



**An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING DIALECT IN
TRANSLATING HUMOROUS TEXTS: COMPARING
DIALECT WITH MODERN STANDARD ARABIC
TRANSLATION USING THE ANIMATED FILM TOY
STORY (1995) AS A CASE STUDY**

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**This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
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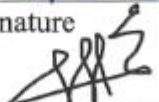
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the people who mean the world to me, my beloved parents Asim and Hanan. No words can describe the amount of love and support you have given me.

I wish to also dedicate my thesis to my brothers, Ayham, for his invaluable assistance, Ahmad, for being a true inspiration for my work, and to Moath and Zaid, for their love and encouragement.

My deepest gratitude goes out to my friends and to anyone that stood by my side throughout the entire MA program.

I also dedicate this thesis to myself, to the part of me that is self-disciplined, unwavering, and always thrives for success.

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Special thanks goes out to my family. Words can never convey how grateful I am to my parents who sacrificed so much for me. My deepest gratitude goes to my father who is, was, and forever will be an esteemed mentor in all of my academic endeavors. I would also like to express my appreciation and love for my brothers who supported me with every step I took.

I wish to also thank my friends, colleagues, and every person who supported me at any point in my journey of achieving my MA degree. For your support and encouragement, I am forever grateful.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

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I declare that the work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

Student's Name: Omayma Sawalmeh

Signature:



Date:

29/1/2023 _____

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Abstract

This research aims to uncover the types of humor used in Toy Story (1995), define the linguistic and cultural limitations in translating the humor in each examined instance, and to finally evaluate the quality of the Arabic translations at the episodic level as well as overall contingent upon the investigation of the available options provided by both versions. The data was collected from the first animated film of the American franchise, Toy Story (1995), along with its two translated versions in Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Egyptian dialect translation. The data was sorted into two main categories, language-based humor, with its own sub-categories of wordplays and appellation, and culture-based humor, with two sub-categories of cultural references and swearwords. House's 1997 model of translation quality assessment is applied on the extracted data, documenting an outline of all humorous instances within the case study in the source text (ST) as well as both target text (TT) versions, and then attributes them according to House's 1997 model to either a covert or an overt category. The MSA translation shows to favor opting for an overt translation, where maintaining the form of the text is prioritized over conveying the function, i.e., the humorous effect. Whereas in the colloquial version, the translation is classified under covert, where transmitting the humorous function of the text is prioritized over the form. The dialectic translation does not restrict itself to the form, and, therefore, as a relatively free version, it facilitates in familiarizing the text to the linguistic and cultural standards of the target audience, makes the TT translation easier to associate with, and leads to better results in the conveyance of the communicative function as well as the humorous function.

Keywords; Translating humor, Audiovisual, Dialect, MSA, Popular Culture, Covert and Overt Translations.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Humor is a universal phenomenon that is naturally experienced by the interlocutors who speak the same language and share a common culture experience. Before delving into what humor is defined as, it is worth mentioning what Diaz-Cintas and Remael have proposed. They claim that defining humor in itself is a matter of high complexity. Moreover, the fact that the definitions of humor and procedures studied in examining humor have only been accumulating over the past decade, and they continue doing so, counts as an indicator of its density as a subject (2007, p. 212). However, Newmark defines it as:

[a] term for mirth, laughter and smiling. It has elements of the surprising, the unusual, the irregular and the absurd. It is evinced in vocal sound and/or facial expression... It acts as a release after tension. It produces a sense of well-being and happiness. (2003, p. 126)

In the matter of defining humor, (Attardo, Linguistic theories of humor, 1994) explains: “linguists, psychologists and anthropologists have taken humour to be all encompassing category covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses or is felt to be funny” (p. 4). Furthermore, Raskin argues that laughter is by and large a manifestation of the feeling of funniness (1985, p. 1). From another point of view, as quoted in (Raphaelson-West, 1989, p. 140), Herzberg and Mones argue that humor is an entertaining manipulation of forbidden actions, social customs, or taboos. It is dabbling with prohibited societal norms and restrictions until the truth becomes more clear than ever. The Oxford Dictionary provides further clarification on the meaning of humor, it describes humor as the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing (Hornby, Gatenby, & Wakefield, 2005). Verbal humor may encompass wordplay, pun, appellation, swearwords and culturally loaded expressions, all of which are discussed and analyzed in the present research.

With the abstract notion of humor being disparate from one culture to another, it is safe to say that the concept of what is realized as 'humorous' can be culturally exclusive under certain conditions where the essence of the joke is confined by the presence or the absence of culturally-shared notions, or linguistic boundaries in cases like puns and wordplay. As pointed out by Vandaele, "[t]he relative or absolute untranslatability is generally related to cultural and linguistic aspects" (2010, p. 149). Indubitably, this is where the intricacy of translating humor comes in.

The subject matter of this research falls into the ambit of Audiovisual translation, which ultimately would suggest including discussions on the investigation of both the translation studies as well as the subtitling profession in regard to dealing with humor. More conclusively, subtitling humor into Arabic requires special consideration for reasons which are discussed in further detail in 1.3. Vandaele suggests that the deficiency of serious work on the subject of humor translation in translation studies "suggests that humour translation is qualitatively different from other times of translation and, consequently, one cannot write about humour translation in the same way one writes about other types of translation" (2002, p. 165). By the same token, Leibold maintains that:

The translation of humour is a stimulating challenge as it requires the accurate decoding of a humorous speech in its original context, the transfer of that speech in a different and often disparate linguistic and cultural environment, and its reformulation in a new utterance which successfully recaptures the intention of the original humorous message and evokes in the target audience an equivalent pleasurable and playful response. (1989, p. 109)

Additionally, according to (Newmark, 2003, p. 126) "cultural influences might affect how humor is expressed." In (Bell, 2007), Carrell is quoted explaining that the interlocutor's inability to detect a joke as such can be attributed to two factors: the interlocutor's failure to recognize the form of the joke text, or the absence of the requisite elaboration in the translation to understand the text as a joke (p. 373). But the persistent query is whether

the translated humor has the same achieved impact on the target audience as the ST does on its audience. It is crucial to look into how both translation practitioners and theorists view this issue in order to provide an adequate analysis of the translation of both Arabic varieties in this study. After that, a systemic application of House's 1997 Model of Translation Quality Assessment can be done to achieve more satisfactory conclusions on the topic.

The humor genre has often been cited as a prevalent obstacle that veers on a difficulty scale from challenging to being as complex to transfer between languages as becoming a case of "untranslatability." "When it comes to translating humor, the operation proves to be as desperate as that of translating poetry" (Diot, 2002, p. 84). The level of untranslatability of humor is dependent on various factors that include both sociological and linguistic facets. Since humor is a performative act in nature, the communication breaks once that effect is not achieved on the receiver. For instance, puns are perceived as such only when the wordplay reference is understood in the targeted audience. However, when the TL capabilities do not convey the same wordplay as done in the SL, there will be an instance of translation failure and the humor in that context will not be conveyed; that is, there will be a translation loss. Del Corral explains that:

Communication breaks down when the levels of prior knowledge held by the speaker/writer and by the listener/reader are not similar. While this is true of any communication, the breakdown is particularly obvious in the case of translated humor, whose perception depends directly on the concurrence of facts and impressions available to both speaker/writer and listener/reader. (Corral, 1988, p. 25)

1.2 Problem Statement

The main obstacle in translating texts of light-hearted genres such as comedy from English into Arabic is the diglossic nature of Arabic, and the differences in the contexts where each vernacular instance is usually employed. Diglossia, as defined by (Ferguson), refers to instances when:

Two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions. Perhaps the most familiar example is the standard language and regional dialect as used, say, in Italian or Persian, where many speakers speak their local dialect at home or among family or friends of the same dialect area but use the standard language in communicating with speakers of other dialects or on public occasions. (1959, p. 325)

The same applies for Arabic diglossia. Additionally, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is affluent with sacred associations. Being the language of the Holy Quran, it is used in sacred settings. The distinction between dialect and formal variations is most evident when Muslim preachers doing religious sermons switch from MSA into colloquial when they intend to joke with the crowd. On this account, given the formality of the contexts in which MSA is used, it neutralizes any humorous content; hence giving it a disadvantage in certain genres like comedy. This is where the translation problems mostly lie in the first case. In addition to that, translating a text from an oral into a written form adds to its formality even more. According to (Parmiggiani, 2002) when a spoken text is transferred into a written one, it is stripped of many sociolinguistic and pragmatic markers which it originally had, making it more formal and neater, as cited in (Nemani & Rasekh, 2013). There are several instances which illustrate how different humorous effects end up being lost in translation when the decision made by the translator was to follow a more formal translation strategy, all of which are reviewed in further details in this research.

