

Representation of Gender Identity in Egyptian Students' Graphic Adaptation of Chekhov's "Anna on the Neck" – A Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The present paper provides a (multimodal) discourse analysis of gender identity representation in Anton Chekhov's short story "Anna on the Neck" and its graphic adaptation created by Egyptian university students as a requirement of a community service-based graduation project. The selected texts are analyzed in terms of the ideational and interpersonal meta-functions of discourse proposed by Halliday (1994) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory and the representational and interactive functions of visual grammar introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The paper provides a quantitative-qualitative analysis which shows that the female protagonist in the

original text is portrayed as a submissive shallow character using her beauty to acquire gains and take advantage of her hypocrite husband, whereas the female protagonist in the graphic adapted text is attractively depicted as a dynamic character who is capable of initiating change, standing up for her beliefs and freeing herself from a tyrant husband while adhering to social norms. The multimodal discourse analysis presented herein also throws light on how graphic text adaptations can be used as community service tools to inform, persuade and reform social practices and attitudes.

Keywords: Gender identity representation, graphic text adaptation, multimodal discourse analysis, Appraisal Theory

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1. Introduction

Narrative genres have recently witnessed paradigm shifts in the way they are adapted and presented to a particular audience. One such shift manifests itself in the multimodal representation of graphic texts that offer the reader rich narrative experiences encompassing both verbal and visual modes while contextualizing cultural ideologies and identities. The present paper offers a multimodal discourse analysis of a graphic text created by Egyptian university students as an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's short story "Anna on the Neck" and investigates how it portrays gender identities that differ from the identities presented in the original texts with the aim of empowering women readers and promoting social change. The creation of the adapted graphic text was part of a graduation project based on community service in which the students were required to create a graphic short story with a moral to be donated to public libraries in order to benefit the community.

Graphic short stories represent a literary genre that combines text and image to convey a narrative where the text is represented by a sequence of panels resembling the sequence of sentences (Eisner, 1996). Like any literary text presenting human experiences in fictional settings, graphic stories describe characters in terms of personal and social paradigms that shape their identities. Identity refers to the way the self is described along social/cultural dimensions such as gender, age, race, occupation and socio-economic status (Bamberg, 2013). In the present context, identity is investigated in the adapted graphic text, with emphasis on gender roles and the

associated social norms. Literary adaptation, which is used to create the graphic story analyzed, refers to a product that is transcoded from one genre to another or a process of reinterpretation and creation of a literary text in a new context (Hutcheon, 2006). The graphic text selected in this study represents an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's short story "Anna on the Neck" into a modern Egyptian context and therefore serves to describe the students' perspectives of gender identities associated with Egyptian characters. The selected text is analyzed in terms of the ideational and interpersonal functions of discourse proposed by Halliday (1994) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and the associated appraisal theory proposed by Martin and White (2005), as well as the corresponding representational and interactive functions of multimodal discourse introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

The study at hand, therefore, addresses the following research questions:

1. What ideational transitivity processes are used to portray gender identity in the discourse of the original and adapted texts?
2. How are the interpersonal appraisal elements of affect and judgement used to attract the readers to, or alienate them from, certain gender identities presented in the original and adapted texts?
3. How do the graphics used in the adapted text portray gender identities through the representational visual processes?
4. How do the graphics establish close/distant interactive relationships between the reader and the gender identities represented by the characters in the adapted text?

5. How does the interplay between verbal and visual elements in the adapted graphic text present gender identities that promote social change?

The answers to the above questions aim to explain how the ideational and interpersonal meta-functions of the written discourse, as well as the representational and interactive meta-functions of the multimodal graphic discourse, construct distinct gender identities and establish social relations between the readers and the identities represented by the characters in the selected texts with an intention to promote social change.

2. Literature Review

The present literature review starts with a description of the theoretical framework used in the analysis of the original and the adapted graphic texts, which is built on the discourse and multimodal discourse frameworks proposed by Halliday (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Martin and White (2005), and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and then offers a brief survey of the previous (multimodal) discourse studies based on the above frameworks.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Identity has often been studied in relation to the discourse used to describe characters and events in literature. For Gee (1999), discourse represents social practices shaped by the surrounding social and cultural norms and, thus, enables an individual to enact a specific identity and perform activities associated with that identity. In fact, speakers construct their identities while interacting with one another through the use of certain linguistic forms, which is described by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as a process of indexicality. Identities in literary works are not only indexed through discourse, but they can also be depicted by graphics where graphic text authors expose explicitly, or implicitly, certain social stereotypes or

prejudices held by them or their readers (Royal, 2007).

Halliday's systemic functional grammar (1994) provides a useful tool to analyze identity representation in discourse through the three meta-functions of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. The ideational meta-function encompasses the experiential meaning, which is the focus of analysis in the present paper, and which is concerned with interpreting world experience and answering questions such as what is going on, who is doing what, when, where, why and how things are happening, etc. The interpersonal meaning is concerned with social relations among participants and the feelings they share. The textual meaning is concerned with how the text is structured and the realization of coherence among textual elements. The present paper is concerned with the analysis of the ideational and interpersonal meta-functions of graphic text discourse since they tend to carry more informative load and, thus, seem to be more indicative of characters' identities.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the ideational meta-function of discourse accounts for humans' experiences in terms of the transitivity system which describes the world of experience using a set of six process types: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational and existential. The analysis conducted in the present paper follows the model of transitivity processes to describe how the writers convey characters' identities and ideological stances through the use of different process types. Material processes are realized through verbs that show participants doing an action such as 'run, hit, and catch.' Mental processes are processes of sensing or feeling and occur in verbs like 'think, feel and love.' Behavioral processes account for physiological and psychological behavior as in 'look at, laugh, smile and

cough.’ Verbal processes account for saying and are realized through verbs like ‘say, tell and inform.’ Relational processes denote states of being or having, which is shown in the use of verbs like ‘be, have, become and appear.’ Existential processes denote that something exists and are usually realized through the use of ‘there’ as in ‘There was a man in the backyard’.

The interpersonal meaning of discourse portrays social relations and feelings shared between participants (Halliday, 1994). The interpersonal discourse meta-function is analyzed in the present context in terms of the appraisal theory proposed by Martin and White (2005) which describes feelings of and about participants in relation to attitude. Attitude is investigated in terms of the two elements of affect (referring to positive and negative emotions) and judgement (dealing with positive and negative judgements of participants’ behaviors).

