

Novelizations and their Pedagogic Potential

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In the professional literature it is commonplace to draw attention to the prevalence of the use of motion pictures in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and the use of movie dialogue as a proxy for English conversation; and books such as Engelbert Thaler's (Thaler, 2014) are available to guide practitioners. Less well known is the potential to add literacy-focused activities to movie-based lessons by using movie novelizations, although the author has drawn attention to such possibilities in his previous writings (Howell, 2015, 2016). English teachers, however, may not be familiar with novelization as a subcategory of text. Texts can be divided into spoken and written texts, and within written texts there is clearly a wide variety of forms, such as personal letters, diaries, newspaper reports, legal documents, fictional narratives and so on. This paper seeks to provide information to practitioners about novelizations in the hope that they will take this subcategory of the novel under consideration for use if and when they are able to choose the materials for their own lessons.

Randall Larson divides movie tie-in novels into three types: new editions of previously published novels that form the basis of the movie; novels written based on the screenplay of the movie; and novels using the same characters as in the movie, but with a new story (Larson, 1995, p. 3). It should also be added that novelizations have been written on the basis of computer games (for example S. D. Perry's novelizations of *Resident Evil*) and of Broadway musicals (for example Irving Shulman's novelization of *West Side Story*), and fan fiction (unauthorized and unpublished novels written by fans) might also be mentioned. This paper, however, is concerned with the second of Larson's categories of tie-in novel, novels written from screenplays. The article is composed of three sections. In the first section, the author outlines how novelizations have recently become the focus of analysis in published writings and can be considered a subcategory of the novel in their own right. However, as demonstrated in the second section, there are different types of novelizations and it is a text form that should not be seen as blandly homogeneous. Finally, in the third section, the author will attempt to highlight the potential of novelizations for pedagogy by pointing out convergences with theoretical writing on TEFL and by referring to his own practice.

NOVELIZATIONS ARE AN ACKNOWLEDGED TEXT FORM

Over the past couple of decades novelizations have been acknowledged as a text form by being written about both in book-length publications and in articles in academic journals. The first book to be published dealing exclusively with novelizations was Randall Larson's 1995 monograph, *Films into Books: An Analytical Bibliography Film Novelizations, Movie, and TV Tie-Ins*. The book is comprised of three sections. The bulk of the content is actually in the second section, comprising accounts given by 52 novelization writers about their job and the works they have written. In the initial 'examination' section, Larson introduces novelization as a hitherto little discussed text form and explains its specificities, while in the third section he

provides a detailed bibliography of novelizations and tie-ins published in the U.K. and the U.S.A. A book not dissimilar to Larson's, but published fifteen years later, is Lee Goldberg's edited volume, *Tied In: The Business, History, and Craft of Media Tie-In Writing*. It is a publication of the International Association of Tie-In Writers, produced with the explicit aim of countering the negative image of tie-ins as "cheap crap written for a quick buck by talentless, unskilled, self-loathing hacks" (Goldberg, 2010, p. 2). Perhaps the most illuminating chapter in Goldberg's book is the roundtable discussion on the practicalities of the job with nineteen professional writers, in which we learn that deadlines can be as little as three weeks, that novelizations are written on the basis of the script not the final movie itself, that dialogue from the movie script is usually retained, and that royalties on tie-ins (if offered) are less than half those on 'original' novels. According to Johannes Mahlknecht (2012, p. 148), the writer of an original screenplay makes more money from novelizations than the novelizers themselves. The most recently published book-length treatment of novelization in English is Belgian scholar Jan Baetens' (2018) monograph, *Novelization: From Film to Novel* (translated from the original French book by Mary Feeney). Baetens, a professor of Cultural and Literary Studies at the University of Leuven, presents a historical and semiotic analysis of novelization with the aim of situating it in the wider field of narrative and media theory. English teachers should be advised that most of the focus is on works in French and that the theoretical discussion is somewhat abstract. Moreover, Baetens' definition of 'novelization' includes writings such as poetic *récits de films*, that are not actually novels in the classic sense.

Novelization as a text form has also been treated in edited volumes dealing with processes of adaptation between media, especially between novels and films. Editors Thomas Van Parys and I. Q. Hunter allot it one of the five sections of their 2013 book, *Science Fiction Across Media: Adaptation / Novelization*, with four separate contributions on the topic. On a lesser scale, in editor Deborah Cartmell's volume, *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation*, Jeremy Strong somewhat sadly analyses how David Morell was drawn in his novelizations into dumbing down the complex character of John Rambo he had created in his original novel, *First Blood* (in which Rambo actually dies in the end!) (Strong, 2012). Constantine Verevis (2017) discusses six novelizations of works either written or directed by Paul Schrader, and illustrates the diversity in how they are novelized.

