

Chapter 3

ADAPTING STRATEGIES IN RETELLING MANSFIELD'S SHORT STORIES

Katherine Mansfield owes her success to her subject matters and artistic presentation. Considered remarkable literary works of the 20th century by Oxford University Press, nine of her short stories are adapted by Rosalie Kerr to make a level-5 adapted book entitled “The Garden Party and Other Stories.” In retelling, several considerations must come into play: the meanings and the literary techniques in the original version and the new audience with limited knowledge of the language, literature, as well as the cultural contexts. The original themes and most literary techniques are essentially maintained. The author’s language style that may obstruct the new readers’ understanding are modified, mainly vocabulary, colloquialism, and complex syntactic patterns. The adapting strategies used are addition, deletion, substitution, interpretive restatement, and simplification of figurative language.

Addition

Generally, a retold version is expected to be shorter than its original version. Yet, addition of some details to the simplified text is sometimes necessary to make implicit messages clearer as inexperienced readers may not be able to fully comprehend all points hidden in authentic literary texts. Besides, a text laden with cultural meaning also needs explanation. Additions, therefore, are found in the adapted version in the forms of modifiers or additional details and marking of interior monologue.

1. Modifiers

A modifier gives a better understanding for a reader. Added modifiers found in retold texts are adjectival and adverbial phrases. Below are examples from “The Garden Party.”

“You’ll have to go, Laura; you’re the artistic one.” (246)

*‘You’ll have to go, Laura. You’re the artistic one **in this family.**’*
(16)*

Without the added prepositional phrase “in this family,” the second clause may seem unrelated and thus unclear that the second clause is the reason for the first.

Another example is from “The Doll’s House.”

And her little sister, our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy’s boots. (386)

*And her little sister, ‘our Else,’ **as Lil always called her,** wore a long white dress that looked like a night-dress, and a pair of boy’s boots.*
(10)

Here, the deictic “our” can be ambiguous for readers as the context does not determine of whom Else is. To clarify the referent of the unclear possessive adjective, the reteller adds a modifying clause “as Lil always called her.”

2. Additional Details

To interact with the texts makes reading a lively and active activity. Writers

*In this comparative study, the original version is presented in the normal type while the adapted text is italicized. The bold-typed words represent the focused difference.

sometimes let readers do this by omitting some elements in the scene. This can cause reading failures to inexperienced readers who may not be able to fill in the missing parts. In the adapted texts, such gaps are completed. The example from “Pictures” below is an addition of Mr Bithem’s going out of the scene after his polite attempt to end the job interview.

He gave her a whole grin to herself and patted her fat back. “Hearts of oak, dear lady,” said Mr Bithem, “hearts of oak!”

At the North-East Film Company the crowd was all the way up the stairs. Miss Moss found herself next to a fair little baby thing about thirty in a white lace hat with cherries round it. (125)

*He gave her a big smile, all for herself, and touched her lightly on her fat arm **before disappearing back into his office.***

At the North-East Film Company they were waiting on the stairs. Miss Moss stood and waited next to a fair little baby-girl of about thirty, in a white hat with fruit all round it. (39)

The addition of the adverbial phrase “before disappearing back into his office” marks the closing of the scene at this company and prepares the readers for the next scene at the North-East Film Company. The added detail also intensifies Miss Moss’ desolation as she is deserted, and has to move to another place to look for employment.

In the same story, there is an insertion of an action not stated in the narrative, which describes Miss Moss after her failure to find a job.

And then she sat down on one of the benches to powder her nose. But the person in the pocket mirror made a hideous look at her,(127)

*Then she sat down on a bench **and took out a little mirror** to powder her nose. But the person in the mirror made an ugly face at her,(41–42)*

In the original version, the writer prompts the readers to perceive Miss Moss's mood through the sudden appearance of a face in the mirror. To experienced readers, it is clear from the context that the person in the mirror is no one else but Miss Moss herself. However, without the linking information ("took out a little mirror"), some inexperienced readers may wonder who the person in the mirror is.

3. Marking Interior Monologue

Mansfield is keen about exploring her characters' mental states. As people's thoughts are hidden, she blends what is in the characters' minds with the background description and plunges the readers into their inner world without warning. Readers of lower level, however, might not be prepared to differentiate the characters' inner world from the external world. Thus, the reteller marks the characters' process of thinking through an introducing clause which indicates the owners of the mental acts as seen in "Pictures," when Miss Moss's mental pictures are explicitly signaled.

A pageant of Good Hot Dinners passed across the ceiling, each of them accompanied by a bottle of Nourishing Stout....(119)

She imagined a roll of good hot dinner passing across the ceiling, each with a bottle of good strong beer.(34)

In the original version, Miss Moss's mental picture appears as a real happening. In the retold version, "She imagined" is added to signal that this is actually going on in her mind.

As seen in the above discussion, addition is necessary in adapting texts to clarify what is stylistically left out to make the texts more understandable for less skilled readers.

Deletion

Deleting or cutting off some details helps shorten a reading text and thus makes it seem less demanding. The deleted elements in this retold book include difficult vocabulary and components such as stylistic modifiers, imagery, descriptions, and conversational fillers. Besides, certain complex psychological hints are also deleted.

1. Vocabulary

Children and EFL students have limitations in their vocabulary banks. In books for them, therefore, words outside the specified lists are excluded to suit their lexical competence. The adapted version of the selected nine short stories is in level 5 with 1,800 headwords. This means that words beyond this level rarely occur without a provided glossary. An example of the deletion of vocabulary beyond the reader's level can be seen in the following description of lilies Mrs. Sheridan ordered for her garden party in "The Garden Party."

No other kind. Nothing but lilies—**canna** lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, **radiant**, almost frighteningly alive **on bright crimson stems**. (249)

No other kind. Nothing but lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, and almost frighteningly alive. (19)

The reteller deletes the word "canna," the genus of the plant which can be "large, brash, bright and sometimes gaudy..." ("Canna_lily," 2008). This word is removed as it is too specific. The word "radiant" which means "very bright" and is a literary term (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, 2003 : 1349), is cut off. So is "on bright crimson stems," as it contains difficult words "crimson" and "stem."