The representational and interactive meta-functions or meanings of multimodal discourse are analyzed herein following Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar approach (2006). The representational meaning is realized through narrative images that describe actions, participants and circumstances, and which correspond to the ideational discourse meaning realized by the transitivity system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The interactive meaning of images is realized through elements like eye contact (where a direct gaze represents a demand while an indirect gaze offers information), attitude - or angle of view - (where a horizontal attitude suggests equality, a high attitude suggests superiority and a low attitude suggests inferiority), social distance (where a close-up shot implies intimacy, a medium shot implies a close relationship and a distant shot suggests detachment) and modality, which renders an image more realistic through the use of characteristics

like contextualization, brightness and color saturation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

2.2. Previous Studies

The significance of visual narration in graphic texts as a recently popular literary genre has been highlighted by several researchers (Eisner, 1996; Saraceni, 2001; Cohn, 2013; Bateman & Wildfeuer, 2014); yet, a few researchers have attempted to carry out a multimodal discourse analysis of graphic texts to show how text and image interplay to deliver new levels of meaning. One example of a multimodal discourse analysis of a graphic text is that provided by Rajkhowa (2021) who analyzes the graphic novel, *Maus*, by Spiegelman (2003). Rajkhowa explains how visual elements like graphic salience and exaggeration of image size have been used in *Maus* to highlight certain events and resemble the act of shouting during moments of turmoil. He also comments on the use of monochrome; that is, black and white images, which helps portray an atmosphere of fear and trauma as well as the use of broken language and gaps in speech bubble communication, which all accumulate to give a vivid picture of the psychological and physical stress experienced by the author’s own family during the holocaust (Rajkhowa, 2021).

A second multimodal discourse analysis of graphic text is provided by Tian (2010) who analyzes the multimodal implications of the English-Chinese graphic text *The Ballad of Mulan* by Song (1998) and examines how gender identity is examined in the specified graphic text. Tian (2010) studies the visual implications of lines in relation to the folds of clothes and posture, as well as the portrayal of facial expressions and choice of colors to depict characters. She observes that the use of simple curved lines in clothes implies softness and is often associated with female characters, whereas thick straight lines are used in portraying men’s outfits to

imply power, control and restriction. In terms of facial expressions, Tian indicates that the Chinese graphic book tends to express the feelings of women and children, especially those showing grief and remorse, but hide the feelings of adult males. She also analyzes the use of colors and observes that the use of multiple colors symbolizes complexity and turmoil, which are used to portray the masculine world of power and battles, while simple colors are used to portray the simple, peaceful and domestic world of women.

Tian (2010) not only provides a multimodal image analysis of the graphic text, but she also analyzes the interpersonal meaning of discourse in terms of Martin and White's (2005) appraisal domains of attitude (comprising affect, judgement and appreciation), engagement and graduation. Her analysis reveals that negative affect is more associated with female characters and that positive judgements are associated mainly with male characters and with the female protagonist when she disguises as a male warrior and achieves victory for her country.

Among the other pioneer researchers in the field of graphic text analysis are Painter et al. (2012) who provide a comprehensive multimodal analysis of 73 selected children's picture books showing how visual images combine with the verbal components of the narrative text to convey different levels of meaning. They analyze the ideational, or representational, meta-function realized through successions of images that represent processes as well as circumstances. In their analysis, visual action processes serve to introduce causality and temporal succession between the depicted actions, while mental and verbal processes serve to project certain ideas (thoughts or sayings) and bring them into focus. Circumstances, on the other hand, are visually depicted through the details of the setting or the physical environment in which the characters appear.

Painter et al. (2012) also analyze the interpersonal, or interactive, meta-function of the selected graphic stories emphasizing elements like variation in angle, focalization of images, depiction style (from cartoon-like to naturalistic) and variation in the use of colors, and how these elements lead the readers to identify with or distant themselves from the represented characters. In terms of the textual, or compositional, meta-function, they explore how variation in page layout and the use of framing and bordering devices were used to guide the readers to focus on certain meanings created by the integration of the verbal and visual modalities. Although they manage to provide a multimodal analysis of a considerable corpus of children's picture books, Painter et al. (2012) still believe that the current multimodal analyses of visual texts need continuing development and expansion to be more useful for future picture book analysis and research.

An additional graphic text multimodal analysis is presented by Albert (2021) who analyzes the textual-visual interaction underlying the graphic novel *Incognegro* by Mat Johnson (2008). In her analysis, she explains the multimodal implications of the images portraying black people being tortured by the white American master during the segregation era in the United States. She stresses on how distance and attitude have been used to alienate the reader from the black characters and make it seem impossible to identify with or rescue them (Albert, 2021).

The multimodal discourse analysis provided in the present paper aims to show how a community service-based project in which students created an adapted graphic text can be used as a powerful tool for motivating social change. Previous research supports the assumption that community service programs are beneficial for university students as they positively impact students'

personalities in terms of self-efficacy and self-esteem, students' social attitudes in terms of social responsibility and engagement levels, and students' learning in terms of achieving learning outcomes and higher grades (Celio et al., 2011; Yorio & Ye, 2012; Meyer et al., 2019).

One of the efficient tools used to motivate social change in community service projects is storytelling, which constructs agency, shapes identity and promotes action (Ganz, 2001). Community development initiatives aim to create social transformative change through transfer of knowledge, which may be realized through story lines about change and innovation (Wittmayer et al., 2019). Stories can be more efficient in disseminating knowledge and motivating action than facts, opinions or answers to direct questions (Kurtz, 2014). This end is achieved when the story presents the readers with a problem and a suggested solution in a way that reshapes the readers' beliefs while preserving their emotional safety as their own identities are not directly targeted, but rather juxtaposed with the identities presented within the story context. Accordingly, the adapted graphic story examined herein is analyzed in terms of its depiction of social problems, especially those related to women's abuse, and presentation of possible solutions for these problems, which, in turn, reflects the story's potential to motivate social change.

The above literature review highlights the theoretical framework that is used in the (multimodal) discourse analysis of the original short story and its graphic adaptation under study as well as provides a brief survey of previous work investigating multimodal analysis of graphic texts as well as previous research highlighting the positive impacts of using storytelling as a community service tool promoting social change. However, the existing literature shows a gap in the analysis of identity as portrayed by

both discourse and graphics in multimodal texts, especially in the graphic texts that are adapted from other literary works, hence the contribution of the present study.

