

# Acculturation in Performing Shakespeare on Saudi Stage

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## Abstract

Shakespeare is among those theatrical icons highly celebrated in the Arab world. The aim in this paper is to investigate acculturation strategies commenced by theatre amateurs in performing Shakespeare's plays in Saudi Arabia. Major to the acculturation process is Hakim's argument to eradicate Arabic versions from supernatural elements rejected in the Islamic Arabic culture. Among references quoted in this study are John W. Berry's acculturation steps and Robert Barton's three I's of investigation, inference and invention. This study follows the descriptive analytical method and relies on interviews and focus groups to trace those strategies endeavored in local adaptations of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Figures demonstrate not only the different sectors in Saudi amateur theatre, but also their strategies in acculturation for the aim of staging to different audiences. One of the most important figures is the module recommended in the conclusion to facilitate the tasks of directors in performing Shakespeare and Classics to non-English audiences.

**Keywords:** acculturation, adaptation, integration, Saudi Stage, Shakespeare

## 1. Introduction

Shakespeare has been an area of interest in the Arab World since the final decades in the nineteenth century. Shakespeare's plays have been first introduced to Arab Stage through French translations. By reading those translated texts, Arab intelligentsia select those plays which glorify heroism, virtue, honor and morals. They incorporate specific strategies aiming "to delight the audience" when they "sum up scenes, change their sequence, delete several characters and, sometimes, modify the tragic end." Their attempts are mere steps into acculturation (Moussa, 2009, pp. 81–82).

Such interest in Shakespeare theatre has begun years ago in the academic and cultural sectors in Saudi Arabia. *The Merchant of Venice* (1599) has been first staged in Jeddah Women's College of Education in 2005 through a translation of the Shakespearean comedy ventured by female undergraduates who read the Source Text in English. Later, in 2012, SASCA, Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts, a government subsidized department of theatre and drama, set a competition in Riyadh, the capital city, to rewrite Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602). The competition draws attention to the Shakespearean tragedy through an Arabic translation, *Hamlet's Tragedy* [Ma'sat Hamlet] by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1960). Among the four adaptations selected for stage-production, *The Final Act* has been nominated for the public festival held in 27<sup>th</sup> March celebrating World Theatre Day. *Macbeth* (1606) has been staged in Dar El-Fikr girls' private school in the end-of-year Theatre Day, 2015. The performance was directed by English language Teacher and the actors were 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who performed the play in English. *Macbeth* is also staged by senior undergraduates in the Department of European Languages and Literature in an Arabic Version entitled *El Sheikh*, 2019. In the Academic female sector, audiences are always females with different cultural backgrounds.

## 2. Review of Literature

Maroon al Naquash (1817–1855) is the first to introduce theatrical arts to the Arab world. Through his adaptations, he relies on themes and structures popular in the Western theatre. Al Naquash gives much consideration not only to types of his audience, their inclinations and traditions, but also to ethics cherished in those plays. He tends to the social and moral issues in those performances. He seeks to "underline principles within the entertaining stage arts". To al Naquash, comedy addresses "the wise and the ignorant" and conveys moral lessons by "revealing flaws" (Al Iss, 1999, p. 153).

To some Arab scholars, translating Shakespeare's masterpiece is among the significant contribution to Arab

theatre. Sameh Fikry Hanna focuses on the translation of Shakespeare and argues that through translation, the text becomes “a product of a complex set of paths intersecting the social, cultural, political, aesthetic, personal and the institutional.” Hanna argues two types of translation contended in Egypt. Tanios Abdo (1869–1926) who proceeds to present his translated product on stage giving little attention, to the dramatic structure and theme in the Shakespearean *Hamlet*. And Khalil Matran (1872–1949) abides by the Source Text in translating *Hamlet* for Arab readers. (<http://www.diwanalarab.com/spip.php?article3788>).

In “Theatrical Translation ... an Urgent Need ... and a Reality Spinning out of the Troop”, Amina Abbas discusses Syrian translations of theatre classics. She pinpoints the staging factor in those Arabic translations where tactful and implicative equivalences are imperative. And thus, the translated staged product is acceptable when proceeded by a specialist in theatre arts. Usually directors tend to some modification in the translated version to capture the Syrian theatregoers.

To incorporate contemporary style, translators may drift away from former rhetoric style tending to communicate thematic argument contained in the Source Play Text. The selection of those theatrical texts for readers and audiences undertake to satisfy cultural, intellectual, political and social needs in the Target society. By doing so, such theatre translations bring close the thought and culture in other nations and states. And thus, directors are always encouraged to set local theatrical adaptations of Classics. (<http://languages.forumactif.org/t938-topic>).