Old words or words used only in specific dialects are also deleted. In the texts below from “The Woman at the Store,” we can find such words in the scene supposed to take place in a remote area of New Zealand.

Jim lay by the fire watching the **billy** boil.

...

“Didn’t you see how Jo had been titivating? He said to me before he went up to the **whare**, ‘**Dang** it! She’ll look better by night light—at any rate, my **buck**, she’s female flesh!’ ” (555-556)

When I got back to the tent, Jim was lying by the fire. I asked him where Jo was.

‘Didn’t you see how he cleaned himself up?’ said Jim. ‘He said to me before he went off to find her, “She isn’t much, but she’s a woman. She’ll look good enough in the dark!” ’ (68)

In rewriting the text, the reteller eliminates all the unfamiliar terms, and if necessary, the surrounding words: “billy” which is an Australian/ New Zealand word for a tin can used as a cooking pot (Hornby, 1978 : 81), “whare,” the word we cannot find in available dictionaries, but probably the same word as “ware” which means a store house, “Dang”—the old and euphemistic swearing word for “damn” (**Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language**, 2001 : 505), and “buck” which may be an old word for stylish young man (**Cambridge International Dictionary of English**, 1995 : 171), used here in the expression “my buck,” probably as an equivalent of “my friend.”

2. Ornaments

In literary works, writers tend to enhance their texts with ornaments which include modifiers, imagery, detailed description, etc., which help to create effects. Yet, they produce textual complexity. Inexperienced readers can easily be trapped in

linguistic and literary labyrinths and fail to get the gist of the texts. To facilitate their reading process, some of the embellishments are deleted in the retold version.

2.1 Modifiers

The retold text has fewer descriptive phrases that vividify the depiction. The first example is from “The Woman at the Store.”

A thin line of blue smoke stood up **straight** from the chimney **of the whare;(552)**

Smoke rose from the chimney,.... (65)

The author describes the atmosphere at the store in detail, indicating the look of the smoke which goes up “straight” in ‘a thin line,’ and that the chimney is part of “the whare.” But as the details are not very significant, they are all erased from the text to make it succinct.

Another example is the deletion of all modifiers of a door in “The Garden Party.”

The house was alive with soft, quick steps and running voices. The **green baize** door that led to the kitchen regions swung open and shut **with a muffled thud.** (249)

The house was alive with sounds of running feet and distant voices. Somewhere down in the kitchen, a door opened and closed. (19)

Even though “green baize” makes the text vivid, it is deleted in the adapted version together with the sound of the closed door made audible in the word “a muffled thud.” The reason of eliminating the words “baize,” “muffled,” and “thud” is that they are beyond the intended readers’ repertory.

2.2 Imagery

As this short story writer is a master of imagery, her figurative language creates sensory effects: kinetic, auditory, visual, olfactory, and tactile. To understand this kind of language requires readers' interpretive ability. Thus, when the context already establishes sufficient meaning, figurative language is deleted in the adapted text.

Below is a description with an awesome image functioning as an omen for Laura's encounter with death after the garden party. The image is deleted in the retold version.

It was just growing dusky as Laura shut their garden gates. **A big dog ran by like a shadow.** The road gleamed white and down below in the hollow the little cottages were in deep shade. How quiet it seemed after the excitement of the afternoon. (258–259)

It was beginning to get dark as Laura shut their garden gate. Below her, the road shone white. The little cottages were in deep shadow. How quiet it seemed after the excitement of the day. (30)

In the original version, the image of “A big dog ran by” supported by the simile “like a shadow” creates a gloomy atmosphere as Laura is approaching a threatening life experience. The picture of a big dog moving quickly like a shadow depicts a fearful, mysterious, and ghostlike figure in the readers' minds. This image which can evoke emotional responses is not included in the retold version.

Another example is from “The Little Governess.”

A woman **in a black alpaca apron pushed a barrow with pillows** for hire. **Dreamy and vacant she looked—like a woman wheeling a perambulator—up and down, up and down—with a sleeping baby inside it.** (177)

...a woman offered blankets for hire. (46)

In the original version, the details of the clothes, action and mood of the woman who offers pillows for rent are given along with a long simile “like a woman wheeling a perambulator—up and down, up and down—with a sleeping baby inside it.” This suggests the protagonist’s romantic and rather childish view towards the world. The visual and kinetic images create warmth and safety which are illusive and ironically contrast to what the little governess will really face later in the story. In the adapted version, the reteller removes such illustrative details, leaving the readers only its literal core part.

2.3 Detailed Description

Portrayals of characters’ appearance and behaviors can make the texts clear and vivid and suggest the characters’ attitudes, moods, etc. In adaptation, some of these are deleted when they are not crucial or if the surrounding information is sufficient. An example is in “The Woman at the Store.”

Jim rode beside me, white as a clown; **his black eyes glittered** and he kept shooting out his tongue and moistening his lips. **He was dressed in a Jaeger vest and a pair of blue duck trousers, fastened round the waist with a plaited leather belt.** (551)

Jim rode beside me, white-faced. He kept licking his dry lips.
(64)

The deleted sentence below depicts Laura’s physical response implying frustration after her mother refuses to cancel the party in “The Garden Party.” It gives a realistic picture of what a child would do in such a situation.

Laura had to say “yes” to that, but she felt it was all wrong. **She sat down on her mother’s sofa and pinched the cushion frill.**

“Mother, isn’t it terribly heartless of us?” she asked. (255)

Laura had to agree, but she felt it was all wrong.

‘Mother, isn’t it really terribly heartless of us?’ she asked. (25)

The picture of a setting also helps amplify the characters’ circumstance. However, the details below from “The Woman at the Store” are discarded because they include many specific words unfamiliar to the intended readers.

We walked together up the garden path. **It was planted on both sides with cabbages. They smelled like stale dish-water. Of flowers there were double poppies and sweet-williams. One little patch was divided off by pawa shells—presumably it belonged to the child—for she ran from her mother and began to grub in it with a broken clothes-peg.** The yellow dog lay across the doorstep, **biting fleas**; the woman kicked him away. (553)

We went up the garden path. The yellow dog lay across the door, and she kicked it out of the way. (67)

The woman at the store’s isolated life is presented though a description of her garden with specific images of smelly vegetable—“cabbages” along the path, flowers—“double poppies,” and “sweet williams” as well as “pawa shells.” The dog “biting fleas” adds a lively note to the scene as a whole. Although all these details are striking, they are considered unnecessary and deleted.