On the other hand, a colloquial vernacular, being the language variety that is used in daily life, allows for more freedom in terms of word choice, and easy-going expressions, therefore giving the translation task of humor more advantage in achieving an effect on the TT audience similar to that which the ST left on its audience. However, this effect is often achieved at the cost of the ST form. Moreover, it is contingent upon how dynamic or free the translation strategy is; how much text adaptation, omission, or transposition is involved, at both the semantic as well as the syntactic level.

1.3 Research Objectives

In relation to this challenging task of tackling humor using dialects, the main objective is to highlight the value and gains that are achieved through dialect translation in transferring the different types of humor found in animated films across languages, using *Toy Story* (1995) as a case study. The research aims to identify the linguistic and cultural constraints in translating the humor in each instance, and to finally compare and assess the quality of both MSA and colloquial translations at the micro as well as the macro levels based on the analysis of the available options provided by both versions.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The studies and research pertaining to the translation of humor in animated films into Arabic tend to approach the subject from a different angle, raising inquiries regarding the audiovisual perspective of the matter rather than the linguistic one. This research will be beneficial to average readers and linguists alike. The research provides its readers with a general understanding of both cultures under scrutiny; the American and the Egyptian popular cultures. This is due to the fact that humor functions as a reflection of its participant culture. (Fine, 1983, p. 160) describes humor as: “a tool that can be used in numerous ways and has implications for understanding many corners of our social environment.” As the research uncovers the translation issues intensively, it will cater more to translators and language scholars.

The study examines and compares the MSA translation with the Egyptian vernacular translation in humorous instances in terms of the text function, comprehends why certain instances succeed in achieving the source language text function more than others, and discerns whether the fault lies in the language variety or in the translation choice, all of which based on a systematic application of House’s 1997 model of translation quality assessment.

1.5 Thesis Chapters

This research paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter One comprises of the introduction, problem statement, research objectives, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two discusses the literature review on humor and dialects in translation studies

along with a section which discusses subtitling and dubbing. Chapter Three accounts for the research methodology, data collection, and analysis methods. In Chapter Four, a systematic analysis of the collected data is conducted, analyzing language-based humor; which accounts for wordplay and appellation, and culture-based humor; which encompasses cultural references and swearwords. Chapter Five states the limitations of the study, the conclusions and recommendations reached by the researcher in accordance to the research findings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review

Translation studies has always faced the issue of transferring texts between languages. In source-text oriented translation theory, translators are generally expected to conform to the uniqueness of a ST using the appropriate equivalent lexemes and sentence structures in the TT. However, this approach does not serve the translation purpose well in certain cases where the desired equivalence comes at the expense of the ethical obligation to the author, that is to convey the author's original message content. In an attempt to create a new moral framework, Christiane Nord mentions that it is not "faithfulness" to the original text that should be the translator's utmost objective, but the "loyalty" to the originator of the translation (1997, p. 48). Nevertheless, Nord had also emphasized on the fact that the purpose of translation must not counter the author's intention, even more so in the case of translating literature. Although the target-text oriented approach nowadays is by and large becoming a fashionable practice in translation, the ST remains as a focal point of reference in the case of translation analyses within most translation situations.

Dialect translation in particular is reported in the following literature review to be among the most challenging translation situations. Translating Arabic dialect especially can be problematic in many aspects, one of which is the sentiment analysis. El-Masri et al. explain: "lexicons for the Arabic language would be different than English due to the multiple dialects and the multiple forms of words originating from a single root word" (El-Masri, Altrabsheh, & Mansour, 2017, p. 6). (Assiri, Emam, & Aldossari, 2015)'s research supposes that dialect (informal) Arabic is also believed to be challenging to analyze because of its generally "non-grammatical and unstructured" nature (p. 75). Elawady et al. state that the variance between MSA and colloquial Arabic not only lies in the vocabulary, but also in the structure. They also add that dealing with the randomness of informal Arabic's structure "poses a major task" (Elawady, Barakat, & El-Rashidy, 2015, p. 60). Arabic dialect is also believed to be more prone to obscurity compared to MSA, which may result in a text that lacks "reliability." According to Khalaila,

“[r]eliability of the translated version may decrease when colloquial Arabic dialects used for the items in the translated Arabic version are unclear or less well known by other respondents who know and understand different colloquial Arabic dialects” (2013, p. 367). If the resultant translation lacks clarity due to the use of dialect, this proves the challenging nature of dialect translation, regardless of the genre of the text under study. Moreover, as pointed out by (Cappuccio, 2011):

Translating dialect presents additional problems compared to standard language, as some words or phrases appear to be so embedded in the source culture that whatever substitute might be found in the target language may never fully render the actual meaning. (p. 51)

Therefore, like in poetry translation, irony translation, and other similarly challenging translation genres translation loss becomes a de facto. Moreover, the complexity of the translation situation at hand reaches its peak when the text type combines humor with dialect. According to Tuzzikriah & Ardi, “Translating humorous texts is not easy, translators need experience and knowledge of humor from different languages and cultures” (2021, p. 330). With an eye to the aforementioned realities, the translator has to cope with the two challenges simultaneously; the dialect translation and the humor genre as well.

When a translation loss is bound to occur, translators may palliate the loss with different strategies such as communicative translation, where the translator seeks to “produce the same effect on the TL readers as was produced by the original on the SL readers” (Newmark, *Approaches to translation (Language Teaching methodology series)*, 1981, p. 22). Accordingly, in the present research, the effect that translators seek to transmit or replicate between texts is the humorous effect. (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995) have discussed two general types of translation, “direct” and “oblique.” The former includes procedures of borrowing, calque, and literal, and the latter accounts for transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. In this research, the MSA translation leans more towards using methods of the “direct” approach, mainly the literal translation procedure. On the other hand, the Egyptian dialect translation demonstrates consistent decisions in most of

the examples, by opting for procedures of “equivalence” and “adaptation” in the translation process of humor. Equivalence here is defined as “a procedure in which the same situation is replicated as in the original but different wording is used”, and adaptation is a method that is “used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown to the TL culture.” (32 - 39).

According to previous literature of the past few decades, a clear overlap in methodology and data categorization can be seen when dealing with the translation of humor (Ageli (2014); Alkadi (2010); Abomoati (2019); Abu-Ya’qoub (2013); Yahiaoui, Hijazi, Fattah (2020)). Practitioners would generally classify the data of humorous cases under two main groups; linguistic and cultural/reference-based humor, a general spectrum under which falls several subcategories varying from one research to another. (Ageli, 2014) explains:

It has been found that humour occurs at the various levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and culture. The translator would have to decide what to keep and when to break away from the linguistic and cultural domination of the source language so that natural discourse may be produced and the communicative objective of the message may be preserved. (p. 417)

In his research, Ageli concludes that in linguistic humor, opting for “formal equivalence” is quite achievable when dealing with humor between two languages that have an overlap of pragmatic and semantic meanings, as long as the utterance does not infringe the norms of the source language by revealing shocking discrepancies with the TL. Whereas in the case of cultural humor, Ageli suggests it to be more efficient to replace the entire ST utterance with TL humor, since the ST would only be translatable if the cultural features of the utterance held a universal “currency.” However, what if the examined utterance has both linguistic and cultural attributes? These instances discard the idea of a dichotomous analysis method; such as formal and semantic, and perhaps, call for a method more lenient.

Researchers examining humor translation often adopt a similar method of analyses that deals with the text function, which is also present in Ageri's work, "the translator being the mediator is required to create approximately a similar impact and response to that of the original environment" (2014, p. 425). Likewise, (Alkadi, 2010), who is himself a translation practitioner, has made some notable remarks in laying the grounds for this audiovisual translation research. According to Alkadi (2010, pp. 159-160), relying on Skopos theory is warranted by the following motives: "skopos theory, unlike the equivalence approach, avoids the trap of looking for equivalence. It concentrates rather on the spirit of the source text's message while at the same time taking into account the skopos or the functions that the translation aims at." Alkadi also points out several arguments as to why dialects are a convoluted subject in translation. He describes some major obstacles such as "difficulty to reading dialect on screen and even finding an appropriate target dialect" (2010, p. 30). He also believes that finding such dialect implies a "recreation" of the source characters, after which ensues another issue of finding the balance between the target character creation and maintaining the appropriate amount of colloquiality of the source character.

Just as a dialect can be a liability to translate, it can also provide a plethora of options to tackle the translation of humor. The same idea applies when dealing with the translation of other forms of media from English into Arabic. As discussed by (Abuarrah & Istetih, 2016), "A language dialect decreases the distance between advertisements and consumers" (pp. 23-24). This affiliation is achieved when replacing standard English form with an Arabic dialect form so that the resultant text appears to have been made in an "Arabic language setting", which eventually makes the consumer feel closer to the medium. It is no surprise that there is a new and upcoming trend of using colloquial Arabic varieties in the translation of animated films and cartoons in the Arab world, especially the Egyptian dialect, as it is one of the most widely-understood varieties throughout the Arab world. As (Giovanni, 2017, p. 3) explains in her research discussing Disney in the Arab world, "with its abundance of jokes and puns", Egyptian dialect has the ability of conveying humorous texts and transferring contemporary foreign culture in animated films into one which correlates with the popular culture in the Arab world.