3. Methodology

The current paper provides a (multimodal) discourse analysis of a graphic short story created by five female Egyptian university students as a requirement for their graduation. The created graphic text represents an adaptation of the short story, "Anna on the Neck", written by Anton Chekhov in 1895. In their created graphic text, the students adapted the original short story into a present-time Egyptian context using the point of departure strategy, which drops most elements of the original narrative, keeps the plot premise, a name, or a title and uses these as points of departure adding an invented narrative. The students were asked to do this graduation project as a community service activity, and copies of their final product were to be donated to public libraries run by community service associations to help spread awareness of social problems and ways of overcoming such problems. The text analyzed herein is one of 35 graphic texts created as group projects by 185 senior students in the faculty of languages at a private university in Cairo with the purpose of presenting moral lessons and empowering social change in their community. However, for the sake of brevity, only one text was chosen for the present study to be examined in detail. The group project created by five female students was completed in January 2022, and the graphic text copies were donated to public libraries through community service associations in the first half of 2023.

The students were required in their graduation project to create a graphic adaptation of a short story written by one of the pioneer authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To create the graphics,

they were introduced to the comic creation site 'Pixton', which allows students, upon subscription by their teacher, to design user-friendly graphic texts. The site offers students a variety of themes, characters and backgrounds to choose from, so the students can easily design their own comics. The students had been introduced to multimodal discourse analysis in previous undergraduate courses, so they were familiar with how to create a multimodal text that conveys certain levels of meaning through both text and image. The adapted graphic text created by the students was supposed to carry a moral lesson and be enlightening to bilingual Egyptian adolescent readers in order to be apt for donation as a community service product. The students had lately been encouraged to participate in community service activities in different domains in order to prepare them to be more active and productive members in their own communities. Scholars believe that community service at the university level has a great potential to positively impact students' personal, social, ethical and academic skills (Seidar et al., 2011; Meyer et al., 2019).

The present paper proposes a quantitative-qualitative study in which the selected graphic story is analyzed in terms of the ideational and interpersonal meta-functions of language proposed by Halliday (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Martin and White (2005), and the corresponding representational and interactive functions introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) in order to examine how gender identities are represented in the adapted multimodal graphic story, and how far they deviate from the identities represented in the original text. The ideational meta-function is analyzed in terms of Halliday's systemic functional grammar (1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen's transitivity system (2004) which describes the world of human experience using a set of

six process types: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational and existential. The interpersonal meta-function is analyzed in terms of the appraisal theory proposed by Martin and White (2005) which describes feelings of and about participants in relation to attitude, which, in turn, is investigated in terms of affect and judgement. The study follows the content analysis approach, which investigates the selection of certain linguistic elements, the frequency of occurrence of each and the implication this has on the construction of meaning (Ruiz, 2009). Accordingly, the number and types of the linguistic elements used to describe the transitivity processes as well as the appraisal elements of affect and judgement in the selected stories will be accounted for in order to examine how the ideational and interpersonal meta-functions of the discourse under study construct certain meanings and identities. The frequency of occurrence of the above linguistic elements is counted manually by two raters, PhD holders in the field of linguistics, and the average of the two counts is taken. When the difference in the word count between the two raters is more than two, a third rater is consulted, and the average between the closest two raters is mentioned in the present paper's analysis.

The representational and interactive meta-functions of the graphic text images are analyzed following Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar approach (2006) which describes the representational meaning of visual images in terms of the implication of narrative and conceptual processes and the interactive meaning in terms of the relations between participants as depicted by eye contact, social distance, attitude and modality.

The (multimodal) discourse analysis of the original and adapted short stories is introduced in the following section, where the graphic narrative is analyzed and juxtaposed with the original narrative to

examine the similarities/ differences in the construction of gender identities in both texts.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis of the short story “Anna on the Neck” and its graphic adaptation, “An Unchosen Life”, created by the students, with an emphasis on gender identity representation. Each story is analyzed in terms of the ideational transitivity processes, interpersonal appraisal elements, visual representational processes and visual interactive meaning. The ideational and interpersonal meta-functions are analyzed quantitatively by taking into account the frequency and percentage of occurrence of the relevant linguistic elements, and qualitatively by describing the implication of those elements and how they deliver ideational and interpersonal meanings. The total number of words is 5284 in the original text and 4256 in the adapted graphic text which has less words due to the fact that the images sometimes compensate for words by depicting non-verbal courses of action.

4.1. Plot line of “Anna on the Neck” by Anton Chekhov Adapted into “An Unchosen Life”

“Anna on the Neck” talks about Anna, from a Russian poor family, who is forced into a loveless marriage, to a rich old man. Being afraid of having no money and being totally dependent, she finds how she can conquer by using her beauty, charm and youth. The adapted graphic story “An Unchosen Life” talks about Salma, from a poor family in an Egyptian village in Sohag, who is forced into a loveless marriage to a rich old man. She is treated cruelly by her husband, so she decides to run away seeking help from the National Council for Women to file a divorce and live independently. The adaptation here follows the point of departure strategy, where one element is kept from the original story; that

is, the young pretty protagonist being married to a rich old man to escape from her poor living conditions, but the rest of the story line is completely invented. The choice of the deviated course of action in the adapted text bears the cultural implication that Egyptian women in underprivileged rural communities are helpless, submissive to their husbands and suffer from the cruel treatment of their inner circle families. In the original story, Anna is first objectified by her husband, Alexeitch, as a beautiful trophy which is kept for pleasure but is not capable of accomplishing anything of value. However, he later finds out that she can be of great help when he receives a military award after his superiors are pleased with his wife’s beauty and coquettish attitude. The medal he receives as an award bears the name “Order of Saint Anna”, which alludes to the title of the story “Anna on the Neck”. In fact, the husband is the one who encourages his wife to impress others, men and women, for his own benefit, which comes as an ironic contradiction of his description as ‘modest Alexeitch’ throughout the story. This theme of women’s empowerment through their beauty and coquetry is completely removed from the adapted text as it is not accepted by the cultural norms of the traditional Egyptian society. Instead, the protagonist in the adapted version is a humble young woman, who is conservatively dressed, with a head cover, throughout the story. She only leaves her house to help her poor brothers, and later to find herself a job and seek help from the National Council for women to save herself from an abusive marriage. An interesting remark, however, is that in both stories, characters’ names are used ironically to present the contradictions between expectations and reality. In “Anna on the Neck”, the title itself bears allusion to the title of a medal yet suggests that the wife, Anna, can also be a burden on the husband’s neck that he has to live up with to achieve material

gains. The husband’s nick name, Modest Alexeitch, is ironic as he is far from being modest since he is depicted as a hypocrite willing to do anything to achieve his goals. Irony is also used in characters’ names in the adapted story. The protagonist’s name, Salma, means ‘safe or peaceful’ in Arabic; yet, she is far from being safe or feeling peaceful; the husband’s name is Taher, which means ‘pure or innocent’, but he is far from being a pure or an innocent person; the cruel step-mother is called Skeena, meaning ‘tranquility’; yet, she only causes trouble to everyone around her. The following section draws a comparison between the original and the adapted texts in terms of the ideational transitivity processes used as markers of identity.