2.4 Conversation

Conversation helps to tell stories. Yet, it can overwhelm less advanced readers when presented in a long stretch of details without breaking into paragraphs, as commonly done for conversations. In the adapted texts, details are eliminated and the conversations are presented in a more understandable form we are familiar with.

An example is the following conversation between the little governess and the old man in “The Little Governess.”

“Oh, no, this is the first time”—a little pause, then—“this is the first time that I have ever been abroad at all.” “Really! I am surprised. You gave me the impression, if I may say so, that you were accustomed to travelling.”
“Oh, well—I have been about a good deal in England, and to Scotland, once.” “So. I myself have been in England once, but I could not learn English.” He raised one hand and shook his head, laughing. “No, it was too difficult for me.... ‘Ow-do-you-do. Please vich is ze vay to Leicestaire Squaare.’ ” She laughed too. “Foreigners always say...” They had quite a little talk about it. “But you will like Munich,” said the old man. (180–181)

‘Oh, no, this is the first time I have ever been abroad at all.’

‘Really! I am surprised. I had the feeling you had travelled a great deal before. Well, you will like Munich,’ said the old man.’(48)

The talk in the original version shows the gradual ice breaking between the old man and the little governess. In order to make it easy to follow, it is reduced, especially the part in which the old man’s making fun of his own English speaking with a German accent. It can be humorous if readers are familiar with the pronunciation mistakes. For the adapted version readers, however, it can be confusing and thus deleted.

2.5 Fillers, Interjections, and Punctuation Marks

Authentic records of conversation is abound with fillers, interjections, punctuation marks to indicate hesitation, pauses, false starts etc., and this is what we find in Mansfield’s works in which conversations seem very natural. These elements are often deleted in the adapted book. The first example is from “The Garden Party.”

“Oh—**er**—have you come—is it about the marquee?” (246)

‘Oh, have you come—is it about the marquee? (17)

Here, the use of the filler “er” and the dashes suggests Laura’s hesitation in conversing with people she doesn’t know. The reteller probably thinks one dash is enough to show her faltering, and deletes “—er—.”

The deletion of interjection can be seen in “The Little Governess” when the reteller omits “Alas!,” the narrator says when describing the old man’s possible thought about the pretty little governess’s vulnerability which is especially marked by her beautiful golden hair.

Alas! How tragic for a little governess to possess hair that made one think of tangerines and marigolds, of apricots and tortoiseshell cats and champagne! Perhaps that was what the old man was thinking as he gazed and gazed,....(180)

Her beautiful golden hair hung over her face. How sad to be a poor little governess and have such wonderful hair! Perhaps the kind old man was thinking that. (48)

Notice also that the author remarkably compares the various shades of the little governess’s hair, using a stretch of remarkable figurative language, “made one think of tangerines and marigolds, of apricots and tortoiseshell cats and champagne.” Besides, the old man is said to really admire her hair, “as he gazed and gazed.” All these words are, regrettably, omitted in the adapted version, diminishing the exquisite effects.

In “The Woman at the Store,” an interjection is deleted. An example is when “T” was shocked at the woman’s isolated life.

“**Good Lord**, what a life!” I thought. “Imagine being here day in, day out, with that rat of a child and a mangy dog. Imagine bothering about ironing. *Mad*, of course she’s mad! (554)

‘What a life!’ I thought. ‘Imagine living here all alone with that child and that dog. Mad? Of course she’s mad!’ (67)

The narrator’s interjection of shock, “Good Lord,” in the original version, is omitted in the retold version (probably because it is a swearing word), together with the expression “day in, day out” which emphasizes the horrid life of the protagonist.

Punctuation marks representing pauses during speech are also deleted as in the following example from “The Lady’s Maid.”

...and I couldn’t keep myself in, and I asked her if she’d rather I...didn’t get married. (379)

I couldn’t stop myself, and I asked her if she would rather I didn’t get married. (84)

Here, the dots which mark Ellen’s pause in her attempt to control her overwhelming emotion are deleted, to make it easy to follow. Unfortunately, the depth of feeling is lessened in the process.

3. “Ambiguous” Texts

Some of the short stories deal with certain adults’ matters such as sexuality, or struggle in a difficult situation. In the retold version, some of these parts are left ambiguous while others are deleted.

The first example of such deletions is the narrator’s dream during her journey to the remote store in “The Woman at the Store.”

I half felt asleep and had a sort of uneasy dream **that the horses were not moving forward at all—then that I was on a rocking-horse**, and my old mother **was scolding me for raising such a fearful dust from the drawing-room carpet**. “You’ve entirely worn off the pattern of the carpet,” I heard her saying, and she gave the reins a tug. I snivelled and woke to find Jim leaning over me, maliciously smiling.

“That was a case of all but,” said he. “I just caught you. What’s up? Been bye-bye?” No!” I raised my head. “Thank the Lord we’re arriving somewhere.” (551–552)

‘The heat’s making you crazy, said Jo. We rode on. I felt half asleep, and dreamed that I was back home with my mother. I woke up to find that we were arriving somewhere. (65)

The details of the dream in the expository scene from the original text hint at the topic of discussion in the story, human instincts including sexual desire and violence. The traveling of the three characters, Jo, Jim, and “I,” the narrator, suggests a mental journey into the mind of the woman at the store. The dream here can be analyzed based on Freud’s sexual interpretation already discussed in Chapter 2. But without the knowledge of this psychological interpretation, the message is lost. The reteller deletes this sophisticated component of the text, so what is left for the reader has no trace of sexual dream.

In “Pictures,” the author displays Miss Moss’s suffering during unemployment and her decision to become a prostitute for survival. Symbolic images are used to depict paralleling poor creatures’ struggles for living, foreshadowing Miss Moss’ last resort. Considering the inexperienced readers’ limited ability in decoding symbols, the reteller eliminates this as well.