Binabd Elali argues that “translating a text would enliven it to current readers” (Binabd Elali, pp. 51–53). Tawfiq al Hakim (1898–1987), the Egyptian prominent writer, refashions *Oedipus* in the Arabic language declaring that he has to “sum up in the Target Text what happened to Oedipus before his tragedy starts. Al Hakim tends to eradicate the Arabic text from those mythical beliefs rejected in Arabic and Islamic culture. Perceiving the moral along with the cultural enables both the playwright and the director to rewrite new versions in different languages to different audiences (<http://languages.forumactif.org/t938-topic>).

In “Adaptation in Arabic Theatre: Theatrical Acculturation among Arabic Theatre and Western Theatre”, Mansoor Amayrah argues the cultural exchange in theatre among Arabs and the West. He believes that acculturation is an all-inclusive process of not only adaptation and translation but also comparative Literature and the mutual exchange. To him, theatrical adaptation challenges the question of identity in both the text and the dramatic personae. Those adaptations maintain those western features in characters and incidents celebrating the western background. Structuring the adaptation is the role of the director who seeks knowledge through cultural communication aiming at acculturation. (<http://aswat-elchamal.com/ar/?p=98&a=34368>).

Through translations and written as well as staged adaptations, the presence of Shakespeare is marked continual in the Arab World. Mohammed Walad Mohammed Salim ascribes Shakespeare’s long-lasting presence in the Arab culture to the playwright’s discernment in revealing not only the human soul but also motifs in the conduct which help people recognize their inner conflict. Salim comments on the multitude translations commenced by Arab scholars and writers and the modifications undertaken. Shakespeare’s impact in the Arab academic field is noteworthy in universities, institutes, schools and courses in English. (<http://www.alkhaleej.ae/alkhaleej/page/bc6cb930-e49a-42b6-bbe6-0fe877ff0f82>).

### 3. Aim of the Study

The aim in this paper is to investigate acculturation strategies commenced in staging three Shakespearean plays to different audiences in Saudi Arabia. I contend to answer the question “How would theatre amateurs transfer Shakespeare’s texts, comedy or tragedy, to accommodate with perceptibility in different audiences in Saudi Arabia?” Audiences, in different regions in Saudi Arabia, belong to different intellectual backgrounds. Some of them have read Shakespeare’s plays in English, others have read Shakespeare’s plays translated into Arabic and the third group have never heard of Shakespeare.

### 4. Methodology

By referring to acculturation strategies argued by John W. Berry (1939), I tend to explore acculturation steps commenced by educators and casting directors in staging Shakespearean plays in Saudi Arabia. I also tend to use interviews and focus groups with those theatre amateurs involved in writing and staging the adaptation of Shakespeare. They both aim to trace those steps incorporated in the light of Robert Barton’s three I’s of investigation, inference and invention in his *Acting: Onstage and Off*. (Barton, 2012, p. 216). The descriptive analytical method helps explore acculturation strategies employed to familiarize local audiences with Classical theatre. Figures illustrate discrepancies and affinities among the sectors and their procedures.

Adaptations in this paper are based on Shakespeare’s English Source Texts in *The Merchant of Venice* and

*Macbeth* and on the Arabic translation of *Hamlet* in *Hamlet Tragedy* [Ma'sat Hamlet]. Saudi adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth* commenced in the academic field will be examined first. Then, adaptation of the translated *Hamlet* ensues. Shakespeare's Source Text is abbreviated whenever *The Merchant of Venice* is quoted.

Quotes from Arabic resources used in review of literature, online or in books are my own translation aiming at underlining the Arabic accomplishment in this regard.

**5. Performing Shakespeare in Saudi Arabia**

The following diagrams demonstrate the fields where Shakespeare's plays are staged in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to trace acculturation strategies employed.



Figure 1. Academic and cultural places staging Shakespeare's Plays

Adaptations of Shakespearean plays give considerable attention to the audience and their competency in English. In a college with departments of Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, Geography and History, educators, casting directors and directors set adaptations in Arabic.



Figure 2. Staging Shakespeare in the academic sector

Theatre Day in Women's College is an opportunity for educators in the Department of English to enact acculturation in selecting the Shakespearean play which will be performed in Arabic on College stage.

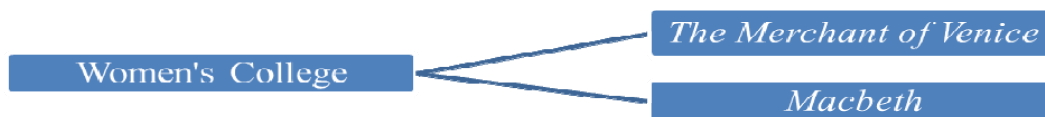


Figure 3. Plays selected for stage in women's college

In Dar El Fikr School, Girls' Section, educators select *Macbeth* for an English performance to enhance the students' learning and leadership skills through an English performance in School Theatre Day.



