

Arabic Young Adult Literature in English

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Abstract

Research shows that literature in translation has a tremendous impact on students' learning in an increasingly interdependent world. The purposes of this study were to explore the usefulness of Arabic young adult literature in English in both American and Arabic classrooms and to examine the current availability of Arabic young adult literature (AYAL), particularly in the genre of fictional prose. Since I wanted my work to be useful for readers and teachers both in the United States and the Arab world, the accessibility of the texts in English was essential. My extensive searches indicated that there is a real scarcity of first-rate AYAL available in English. I found 49 AYAL books that were published or republished in English between 1988 and 2010. The selected books can be placed into two categories: contemporary fiction (timely stories about Middle Eastern/Arab conflicts) and adapted classical Arabic folk literature (simplified versions of classical Arab folk tales). Interestingly, the majority of the contemporary books were originally written in English, and about 19% were translated into English from other languages like Arabic, French, and German. The majority of the adapted classical books were originally written in Persian or ancient Arabic and translated into English. The study also showed that Arabic young adult literature in English, as any young adult literature, plays an important role in classroom instruction in Arabic and non-Arabic speaking countries.

Keywords: Arabic literature; translated literature; young adult literature; TESOL