4.2. Ideational transitivity processes

The following table shows the number and percentage of occurrence of the transitivity processes in both texts to show how the ideational meta-function is realized through the description of human experiences of the world, and how these experiences differ between the male and female characters in the two narratives. The transitivity processes are divided into material (showing physical actions), mental (showing feeling or thinking), behavioral (accounting for physiological or psychological behaviors), verbal (accounting for saying), relational (denoting states of being) and existential (denoting the existence of an entity/ experience) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Process	“Anna on the Neck”					“An Unchosen Life”				
	Males	%	Females	%	Total	Males	%	Females	%	Total
Material	57	54%	48	46%	105	32	30.5%	73	69.5%	105
Mental	6	12%	43	88%	49	9	19%	38	81%	47
Behavioral	8	33.5%	16	66.5%	24	6	26%	17	74%	23
Verbal	27	75%	9	25%	36	46	49%	48	51%	94
Relational	11	61%	7	39%	18	11	65%	6	35%	17
Existential	2	50%	2	50%	4	0	0%	0	0%	0

Table 1 Ideational transitivity process distribution in “Anna on the Neck” and “An Unchosen Life”

The total number of processes in the original text is 236, while the total number of processes in the adapted text is 286 even though the original text has a larger total number of words than the adapted graphic text, which implies that the graphic text writers were keen on describing the processes carried out by the participants both verbally and visually. As shown in the above table, the material, verbal and relational processes performed by the male characters in the original narrative, “Anna on the Neck”, outnumber those performed by the females, which suggests that men are described as more active participants taking responsibility for most physical actions and most verbal

interactions, and that they are given more descriptions through the use of the relational verb ‘to be’. Women, on the other hand, outnumber men in mental and behavioral processes, which implies that feelings and passive processes are more associated with women, and that they tend to use more behavioral (seductive) acts such as ‘smiling, ‘looking slyly’ and ‘screwing up her eyes coquettishly.’ As a narrative written in the late nineteenth century, “Anna on the Neck” reflects women’s identities during that time and shows them as passive characters capable of making a change only through their beauty and coquetry.

In the adapted text, “An Unchosen Life”, the female characters outnumber the males in the material processes (69.5% vs 30.5%), mental processes (81% vs 19%), behavioral processes (74% vs 26%) and verbal processes (51% vs 49%), which implies that women in the adapted texts are shown as more competent participants and that they are responsible for most physical actions as well as moments of contemplation and expression of emotions. Men outnumber women only in the relational processes (65% vs 35%), which tends to describe men as static characters through the use of verbs like ‘to be’ and ‘have, while women are portrayed as more dynamic through associating them with more physical actions. The existential process is not used in the adapted text to refer to any of the two genders, which suggests that the adapted text writers prefer to show the dynamism of the story line and the physical actions made by the participants, which is referred to by Harbi et al. (2019) as a writer’s preference for expressing physical and tangible actions rather than describing the mere existence of an entity with an existential process.

The two texts do not only differ in the distribution of transitivity processes among male and female characters, but they also differ in the choice of the linguistic elements realizing these processes. In the original text, men’s and women’s processes reflect the Russian cultural traditions and practices as is shown in associating men with acts like playing cards, leading ladies to a ball, drinking alcohol and talking about politics, and women with acts like serving, dancing, bowing, going to the market, looking through fashion magazines, playing the piano and tempting men. The most recurring material processes associated with men in the original text were those related to drinking alcohol (comprising 15% of the material processes and including verbs like ‘spilling his wine, filled his glass, drank, poured and emptied his

glass’) and those related to violent actions (comprising 9% and including verbs like ‘beat the table with his fists, storm at the boys, sweeping down ready to crush her, and holding his knife in his fist’). As for the women portrayed in the original text, the most recurring material processes were those related to serving oneself or others (comprising 25% of the material processes associated with women and including verbs like ‘look after her father, darn stockings, go to the market, clean, make a new dress out of an old one and hand over’) and those related to acts of flirting or attracting attention (comprising 21% of material processes and including verbs like ‘dressed in the latest fashion, danced, flew away, and fluttered around him provoking him by her beauty’).

On the other hand, the adapted text reflects the cultural norms of the rural Egyptian middle and lower-middle social classes shown in associating abusive husbands with processes denoting violent actions like abusing, slapping, grabbing, slamming and locking up, and women with processes implying servitude like cooking, washing, cleaning, preparing meals and looking after others. The adapted text also reflects the social stereotype that the woman has to be under protection of a male figure. The writers of the adapted text introduced the character of a stereotypical stepmother, and described her by the words: “Skeena was a forty-year-old evil and cruel woman, just like every stereotypical stepmother who mistreats her stepchildren” in order to depict the female protagonist, Salma, as a helpless young woman who has no one to support her after her father’s death. In the original story, the protagonist’s father is not dead, but acts indifferently towards his daughter and lets her marry an old rich man to save himself and his other children from financial problems. This point in the story is changed in the adapted text as the father in the Egyptian society is usually regarded as a figure of

protection for his daughter, so the writers removed the father figure from the protagonist's life to add to her misery and portray her as a lonely, helpless and sympathetic character. This theme of helplessness is stressed in the story's title "An Unchosen Life", which implies that the protagonist had to live a cruel life that she did not choose for herself.