But the person in the glass made a face at her, and Miss Moss went out. **There were grey crabs all the way down the street slopping water over grey stone steps. With his strange hawking cry and the jangle of the cans the milk-boy went his rounds. Outside Brittweiler’s**

Swiss House he made a splash, and an old brown cat without a tail appeared from nowhere, and began greedily and silently drinking up the spill. It gave Miss Moss a queer feeling to watch –sinking, as you might say.

But when she came to the ABC she found the door propped open;
....(122)

But the person in the mirror wouldn't smile at her, and Miss Moss went out.

When she came to the ABC café, the door was open. (36)

Dreadful movement of crabs on the wet stone steps and a hungry cat drinking spilt milk are deleted. This suggests living beings' miserable struggle for survival, including a lonely woman like Miss Moss. Again, the suggestive images of the original version are considered too complex and unnecessary for inexperienced readers.

Deletion, as seen in the foregoing discussion, helps to shorten the original text and eliminate lexical, idiomatic as well as figurative complexity and too subtle connotative images. What is left is the very essence of the texts. The question, however, is on the effectiveness of the retained artistic elements in the adapted version.

Substitution

Part of the difficulty of Mansfield's texts is vocabulary, non-standard or colloquial language as well as some syntactic patterns. Many times these problematic elements cannot be deleted without sacrificing intended meaning or effect. In some of these cases, substitution is a strategy the reteller uses to provide simpler and more familiar words or grammatical patterns.

1. Uncommon Terms and Expressions

With regard to vocabulary and expressions, the writer of the adapted book needs to simplify words not commonly used, cultural-specifics or references to unfamiliar objects, as well as colloquial and non-standard English. To replace these words, more common synonyms, or standard counterparts are used to replace them.

1.1 Words

As the headword number of this adapted book is limited at 1800, words beyond this list are substituted by simpler synonyms or definitions. Below are examples from “The Doll’s House.”

So they were the daughters of **a washerwoman and a gaolbird**. (386)

So they were the daughters of a woman who washed people’s clothes and a man who was in prison (9).

As the words “a washerwoman” and “a gaolbird” are unfamiliar to young readers, they are substituted by their definitions: “a woman who washed people’s clothes” and “a man who was in prison,” respectively.

In “Her First Ball,” there is a substitution of a rather informal word for a more common one.

“ ...But, my child, how too **weird**— ”cried the Sheridan girls.
(336)

‘...But how strange—’ cried the Sheridan girls. (56)

Some patterns of compound words, particularly adjective compounds are difficult to understand. In the adapted text, such compounds are substituted by two

individual words as in the description of the poor's condition of those living in the lane in "The Garden Party."

The very smoke coming out of their chimneys was **poverty-stricken**.
(254)

*Even the smoke coming from their chimneys looked **poor and mean**.* (24)

Notice that for the adapted book readers, the difficulty of the compound "poverty-stricken" is doubled: from the less familiar noun "poverty" and the adjective "stricken" as well as the new combination of the two words.

Belonging to a younger generation, EFL students can find Mansfield's works problematic because of the references to things almost a century ago. As a result, the reteller modernizes the texts by replacing unfamiliar objects by the more familiar counterparts. Below is such substitution for the sweet the Sheridans ordered for the garden party.

"Godber has come," announced Sadie, issuing out of the pantry. She had seen the man pass the window. That meant **the cream puffs** had come. Godber's were famous for their **cream puffs**. (252)

*'Godber's has come,' She meant that the man from Godber's shop had brought **the chocolate cakes**. Godber's **chocolate cakes** were famous.* (22)

"Cream puffs" are substituted by "chocolate cakes," a better-known type of dessert nowadays.

In "Feuille d' Album," the reteller replaces uncommon fruits with more familiar ones.

One evening he was sitting at the side window eating some **prunes** and throwing the stones on to the tops of the huge umbrellas in the deserted flower market. (163)

*One evening he was sitting at the side window eating an **apple** and looking down on to the tops of the huge umbrellas in the empty flower market. (3)*

The word “prunes” in the original version is considered less common and thus substituted by “an apple,” a more widely known fruit.

1.2 Colloquialism and Idiomatic Expressions

Colloquialism is another element difficult for inexperienced readers because it is informal and used only in conversation. As school English tends to be standard and formal English, spoken English is substituted by its more standard equivalent. The example below is from “The Woman at the Store.”

“**Right-o.**” I smiled at her. “Come down to the paddock and bring the kid for tea.” (555)

‘All right.’ I smiled at her. ‘Bring the kid down to the paddock and eat with us.’ (68)

“Right-o,” an equivalent of “OK,” is an informal interjection which shows that you agree with a suggestion that someone has made (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, 2003 : 1417). To make it completely clear, the reteller substitutes it by the commonly known “all right.”

It should be noted that language changes all the time. What was probably common and widely used in everyday conversation during Mansfield’s time may sound rather formal in present-day English. A good example is the use of “one” in “The Garden Party” below.

“Don’t [the puffs] carry **one** back to all **one**’s parties?” said Laura. (252)

*‘Don’t [the cakes] remind **you** of all the parties **we** had when **we** were children?’ said Laura. (22)*

The word “one” in this context is considered formal, meaning people in general (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, 2003 : 1148). This is why in the adapted text it is substituted by “you” and “we” which are less formal and in general use now.

Idiomatic expressions have special meanings “different from the ordinary meaning of each separate words” (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, 2003 : 805). They often occur in natural speech and can be a problem for inexperienced readers. In the text in focus, many of them, as illustrated below, come from phrasal verbs. The first example is from “Millie.”

As Sid said, if he wasn’t **strung up** where would they all be? (572)

*As Sid said, if they didn’t **hang** him, he could just go out and kill someone else. (73–74)*

The phrasal verb “strung up,” the past participle of “string up,” means “to kill someone by hanging” (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, 2003 : 1646). It is used to suggest how the boy who murdered Mr. Williamson should be punished. This phrase is substituted by the active form of a more common synonym, “hang.” Significantly, the passive pattern is changed to the active, which is easier to understand (see discussion in 2.1 of this chapter).

Another example of an idiom replaced by its one-word equivalent is in “The Woman at the Store.”