Figure 4. *Macbeth* is the play selected in Female private school

In World Theatre Day, an adaptation of *Hamlet*, based on Jabra's Arabic translation, is performed in Classical Arabic to male and female audiences in Riyadh.



Figure 5. Staging Shakespeare in Cultural Sector

**6. Acculturation**

Acculturation is a well-known term in Arabic. It is defined in *Al Mawrid*, Arabic Lexicon, as “the concept of modification undertaken in the culture of the individual or the community subsequent to the interaction with another foreign culture. (<http://aswat-elchamal.com/ar/?p=98&a=34368>). Dictionary.com denotes acculturation as it is “the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group.” Merriam-Webster indicates that it is the “cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture.” In the light of these Arabic and Western definitions, I propose that the different courses in Drama and Shakespeare in Department of English and Department of European Languages in Saudi Universities and schools are academic endeavors towards exposure to renown theatrical traits in World Classics.

The process of acculturation starts with the selection of a Shakespearean Text that satisfy the audience in the academic sector and the culture centres. The selection of plays for performance in college and school is undertaken by educators who are competent in speaking and teaching English. When students acquire “skills in English and grow bilingual and bicultural,” they are not only “able to speak two languages” but they also accept diversity in culture. ([kau.deepknowledge.io](http://kau.deepknowledge.io)).

Among the several plays taught in the curriculum, the role of the educator is central. She is the one who mentors the selection of the play to perform to college audience. Whether tragedy or comedy, the play selected recommends an awareness of social and intellectual change sought in life today. Performance is presented in the local Arabic dialect. In the Culture Centre where the performance of *Hamlet* is proceeded in Classical Arabic, it is the director who selects the Arabic translation of the Shakespearean play. By attentive reading of the translation, theatre amateurs formulate an adaptation in accordance with youth aspiration.

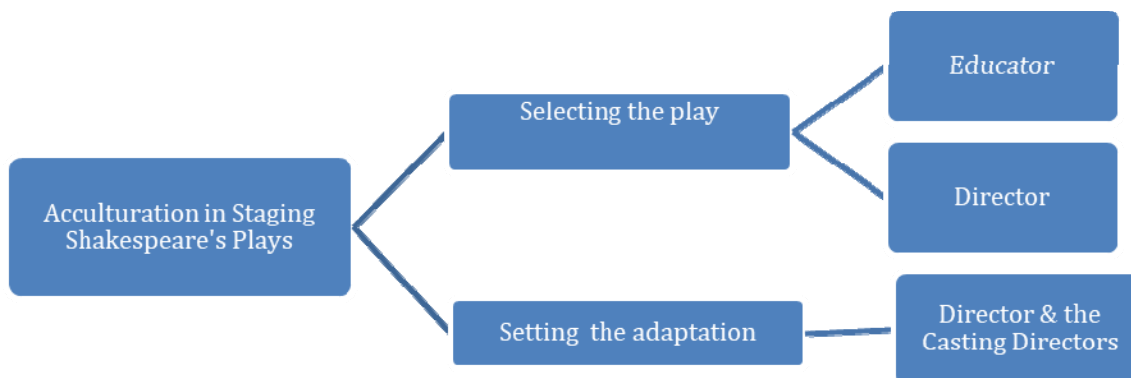


Figure 6. Steps of acculturation in performing Shakespeare

Interviews are piloted with those theatre amateurs in SASCA and the private school to trace the approach of acculturation employed. Major to their interest in setting the adaptation is visualizing the audience and their intellectual and social background to help the performance be a memorable theatrical experience. Interviews show that those amateurs proceed through investigation, Barton’s first I, to search for and check the available versions, reviews and references. The selection of the Shakespearean text leads into the stage of assimilation suggested by John W. Berry in his acculturation model. The assimilation of Shakespearean dramatic elements in the ST help directors proceed into inference, Barton’s second I.