The most recurring material processes associated with men in the adapted text were those related to violence, which is mainly inflicted upon women, (comprising 37% of all the material processes performed by men and including verbs like 'abuse, slapped, grabbed, slammed, locked, caught and hit'). As for the female characters, the most recurring processes were those related to serving others (comprising 30% of all the material processes performed by women and including verbs like 'made tea, prepared breakfast, cooked, cleaned and washed the dishes'). It is also noteworthy that the writers of the adapted graphic story tried to portray the female protagonist as someone transforming into a stronger person and breaking the barriers of an unjust marriage, which is clear in the third phase of the story where the material processes shift from those related to servitude and domestic household chores to ones related to making plans, going to meet the representatives of the National Council for Women, going to court, taking custody of her brothers, continuing her education, studying law and working. However, this transformation could only take place with the help of another person; that is the male doctor in the hospital and the National Council for Women that he directed her to turn to for help. This reflects the social view that Egyptian women, especially in rural areas, still need guidance from more educated individuals and from governmental institutions to be able to gain their full rights and stand against those who oppress them. Even towards the end of the story, when the

female protagonist achieves her dreams of graduating with a law degree and having a suitable job, her happiness can only be complete by finding a right husband who is compassionate and willing to take care of her and her brothers. The ending reflects the stereotypical image of Egyptian, and Eastern girls in general, who can only fulfill their dreams and have a sense of a 'complete' life upon finding the right person to marry.

The above analysis of the two texts reveals that literary texts usually mirror the gender identities shaped by social and cultural expectations, which is a finding supported by Butler (1990) who maintains that writers usually adapt to gender norms as they cannot easily disengage from cultural influence and judgement. The analysis also serves to address the first research question investigating the ideational transitivity processes that are used to portray gender identity in the discourse of the original and adapted texts. It is clear from the above discourse analysis of the transitivity processes used in both texts that the original text, "Anna on the Neck" portrays men as powerful yet shallow, which is implied by the lack of description of their mental processes. Men are also frequently shown drinking alcohol, often to the extent of being intoxicated, which is both indicative of the traditions of the Russian society at the time the novel was written and of what Holmberg (2015) describes as the nineteenth century writers' inclination to associate male characters with smoking and drinking while protecting women from those perils and portraying them in the domestic peaceful setting of the house. The transitivity processes associated with women in the original text are mainly mental processes describing their passive thoughts and emotions, and behavioral processes showing how they are capable of using their looks and smiles to be tempting and attractive to men, which reflects the nineteenth century western

attitude that women’s power lies in their outer beauty and ability to attract men. On the other hand, the transitivity processes analyzed in the adapted text describe men as violent unfair characters, while women are depicted as submissive and helpless throughout the majority of the text. As the writers try to transform the female protagonist towards the end of the story, to achieve the morale of the story and allude to women’s empowerment, they change the processes associated with women to ones that reflect power of planning for oneself and fighting for one’s rights. A woman’s power in the adapted text is realized not through her beauty and flirtation, which is not accepted by the norms of the Egyptian society, but through her decision to free herself from an abusive marriage and to pursue her dreams of education and work.

4.3. Interpersonal Appraisal Elements of Affect and Judgement

This section analyses the interpersonal relationship that the original and adapted

texts create with the reader. The interpersonal meta-function of discourse refers to the potential of the verbal mode to construct social relations (Halliday, 1994), which is described below in terms of the appraisal model proposed by Martin and White (2005). The appraisal model entails that the interpersonal meaning of discourse is realized through the semantic system of attitude, which is analyzed in the present paper in terms of the two elements of affect (denoting positive and negative emotions) and judgement (referring to positive and negative evaluations of characters) since they are more concerned with depicting relationships between characters on one hand, and between the characters and the reader on the other. The table below shows the linguistic elements used in the original and adapted texts to refer to the affect and judgement attributes of characters. The linguistic elements were counted and evaluated manually by two raters, as explained in section 3 above.

Appraisal Linguistic Element	“Anna on the Neck”					“An Unchosen Life”				
	Males	%	Females	%	Total	Males	%	Females	%	Total
Positive Affect	13	33.5%	26	66.5%	39	6	100%	0	0%	6
Negative Affect	5	15%	28	85%	33	4	16%	21	84%	25
Positive Judgement	49	86%	8	14%	57	2	40%	3	60%	5
Negative Judgement	31	70.5%	13	29.5%	44	2	20%	8	80%	10

Table 2 Interpersonal appraisal elements of affect and judgement

In contrast to the word count of the ideational processes which shows more processes being mentioned in the adapted text than in the original text, the word count of affective and judgement lexical elements

shows that the original text outnumbers the adapted one with a total number of 173 words describing affect and judgement in the original text compared to 46 in the adapted graphic text. The affective and judgement

lexical elements are accounted for in terms of the number of adjectives and adverbs denoting emotional states or describing characters' personalities. This implies that in the adapted graphic text, emotions were more depicted through images than words, and that the characters' feelings were generally described through mental processes rather than direct attributive adjectives.

Table 2 above shows that in the original narrative, men are described with less positive and negative affective words than women but with more positive and negative judgement expressions. This suggests that women are generally depicted as more emotional and passionate, but portrayed with less depth than men in terms of how they are positively or negatively judged. Also, the choice of words used in each appraisal category differs between the two genders. Men's positive affect is referred to using words associated with esteem like excited and dignified, while women's positive affect is shown through words suggesting simplicity and playfulness like 'fond, joyful and happy'. Men's negative affect is described with words suggesting anger like 'imploring, flushing, and raging', while women's negative affect is described using words denoting fear and uncertainty like 'troubled, cheated and frightened'. This description agrees with the stereotypical view that men are more characteristically angry than women (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999) and that women are more uncertain and vulnerable (Lakoff, 1975), and it reflects the western societies' attitudes towards gender roles and identities in the late nineteenth century. In terms of judgement, men's positive judgement is shown in the original text through words implying respect and power like 'impressive, rich and prominent', while women's positive judgement is described by words related to outward beauty like 'young, handsome and attractive'. As for negative judgement linguistic choices, men

are described with words suggesting intimidating power such as 'terrifying, terrible and implacable', while women are described with words implying weakness and incapability like 'enigmatic, idiot and disproportionate'. This again portrays men as powerful and dignified, and women as shallow and vulnerable.