She stood, pleating the frills of her pinafore, and glancing from one to the other of us, like a hungry bird. I smiled at the thought of how Jim **had pulled Jo’s leg about her.** (552)

*She stood, looking from one to the other of us, like a hungry bird. I smiled to myself at the way the men **had joked about her.*** (65)

The idiom “pull somebody’s leg” means “to tell someone something that is not true, as a joke” (**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, 2003 : 1325). As the literal meaning of the idiomatic phrasal verb may mislead an inexperienced reader, it is substituted by a one-word verb, “joke,” which is non-idiomatic and a very common word.

Below is another rewriting of an idiomatic expression to make it more understandable in the same story.

“You **had** Jo about her looks—you **had** me too.” (556)

“You told us she was pretty,” I said. “That wasn’t exactly true!” (68)

The idiomatic expression “to have somebody” means to trick or deceive (Hornby, 1978 : 401). This is plainly restated like the previous example.

1.3 Non-Standard English

To make the characterization more realistic, authors use the real language spoken by the characters to suggest their social classes and regions. For example, the characters of lower classes speak non-standard English while those of higher classes tend to use standard English. Non-standard English often includes “ungrammatical” spelling and non-standard pronunciation. In adapting texts, the reteller, therefore, “corrects” the language both in grammar and spelling as follows.

“They were taking the body home *as I come up here.*” (253)

“They were taking the body home *as I was coming here.*”(23)

In the original version of “The Garden Party,” the clause “as I come up here” is ungrammatical because the present form “come” does not agree with the tense of the main clause, which is in the past. Here, the author makes it ungrammatical to suggest that the delivery man is from a lower class. In the adapted text, the verb is in the correct tense, past progressive.

In the same story, non-standard spelling is used to signal non-standard pronunciation of a lower-class character.

“I’ll **thenk** the young lady.” (260)

I’ll thank the young lady.’ (31)

The use of the letter “e” which sounds /e/ instead of “a” which sounds /æ/ indicates the speaker’s deviation from standard pronunciation. The unfamiliar form “think” can confuse readers of lower levels; therefore, the standard form, “thank,” is chosen.

1.4 Foreign Expressions

Similar to the use of non-standard English to enhance realistic characterization, foreign expressions make both characters and settings seem real. As many of Mansfield’s stories are set in Europe, relevant foreign words or phrases, French and German, can be found in her short stories. However, this can obstruct inexperienced readers’ understanding. This is why these foreign expressions are translated into English in the adapted texts. An example is the little governess’s appreciation of the strawberries from the old man in “The Little Governess.”

“Oh, thank you very much. *Danke bestens,*” she stammered, “*sie sind so sehr schön!*” (183)

‘Oh, thank you!’ she gasped. ‘**They look so delicious.**’(50)

The inserted German expressions “*Danke bestens*” meaning “Thank you very much,” and “*sie sind so sehr schön*” meaning “they look so delicious” help the conversation sound natural as the person she talks to is German and the setting is Germany. In the retold version, the first is deleted as it is redundant while the second is translated into English.

In the same story, French is also used to make it agree with the setting in France.

She opened her little purse to find something small enough to give this horrible man while he tossed her dress-basket into the rack of an empty carriage that had a ticket, *Dames Seules*, gummed on the window. (176)

She opened her little purse to find something small enough to give to this horrible man, while he threw the bag into an empty carriage. There was a ‘Ladies Only’ notice stuck to the window. (45)

The French phrase “*Dames Seules*” meaning “Ladies Only” is used to create verisimilitude. This is, again, translated into English.

In the last example of the same story, the foreign currency unit is simply substituted by the word “money.”

She looked out from her safe corner, frightened no longer but proud that she had not given that **franc**. (177)

She looked out from her safe corner of the carriage. She was not frightened any more, but proud that she had not given that man any money. (46)

“Franc” refers to the French currency. It is a cultural specific word used to make the story seem to really take place in France. To lessen the difficulty for readers with

limited vocabulary and cultural knowledge, it is replaced by the simple word “money.”

2. Complex Syntactic Patterns

Syntactically complex sentences are derived through numerous transformational rules. To understand them, we need to acquire adequate “language competence.” To facilitate readers with limited competence, a reteller uses sentences with fewer transformational rules in an adapted text. Often the reteller adds grammatical elements deleted by transformational rules in the original text, or rearranges the elements to form more basic sentence patterns. What is generally found in this adaptation includes the substitution of the passive voice by the active voice, and adjectival phrases by more basic clauses.

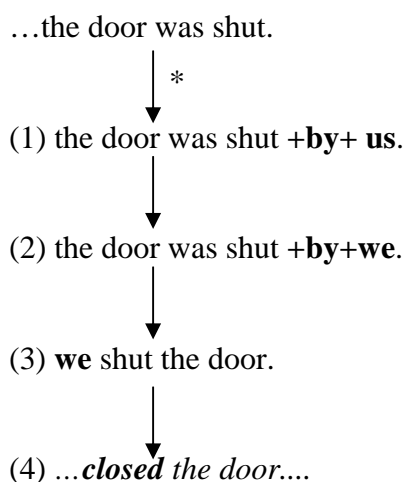
2.1 Passive Voice

The passive voice is a syntactic pattern derived from the application of NP-Movement to an active clause or the reverse order of the noun phrases, the addition of verb be+en and a by-phrase (which may be deleted) (Traugott and Pratt, 1980 : 406). To understand the passive, readers have to master these related transformational rules. What the reteller of an adapted text often does is substitute clauses in the passive by those in the active because the active counterparts are easier for readers of limited syntactic knowledge. The example below comes from “The Woman at the Store.”

The woman brought us a lamp. Jo took his bundle for Jim, the door was shut. (560)

We took a lamp and closed the door of the store. (71)

In the original version, the passive voice is chosen to describe the condition of the door. In the adapted version, the basic active clause structure substitutes it. To get this, the reteller probably goes back as follows.



Notice that besides supplying the subject of the act, in the rewriting the verb is changed from “shut” to “closed” also.

The following sketch hypothesizes the retelling of part of a sentence in “Her First Ball,” focusing on the involved transformations from the passive back to the active.

...and they were somehow lifted past the big golden lantern, carried along the passage, and pushed into the little room marked “Ladies.” (337)

↓

(1) and they were somehow lifted past the big golden lantern, carried along the passage, and pushed + **by** + **the crowd** + into the little room marked “Ladies.”