Opposite to Alkadi's views, (Abomoati, 2019) advocates for the use of dialect, Egyptian dialect in particular, in translating humor for three reasons. The first is due to the nature of the series in Abomoati's research; *Fuller House (2016)*, being full of daily life scenarios. "Modern Standard Arabic is a language variety used in written communication rather than in daily life" (2010, p. 7). Consequently, she deems it suitable to choose dialect in humor translation for "successfully translating the humorous effect." Abomoati's second and third rationales deal with both the universality of Netflix in the past few years, which provides easy accessibility to Egyptian dubbed series and films regardless of your region as a viewer, as well as the reputation of Egyptian film and TV industries having made several prominent productions in the Comedy genre in the Arab world. Abomoati also identifies different translation strategies conferring to the type of humor the text utterance had been branded as in her paper. Ranging from language-based humor; puns, wordplay, taboo language, to reference-based humor, including culture, knowledge-based, and references to the visual image from the audiovisual scene, her strategies can be summarized into "literal translation", "adaptation", "substitution with the same stylistic device or with another", "omission", "paraphrasing" and "changing" the target, situation, or what the joke arouses in the targeted audience.

Abu-Ya'qoub's (2013) study explores another predicament in humor translation studies. Her research discusses the various types of audience groups in humor TV shows; such as age group, literacy, culture, and cognitive level, and how these factors can affect the type of translation implemented in humorous TV shows. She explains: "The sense of humor to children is positively different from that of those who are adult or even the older generations. An example of this is the verbal irony. Verbal irony is humorous for adults but not for young children who lack the cognitive ability to understand the intended humor of the spoken or written irony" (2013, p. 7). Abu-Ya'qoub concludes by suggesting a number of translation strategies varying between formal and dynamic contingent upon the type of humor used in the text, cultural conditions, the audience's literacy and age group.

Much like several other pioneering researchers on humor translation in TV shows, (Yahiaoui, Hijazi, & Fattah, 2020) conduct a thorough comparison between Egyptian

vernacular and MSA, and attempt to uncover the outcome of “language variety and translation modality on rendering satire.” Owing to their research, a number of challenges in humor translation are revealed. Due to the palpable variance between the two languages involved in the translation, the translator has to overcome linguistic and cultural challenges. They posit that challenges in humor translation stem from the “difficulty of spotting the humorous element as it requires a deep understanding of the text, show, characters, relationships and the plot.” This remark stresses on, not only the importance of the translator’s literacy and competence, but more so on his/her comprehension of the sociocultural, political and historical grounding.

By virtue of the mentioned previous literature on the challenges encountered in the translation of humor and the approaches and analysis methods considered in this field of language transfer, the present research aims to examine the types of humor used in *Toy Story* (1995), identify the linguistic and cultural constraints in translating the humor in several instances, compare dialect with MSA translated versions, and assess the quality of the Arabic translations depending on the investigation of the available options provided by the Egyptian vernacular translation and the MSA one.

One perspective that is investigated in this study is language-based humor, which encompasses humorous instances that are dependent on the linguistic code properties of the language used in the textual entity used to convey the joke. As (Chiaro D. , *The language of jokes: Analyzing verbal play*, 2006) explains, the task of translating language-dependent humor can be extremely thorny. This is due to the fact that the existence of two languages with identical or similar enough linguistic code properties is highly improbable (p. 37). And, the case is even more evident between the source and target languages dealt with in the present research; English and Arabic.

This study also touches upon the issue of translating culture-specific humor. According to Newmark, “translation problems caused by culture-specific words arise due to the fact that they are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned and, therefore, are related to the context of a cultural tradition” (2003, p. 78). Since the case study deals with the translation of texts originally aimed towards American speaking audience and into

texts to be presented to Arabic speaking audience; two different cultures with minimum correspondence, instances of cultural-clashes are bound to happen. When the two languages involved in the translation of a joke possess even a little shared cultural ground with each other, although the target version will not always be perfectly clear to the recipient, it will at least bear some resemblance, content-wise, to the message in the original text. However, many jokes play on events, states and situations which are peculiar to their culture of origin. Naturally, such jokes create serious problems, not as far as the technicalities of translation are concerned, especially if no punning is involved, but for the recipient's understanding (Chiaro D. , 1992, pp. 80-81).

2.2 Subtitling and Dubbing

Since the present research explores humor in an audiovisual medium, it only seems logical to describe what subtitling and dubbing are first and for most. Subtitling is identified as “the incorporation of a written text (subtitles) in a target language (TL) on an original film in a source language (SL) presented via a screen, where the subtitles are synchronized with the screened dialogue” (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). As mentioned in 1.2 in the introduction of this research, the first issue that subtitlers face when translating audiovisuals from English into Arabic is related to dealing with language varieties, or as explained above, the diglossic nature of Arabic. One can tell quite a huge deal about another individual from the language they speak. According to Trudgill, “[t]he internal differentiation of human societies is reflected in their languages” (2000, p. 23). In other words, an interlocutor's background, geographical region, and education can be reflected through his/her language. Nevertheless, these areas of distinction practically vanish in written texts, along with their phonetic, syntactical, and morphological specificities that are discernable in spoken discourse. This indicates that the only way to learn about and comprehend the characters' backgrounds in a subtitled audiovisual medium is through the translated dialogue.

The film setting, characters' background, the dialect, and the social class shown in the movie *Toy Story* (1995) will be known to American audiences, and to some other degree, to the wide ranging of other English-speaking audiences. On the other hand, when subtitled, the same film may not be understood or appreciated in the same way by

audiences that speak Arabic. This is due to the fact that most of these features disappear in subtitling, more so when the films are subtitled into modern standard Arabic. This poses a challenge to the translators in terms of how much colloquial, or common everyday language, can be reflected in MSA. As highlighted by (Hervey & Higgins, 2002, p. 168), printed translation allows for “occasional additions which might compensate the important effects produced by a dialect” to be added in written texts. However, due to space and time constraints, this cannot be accomplished on screen or in an audiovisual medium.

As defined by (Chaume, 2012) dubbing is a process that “involves translating and lip-syncing the script of an audiovisual text, which is then performed by actors directed by a dubbing director and, where available, with advice from a linguistic consultant or dubbing assistant” (p. 109). Moreover, obstacles related to having language varieties or cultural constraints in the translation of audiovisual media when subtitled may be bridged by opting for the dubbing method instead. For instance, (Ferrari, 2006, p. 124) maintains that texts can be made culturally and linguistically specific through dubbing, which in its essence, transmits accents, dialects, and cultural specifics into their suitable corresponding items for the target audience, as well as reconfigures them for new audiences in different circumstances. Several instances in the data analysis of this study demonstrate that rather than subtitling, dubbing humorous texts by means of dialect or colloquial language is the key to achieve a more successful translation in terms of functionality and effectuality which is unquestionably due to the metalinguistic and phonetic traits accompanying speech discourse. However, it is argued that this option may not be commercially favorable, since dubbing into dialects does not cater to a wide range of an Arabic-speaking audience who might not fully comprehend the presented dialect, at least not as MSA, for instance, would do.

This study investigates the extent to which subtitling may be replaced by dubbing in colloquial Arabic or, more precisely, how dubbing can be used to address the specific theoretical and practical issues with subtitling that were raised in 1.2 in the preceding chapter. This is accomplished by observing the technical challenges associated with both dubbing and subtitling into Egyptian dialect as well as MSA. After that, by highlighting

some of the syntactic and semantic distinctions between the Egyptian dialect and MSA, this research examines the processes of the many varieties of Arabic and how they operate. The purpose of this is to expose the difficulties that underlie these two kinds. In order to understand whether dubbing into dialects can be financially feasible or not, the research investigates the effectiveness of some of the audiovisual samples from the movie that have been translated into Arabic, whether dubbed or subtitled into Egyptian dialect or MSA. Yet, it is crucial to understand the background of Arabic dubbing before moving on.

Arabic-speaking countries have used dubbing since 1963. Al-Fanni, situated in Cyprus and established as a radio production firm in 1963, was one of the first production companies, if not the first, to subtitle media programs into Arabic, according to (Maluf, 2005). A voiced adaptation of a Jane Eyre BBC radio episode served as the subject of the first experiment. Maluf claims that Arabic dubbing of the video came afterwards including works which range from children cartoons such *Sindbad* and *Zeina Wa Nahhoul* to Mexican or Latin American soaps. Later on, the first lengthy feature film to be dubbed, *Police Academy*, was shown on Beirut's MTV, where dubbing showed to be lacking in certain aspects. According to Alkadi (2010, p. 48), "barriers to dubbing [into Arabic] can be summarized under three main categories. They relate to culture, aesthetics, and lip synchronization which also has three sub-barriers related to phonetics, content and character".