Surveying journal articles, illuminating contributions have come from Thomas Van Parys, who completed his Ph.D. on science-fiction novelizations at Leuven. In an initial paper (Van Parys, 2009), he outlines the history of novelization with an emphasis on the English-speaking world. Like Jan Baetens, he does not restrict the term "novelization" solely to what he calls the 'industrial novelizations' associated with present-day media conglomerates and points to predecessors of the latter in the multiple short 'fictionizations' that appeared in trade magazines from as early as 1911 and later in fan magazines accompanied by still photographs from the film. In his second paper (Van Parys, 2011) he provides a detailed secondary bibliography, which illustrates the increasing scholarly interest in this text form, and outlines a typology of novelizations including factors such as original source and genre (for example youth vs. adult audience).

NOVELIZATIONS ARE NOT A HOMOGENEOUS TEXT FORM

As mentioned in the previous section, there is usually scant literary prestige attached to writing novelizations. For example Michael Stackpole, who has novelized *Conan the Barbarian* and has written

tie-ins for the Star Wars franchise, refers to the term ‘sharecropper novels’, and contrasts the image of the novelizer as a commercially subservient hack with that of the impecunious, but free, ‘true artist’ (Stackpole, 2013, p. 212). Novelizers have indeed on occasion been ghost writers, for example in the novelization of *Stars Wars* written by Alan Dean Foster, but credited to director George Lucas (Larson, 1995, p. 141), and the novelization of *Close Encounters of a Third Kind*, which was credited to the director Steven Spielberg but actually written by Leslie Waller (Mahlknecht, 2012, p. 148). However, there are also instances where novelizations have been written by well-known authors with a substantial body of ‘original’ work. Drawing on the published literature outlined above, at least four examples can be mentioned: Arthur C. Clarke, Orson Scott Card, David Rabe, and Max Allan Collins. One of the best known novelizations is *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Arthur C. Clarke wrote the screenplay for the movie together with director Stanley Kubrick, and then also wrote the novel based on the screenplay. Interestingly the novel provides significantly more clarity in terms of narrative exposition than the notoriously opaque film. Another example is the novelization of James Cameron’s film, *The Abyss*. Cameron liaised with already known SF writer, Orson Scott Card, encouraging him to write the novel, allowing him access to the set of the movie, and granting him a considerable leeway with normal cast-iron publishing deadlines (Card, 1989). Moreover, there may even have been a small degree of reverse influence from the novelization to the film, in that it is reported that the actors on occasion used Card’s backstories in creating their characters (Van Parys, 2013).

An example outside the genre of science fiction is playwright David Rabe’s novelization of *The Crossing Guard*. Again Rabe was given considerable freedom in writing the novel. Director Sean Penn explicitly states in his introduction to the novelization that he wanted to free Rabe from “the restrictions of the screenplay or the film” (Penn, 1995, p. ix). Thus the writer was able to restructure the narrative by in effect adding a new character – the voice of the protagonist’s dead daughter who addresses both her revenge-seeking father and the drunk driver, John Booth, who killed her eight years ago. As a result, the novelization has been considered better than the original film (Kobel, 2001). Another novelizer who is a well-known writer in his own right is Max Allan Collins. As well as writing over twenty novelizations, Collins is the creator of the graphic novel, *Road to Perdition* (Collins and Rayner, 1998), which is set in the world of gangsters in Illinois during the prohibition era. When DreamWorks produced a movie based on the graphic novel, Collins was asked to write the novelization (Collins, 2002), but, much to his chagrin, and despite being the creator of the story and the characters, he was forced to cut from his original draft everything that wasn’t in the film (Collins, 2010, p. 26). Fortunately, however, Collins was able more than a decade later to find a publisher for what was called *Road to Perdition: The New Expanded Novel*. As Collins explains in his afterword, he attempted in the expanded novel to add aspects of his original graphic novel to David Self’s screenplay as well as some new material (Collins, 2016). An example of Collins’ expansion is presented below in Table 1. The scene is one where the protagonist, Michael O’Sullivan has been set up by his boss under the guise of picking up money from small-time criminal, Tony Calvino. In the expanded novelization, Collins reverts to the original character names of O’Sullivan and Looney as opposed to the names Sullivan and Rooney used in the movie (although Tony Calvino is not changed to the original Tony Lococo). The insult “mick son of a bitch” is also a carry-over from the graphic novel and is not used in the film, and helps make the dialogue more gritty and aggressive than in the studio-approved novelization. Highlighting in bold is by the author of this article.