The interpersonal meaning created in the original text using the above appraisal elements creates a distant relationship between the male and female characters, where the females are intimidated by the male characters, while the males objectify the females and regard them as impotent. In terms of the relationship between the reader and the characters, the reader sympathizes with the female characters due to the excessive negative affective words describing their vulnerability and sufferings yet is left to regard men as more powerful and women as objectified beings who can only impact others through their superficial beauty and seducing charm.

In the adapted text, positive affect is only associated with men describing the male characters as being 'excited, happy and proud', while no positive affect words are used to describe female characters. On the other hand, negative affect is mostly associated with women, describing them with adjectives like 'scared, melancholic, shocked, exhausted, sad, terrified, sorrowful and desperate'. Few positive and negative judgement words are used to describe men using the two adjectives 'rich' and 'lucky' for positive judgement and the two adjectives 'a different person' and 'poor' for negative judgement. Only three positive judgement words are used to describe women, namely 'beautiful', 'kind' and 'respectable', and eight negative judgement words are used to describe them, most of which being associated with the evil stepmother who forces the protagonist to marry an old ruthless man for his money. Negative judgement

words describing women include ‘poor’, ‘evil’, ‘cruel’, ‘greedy’, ‘harsh’ and ‘unwelcoming’. The use of affective and judgement words to describe men and women in the adapted text implies that men’s emotions and attributions are not fully described with the intention of depicting them as shallow characters and alienating the reader from them. It also reflects the view proposed by Painter et al. (2012) that male characters’ feelings tend to be invoked through the context rather than being directly inscribed. Women are generally described as vulnerable, miserable and sad, which makes the reader sympathize with them, especially with the female protagonist who has to fight for her freedom. Emotional expression, as such, is believed to be one of the main characteristics associated with feminine stereotyped behaviors (Tannen, 1990; Scollon & Scollon, 1995; Anderson & Leaper, 1998). When female characters are positively judged in the adapted text, there is stress on their respectability, which is one of the important positive attributes associated with Egyptian women in general.

The above analysis addresses the second research question examining how the appraisal elements of affect and judgement are used to attract the readers to, or alienate them from, the gender identities presented in the original and adapted texts. The analysis of the appraisal elements in both texts serve to portray the relations between characters on one hand and the relation between the characters and the reader on the other. In terms of the relationship between characters, the male and female characters are alienated from one another in both texts due to the fact the men feel superior to women and are described as more powerful and intimidating than the vulnerable helpless women. In terms of the relation between the characters and the reader, the original text creates a feeling of sympathy between the reader and the female protagonist due to the use of a number of

negative affect words showing her misery and helplessness at the beginning of the story. Yet, the reader also feels the shallowness of the female character who is mainly praised for her beauty and coquettish attitude but is not shown to have any positive role in practical life. Men, on the other hand, are depicted as the ones in power and control, which does not necessarily create a hostile attitude towards them or alienate them from the reader. The adapted text, on the other hand, creates an intimate relationship between the reader and the female protagonist through her depiction as a kind person, and through the use of negative affect words describing her miserable life, which initiates feelings of sympathy towards her. Though the male characters are not fully described in terms of linguistic affect and judgement elements, the reader still feels alienated from them, especially from the protagonist’s cruel husband whose cruelty and ruthless nature is revealed through the description of the female protagonist’s miserable life and daily sufferings.

4.4. Visual Representational Processes

The representational meta-function of the multimodal discourse of the adapted graphic text is analyzed in this section following Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) approach which describes the representational meaning of visual images in terms of the implication of narrative and conceptual processes. The adapted graphic text has a total of 164 panels, all including images with text (either in the form of captions or speech/ thought balloons). In picture books, as Nodelman (1998) remarks, text and image seem to complete each other through their differences; that is, each describes matters that the other is silent about. Out of the 164 panels, 125 show narrative processes, where characters are doing some kind of activity, and the remaining 39 panels show conceptual

processes that are represented by static images. Conceptual processes, according to Painter et al. (2012), may occur in the orientation stage to introduce characters and their attributes, or at moments within a story where the course of action calls for a pause or a reflective moment. This is clear in the adapted graphic text “An Unchosen Life”, where figure 1 below represents a static image used in the orientation stage to describe the protagonist’s cruel stepmother who contributes to her misery throughout the narrative, and figure 2 shows a moment of

contemplation leading to the climax of the story where the protagonist decides to start her transformation towards a stronger person who is capable of planning right decisions for her future. The visual elements of eye contact, distance and attitude are used in the two figures to alienate the viewers from the cruel stepmother who is shown at distance from a relatively high angle in figure 1, and attach them to the protagonist using direct eye contact and a close-up horizontal shot to create intimacy with the viewers in figure 2.

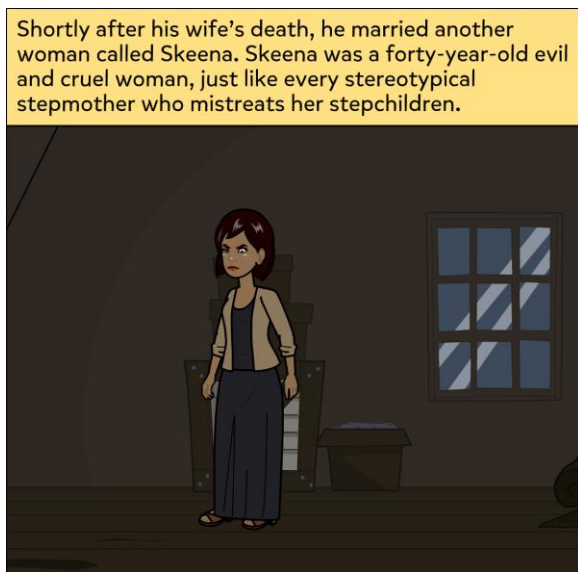


Figure 1 Conceptual Process: Orientation

The majority of graphics or panels in the adapted text show narrative processes depicting characters engaged in an activity or action. Painter et al. (2012) believe that this is expected of graphic texts and maintain that since graphic texts are generally meant to tell stories, the majority of their images would constitute what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) refer to as narrative processes that depict some kind of action. The shapes or characters in a narrative image represent participants, while oblique lines or vectors created by their limbs or other tools represent a process or an action (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Out of the 125 panels representing