It can be claimed that culture frequently serves as a barrier in the audiovisual sector in general and in Arabic dubbing in particular. This is due to the possibility of alienating both the viewer and the characters due to a cultural gap that is not or cannot be bridged. Also, this might lead to the audience being exposed to well-known performers portraying characters that are reciting dialogue from a source book that is not representative of their culture. In this regard, the failure of the *Police Academy* may be explained by the cultural issue. Maluf explains:

The reasons for the success of the Mexican soap and the failure of the otherwise very popular *Police Academy* film series to attract a wide

audience in Arabic were cultural. The plots and dialogues of the former were culturally acceptable to Arab audiences as possible Arab stories with Arab actors, while the latter were seen as a contrived translation of plots and dialogues that had no bearing on Arab reality. (2005, p. 13)

According to Abou Samah, who was quoted in Maluf (2005), even the Latin American works which were on the successful side of the dubbing projects on MTV required further editing in order for them to meet the cultural expectations of the Arab-speaking audiences. On the other hand, according to Maluf, “subtitles however carry none of the pretenses of dubbing. Rather, they act as a constant reminder that the film or television program being watched is foreign” (2005, p. 14).

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Methodology

The research presented is both descriptive and evaluative in nature. Descriptive in the sense that instances of humor were extracted from both MSA and colloquial translations, and then, surveyed and classified according to House's 1997 model as either an overt or a covert translation. In addition to that, the study determines the types of humor used in *Toy Story* (1995), as well as the linguistic and cultural constraints in the translation. This research is also evaluative in the way that a translation quality assessment was made on both the MSA and colloquial translations at the micro as well as the macro levels based on the analysis of the available options provided by both versions. Finally, the researcher employed House's 1997 model of translation quality assessment on the data collected, followed by an in-depth analysis of its methodical approach.

3.2 Data Collection

The data was extracted from the first animated film (1995) of the American franchise *Toy Story*, the description of which had been further elaborated on above. The data extraction was done after analyzing the original version of the film with the source language (English) text dialogs, which were confirmed on the website Dailyscript.com. The MSA translated subtitles were confirmed on Netflix, and the (Egyptian/colloquial) translation and dub was sourced from a Hard Copy DVD of the film.

3.3 Analysis Methods

Instances of different types of humor were collected from the film in question, and then sorted into two major categories in conformity with their nature. The first category deals with language-based humor instances like wordplays and appellation, and the latter accounts for culture-based humor as the case is with instances that deal with culturally loaded references and swearwords. House's 1997 model of translation quality assessment was then applied on the collected data, along with a comprehensive analysis of its methodical approach. The application of House's model involved the production of a

textual outline of all humorous instances within the case study in the ST as well as both TT versions, ascribed to either a covert or an overt category. The final step was implementing the achieved results in the quality assessment of the translated humorous texts on each episodic instance as well as the overall text for each TT version.

Several translation scholars criticize non-quantitative translation quality assessment models to be incapable of establishing valid conclusions, whether a TT achieves a particular standard of translation quality or not. According to (Williams, 2001), they do not provide fixed weighting and quantification methods. However, (House, Translation quality assessment: A model revisited, 1997) seems to acknowledge these remarks, and she accepts that quality as a concept in translation is problematic, stating that it is perplexing to decide whether an assessment does meet the “demands of objectivity”, as assessments are subjective in nature.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

4.1 Language-based Humor

Language-based humor refers to jokes, puns, and other forms of humor that rely on the specific linguistic properties of a language. This category encompasses humorous instances that are dependent on the linguistic code properties of the language used in the textual entity to convey the joke. This type of humor often involves wordplay, such as homophones, homonyms, or double entendres, where the humor is derived from the multiple meanings or sounds of a word or phrase. Within the film under scrutiny, language-based humor is an essential component of the humorous effect of the text and which can be found in numerous instances at a micro level. This frequent array brands the overall text as a characterizing feature and contributes to stipulating the examined film as one that belongs to the comedy genre.

Language-based humor can be a challenge to translate because the humor often relies on the specific linguistic and cultural context of the source language. Translating this type of humor requires the translator to not only have a deep understanding of the source and target languages but also to be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic differences between them. However, and aside from its challenges, language-based humor can also be a powerful tool for communication and connection between people of different cultures and languages. It can help to break down cultural barriers and foster a sense of shared understanding and appreciation for the nuances of language and culture.

One of the primary challenges in language-based humor translation is preserving the humor while adapting it to the target language and culture. To achieve this, translators use a range of strategies, such as adaptation, omission, addition, and explanation. Adaptation involves replacing the source language humor with a similar one that works in the target language. Omission involves removing the humor altogether, while addition involves adding new humor that works in the target language. Explanation involves providing a note or a footnote to explain the source language humor to the target audience.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the study of language-based humor translation, with researchers exploring various aspects of this complex phenomenon. The following studies provide an overview of the key findings and trends in this area of research. Translation studies have explored various aspects of language-based humor, including the challenges involved in translating jokes, puns, and other forms of humor that rely on the specific linguistic properties of the source language into another language while maintaining their humorous and communicative effects.

In a research conducted by (Zhang, 2015), several strategies used by Chinese translators to translate English puns into Chinese were explored. The study found that adaptation was the most effective strategy, followed by explanation, omission, and addition. (Cao, Mansor, Ang, & Ujum, 2022) examined the translation of humor in subtitles for the television show *The Big Bang Theory* from English into Chinese. Their research findings disclosed that the translators utilized various strategies to preserve the humor, including adaptation, omission, and explanation.

(Ajabbad, 2019) analyzed the translation of humor in the Arabic subtitles of the American Sitcom, *Friends*. The study also confirmed that the translators have to possess a high level of linguistic competence in both languages, in addition to the flexibility in translation where one has to apply a range of translation strategies to maintain the humor. Yahiaoui et al. (2020) investigated the translation of humor in the subtitles of the American animated television show *The Simpsons* from English into Arabic. The study found that a high level of cultural competence is required to maintain the humor in the subtitles.

Overall, these studies highlight the challenges involved in translating language-based humor and the importance of using effective translation strategies and both the linguistic as well as the cultural competence to achieve successful translation. They also demonstrate the diversity of approaches to translating humor and the need for further research to develop more effective translation strategies for this complex phenomenon.

As have been established earlier in this thesis, the humor genre contains different forms of humor, and the difficulty of translation depends on several factors, including the type of humor used. For instance, humor that revolves around universal aspects of everyday

life is indubitably easier to convey across cultures and languages than language- or culture- specific humor. Therefore, if we were to consider the more-or-less universal humor on one end of a spectrum, language dependent humor such as puns, wordplays, appellation or epithets would fall on the far opposite side of that spectrum of translatability as it is subjected to the linguistic properties of both languages involved. It is also contingent upon the formal as well as the semantic structures, the possibilities and the limitations provided by these languages.

Humorous instances included in this category are those which deal with language specific characteristics, with two main subcategories considered; wordplay and the use of appellations.

4.1.1 Wordplay

Wordplay is a type of verbal humor that involves the creative use of language to create puns, jokes, and other forms of linguistic play. It is a popular form of humor in many cultures and languages, and has been the subject of several areas other than translation studies, such as linguistics, psychology, and literature. Delabastita has presented a rather inclusive definition of the phenomenon in discussion, stating that a wordplay is a rhetorical device which occurs in a language where expressions that possess similar formal or textual structures can present different meanings: “more or less similar forms conveying more or less different meanings” (Delabastita, 1996, p. 128). When considering the translation and translatability of puns, Delabastita also advises that:

One obviously needs to rely on an operational definition of the pun, including criteria for describing and comparing puns in terms of (say) their formal structure, semantic structure, underlying linguistic mechanism, textual function, and/or any other aspect deemed relevant to comparison. (1994, p. 232)

Amongst several other factors introduced by Koller (1979), as cited in (Hatim & Munday, 2019), which may apply to the translation of wordplay, are the source language and target language code features, possibilities, and limitations. In accordance with the

aforementioned, it is undeniable that puns reveal the language code property limitations between the ST and TT in question.

The following literature provides an overview of the key findings and trends in the research on wordplay. One area of research on wordplay has focused on the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms involved in creating and understanding puns and other forms of wordplay. For example, (Giora, 2003) proposed the "relevance theory" of puns, which suggests that puns are understood when they activate multiple mental spaces that are relevant to the context of the pun. Other studies have examined the role of working memory and attention in the processing of puns and other forms of wordplay (Coulson & Wu, 2005). Overall, as suggested by the previous studies, wordplay is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has important cognitive, linguistic, developmental, and social implications.