TABLE 1. Contrasting Text from Max Allan Collins' Two Novelizations of *Road to Perdition*

Film Dialogue	Studio-Approved Novelization	Expanded Novelization
<p>- Mr. Calvino, Mike Sullivan's here, - Aaah shit. - He wants to see you. - Aaah shit. Is he packing? - Not anymore. - All right. Show him in. Hey, hey, hey. You stick around, okay?</p>	<p>"Mr. Calvino...Mike Sullivan's here." Calvino's husky voice baritone, slightly slurred, responded, "Aaah, shit...is he packing?" Pride colored the bodyguard's voice. "Not anymore." Sullivan smiled as he listened. Then Calvino's voice: "All right – show him in...but you stick around, okay?"</p>	<p>"Mr. Calvino, sorry to in 'erupt, sir...but Mike O'Sullivan's here." Calvino's husky baritone, slightly slurred, responded: "O'Sullivan...Looney's enforcer?" "Yeah, it's him, sir. Angel of..." "I know who he is...aw, shit. What's he want?" "To see you, sir." "Fuck a duck. Is he packing?" Pride colored the bodyguard's voice: "Not anymore." O'Sullivan smiled as he listened. Then Calvino's voice: "All right – show him in...but you stick around, see? Keep an eye on the mick son of a bitch."</p>

Novelizations may be written in alternate versions for audiences of different ages. For example, Donald Glut wrote two versions of his novelization of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, a regular edition for a general audience of adults and another “special young readers’ edition”. Larson traces the history of novelizations for children back to the 1940s when Golden Books began publishing adaptations of Walt Disney cartoons, and relates how more recently Scholastic Books has also published novelizations targeted at a younger audience. He quotes Scholastic novelizer Joe Claro as reporting that sexual references or innuendoes in the screenplay need to be removed from novelizations for school-age audiences (Larson, 1995, p. 22). Similarly, Aaron Rosenberg reports the need to be sensitive about content when writing for younger audiences, particularly with regard to violence (Rosenberg, 2010). Rosenberg also alludes to the reduced length of young adult tie-ins, which may contain as little as half the number of words of a regular novelization. John Vornholt’s young readers’ novelization of *Star Trek Nemesis* (Vornholt, 2002) contains only 144 pages, whereas the regular novelization by J. M. Dillard runs to 198 pages (Dillard, 2003). A comparative reading of Dillard’s and Vornholt’s novelizations confirms that ‘adult’ language seems to be toned down in the junior novelization. Some examples of this can be noted in Captain Picard’s lines in the scene near the beginning of the film in which the crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise are celebrating the wedding of First Officer Will Ryker and Commander Deanna Troi. The toned-down expressions are highlighted in bold by the author of this article.

TABLE 2. Examples of Toned-down Language in the Young Reader Novelization of *Star Trek Nemesis*

Film Dialogue	Novelization	Young Readers Novelization
- <i>Mr. Data, shut up!</i>	- <i>Data.</i> - <i>Sir?</i> - <i>Shut up.</i>	- <i>Data.</i> - <i>Sir?</i> - <i>Be quiet.</i>
- <i>This is all a damned inconvenience!</i>	- <i>This is all a damned inconven-ience... (sic)</i>	- <i>This is all an inconvenience -</i>
- <i>Oh, the hell you are!</i>	- <i>The hell you will!</i>	- <i>Don't you dare!</i>

A final, somewhat unusual, example of heterogeneity in the text form has been pointed out by Deborah Allison. This is the dual novelization of the film *Capricorn One*. One novelization was written by Ron Goulart for the American market, while – for reasons unknown to the author of this article – a separate novelization was published in the U.K., written by Bernard L. Ross. Interestingly, the latter is another case of a novelization being written by an author of highly successful original novels, since Ross is in fact a pseudonym for best-selling thriller writer Ken Follett. Allison describes Ross’s novelization as “more ambitious and detailed” (Allison, 2007, n.p.), and suggests that the two novelizations were actually based on different versions of the screenplay.