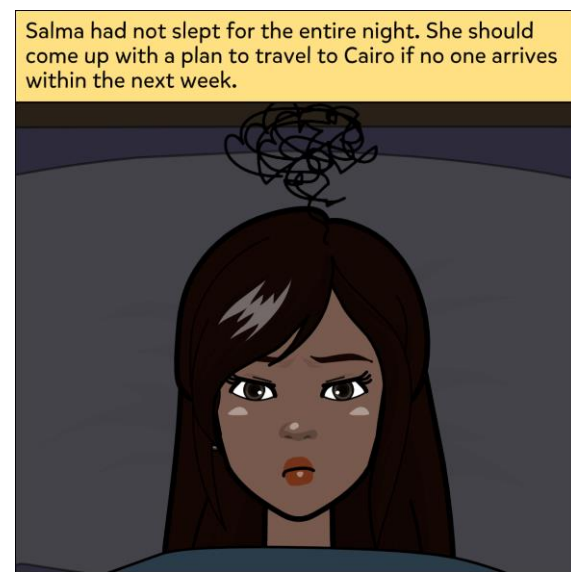


Figure 2 Conceptual Process: Reflective moment

narrative processes where characters are engaged in an activity or action in the examined adapted text, 16 panels represent acts of violence against the female protagonist. Figures 3 and 4 below show two acts of verbal and physical violence inflicted by the cruel husband on the female protagonist. The two images portray the male character as cruel and ruthless, and the female character as helpless and submissive, which aims at triggering the reader’s despise for the tyrannical figure of the husband, who abuses his wife for not following his orders, and sympathy with the female protagonist.



Figure 3 Male verbal violence

The interaction between the text and image in the above figures draws a complete picture of the female character's suffering. The speech bubbles and captions always appear on top of the image, which foregrounds the meaning that the text conveys first and then complements it with the image. As put forward by Painter et al. (2012), when the verbiage appears above the picture, the reader cannot ignore the words or perceive the image before the text. The writers choose this layout to make sure that the reader understands the message through the text first, which stresses the male character's cruelty with words like 'abuse, slapped, a completely different person.' The above analysis addresses the third research question about how the graphics used in the adapted text portray gender identities through the representational visual processes. The sample images above showing domestic violence portray the character of the husband as cruel and merciless and the character of the wife, the female protagonist, as submissive and helpless, which reinforces the identities portrayed by the textual analysis in sections 4.2 and 4.3 above. It further alienates the readers from the character of the tyrant husband who shows no compassion or

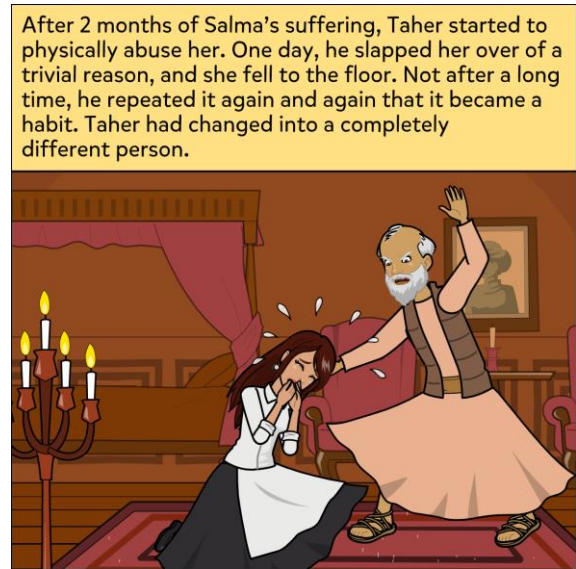


Figure 4 Male physical violence

appreciation for his wife, and evokes their sympathy towards the female character who symbolizes the obedient submissive wife who is forced into a loveless marriage for the sake of her family. Yet, the visual representation of the female protagonist, Salma, changes as she transforms into a stronger person and rebels against the husband's harsh treatment. Figure 5 shows Salma, after the hospitalization of her brother due to the step-mother's negligence, planning to take steps towards freeing herself from the abusive marriage she is trapped in. The wooden bars behind her suggest that she has decided to run away from the imprisonment that she has long been confined to, and that she is now ready to gain her freedom. Figure 6 shows her jubilating after winning the divorce case against her abusive husband. The use of direct eye contact, medium shot and horizontal angles in both figures creates a sense of attachment between the viewers and the protagonist and portray her as a more determined person, with an air of confidence and a desire for change. The images, accordingly, trigger the reader's admiration for Salma and her successful endeavors rather than sympathy for a helpless wife.



Figure 5 Salma planning for her liberation



Figure 6 Salma celebrating her legal accomplishment

4.5 Visual Interactive Meaning

The interactive meta-function of multimodal discourse expresses how graphic elements like eye contact, social distance, attitude and modality create certain relationships between participants on one hand, and between participants and viewers on the other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In terms of eye contact, the female protagonist Salma gazes away from the viewers in the images where she is subjected to humiliation and abuse, as in figures 3 and 4, which is considered as an offer of information rather than a direct demand suggested by a direct eye contact (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The direct eye contact is maintained when she experiences a shift in personality and decides to transform into a strong person and pursue her freedom as is shown in figures 2, 5 and 6. The direct gaze here invites the reader to identify with her and experience her feelings of determination, power and success.

Social distance describes how close the characters are to one another as well as how close they appear to the reader. In the graphic text, “An Unchosen Life”, most images of the cruel husband and the

protagonist Salma show them at a distance, as in figure 3, which implies their emotional estrangement and deteriorating relationship. These images also distance the reader from both Salma and the husband since they are usually seen together in full figure at a distance, as in figures 3 and 4. This prevents the reader from identifying with any of them at this stage; the reader is alienated from the cruel husband figure, and is also alienated from Salma’s submissive personality. However, when Salma starts to gain self-confidence and pursue her dreams, she appears at a close distance from the readers to suggest that she is one of them, as in figures 2 and 5.