In the present research, an example on wordplays is found in the scene where “Woody” pretends to partake in a pistol duel with the drawing board toy “Etch” and the pun word “draw” is then used twice in that context, which is a play on words in the source language. Draw here could mean either to sketch or to pull out a weapon.

Whereas in MSA, this particular pun cannot be conveyed with one expression, as there is no single word that can deliver both meanings. In very few cases, the translation of a pun can be compensated with another pun in the same context, and this is how the colloquial translation version dealt with one of the pun instances in this example. However, as any other translation issue, several translation strategies or procedures ought to be followed to deal with wordplays, whether it is to omit or retain the wordplay.

To illustrate with examples from the text, instances will be given first in the source language, and then in the target language transcribed according to the IPA system, followed by the literal translation of it back into English.

Table (1)*Wordplay in Dialect*

Example 1.1		Example 2.1	
ST	Hey Etch! Draw!	ST	You've been working on that draw.
TT	ʔitʃ, ʔidʕrab!	TT	bititmarran min wara:ja.
Literal	Etch, strike!	Literal	You've been practicing behind my back.

The puns in the ST in the Examples 1.1 and 2.1 carry two functions, a humorous and a communicative one. They both communicate to the reader what is being said by the characters in that scene, and, if the audience have the cognitive level required to comprehend puns and wordplays, then, they may find humor in such witty utterances.

In the Egyptian dialect translation in Example 1.1, the translation loss of the pun word “draw” was palliated through replacing it with another pun; strike. In both English and in Egyptian Dialect, the word strike can denote to the stroke of the classic feather pen or to the stroke of a brush, as well as to striking someone with one’s hand or with a weapon. Therefore, the humorous function and the communicative function were both maintained in that translation.

In Example 2.1, the Dialect translation omits the pun entirely in favor of maintaining the naturalness of the TT while still delivering the same communicative function, that of practicing or working on something. The translation also adapts to the popular culture of the TT audience by opting for a colloquial expression which in itself encompasses a playful light-hearted tone that is frequently used when joking around between friends. Therefore, despite the pun being omitted in the TT, the humorous function was properly conveyed, perhaps not by pun or wordplay humor, but by reference humor (the utterance is a reference to Adel Emam’s quote from *The School of Mischief*). The dialect translation in this instance upholds House’s remark: “In covert translation, the translator will attempt to re- create an equivalent speech event. Consequently, the function of a covert translation is to reproduce in the target text the function the original has in its frame and discourse world” (House, 2014, p. 14).

According to House’s model of assessment, the above translations fall under the covert translation category; although the TT does not match the ST in terms of form and meaning, they both meet in terms of text function. Scholars who believe humor to be translatable (Chiaro D. , 2004), (Delabastita, 1994), and (Vandaele, 2010) all agree that this is only achieved when the ST function is achieved in the TT.

Table (2)

Wordplay in MSA

Example 1.2		Example 2.2	
ST	Hey Etch! Draw!	ST	You’ve been working on that draw.
TT	ʔintabih ja ʔitʃ! ʔursum!	TT	ʔitʃ, kunta taʃmalu ʃala: tilkar rasma.
Literal	Lookout Etch! Sketch!	Literal	Etch, you’ve been working on that sketch.

In the MSA version, it is evident that the translator leans more towards literal translation as opposed to free on the overall strategy spectrum, which would be classified in this research under the category of overt translation. An overt translation does not hide the fact that it is indeed a translation; however, the ST function cannot be met in this type of translation (Vallès, 2014, p. 58).

The Arabic translation of the pun word in Examples 1.2 and 2.2 had entirely discarded with the double-meaning, leaving the word “draw” to denote only painting or sketching alone. Subsequently, the MSA resultant text loses the humorous function in both instances; it only retains the communicative function in the Example 2.2. Whereas in 1.2, the communicative function is not entirely transmitted, in light of the fact that it would make no sense to ask someone to be alert and sketch all of a sudden.

According to Thawabteh, there are several channels that need to be observed in the context of audiovisual translation in order to deliver the communicative function appropriately, and these channels comprise of:

- [N]amely (1) the verbal auditory channel, e.g. dialogue, background voices, and sometimes lyrics; (2) the non-verbal auditory channel, e.g.

music, natural sound and sound effects; (3) the verbal visual channel, e.g. superimposed titles and written signs on the screen; and (4) the non-verbal visual channel, e.g. picture composition and flow. (2012, p. 5)

The translation loss in 1.2 and 2.2 is more evident when the text is accompanied with regard to this “non-verbal visual channel” which revolves around the Wild West’s deadly cowboy game “quick draw” between the characters Etch and Woody in the film, since the pun-free expression “sketch” used in both TT instances bears little to no meaning in the visual context of a gunfight.

Although (House, 2014, p. 112) states that an overt translation presents the target audience with a chance “to appreciate the original textual function, albeit at a distance”, this can hardly be applicable to wordplays. Judging by the two standards adopted to assess the translation quality, that of conveying the communicative and the humorous functions of the original text, the dialect translations perform better in the majority of cases. Because in the case of wordplays and puns, an overt rendering fails to convey the multifunction or connotative meaning of a single expression.

4.1.2 Appellation

Appellation, titles, or forms of address can be deployed in a manner that contributes to the humorous effect in a text (Dyrel, 2010, p. 214). Using appellation as a tool for humor seems to be a recurring phenomenon in films that target children. In the film at hand, appellations can range from the characters’ given names to labels and epithets uttered by the characters in the film in moments of mockery, anger, or disrespect.

The majority of the Toy Story (1995) characters were given names which are descriptive or related in some way to the characters themselves. For instance, the astronaut toy Buzz Lightyear was named after one of the two American astronauts to ever land on the moon, Buzz Aldrin, and the surname “Lightyear” is a space term. There are also more straightforward character names such as the protagonist Woody whom is called so because he is a Toy made of wooden material. The piggy bank toy “Hamm” is a pig. Slinky Dog is a toy dog with a plastic front and hindquarters and has a metal slinky as his

middle. Rex is a Tyrannosaurus Rex and Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head are potatoes with just a head as their body. The names were mostly transliterated into Arabic except for a few.

The following example is an illustration of the most successful case of translating one of the primary characters' names from the film in question, in terms of humorous function. In the ST, one of the characters is given the name Buzz Lightyear. This name was translated into "ba:z jat'i:r;" (Buzz Flies) in the colloquial translation as well as the MSA one. The surname is not only selected to fit the lip flaps for the character's name from the ST, but, it gives an ironic remark which incorporates more humor into the name since the astronaut toy Buzz Lightyear has useless wings attached to his back and cannot fly, which is hinted at multiple occasions in the film. This translation, which is unanimous in the Egyptian dialect version and the MSA alike, can be classified as covert according to House's 1996 model of translation quality assessment due to its catering to the humorous function of the text and detachment to the original form of the ST.

The translation of names however parts ways with many other characters. Taking (Mr. Potato Head) and (Mrs. Potato Head) as direct examples of this variance ultimately points out a difference in the achieved humorous effect as a consequence of translating honorifics in colloquial and MSA. In the dialect translation, they are rendered as "bat'a:t'is" and "mada:m bat'a:t'is", which translate back into (Potato) and (Madam Potato) respectively. These TT honorifics in the names are well matched with the popular Arab culture, particularly Egyptian culture, where the married man is called by his first name among his friends, and his wife as the "Madam." This exact interrelation situation is depicted by the characters in the film. The favoring of the name "bat'a:t'is" (a colloquial way of saying Potato) over the compound version "Potato Head" in the dialect translation makes the TT less elaborate or forced, and more natural sounding to the target audience. If we were to consider the prime functions of the characters' names as being descriptive of the characters themselves, and being familiar to the target audience, therefore, the dialect translation can be categorized under covert, where the function of the text is maintained at the expense of the form and structure of the ST.

The MSA version, however, renders those names as “ʔassajjid raʔs albatʕa:tʕa:” and “ʔssajjida raʔs albatʕa:tʕa:”, the literal translation of which is exactly as it is in the ST. In light of the fact that the film in question is of a light hearted genre and is concerned with daily life scenarios, such precise translation of the honorifics (Mr. and Mrs.) fail to depict said ambience and playfulness. Such expressions can only be seen in formal documents in Arabic or in extremely formal settings. The compound name was also translated word for word as “raʔs albatʕa:tʕa:.” This overt translation of the names shifts the text from an everyday joyful setting into a more formal and a rather detached one. This formal rendering hampers with the comedic discourse that takes place between these rigidly named characters, and ultimately dispensing with the humorous function that is native to the film.

In the same scope, not only the names but also the form of address between the characters is a core linguistic feature that is utilized to convey simple and unsophisticated humor in media texts which target children. Considering the genre of the text in question, the use of informal or unconventional ways of address between the characters elevates the level of humor in comparison to the use formal appellation. Moreover, it is important to note that what is considered informal for an appellation in one language might not travel with the same level of informality across other languages if translated overtly.