↓

(2) *and somehow **the crowd carried them** along and **pushed them** past the big golden lamp, along the passage and into the little room marked ‘Ladies.’(57)*

* “ ” marks the syntactic adaptation process.



In this adaptation, the past participle “lifted” is dropped to shorten the sentence while the verbs “carry” and “push”, originally past participles of the passive, become the active verbs (in the past form) of the clause. It should be noted that although “lifted” is deleted, the retold sentence is longer as the actor, “the crowd,” is added. This suggests that the passive is considered a complex transformation for inexperienced readers and is to be simplified even though this will result in a longer sentence. However, one passive form, “marked” is still kept, probably, considered a simple word.

2.2 Adjectival Phrases

When writers want to condense sentences, they can turn modifying clauses into phrases. In the adapted texts, adjectival phrases are usually replaced by clauses which are easier because they come from the application of fewer transformational rules as in the example from “The Woman at the Store.”

We ate until we were full, and had arrived at the smoke stage before **Jo came back, very flushed and jaunty, a whisky bottle in his hand.** (557)

We had finished before Jo arrived. He was very red-faced and cheerful and he had a whisky bottle in his hand. (69)

In the original text, the dependent clause “before Jo came back, very flushed and jaunty (an adjectival phrase), a whisky bottle in his hand” (an adjectival phrase) comes from three clauses in the deep structure which we may be hypothesized as follows:

- (1) Jo came back
- (2) Jo was very flushed and jaunty
- (3) Jo had a whisky bottle in his hand.

The three clauses in the deep structure with the same subject, “Jo,” are condensed by making (2) and (3) adjectival phrases. To derive (2), the subject (Jo) and the verb “was” are deleted. To get (3), the deletion includes the subject (Jo) and the verb “had.” Both phrases modify Jo. To derive the complex sentence as seen in the original, first, relativization is applied:

Jo **who** was very flushed and jaunty and **who** had a whisky bottle in his hand came back.

Then, the two clauses are transformed to adjectival phrases. This is done by deleting the relative pronoun “who” and the verb to be in the first clause; deleting the relative pronoun “who” and the verb “had” in the second.

In the adapted text, the simpler sentence is derived by going back to the clauses in the deep structure, using the pronoun “he” for “Jo,” replacing the more difficult words (“flushed and jaunty”) by easier ones (“red-faced and cheerful”), and adding the conjunction “and” to co-ordinate the last clause.

Sentences with very complex transformations need to be broken into simpler sentences. The replacement of a highly complicated structure by a simpler one can be found in the description of a café Miss Moss went to in “Pictures”:

But when she came into the ABC she found the door propped open; a man went in and out carrying trays of rolls, and there was nobody inside except a waitress doing her hair and the cashier unlocking the cash-boxes. (122)

When she came to the ABC café, the door was open. A man was carrying boxes of bread in, and two waitresses were combing their hair and talking. (36)

In the original text the sentence is long and complex, derived from many transformational rules. Below are hypothesized basic clauses in the deep structure.

- (1) She came into the ABC.
- (2) She found the door propped open.*
- (3) A man went in and out.
- (4) A man was carrying trays of rolls.
- (5) There was nobody inside.
- (6) A waitress was doing her hair.
- (7) The cashier was unlocking the cash-boxes.

To write a compact and simplified text, the following steps are used. First, (1) and (2) are connected through subordination with “when” as clause marker and (2) is simplified and becomes “the door was open.” Second, (3) and (4) are combined because they share the same subject, but (3) is almost all deleted, only ‘in’ is left to show necessary direction. Third, (5) and (7) are completely deleted, resulting in fewer details. Fourth, (6) is co-ordinated with the previous clause. At this point, the waitress is made plural and the idiomatic expression “doing her hair” is substituted by the non-idiomatic “combing their hair,” and one action, “talking” is added to the subject.

With the application of fewer and more basic transformational rules, the texts become less difficult with no adjectival phrase at all. It is noteworthy that in the process of simplifying syntactic elements, some ideas are kept while others are left out.

Lexical and syntactic substitution is an effective way to keep all the key meaning of the original text while making it more comprehensible for readers of limited reading ability. This strategy is used a lot in the adaptation.

* This clause is derived from three basic clauses:

- (a) She found the door.
- (b) The door was propped.
- (c) The door was open.

Interpretive Restatement

Modernist writers prefer their narration to be an objective report of incidents, offering details for readers to find the meaning for the story by themselves. However, this is rather difficult for untrained readers. To help them, the reteller often provides interpretive restatements which come as guiding generalizations or explicit statements of the implied points.

1. Generalization

Imagery makes a literary work vivid and extends readers' imagination. However, some details or images may lose their suggestiveness if readers are unable to interpret. In this case, they confuse readers rather than reinforce the meaning. In adapting texts, therefore, a focus is often selected to highlight the essential part of the text, then presented in a simpler form. To do this, the key concept of the text must be first identified by generalization of details. After that, a precise word or words of an appropriate level will be chosen. The following example from "The Garden Party" is a simplified description which suggests the poor condition of the low class people's area in "The Garden Party."

In the garden patches there was nothing but **cabbage stalks, sick hens, and tomato cans.** (254)

*Nothing but **rubbish** grew in the gardens.* (24)

The author gives specific details of the garden, "cabbage stalks," "sick hens," and "tomato cans." As they refer to stuff of little or no value, a generalized term, "rubbish," replaces them in the retold text. We may say that the author of the original text simply "shows" objectively and the reteller "interprets" the picture for the new audience.

The picture of the magnificent flowers on the way to Germany that the protagonist sees in “The Little Governess” is restated through similar generalization of details.

Look! Look what flowers—and by the railway station too! **Standard roses like bridesmaid’s bouquets, white geraniums, waxy pink ones** that you would never see **out of a greenhouse** at home. (182)

*Look! What lovely flowers—and at the railway station, too! **Colours** you would never see at home. (49)*

Instead of sensing the marvel of roses and geraniums vividly depicted with their specific colours and quality, readers of the retold book only get the one selected impression of the scene, colours.

Another example of the selected key concept in the same story is in the dialogue about Augsburg between the little governess and the old man.