Focus group sessions are mentored by directors to define topical issues, dramatic personae, plot along with climax and resolution in the newly refashioned adaptation. Through focus groups, amateurs seek to reach the stage of integration proposed by Berry in his strategies of acculturation. Integration, in theatre acculturation is described by Sirkku Aaltonen. as “the process which is employed to tone down the Foreign by appropriating the unfamiliar

‘reality’ and making the integration possible by blurring the borderline between the familiar and the unfamiliar.” (Aaltonen, 2000, p. 55)

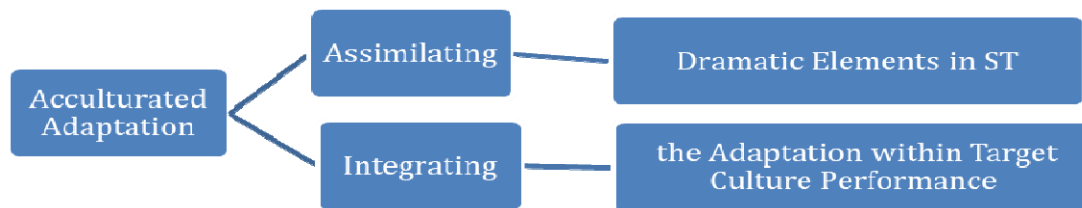


Figure 7. Strategies of acculturation in theatre

To Integrate the Shakespearean adaption into the target culture, directors proceed into Barton’s three strategies of investigation, inference and Invention.”



Figure 8. Integration in the theatrical performance through Barton’s strategies

## 7. Investigation

In their first step in the process of integration, directors pursue their investigation of those “facts provided in the text” undertaking the “research into an expression of the author’s meaning, and the motives, thoughts and emotions of his characters.” Therefore, A good grasp of theme and characterization is major in setting the stage performance. (Krebs, 2007, p. 41).

However, searching for meaning in the Shakespearean text is a step into the investigation stage leading to further research in how Arab translators and directors perceive those texts. Reading the widely spread formerly formulated visions and impressions of Shakespeare in the Arab World facilitates featuring new versions of Shakespeare’s drama. Hafnawi Ba’ali recounts that Shakespeare has already been warmly welcomed in the Arab World when translators investigated Shakespearean criticism paying considerable attention to his era. His cultural and social background have never been absent from translators who studied Shakespeare’s linguistic structures along with denotation and connotation of his words to comprehend the Shakespearean milieu. (Ba’ali, 2013, p. 196).

Investigating Shakespeare’s “scenic, visual and sensory aspects” is preparatory to writing the adaptation especially when “costume” is recounted, “like blood,” to have “massive visual impact.” (Cooper, 2015, p. IX). Substantial attention should be also given to verbal impact in the poetic images, connotations and innuendoes in characters’ verbal exchanges. In *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, Portia, the female inheritor, and her interactions, words and attitudes in life are focal. Probing in her retrospective statements on life and relations is substantial to Arab viewers who highly consider the deceased father’s patronage. Seeking to hold the audience’ attention, female undergraduates in Department of English Language tend to investigate means to demonstrate those themes concerning young woman.

In writing *El Sheikh*, the Arabic adaptation of *Macbeth*, in Women’s College, the process of investigation begins with the character of the king who falls prey to treachery and manipulation plotted by subordinates in the state in the ST. Revising the question of glorified power in *Macbeth* unfolds auspicious possibilities to senior students in Shakespeare Course. Investigating techniques in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* helps director and the cast follow Hakim’s theatrical principles in Arabic adaptations. Female amateurs follow his footsteps in eradicating the performance from such supernatural elements as witches, dangling dagger and the ghost which are rejected in the

Islamic and Arabic culture. Concerned solely with the theme, female undergraduates investigate apt dramatic elements for the local stage.

However, the process of investigation differs in setting the adaptation of *Macbeth* in English Diploma Private school. Their major task tends to seek possible methods to present the Shakespearean tragedy to Arab audience whose second language is English. Editing the Source Text is another task endeavored prior to writing the adaptation where theme of loose ambition is crucial to accentuate morality in the human aspiration. The director also investigates students' capacity to memorize long poetic lines in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Before setting their adaptation for competition in `Riyadh Youth Theatre held by SASCA, co-authors proceed to examine recent articles and revisions of Shakespeare's most well-known tragedy. To some playwrights and reviewers investigated, Shakespeare's tragedies are ample with contradictions and idealism unaccepted and unwelcomed by 21 century readers and viewers. Yet, to SASCA's youth in 2012, Shakespeare's philosophical questions are still unanswered.

Investigation also includes scheduling audition sessions. Coaching the cast entails special space inside Women's college, Girls' school or the Department of Theatre in SASCA. Directors also investigate performing skills in the cast nominated for the performance. Upon their investigation, sessions of linguistic and physical proficiency and fluency are scheduled.

### 8. Inference

Inference is declared by Barton to be "drawing conclusions from facts provided in the play text." Those conclusions are usually inferred by casting directors to integrate Shakespeare's humanistic concerns within the target adaptations. Inferring woman's determination and aspiration in *The Merchant of Venice*, female undergraduates rely on Portia's quote of choice acknowledging the father's wit.