The following table demonstrates how one translation choice of rendering ways of address can encapsulate the interrelation between the characters better than the other.

Table (3)
Appellation 1

Example 3.1: Dialect		Example 3.2: MSA	
ST	Hey, Sarge.	ST	Hey, Sarge.
TT	ʔitʃ, ʔidʕrab!	TT	Marhaban ʔajuhal ʕari:f.
Literal	Hey, Sarge.	Literal	Hello, Sergeant.

In the colloquial translation version, the type of translation is classified under covert, where the form and register used in appellation are manipulated in favor of the function

of the script, hence, making the resultant text closer to the target audience in terms of relevance and familiarity. In 3.1, the word “Sarge” which is the informal way of addressing a Sergeant in the English language, was translated into “ʃawijʃ”; an equally informal way of addressing a person of a sergeant or corporal rank in Egyptian Arabic. Example 3.1 maintains both the communicative function of the ST as well as the humorous function complemented by the sense of familiarity that the abbreviation brings about. Moreover, it can be argued that the translation choice in 3.1 is the more equivalent one in terms of reflecting the actual interrelation between the characters, considering that the speaker here is Sheriff Woody, and a Sheriff ranking officer is more likely to speak in a familiar demeanor towards subordinates or lower ranking officers. On the other hand, the MSA translation in Example 3.2 fails to reflect that social connection between the characters, loses the humorous function due to the use of the more formal and full expression “Sergeant” and delivers only the communicative function.

The table below presents examples on how opting for ways of address that are popularized in the target culture would perform better in the humorous genre.

Table (4)
Appellation 2

Example 4.1: Dialect		Example 4.2: MSA	
ST	Hey, Gas Dude!	ST	Hey, Gas Dude!
TT	law samaħt ja ʔustʕa!	TT	marħaban ja masʔul maħatʕʕat albanzi:n!
Literal	Excuse me, sir!	Literal	Hello, gas station manager!

The same can be said regarding Example 4.1 where the expression “Gas dude” was rendered into “ʔustʕa”, which is an informal form of address for calling out to any business or property owners, much like the word “sir” but substantially more informal.

Even though the term is popularized as a colloquial Egyptian expression, it is worth noting that the expression is borrowed from the word “ostād” which is the Persian for “Master.” Akin to the popular culture of English-speaking countries where people are less likely to call business owners by their full title of profession; e.g., “gas station manager”, and

instead opt for the appellation “sir, man, or dude” depending on the social setting, the same applies to the popular culture among Arabs.

The translation in Example 4.1 delivers the communicative function of the ST, and it also transmits the humorous function by reflecting the same level of informality and impoliteness that was there in the original text. Whereas in Example 4.2, the MSA translates that form of address overtly and only focuses on translating the communicative function alone. Be that as it may, it neglects the humorous function of the ST by being overly polite and inflexible.

The following table shows the different outcomes one can get from a covert translation, which delves into the cultural substitution strategy versus an overt one, that restricts itself from crossing that line.

Table (5)
Appellation 3

Example 5.1: Dialect		Example 5.2: MSA	
ST	Hi, there, little fellah!	ST	Hi, there, little fellah!
TT	ʔahlan ja katku:t, ʔizzajjak?	TT	Marhaban ʔajjuha sʕsʕadiqu sʕsʕayi:r.
Literal	Hi, there, little chick! How are you?	Literal	Hello, little friend.

The form of address “Little fellah” in Example 5 is an expression often employed in baby talk or child-directed speech, a mode of speech that is considered comical when used between adults in both source and TL popular cultures. This does indeed deliver the humorous effect especially when the addressee turns out to be a multi-legged monster that is twice his size.

In 5.1, the expression is translated into “katku:t” which is Arabic for “Chick” or a baby chicken, much equal to the appellation “little fellah” or “chap.” Although this translation, deviates from the ST form, it succeeds in maintaining the communicative function by conveying the same level of register between the interlocutors; it also retains the humorous function of the ST due to the use of an expression that is common in the popular

culture of the TT audience. On the contrary, while the MSA translation in 5.2 delivers the communicative function, part of the humorous function is lost as a consequence of the full adherence to the ST form, resulting in a stuffy and unbending speech manner.

The previous section examines several language-based humor cases under the subcategories of wordplay and appellation, and arrives at the realization that MSA translation, which in most of the examined extracts is regarded as overt based on House's 1997 model of translation quality assessment, often fails to convey the humorous function due to the limited options the nature of the language variety presents in this particular genre. The analysis of several examples also alludes to the fact that MSA translation was ineffective in completely transmitting the communicative function of the text.

On the other hand, the dialect version, and the "covert translation" according to House's model, proved to perform well in the language-based humor. Owing to the multifarious translation choices it provides in the genre of humor, dialect language frequently succeeds in transmitting the humorous function in all cases, and relatively, the communicative function along with it.

4.2 Culture-based Humor

The culture of an audience accounts for a massive part of the humor incorporated within a medium presented for any said culture. As pointed out by Martin & Ford, "[t]here are obviously important cultural influences on the way humor is used and the situations that are considered appropriate for laughter" (2018, p. 30). Due to the palpable contrast of both languages dealt with in the present research variance in cultural expectations is well foreseen. These languages being, English being from the Indo-European language family, and Arabic from the Semitic family.

As shown in the previous section, MSA, the overt translation, had shown to be less flexible in translating language-based humor, because of its formal nature. Whereas in the case of the Egyptian dialect, the covert translation, a more appropriate level of informality was achieved, aiding in the transmission of informal texts, that is, humor. The collected data have demonstrated that dialect translation is more capable in carrying humor onto an Arabic audience. In this section, the validity of overt and covert translation

will be tested in the context of culture-specific humor. This study divides culture-specific humor into two subcategories; cultural references and swearwords.

On the culture-based humor, an example was extracted from the scene where the cowboy toy “Woody” is pretending to get shot in a gunfight against the drawing board “Etch”, and says: “Fastest knobs in the west!” The character here replaces “hands” with “knobs” in reference to his addressee, the drawing board. The reference in this exchange is to the gun duel, an activity which was popular between cowboys and sheriffs in the Wild West.

The MSA translation retains most of this expression into Arabic “ʔanta ʔasraʔu lawḥati rasmin fil yarb” (literally: You’re the fastest drawing board in the west). This overt translation resulted in the loss of both the humorous and the communicative functions, since “The west” is a culture-specific expression which refers to the wild west; areas in the United States in a time period following the early settlements and the formation of small towns where cowboys, sheriffs and outlaws would partake in frequent gunfights. Such an expression would come across as anomalous to the average non-American audiences, let alone children.

Contrariwise, the Egyptian dialect translation omits “the west” to bring the scene closer to the popular culture of the target audience by translating it into “baʔet sari:ʔ wi mutamakken” (literally: You’re fast and skilled). Although this translation choice does not transfer the humorous function of the ST, due to the loss of the Wild West reference, it still fulfills the ST communicative function without being anomalous to the target audience.

4.2.1 Cultural References

Instances with cultural references, as the name suggests, require knowledge of the culture in question for the interpretation and the understanding of said culture, and ultimately, to reach an equivalent translation of the ST in the target locale. Equivalence is, in fact, influenced by a range of linguistic and cultural elements, and is hence always relative, as (Baker, 1992) puts it. Parallel to this, (Newmark, 1988) asserts that unless the TT recipient is imaginative, sensitive, and well-versed in the SL culture, the equivalent effect is less

plausible the more culturally specific a text is (p. 49). The question of equivalence is still up for debate, though, and it's unclear if culture, the translator, or the reader is to fault.

The equivalent effect principle has limitations and is not an operational or practical concept, according to (Miao, 2000, p. 204). In the same way, Pym elaborates on the topic of equivalence:

Gone is the kind of re-creative equivalence that was once allowed for by the hunt for the natural nuance; gone is the directional creativity by which translators consciously introduced the new. Instead, equivalence returns to ensure the imposition of controlled patterns on all cultures. And it does so at a time when the metalanguage of equivalence has lost its exploratory and critical force. (2007, p. 291)

Furthermore, as MSA rather than colloquial is typically the language variety employed for subtitling into Arabic, the TT would mostly fall under overt translation. There are linguistic limitations on the translation of SL culture-specific references and the humor included within those entities due to the palpable distinctions between Arabic and English and the cultures of their speakers in general, as well as the MSA's incapacity to cater to the popular culture of the TT audience, after all, it is not the language variety employed in daily life scenarios.