“I’m not going to stay in Munich,” said the little governess, and she added shyly, “I am going to a post as a governess to a doctor’s family in Augsburg,” “Ah, that was it.” Augsburg he knew. **Augsburg—well—was not beautiful. A solid manufacturing town. But if Germany was new to her he hoped she would find something interesting there, too.** (181)

*‘I’m not going to stay in Munich,’ said the little governess shyly.
‘I am going to be governess to a doctor’s family in Augsburg.
Ah, he knows Augsburg. **A fine city, too.** (48)*

In the original version, Augsburg’s physical features are mentioned: its look (“not beautiful”), major trade and other comments (“A solid manufacturing town... something interesting there, too”). In the adapted version, all these details are concluded in one adjective, “fine.”

Generalization helps the readers get access to the text more quickly because the key ideas are made more succinct. Yet, images are much more reduced. Besides, the adapted text invites less participation from the readers.

2. Explicit Restatements

A text with implicit meaning is often restated straightforwardly in a retold version. An example of the reteller's interpretation is in Leila's description of the location of her house to the Sheridan girls in "Her First Ball."

"Have you really never been to a ball before, Leila? But, my child, how too weird—" cried the Sheridan girls.

"**Our nearest neighbour was fifteen miles,**" said Leila softly, gently opening and shutting her fan. (336)

"Have you really never been to a ball before, Leila? But how strange –" cried the Sheridan girl.

'We lived so far from anyone else,' Leila said softly. 'In the country we had no near neighbour.' (56)

In the adapted text, besides the unambiguous statement about Leila's isolation, an explanation is added ("In the country we had no near neighbour.").

In "Pictures," the landlady's threat is interpreted and rewritten very clearly.

"Well, Miss Moss, if I don't get my rent at eight o'clock to-night, **we'll see who's a bad, wicked woman—that's all.**" Here she nodded mysteriously...."(121)

'Well, Miss Moss,' said the landlady, 'if I don't get my money by eight o'clock tonight, you can get out of my house, my lady.' (36)

In the original version, it is not directly specified what kind of menace it is if the rent is not paid, nor “who’s a bad, wicked woman,” or how this relates to the point they are talking about. The reteller goes beyond the text by stating explicitly what Miss Moss’ fate is – getting out of the house.

Not only dialogues, but descriptions of characters’ non-verbal expressions are clearly explained. In “The Lady’s Maid,” the lady’s action is interpreted for the intended readers.

But while she said it, madam—I was looking in her glass: of course, she didn’t know I could see her—she put her little hand on her heart just like her dear mother used to and **lifted her eyes**....Oh! madam! (379-380)

*But while she said it, madam, I was looking in her mirror. Of course, she didn’t know I could see her – she put her little hand on her heart just like her dear mother used to, and **she looked so sad**...Oh, madam! (84)*

In the original version, when the lady learns that Ellen is leaving, part of her expression of sadness is “lifting her eyes.” This non-verbal expression may not be enough for inexperienced readers. Therefore, the reteller puts it straightforwardly as “she looked so sad.”

Another implied description plainly rewritten is the discussion on how the women gave up introducing Ian French to Paris life in “Feuille d’ Album.”

When one is an artist one has no time simply for people who won’t respond. Has one? (162)

We are all busy people, and why should we spend our valuable time on someone who refuses to be helped? (2)

In the adapted version, the idea of wasting time is kept while the linkage with art is omitted. Thus, the phrase “an artist” is interpreted as “busy people” and their refusal to waste time is directly stated.

In the same story, a sarcastic note in the description of drinks served in nightclubs is dropped, and the rewriting is explicit.

So off they went to cafés and cabarets, little dances, places where **you drank something that tasted like tinned apricot juice, but cost twenty-seven shillings a bottle and was called champagne**, other places, too thrilling for words, where you sat in the most awful gloom, and where someone had always been shot the night before. (162)

*She took him to cafés and night-clubs, dark places where **the drinks cost too much** and there were always stories of shooting the night before. (2)*

The narrator of the original text sarcastically comments on the quality and the price of champagne, comparing it to “something that tasted like tinned apricot juice, but cost twenty-seven shillings a bottle and was called champagne.” The retold version is much shorter and simpler, with no hint of sarcasm.

In “The Garden Party,” the flowery language the author uses to describe a light-hearted young lady who moves around instead of getting dressed is very briefly restated with no imagery.

Jose, **the butterfly, always came down in a silk petticoat and a kimono jacket.** (246)

*Jose, as usual, **wasn't even dressed yet.*** (16)

The metaphor “the butterfly” supported by its description “a silk petticoat and a kimono jacket” suggests Jose’s incomplete dressing as “a petticoat” is a woman’s underwear worn under a dress and “a kimono jacket” refers to a robe. Being cultural-specific, a kimono, which can make the wearer look like a butterfly, is probably

considered beyond inexperienced readers' comprehension and is dropped together with the metaphor "the butterfly." This certainly reduces the hints at Jose's character as well as the intended joyful atmosphere of the story.

Likewise, in "The Doll's House," all the descriptive details of the girls' eager manners, the school routine, etc. are mostly removed and briefly rewritten to present only the bare necessary information.

But hurry as they might, by the time they had reached the tarred palings of the boys' playground the bell had begun to jangle. They only just had time to whip off their hats and fall into line before the roll was called. Never mind. Isabel **tried to make up for it** by looking very important and mysterious and by whispering **behind her hand** to the girls near her, "Got something to tell you at playtime." (385)

It was too bad that they arrived at school just as the bell was ringing, and they had no time to talk to anyone. Never mind! Isabel looked very important and mysterious, and whispered to some of her friends, 'I've got something to tell you at play-time!' (8-9)

When meaning of the texts goes beyond the words suggest, the readers who understand only literal meaning can miss the point. In such a case, the reteller presents the implied meaning plainly, often, sacrificing details which can be enjoyed only by advanced readers.

Interpretive restatement is the strategy that prevents the readers from losing the key points of the texts. However, it lessens readers' opportunity to decode unclear elements by themselves. Besides, even with a very careful retold text, the original emotional intensity is affected.

Simplifying Figurative Language

Figurative language creates vividness by evoking the readers' senses. However, the full appreciation of such language comes with practice. The writer of

the adapted texts, therefore, simplifies figurative language by making it literal or providing simpler forms of figurative language.