Attitude reflects (in)equality with the participant in the image through the use of horizontal, high-angle or low-angle attitudes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The power relation between characters is realized depending on how one character looks up to or down on another (Painter et al., 2013), which is clear in most images showing the cruel husband abusing Salma and looking down on her as in figure 4. On the contrary, figures 7 and 8 below, show how Salma, after

her self-realization journey, has found the right match for her who respects her and treats her as his equal. Their equal and close

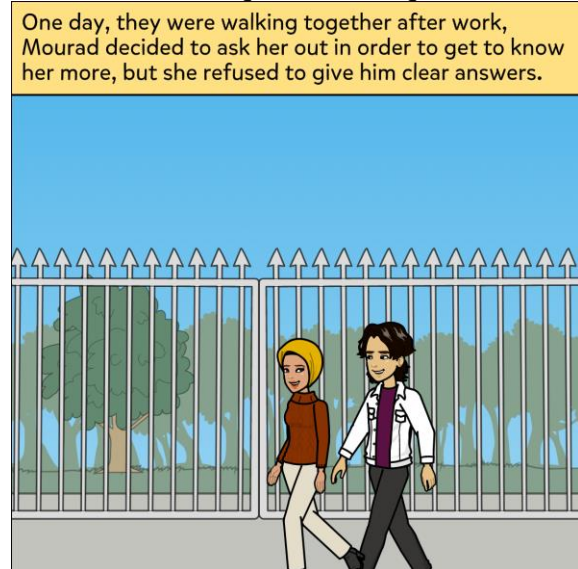


Figure 7 Proximity suggesting close relationship

Salma also appears equal to the readers in the above images, rather than inferior to them, as suggested by figure 4 where she is humiliated by her husband. The readers are invited to identify with the strong version of Salma and feel equal to her through the use of the horizontal angle, which also suggests that they can easily be like her if they stand up for their rights.

Modality in the adapted text is reflected through the use of colors and their brightness. The choice of highly saturated vibrant colors creates a sense of excitement and vitality, while dull colors create more restrained feelings (Paniter et al., 2013). Figures 3 and 4 showing the submissive stage of Salma's life have a few dull colors to create a gloomy atmosphere and reflect Salma's, as well as the reader's, feelings of resentment against the cruel husband. On the contrary, the images showing Salma in the resolution stage, after gaining her freedom and fulfilling her dreams, are full of vibrant colors that create a positive mood and attracts the reader to Salma and her new lifestyle as

relationship is implied by their proximity, or closeness, as well as their horizontal attitude.

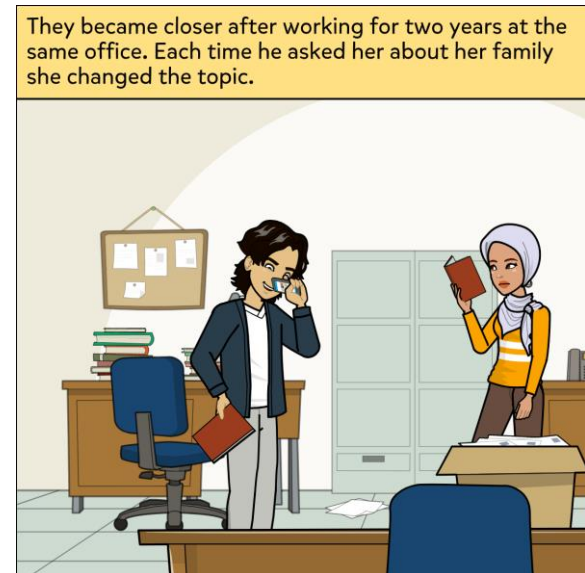


Figure 8 Horizontal attitude suggesting equality

is shown in figures 6, 7 and 8. The above analysis of the interactive meaning of the visual text addresses the fourth research question about how the graphics establish close/ distant relationships between the reader and the gender identities represented by the characters in the adapted text. It is clear that the use of direct eye contact, close distance, horizontal attitude and vibrant colors bring the reader close to the strong identity of the female character after her transformation and liberation from a cruel marriage. On the other hand, the indirect gaze, distant position, low-angle attitude and dull colors used to describe Salma in the submissive stage of her life alienate the readers from her passive attitude and make them unwilling to identify with her or imagine being in her place at any time.

The analysis given so far for the original and adapted graphic texts also serves to address the fifth research question proposed by the present study, which examines how the interplay between verbal and visual elements in the adapted graphic

text present gender identities that promote social change. In terms of the verbal elements of discourse, the ideational processes associated with the female character show her as a dynamic character capable of changing her surroundings, while the interpersonal elements of affect and judgement associate her with negative feelings during her abusive marriage experience to trigger feelings of resentment towards her abuse and her initial submissive attitude. In terms of the visual elements of multimodal discourse, the representation of the female protagonist as a familiar Egyptian young lady, with a traditional Egyptian lifestyle creates intimacy between the character and the readers. The protagonist, Salma is portrayed as a simple Egyptian girl who wears a head cover, like most Egyptian girls in the countryside, and who sets an example of how a woman can fight for her freedom and fulfill her dreams. Yet, after Salma's liberation, she transforms into a modern lady, with a modern outfit and head cover, living in the urban luxuries of Cairo. This new look and lifestyle bring her closer to a bilingual Egyptian reader, who is capable of reading an English narrative, and who probably belongs to the middle or upper middle social class. The way the abusive husband is portrayed is meant to repulse the readers and to make them accept Salma's rebellion against him. As a community service-based project, the graphic text "An Unchosen Life" aims to encourage female readers to identify with the protagonist in her determination to stand up for what she believes in without worrying about breaking the social norms or traditions. After all, the protagonist has not offended the society or traditions in any way; she has only sought salvation from a toxic relationship, and even though she achieves success and self-independence by earning a degree and finding a suitable job, she still conforms to

social expectations and meets the stereotypical requirement of finding a suitable husband at the end. The graphic text also serves as a warning to Egyptian girls against marrying a person who is incompetent in terms of age, education or mentality, and it serves to inform the readers about the National Council for Women, an Egyptian organization authorized to deal with women's complaints and help them gain their social and legal rights.

5. Conclusion

The present paper provides an analysis of the (multimodal) discourse of Chekhov's short story "Anna on the Neck" and its graphic adaptation "An Unchosen Life", which is created by a group of Egyptian university students as a community service-based project, with the aim of highlighting the gender identities represented in both texts. The paper shows how the linguistic ideational and interpersonal elements used in the original text portray the female protagonist as a submissive shallow character using her beauty to acquire gains, while the female protagonist of the graphic adapted text is described as a dynamic character who is capable of standing up for her beliefs. The representational and interactive visual elements of the adapted graphic text portray the female protagonist as a normal Egyptian girl who shares common social traditions and views with the readers, and who is capable of fighting for her rights and changing her life to the better. The adapted graphic text examined herein, thus, serves to provide an example of how literature can be used as a tool for social change, and how university students can be motivated to use graphic texts to inform, reform, persuade and entertain their own communities and the society at large.

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