Adversely, a covert translation provides more freedom in dealing with culturally loaded expressions due to the fact that it is not restricted to the form, semantic or syntactic structure of the ST, but rather, its main objective is delivering the function of the text. However, it is worth noting that a translator may transmit the "perlocutional" function of the text at hand (which is eliciting a similar response in the TT audience as it had been done in the ST audience) but not the same communicative and still be successful in his/her translation. After all, the TT communicative function does not necessarily entail the exact ST one, as Alkadi comments:

[A] TT does not initiate an offer of information in a clearly reversible way.
This means that the function of the translatum in the target culture is not

necessarily the same in the source culture. It is expected to function in a new language and culture. (2010, p. 18)

With regard to culture in translation, according to Thomas (1998), the achievements of ancient civilizations were the result of a clash of cultures and ideas, thus, translators should be faithful to the original text and translate it precisely as is without making any changes in order for the target culture to be able to perceive things it in a new way. Thomas also adds that:

Translators have an important role to play in introducing different cultures to each other and in provoking a healthy, creative and potentially fruitful clash of cultures. They have to select and translate texts which show us that ours is not the only way of looking at the world and in this way we may be persuaded to take a fresh look at our most cherished traditions and perceptions and rethink them. (1998, p. 107)

The fact that the examined text is aimed primarily at children, who are not expected to have sufficient knowledge of foreign cultures, makes the translation task even more perplexing. (Asghari & Salmani, 2016) point out that in cases of culture-specific language, the translator has to either choose to make their text informative, or to opt for an easy-readability:

On the one hand, if the translation is target text oriented, then the readers (children) will be deprived of a foreign culture and world knowledge. On the other hand, if it is source text oriented, then understanding unfamiliar atmosphere of the source text culture will be difficult or even impossible for them. (p. 965)

However, given that the function of the excerpts under study is to deliver a humorous ambience and a light-hearted atmosphere, and that the medium used leaves no room for the explanation of foreign concepts and references, it is anticipated that the priority will be given to easy-readability.

The two examples below contain culturally loaded expressions. The examples display how the translation choice affected the way the comedic aspect and the message content had been delivered across two different cultures.

Table (6)
Cultural References 1

Example 6.1: Dialect		Example 6.2: MSA	
ST	What are you looking at, ya hockey puck?!	ST	What are you looking at, ya hockey puck?!
TT	betbos ^s ʕala ʔeh ja ʕabi:t ^t ʔinta kama:n?!	TT	ʔila:ma tanð ^s uru ja fard ^s alhoki: alʔahmaq?!
Literal	What are you looking at, you too, you idiot?!	Literal	What are you looking at, you stupid hockey puck?!

In the Egyptian dialect translation, we can notice the omission of culturally loaded expressions, such as the deletion of one of the toys' names; "hockey puck" in Example 6.1. Ice Hockey is an ice-skating western game almost exclusive to Canada and the US. The hockey puck is the object used as the "ball" in this sport. While the game itself might not be peculiar for non-western audience, it certainly can be so when this foreign target audience comprises of children. Additionally, the loaning of this expression itself would seem intrusive in colloquial Arabic and it would break the natural flow of the text. Moreover, the character utters the words "ya hockey puck" in an aggressive, almost derogatory manner, which was covertly translated in Egyptian into "ja ʕabi:t^t"; a popular culture expression in colloquial Arabic used in everyday language which literally means "you idiot." This pragmatic equivalence pertains the tone of the original text, hence transmitting the rudeness as well as the humorous load of the ST unit.

The retaining of all culture-specific items in the ST and the decision of translating them overtly into the TT is apparent in the MSA version of the translation. In Example 6.2, while the culture specific item "hockey puck" remained in the TT, the translator added the term "alʔahmaq" (literally: stupid) to deliver a similarly angry attitude to the expression. And although this expression sounds archaic when added to a playful and humorous context, the translation decision successfully salvages the anomaly previously

presented in the TT had the translation strategy been completely overt, therefore, the humorous function is conveyed through expressing rudeness through the translated unit. That being said, the fact that the expression “hockey puck” is present in the Arabic translation alone is alien and disruptive enough for the target audience.

In the next table are examples of two different approaches to translating culture and context-specific expressions, and how each translation choice contributes to the ST intended function and appear to the target audience.

Table (7)
Cultural References 2

Example 7.1: Dialect		Example 7.2: MSA	
ST	Fastest Knobs in the west.	ST	Fastest Knobs in the west.
TT	baʔet sari:ʕ wi mutamakken!	TT	ʔanta ʔasraʕu lawhati rasmin fil ʔarb.
Literal	You’re fast and skilled!	Literal	You’re the fastest drawing board in the west.

In 7.1, the Egyptian version decided to omit “the west” and was sufficed with conveying the humorous function of the text. The expression “the west” is both culturally loaded and context-specific; “the west” to Arabs denotes to the foreign western communities, whereas “The West” in the ST refers to “the wild west”, which makes the expression extremely ambiguous in the TT. On the other hand, the MSA version retains the ST expression “the west” in Example 7.2, and in doing so, fails to convey the exact connotative meaning intended in the original text due to the ambiguity carried by this expression for Arab speaking audience, which prompts the loss of the communicative function. Further analysis on Example 7 had been previously provided in the introduction of this section.

4.2.2 Swearwords

Swearwords, profanities, or taboo are all linguistic expressions which fall under the category of offensive language, and “are often considered pernicious, insulting and derogatory. Likewise, taboos are related to the terms that are deemed inappropriate and

doubtlessly unacceptable in formal contexts, cultures,” (Thawabteh, Al-Adwan, & Shqair, 2022, p. 7)

The second problem with translating humor into Arabic and how it affects the target audience is swearing, which is addressed in this thesis. In actuality, swearing and culture are intertwined. Swearing is less common in many other cultures, such as Arab and Islamic ones, than it is in the West. By way of illustration, Rana, S., the Pakistani cricket umpire, expresses, “calling me a bastard may be excusable in England, but here people murder someone who calls another man a bastard” as quoted in (Hughes, 1991, p. 32). Swearing is a common theme in English-language audiovisual works across, not only humor, but, a variety of genres. According to (Turner & Duckham, 2006, p. 139), film is a social practice that depicts everyday life through gossip, manner, and the full spectrum of activities that contribute to the formation of cultural identities. In addition, Philips claims that the cinema has been driven to stray from its conventional subject matter. The addition of extra realism to visuals has been one of its most fruitful responses to this. Translators and the moving image both share the duty of conveying this realism to the intended audience throughout the context of translated audiovisuals (1957, p. 23).

In accordance with Karamitroglou, audiovisual translation, probably more than any other type of translation, offers a great deal of potential for accessing and bridging peoples' lifestyles and thoughts (1996, p. 56). Additionally, several translation scholars and linguists contend that for translators to completely get the ST and be able to effectively communicate it to the target audience, they must not only be bilingual but also bicultural (Hatim B. , *Communication across cultures: the linguistics of texts in translation*, 2020). And this is where the hindrances may be found most, in fact. For instance, (Nord, 1994) maintains that some cultural traits cannot be translated. These traits are also what Leppihalme refers to in her book as "cultural bumps" (1997, p. 61). The translation of humor, aside from wordplay or puns, but rather mostly the translation of strong language or swear words are examples of culturally specific or culture-bound components.

Swearing, as explicated by (Montagu, 2001, p. 3), has definite social as well as individual benefits. When already there has been a considerable amount of emotion, its purpose is

to produce relief. Additionally, it is claimed by (Andersson & Trudgill, 1990) that swearing can be employed to convey powerful emotions (p. 53). For them, using profanity is considered as a last resort when better alternatives are not available.

According to this line of reasoning, using coarse language is a sign of weakness because your vocabulary is so limited. According to (Fernández, 2009), people frequently feel the need to use profanity as a way to let off steam and express intense attitudes and emotions, such as frustration, disbelief, unhappiness, or annoyance. There are some circumstances where there are no better words to use. Furthermore, according to Jay, cursing not only affects listeners emotionally but also satisfies the speaker's emotional demands. It enables a speaker to convey powerful emotions and/or evoke strong emotions in the listener (2000, p. 9).

In this section, swearwords include uttered insults in moments of frustration, and slurs directed at certain characters. (Feinberg, 1978) argues that the frequency of insults, playful aggression or offensive language in media that targets children is so common due to the straightforward fact that “simple abuse is funny to children.” He also states:

Even in civilized society a great deal of direct aggression is accepted humorously, under the pretense that the exhibition is intended for children to observe – such as the cruelty of clowns- or that the aggressive behavior is make-believe, such as the boorishness of slap-stick. The “primitive” person enjoys his aggression directly, the “civilized” individual enjoys his aggression indirectly; both derive pleasure from playful aggression. (pp. 10 – 11)

If we were to consider Feinberg’s “primitive” and “civilized” as an analogy for “children” and “adults” respectively, it would explicate why most of adult directed humor is either “implied, euphemized, or elicited indirectly, as opposed to children humor. Needless to say, the film in study is an animated family comedy whose main target audience are children, hence, the level of all profanity found in this study is PG-rated; family friendly.