In terms of choice I am not solely led  
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes; ...  
But if my father had not scanted me  
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself  
His wife who wins me by that means I told you, ...  
As any comer I have look'd on yet  
For my affection (*Venice*, 2, 1, pp. 530–535).

Inference of the king's trust and recognition of bravery in his statesmen constitutes the theme in *El Sheikh*, the adaptation written by female undergraduates in Women's College. King Duncan's words "What he hath lost noble Macbeth has won" (*Macbeth*, 1. 2. pp. 93–95) inspires Sheikh Mu'tasem, in *El Sheikh*, to honor the successful efforts of his cousin 'Assaf and grant him the title of Sheikh and second position in the tribe which is endowed solely to the son. Sheikh Mu'tasem follows the steps of King Duncan pledging "I have begun to plant thee, and will labor/ To make thee full of growing." (*Macbeth*, I, 4, p. 307)

The conflict between virtue and vice features the adaptation of *Macbeth* staged in Dar El-Fikr school. Characterization, costume and Shakespeare's poetic language maintain the inference of the Shakespearean tragedy in the local English performance.

*The Final Act* is the adaptation of *Hamlet* staged before the Minister of Media and Culture in SASCA in World Theatre Day to convey an "imaginative interpretation" of Jabra's [Ma'sat Hamlet] (Krebs, 2007, p. 41). *The Final Act* infers Hamlet's most renowned question "To be, or not to be" rendering some figures and themes in ST (*Hamlet*, 3, 1, 1749).

### 9. Interference

Interference is commenced by directors in audition sessions. In those sessions, the cast tend to "use everything" they "have—brains, bodies and emotions—in a very public way ... expected to stand tall, breathe, connect to feelings" and "speak." (Moseley, 2019, p. 13) Directors interfere here to notify and modify character's gesture, posture or movement in a manner comprehensible and acceptable in the target cultural context. Audition sessions offer good opportunities to interfere and restructure the plot through techniques of deletion, substitution. (Moseley, 2019, p. 13)

When proper names of female characters are rendered in the adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, some scenes are deleted to help focus the attention on the theme of female determination. By deleting scenes and characters,

directors set a new timeline of events tending to “envisioned time and place” different from ST. (Mustafa, 2007, p. 10)

Such substitution takes the new adaptation in new directions. A third technique in the interference strategy is “actioning” which aims to “divide up” one’s lines “into separate phrases or thoughts, to assign each thought an ‘action verb’ which expresses the underlying intention of the line.” It is a technique employed to collect those “series of verbs, to attempt to speak and act each thought in the manner of the chosen verb.” Actioning in audition sessions facilitates the task of the performers in conveying apt words, speeches and moves to the local receiving culture. (Moseley, 2016, p. vii).

