



How Sherlock Holmes Can Change Through Translation and Adaptation: A Case Study of “The Red-Headed League”

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Abstract. A Dutch translation of the Arthur Conan Doyle short story “The Red-Headed League,” published in serial form in the Flemish newspaper *Het Volk* in 1911, displays considerable changes from the original. Sherlock Holmes is more generic and superficial, references to London are much vaguer, and lowbrow features are augmented. This translation strategy is connected to the intended readership.

According to Furlong (170), Sherlock Holmes is “the most heavily and frequently adapted [detective] of all crime fiction.” The online *Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia* even dedicates a separate page to these adaptations and shows that ever since the first stage adaptation of *Under the Clock* in 1893 (McCaw 19), Holmes has continued to appear on stage and screens, as well as in many other media types. Moreover, the *Encyclopedia’s* list indicates that these adaptations stem from many different countries and thus also include translations into many languages.

One form of adaptation that this overview does not include, however, is the serialization for publication in newspapers. As Law and Morita (1) state, newspapers have long included more than just news and also printed, for example, fiction. The practice of publishing serialized fiction in installments (*feuilletons*¹) originated in Paris in 1836 and quickly spread to other countries. It was also adopted by newspapers in Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part

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