NOVELIZATIONS HAVE PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL

As mentioned above, it is true that novelizations in general have a poor reputation in literary terms. However, that does not necessarily mean they have no educational value. Even for L1 English education, it is possible to view novelizations as an entry point to the habit of reading. Noted science fiction author Isaac Asimov (who himself novelized the film *Fantastic Voyage*) wrote in correspondence with Randall Larson that he hoped novelizations might “lure” some people into becoming readers who might not otherwise have started to read books (Larson, 1995, p. 44). Larson also cites Ed Naha, the novelizer of *Robocop*, as speculating that readers of SF novelizations may go on to read original works by well-known writers. Mahlkecht, while acknowledging that novelizations may be “of inferior quality”, also sees them as a “bridge” to reading (Mahlkecht, 2012, p. 145-146). These views converge with those of famous TEFL theorist and activist, Stephen Krashen. Krashen stresses the importance of extensive reading for pleasure as a powerful driver of vocabulary acquisition in second-language learning (Krashen, 2011). He is an advocate of letting learners choose their own preferred reading material as opposed to prize-winning books or materials that might be considered ‘high quality’ by librarians and teachers (Ujie and Krashen, 2002). Thus one of the advantages of using works of popular culture in TEFL is precisely that they have the benefit of *popularity* and learners may want to read and understand them. Another potential benefit is that novelizations might be easier to read, as readers are reading what they have seen in the film version. The present author would therefore like to suggest that novelizations might form part of a library of English books for extensive reading. A possible drawback could arise if choice was limited to what are traditionally considered the genres that appeal to male audiences such as SF, action, and crime. However, novelizations have also been commissioned for a wide variety of movie genres. They can easily be purchased second-hand from online stores even after they go out-of-print. An impression of this generic range can be garnered from a selection of the author’s own

collection of novelizations displayed below in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Selected Novelizations from a Range of Genres

<i>Movie Genre and Title</i>	<i>Novelization</i>	<i>Japanese translation</i>
Musical: <i>Annie</i> .	Fleischer, L. (1982). <i>Annie</i> . New York: Ballantine.	山本やよい. (1982). アニー. Tokyo: Hayakawa.
Comedy: <i>Ferris Bueller's Day Off</i> .	Strasser, T. (1987). <i>Ferris Bueller's Day Off</i> . London: Bantam.	橘高弓枝. (1987). フェリスはある朝突然に. Tokyo: Shueisha.
Superhero: <i>Spider-Man</i> .	David, P. (2002). <i>Spider-Man</i> . London: Boxtree.	富永和子. (2002). スパイダーマン. Tokyo: Kadokawa.
Crime: <i>American Gangster</i> .	Collins, M. A. (2007). <i>American Gangster</i> . New York: Tor.	山下慧. (2007). アメリカン・ギャングスター. Tokyo: Softbank.
SF: <i>Interstellar</i> .	Keyes, G. (2014). <i>Interstellar</i> . London: Titan.	富永和子. (2014). インターステラー. Tokyo: Takeshobo.
Historical drama: <i>Braveheart</i> .	Wallace, R. (1995). <i>Braveheart</i> . London: Penguin.	宮崎横. ブレイブハート. Tokyo: Futami.
Romance: <i>One Fine Day</i> .	Gilmour, H. B. (1997). <i>One Fine Day</i> . New York: St. Martin's Press.	永井喜久子. (1997). 素晴らしき日. Tokyo: Tokuma.
Action: <i>Air Force One</i> .	Collins, M. A. (1997). <i>Air Force One</i> . New York: Ballantine.	桃井健司. (1997). エアフォース・ワン. Tokyo: Futami.
Erotic Suspense: <i>Basic Instinct</i> .	Osborne, R. (1992). <i>Basic Instinct</i> . London: Signet.	東江一紀. (1992). 氷の微笑. Tokyo: Fusosha.
Supernatural Horror: <i>The Omen</i> .	Seltzer, D. (1976). <i>The Omen</i> . London: Futura.	田中耕治. (2006). オーメン. Tokyo: Kawade.

Thus, in addition to the appeal of their *popularity*, novelizations offer potential *optionality* to both teachers and to learners, albeit only in a curriculum where autonomy is valued over top-down decision-making. By optionality is meant that teachers can have a wide range in their choices, allowing them to take into account the emotional impact of the material on learners in addition to other factors like linguistic suitability. Optionality also offers a potential increase in learner autonomy if students are asked for input into deciding which of a range of possible materials are chosen for use in class.