1. Literal Restatement

The subtlety of figurative language gives readers the intended effect of the writer's artistic craft. This is often less felt in retold works. In the adapted text of "The Little Governess," the personification of the train together with its happy feeling is dropped.

The train **seemed glad to have left the station with a long leap into dark.** (179)

The train left the station and rushed into the dark. (47)

Originally, the train is personified to signify the little governess' excitement about her first journey abroad. This inanimate object is described as a human who "seemed glad to have left the station with a long leap into the dark." In the simplified version, the train is presented plainly as "left the station and rushed into the dark," suggesting neither mood nor human action.

Also, the onomatopoeia for the hammer sound made by workers on their preparation for the party in "The Garden Party" are dropped in the retold text.

And now there came the **chock-chock** of wooden hammers. (248)

And now there came the sound of hammers (18).

The onomatopoeia, "chock chock," gives readers a vivid scene. However, onomatopoeia differs among languages, and is not readily understood by foreigners. The reteller, as a result, replaces it by a plain word, "sound."

In "Her First Ball," the simile which pictures Laura's dressing is made literal as follows.

But every single thing was so new and exciting...Meg's tuberose, Jose's long loop of amber, Laura's little dark head, **pushing above her white fur like a flower through snow.** (336)

*But everything was so new and exciting. Meg's roses, Jose's necklace, **Laura's dark head above her white dress**—she would remember these things for ever.* (56)

In the original version, Laura's head above her white fur is compared with "a flower through snow." In the adapted version, the simile is omitted.

Another image is replaced by literal words in the same story when Leila's dancing partner suddenly emerges.

Almost immediately the band started and her second partner seemed to **spring from the ceiling.** (341)

*The band began to play again, and her second partner seemed to **appear from nowhere.*** (61)

The original hyperbole "spring from the ceiling" is changed to a less dramatic description "appear from nowhere."

In "Feuille d' Album," a metaphor characterizing Ian French is made literal for the new audience.

"...Why come to Paris if you **want to be a daisy in the field?** No, I'm not suspicious. But—." (162)

*'... Why come to Paris if you **don't intend to have any fun?**'* (2)

The metaphorical expression "want to be a daisy in the field" suggests an innocent person from the countryside who knows nothing about the worldly matters. The reteller, however, makes it direct: "don't intend to have any fun."

The last example for this is the literalized simile used to describe Jim in “The Woman at the Store.”

Jim rode beside me, **white as a clown**;(551)

*Jim rode beside me, **white-faced**. (64)*

2. Simpler Forms of Figurative Language

When figurative language seems complex, its difficulty may be reduced, using its simpler form. The example below is the figurative depiction of the movement of the wind and the light at the Sheridan house during the preparation for the party in “The Garden Party.”

Little faint winds were playing chess, in at the top of the windows, out at the door. And there were **two tiny spots of sun, one on the ink pot, one on a silver photograph frame, playing too**. (249)

*Somewhere down in the kitchen, a door opened and closed. **Sunlight and little warm winds, playing in and out of the windows**. (19)*

The winds at the Sheridan’s are personified as playing chess in their flowing through the house. At the same time, the personified sunlight is playing with them, probably in another direction. When retold, the personifications are simplified and much reduced as “playing in and out.”

Likewise, in “Millie,” the simile which gives an image of Millie’s husband and his friends setting off to hunt the criminal boy is made simpler.

In the distance along the dusty road **she could see the horses, like brown spots dancing up and down, and when she looked away from them and over the burnt paddocks she could see them still—just before her eyes, jumping like mosquitoes**. (571)

In the distance along the dusty road she could see the horses, like brown flies jumping up and down. (73)

In the original version, horse riders are portrayed in two steps, first compared to “dancing brown spots”, then “jumping mosquitoes.” In the adapted text, there is only one simile, comparing them to “jumping brown flies.”

It should be noted that some forms of figurative language are more difficult than others. For example, the metaphor is more complex than the simile. In simplifying texts for an audience with less literary experience, a simile, a simpler figurative form, is used instead of a metaphor as in the depiction of the declining afternoon in “The Garden Party.”

And the perfect afternoon **slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed.** (257)

And the perfect afternoon slowly opened, slowly turned to the sun, and slowly closed like a flower. (28)

The author metaphorically compares the slow ending of the day to a flower closing its petals. The verbs for the flower which include “slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed” beautifully show the approaching end of the afternoon, Laura’s blissful time. To avoid the inexperienced readers’ failure in relating the images with the intended meaning, in the adapted text, the phrase “like a flower” is added, making the metaphor a simile, a simpler form of comparison, while “ripened” and “faded” are substituted by “opened” and “turned to the sun” respectively.

In “The Doll’s House,” the metaphor of Else’s look is also made a simile as follows.

And her little sister, Our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of the 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.** (386)

*And her little sister, 'our Else,' as Lil always called her, wore a long white dress that looked like a night-dress, and a pair of boy's boots. But our Else would have looked strange in any clothes. **She was a tiny white creature with huge eyes—just like a little bird.** (10)*

The original metaphor for Else, “a little white owl” is changed to a simile “just like a little bird.” It should be noted that the metaphor “wishbone” which is a very specific term referring to a fork-like bone of a bird, suggesting a lanky person, is dropped while “owl,” a specific bird, is substituted by a general term “bird.”

The author’s touching figurative language gives ‘life’ to her selected works as through such component the readers’ moods are effectively moved. However, the degree of its subtlety needs to be decreased for those who are not familiar with decoding.

As a whole, the adaptation does not change the overall concepts of the nine short stories. The themes, the plot, as well as all other literary devices, remain very much the same. The discernable revisions relate to the reduction of the text length and the simplifying of all elements that may obstruct the new readers’ comprehension. Unfamiliar words and expressions—old, cultural-specific, idiomatic, colloquial or foreign—are all changed or deleted. Complex syntactic patterns, implicit statements, or ambiguous texts as well as figurative language are, likewise, simplified or clarified. The adapting strategies, consequently, help to convey Katherine Mansfield’s messages in a more approachable form. However, some original literary effects may be resulted, and this is the subject of the following chapter.