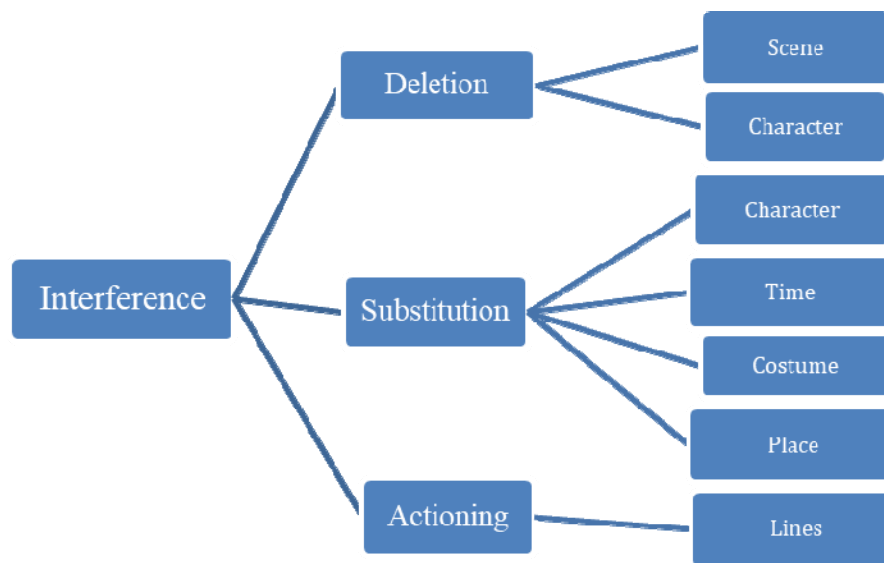


Figure 9. Interference techniques

The female director interferes to delete the first scene in the play where Antonio, Bassanio and Shylock are engaged in the loan. By leaving aside the Venetian trade and the debt, female personae in the adaptation engage themselves in claims for love, money and justice. The performance opens with Portia’s bewilderment at her father’s will and the three caskets. Although the father is dead, Portia feels obliged to enact his will. Portia is counterbalanced with Jessica who aspires to live a joyful life far from her father’s tutelage. Jessica is definite to leave the meanness in her father’s house for a prosperous life with a loving husband enjoying her mother’s jewels and her father’s fortunes. Although Portia, Jessica and Nerissa express their attitudes to fathers and would-be husbands, Portia never hesitates to use logic to save the life of Antonio, her future husband’s friend. Her wisdom in the court is reported to win the local audience’s appraisal. The Saudi local version of *The Merchant of Venice* is void of the conflict between Jews and Christians. All male characters are also lacking. Elizabethan female costumes retained in the adapted version to reinforce the bond with the Shakespearean era and morale.

The plot is restructured at the hands of casting director in *El-Sheikh*. Witches, the dagger, the ghost, the apparitions and the porter are deleted. Accordingly, witches’ prophecies are never told. The counterpart to Lady Macbeth is Zulaikha who is the wife of Sheikh ’Assaf, the deceitful cousin. Unlike Duncan, Sheikh Mu’tasem has only one son, Waleed. Like Malcolm, the crown prince, Waleed is next in the succession line. Waleed is sent abroad to receive higher education. Left alone, Sheikh Mu’tasem is overwhelmed by the ambitious demands of the untrustworthy cousin, Sheikh ’Assaf. In addition to deletion of scenes, substitution is incorporated when Donalbain, the son of Duncan, is replaced by Lulwah, a daughter. Local dialect, Bedouin costume and household accessories accelerate the acculturation tendency in the stage performance.

Interference in the school English adaptation of *Macbeth* undertakes the deletion of Lord Mcduff’s speeches, plans and the murder of his family. His role in saving Scotland by slaying Macbeth is merely reported to the school audience.

The philosophical question “To be, or not to be” is raised by Hamlet, in *The Final Act*, who is featured to recollect his early childhood when he mutters this question after being horrified by a gypsy and her prophecy in his father’s

palace. This local adaptation of *Hamlet* projects a different tragedy attended by Hamlet in Heaven “where souls meet.” Hamlet’s earthly tragedy of losing his father, the king, in death and his mother in marriage is deleted. Horatio, the most trustworthy friend of Hamlet is revealed in the hereafter to be the most treacherous. Such substitution of the good friend by the evil foe is a major change in Saudi youth adaptation of *Hamlet*. Horatio is the antagonist who persists to remind Hamlet of his earthly faults, his forged lunacy, his slaying Polonius, and his constant verbal attacks towards his beloved Ophelia. Highly eloquent language and Elizabethan costume maintain relatedness to the Shakespearean text.

Substitution takes place in *El Sheikh when* Sheikh Mu’tasem chooses to flee to the desert where he speaks his monologues away from tribesmen. The desert endows Sheikh Mu’tasem, the president, the space to verbalize his disappointment at his newly appointed Sheikh ’Assaf’s fraud. The stage is envisioned to depict the tribal life today. Local costumes substitute the monarchial attire and the militant wear when the plot changes from the political to the social. *The Final Act* envisions Hamlet’s life after death and substitutes Elsinore with heaven where Hamlet reflects on his earthly life.

Another technique of interference is the actioning which helps focus the intention in the cast’s words to give proper inflections. Actioning also develops their proficiency in the verbal and physical performance. Action verbs sustain proper communication of ideas to the target audience. Whether the adaptation is in Arabic or English, actioning provides the cast with the precise action onstage. In *The Merchant of Venice*, attention is directed to listing those verbs delivered by Portia, Jessica and Nerissa to voice woman’s interests and determination. In *El-Sheikh* actioning focuses on those transitive verbs said by the major male characters, Sheikh Mu’tasem and Sheikh ’Assaf along with major female characters, Zulaikha and Lulwah. Hamlet’s dialogue with Horatio, in *The Final Act*, implies surprise and disappointment in Hamlet at Horatio’s unexpected devious manner. Horatio’s action verbs are meant to trigger Hamlet’s anger and fury at discovering long-hidden betrayal in a life-long friend. Such interference techniques underline theatrical acculturation.