In movie-based TEFL classes, novelizations can be a valuable source of *comprehensible input* through the *repeating, rechannelling, expanding, and translating* of movie dialogues. In novelizations, the dialogue from the screenplay is usually preserved in its totality. So, although the performance dialogue may sometimes differ from that in the screenplay, the linguistic input of the film is usually replicated or almost replicated in the novelization. Moreover, the input is offered to the learners in a different channel. Although movie dialogue can be presented in written form in DVDs or Blu-Ray discs, it is presented only on the screen, momentarily and passively. Using the channel of writing on paper, the same input can be presented in permanent form and can be constructed actively by the learner through various writing exercises such as dictation. Moreover, novelizations do not simply reproduce the screenplay dialogue in the form of direct speech, but expand it by using quotative constructions (for example in Table 1 above, *responded, then Calvino's voice*) and descriptions of thought or action (for example, *Sullivan smiled as he listened*). Thus the

repeated linguistic input is embedded in new input, which mitigates the risk of boredom in the experience of the learners. Novelizations can also make the input comprehensible if an L1 translation is presented to learners alongside the original English. Fortunately in Japan, Japanese translations are often commercially available. This use of translations is essentially a variant of the centuries-old method of learning L2 reading by using parallel texts, one in the foreign language and one in the mother tongue. It runs counter to the idea of the Direct Method with lessons conducted only in the target language. The Direct Method is perhaps the only practical approach in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) environments where the learners have a variety of mother tongues. But bilingual approaches, as advocated for example by Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009), may be more practical and culturally appropriate in TEFL environments such as Japan. Butzkamm and Caldwell recommend the use of bilingual texts for teaching reading, and cite anecdotal, yet resonant, evidence from learners about frustrations experienced in classrooms where teachers dogmatically refused to provide L1 translations, resulting in input that was incomprehensible and thus unlearned.

In previous articles, the author has described the activities he uses with novelizations in his own practice (Howell, 2015, 2016). Basically the students are asked to actively construct the English novelization text themselves – rather than simply being presented with it ready-made in a handout or textbook – through the following sequence of activities:

- skimming the L1 translation
- L1-L2 word matching combined with expansion drills
- gap-fill exercise
- pair dictation
- listen-and-sequence activity.

No claim is made here that these are more effective methods than any others. The purpose is simply to show that a range of well-known activities can be deployed for use with English novelizations and their Japanese translations. As for the movies used in his practice, the number is as yet limited: *Rain Man*, *Armageddon*, *Fatal Attraction*, *Basic Instinct*, *Spider-Man*, and the Pierce Brosnan *James Bond* films. Further research is needed to write more materials and collect feedback from participants about what kind of content is most popular. More learner feedback would also enable teachers to adjust and experiment with class activities. For example, with regard to order of activities, it would be interesting to know whether there is any preference for watching movie clips before turning to the corresponding text in the novelization, or vice-versa.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has sought to draw the attention of teachers to the text form of novelization. Although novels within the canon of English literature have traditionally been used as materials in TEFL, novelizations have been considered merely unoriginal and lacking in any literary merit. Recent academic writing, however, has gone some way to dispelling such prejudices. The author, drawing on such secondary literature as well as examples from contrasting novelizations, has also shown that novelization as a text form should not be considered as inevitably constrained and homogeneous. And suggestions have been made for the pedagogic potential of the text form both in free voluntary reading and in movie-based lessons. Whether in fact novelizations actually are a popular source of reading material in TEFL is a matter that awaits confirmation from more widespread practice and the reporting of feedback, as do better ways that novelizations could be

utilized in movie-based lessons.

As for future directions, my colleague Kazumichi Enokida has pointed out in a personal communication that novelizations have also been published of Japanese animated films. In particular, Makoto Shinkai has written a novelization of his hit film, *Kimi No Na Wa (Your Name)*, which has been translated into English (Shinkai, 2016). This particular work is also published in *manga* (comic book) form in both Japanese and English, thus offering potential for pedagogic integration of three bilingual media.

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ABSTRACT

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Until recently novelizations have been deprecated in terms of their literary value and ignored in discussions of language teaching. This article seeks to redress this neglect by drawing attention to three aspects of novelizations: firstly, that they are beginning to be recognized in print as a works worthy of literary and academic interest; secondly, that they constitute a heterogeneous text form which includes differing kinds of novelization; and thirdly, that they have interesting potential for use in education, including in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

要 約

小説化作品とその教育的可能性

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最近に至るまで小説化作品はその文学的な価値という点には不賛成を唱えられ、言語教育の議論から無視されてきた。本論は小説化作品のもつ3つの側面に注意を向けることでその無関心の是正を模索するものである。最初に、小説化作品は文学的・学問的な興味のある作品として認識され始め、研究の対象とされている。次に、小説化作品は異種類の作品を含む異種混淆の文章形式を構成している。最後に、小説化作品は外国語としての英語教育を含め教育での使用に興味深い可能性をもっている。