### 10. Invention

The third stage in Barton’s performing practices is “invention” which aims at “filling in any blanks that the playwright may not have directly stated.” Filling those blanks may demand several types of inventive addition in terms of technique and characterization. (Barton, 2012, p. 216)

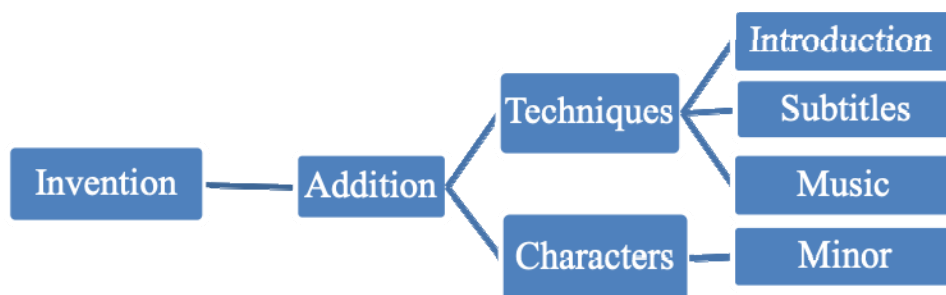


Figure 10. Strategies of invention in theatrical integration

In the academic field, the reading of an introduction prior to the performance is a technique added to help audience grasp the plot and perceive the modification undertaken. In Women’s College, a female narrator introduces the story in *The Merchant of Venice* giving brief accounts of the three female characters Jessica, Portia and Nerissa before their advent onstage. The narrator is heard frequently to report actions and incidents acted by Antonio, Bassanio, Lorenzo and Shylock in ST. Comic tone in the play is rendered through physical innuendoes and implicative gestures to convey “the general cultural conventions” through “the manners, moral standards, rituals, tastes, ideologies, sense of humor.” (Aaltonen, 2000, p. 55)

Introduction in *El Sheikh* clarifies the similarities in human communities when honor and trust are mistakenly understood. Lulwah is an invented female character who feels pity for her father’s departure. She roves the desert looking for him. Finding him alone, she breaks his solitude and persuades him to accompany her back to the tribe. On their way home, she promises to support him in ruling the tribe. The daughter is invented to present the political tendency towards woman empowerment in 2030 Vision in Saudi Arabia. Invention by college undergraduates are integrated within a performance where the social, the political and the aesthetic intersect. Their thematic invention extends to include Sheilah, a popular folk melody, to heighten the emotional undertones



in the performance. Different Sheilahs are employed as preparatory musical intervals for ensuing scenes.

The school adaptation of *Macbeth* tends to show Arabic subtitles on the backdrop to introduce the play to female audience who might have not read or heard of the Shakespearean tragedy. In *Macbeth*, the use of digital visual and audio effects seems motivating to the teenager cast. Arabic narratives are projected on the backdrop to provide the audience with a brief of the setting and characterization in the play. Introduction is inscribed on a featured forest where Macbeth is assumed to have passed through before meeting the three witches. Classical music is played to accelerate those feelings of suspense, mystery and solitude and to intensify the tone of violence, aggression, defeat and misery.

Although the adaptation is performed in English, the Arabic subtitles are used to explain Macbeth's actions in the banquet scene and Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking and sleep-talking. Adding more characters as messengers and soldiers is a dramatic invention employed in the English school adaptation to increase the number of the female cast to satisfy every mother's wish to see her daughter onstage. The school performance combines the moral, the aesthetic and the institutional.

Invention in *The Final Act* incorporates the projection of Hamlet's death scene. On the backdrop of the scene and through shadow theatre, the revengeful Hamlet is projected stabbing and killing. The character of the demon-like gypsy is added to demonstrate how fear is seeded in Hamlet since his childhood. Fleeing with terror in the dark corridors in his father's palace, Hamlet mutters "To be or not to be ... To be or not to be." The Saudi adaptation of *Hamlet* reflects the realization of a life-long hidden betrayal. Just then, Horatio persuades Hamlet that Ophelia loves not the prince but himself, Horatio. Further demonic features are endowed to Horatio as he plays the ghost of the old King Hamlet insinuating Hamlet, the prince, that Ophelia is similar to Gertrude, the unfaithful mother. Since all women are betrayers, they deserve death whatsoever.

Such stage changes may be explained to aim at reform as suggested by Katja Kerbs's argument when "stage translation" assumes "other changes to and deviations from the source text" through "dynamic inter-relationship between deviation and acculturation." (Krebs, 2007, pp. 101–103) Written in the time of Arab Spring, *The Final Act* may be proposed to verbalize the state of Arab youth who are encompassed by the sense of disillusionment raising those questions of identity, broken dreams, relationship with the 'other' and priorities in life. (Dodgson, 2010, p. X)

## 11. Conclusion

Whether translated into Arabic or read in English, Shakespeare's theatre will never diminish in cultural value. His plays are resourceful mainsprings to young academicians and artists as well. To them, Shakespeare's plays constitute cultural channels in the world today. When youth are involved in staging Shakespeare in Saudi Arabia, they proceed into theatrical acculturation. To College graduates, undergraduates, and school students, Shakespeare's play texts are tangible resources in terms of poetic language, culture and morale. Through the several adaptations explored in this study, acculturation undertakes a series of strategies involving the intellectual, the social and the aesthetic.

Assimilation of the Source text in Shakespeare facilitates the means of its integration within the target Saudi culture. Interviews and focus groups are conducted to unfold strategies developed by theatre amateurs interested in staging the Classics to new audiences.

The audience seems a significant priority in setting local adaptations of Shakespeare where acculturation begins with the selection of the play text. Through investigation, diverse cross-cultural resources and references are always checked, reviewed and documented. Inferring key ideas and quotes lay the basic structure in the stage adaptation. Audition sessions define the outline for putting into practice the adapted script. Through audition, director interferes to modify and restructure innovatively declaring an artistic literary vision on reality.

Regarding diverse techniques incorporated in the local adaptations of Shakespeare's masterpieces, the following module exhibits those strategies involved in the field of theatrical acculturation.

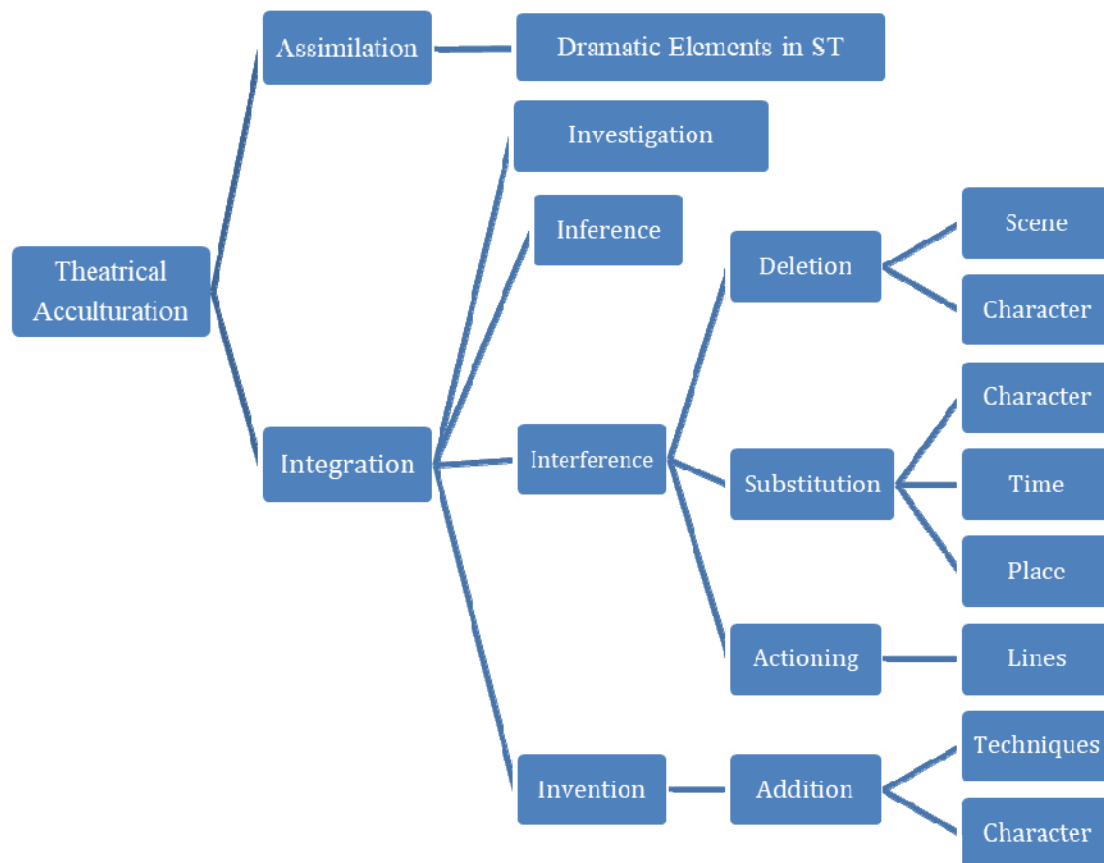


Figure 11. Theatrical acculturation module

This module proves success in writing novel adaptations and staging them. The module promotes creativity and originality in refashioning classical theatre not only in Saudi Arabia but hopefully elsewhere. This theatrical acculturation module encourages theatre amateurs to seek further theatrical means within cultural dialogue.

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