(Jay & Janschewitz, 2008) point out that the reason why people swear is to express a particular emotion, be it anger, frustration or simply a banter; friendly exchange of teasing remarks (pp. 269-282). They also add that “the emotional impact of swearing depends on one’s experience with a culture and its language conventions.” Henceforth, the justification behind the categorization of swearwords under culture-specific humor is due to the fact that what is considered a swearword in one culture, might not necessarily be perceived as such in another, and what carries an acceptable level of offense for a swearword in a children or family comedy film in one language, might be considered highly offensive in another, making the matter highly culturally dependent.

The following table demonstrates how choosing a covert translation preserves the humorous function of the ST by means of transcultural substitution, and compares it with a more overt translation choice.

Table (8)
Swearwords 1

Example 8.1: Dialect		Example 8.2: MSA	
ST	What in the world--?	ST	What in the world--?
TT	ʔih dah? ʔixsʔ!	TT	ma: ha:ða: bihaqqi ssama:ʔʔ
Literal	What’s this? Shame!	Literal	What is this, for sky’s sake?

In the Egyptian dialect version, the translation conforms to the popular culture in several instances. In the Example 8.1, the translator opted for a covert translation where the humorous function was prioritized over the semantic or syntactic nature of the ST. The communicative function was also retained on account of successfully transferring the attitude of the ST. The term “ʔixsʔ” is popular in some Arabic dialects such as Egyptian and Levantine colloquial varieties. It is used to confront a person for misbehaving or doing something dishonorable, and the closest dynamic equivalent to it is the word “shame” or “shame on you” in English. This expression is derived from the classical Arabic word “xasaʔa” which refers to something or someone despised, dishonorable, or looked down upon.

The translator in the MSA version remains faithful to the ST, resulting in an overt translation that neither caters to the humorous function of the lexemes used as swearwords, nor to the impact it leaves on the audience due to cultural differences. In Example 8.2, the resultant text sounds rigid and dried of any humor to a younger audience. The literal translation of the TT expression, “bihaqqi ssama:?” is “for sky’s sake”, a more dynamic translated version of which is “for Heaven’s sake.” In reality, this utterance in Arabic sounds as if it was taken from a Shakespearean play – if it were written in Arabic – and the language used in such manner is only seen in film subtitles or other forms of the entertainment media, and nowhere else in real life. This covert method of translation entailed the loss of the humorous function by being too formal and detached, yet maintained the communicative function of the mother’s shock and disappointment in the scene.

Below are two examples which are to illustrate how the overall phrasing of an entire sentence can either retain or dilute the humor caused by the presence of a swearword in a certain utterance.

Table (9)
Swearwords 2

Example 9.1: Dialect		Example 9.2: MSA	
ST	Ya Looney!	ST	Ya Looney!
TT	ʔinta ha:yif!	TT	ʔajuhal maʔtu:h!
Literal	You’re a degenerate!	Literal	You idiot!

In the colloquial translation in Example 9.1, the swearwords from the source language were replaced with a common, everyday-language cuss word such as “ha:yif” which is a derogatory term that is popular among Egyptian community, and it means “degenerate” or someone with no dignity. Example 9.1 excels in enriching the humorous function of the ST, along with the rudeness function by adapting to the popular culture of the target audience, it also transmits the communicative function by portraying the character’s anger and disrespect. In 9.2, the MSA translation does not divert from the ST and translates

“Looney” directly into “maṣtu:h” (literally: idiot). However, this covert translation succeeds in maintaining the communicative function only, as part of both the humorous and the rudeness function were lost due to the use of the formal vocative case “ʔajuhal”, a classical Arabic term that is only used in formal settings and academic textbooks, which ultimately counteracts the insult.

The following two examples which showcase the effects achieved by a covert translation that utilizes cultural substitution to its favor compared to an overt translation in the context of insults.

Table (10)
Swearwords 3

Example 10.1: Dialect		Example 10.2: MSA	
ST	Princess drool	ST	Princess drool
TT	Umm rija:lah dih	TT	ʔal ʔami:rah atʔiflah.
Literal	This, drool girl.	Literal	Princess toddler.

The translation in Example 10.1 has a rather intriguing rationale. The words “Abu” and “Umm” are name prefixes in Arabic. They are “a *kunya*, an honorific name or surname, as the father or mother of someone” (Shaalan & Raza, 2007, p. 19). As in most Arab societies, married individuals are simply called by their *kunya*; “Abu” or “Umm” followed by the name of their first-born child. Be that as it may, the words “Abu” and “Umm” are also commonly used to ascribe someone to a trait or to something they are famous for, hence the humor in the TT translation in 10.1. The expression “Umm rija:lah” is used as an insult to refer to the toddler girl that drools a lot. This expression is used fairly commonly in the Arab popular culture in everyday life among family or friends, where calling someone Umm or Abu followed by a comical trait is a way of teasing or friendly banter. Example 10.1 delivers the communicative function by referring to the obvious flaw of the toddler girl who drools a lot, and it also conveys the humorous function of the ST without being shackled to the original utterance, and more specifically the term “princess”, as such an expression would not travel as offensive or rude in Arabic.

On the other hand, the MSA translation in 10.2 fails on multiple levels in this example. The TT translation fell short at delivering the communicative function as well as the humorous one. The expression was translated as “ʔal ʔami:rah atʔiflah” (literally: princess toddler), which in hindsight is an inconsistent translation choice; the term “princess” was kept in the TT while the core of the insult (the drooling trait) had been omitted. This poor translation option resulted in the loss of not only the humorous function but also the communicative function, since it neither conveys the character’s annoyance nor rudeness.

Another example on the translation of swearwords which presents how some cultural constraints regarding swearwords may impact the translation choice as well as the effect it may have on the TT audience. The ST expression “You uncultured swine!” was uttered in a scene of anger and rudeness between two characters. The dialect translation decided to render such expression as “ja ʔahbal ja mutaxallif!”, which translates back into (You retarded idiot!). Alternatively, the MSA version decided to translate this utterance into “ʔajjuhal xanzi:rul mutaxallif!” of which the literal translation would be (You retarded swine!). In both colloquial and MSA varieties, while the terms “uncultured” and “mutaxallif” -which translate back to (retarded)- are different semantically, they are essentially what Koller calls “connotative equivalents”; two expressions which trigger the same or similar connotations in the minds of each target audience, ST and TT (Hatim B. A., 2014, p. 33). Additionally, the offensive term “uncultured” signals a hint of formality and seriousness if translated overtly, whereas the term “mutaxallif”, in the two translated versions, carries a comedic sense in the Arab culture. This Arabic expression delivers the same connotative meaning of having a backward mentality or of being ignorant, without carrying the overly offensive association that the word “retarded” implies in English, making it more light-hearted for children.

While the two translations of the term “uncultured” succeed in achieving the humorous function, the former accomplishes that in a more preferred manner. In the Egyptian dialect translation, the insult “swine” was completely removed in the TT in order to suit the target audience better. The term “ʔahbal” (literally: idiot) was added to both mitigate the

translation loss caused by omitting the word swine, and to elevate the rudeness by using double insults in the same utterance.

On the other hand, and as a consequence of the use of overt translation, there appears to be a mismatch in the severity of the swearword in the MSA translation. While the level of offense in using the word “swine” in a friendly banter between characters in a western culture might not be that high, the case is unsurprisingly different in Arab culture, as the animal is considered to be vile, and is linked to damnation and deformation in religious beliefs. This word choice would appear culturally inappropriate to present as “humorous” for children of the target audience, hence part of the humorous function was lost.

Because various people come from diverse backgrounds and perceive swear words differently even when they are euphemized, translating taboos is difficult. This is seen in the frequent use of omission as a translation strategy in this section and the replacement of sharper lexical items with softer ones that are more appropriate for the TT audience. Yet, the fact that when heavy manipulation is employed to, better fit the recipient culture, serves in transmitting the humorous effect in a more appropriate manner alone is an indicator that covert translation is more suitable for translating humor which utilizes swearwords. allows is more ideal for translating humor which utilizes swearwords since it allows for the humorous effect to be transmitted in a more appropriate manner. By virtue of the aforementioned, the translator has to understand the message that the distributor of the audiovisual material intends to convey, and how it should be done, and the objectives of the translation should be defined clearly.

In closing, the segment above explores various culture-based humor cases under the subdivisions of cultural references and swearwords, and arrives at the conclusion that MSA translation, the translation assessed to be overt according to House’s 1997 model of translation quality assessment, has often failed to transmit the humorous function in consequence of the rigidity and formality of its nature. The analysis has also shown that by prioritizing the form over function, MSA was not able to reflect the social connection between the interlocutors in a number of instances, thus, interfering with the conveyance of the communicative function.

On the contrary, the Egyptian dialect translation, which classifies as covert translation in compliance with House's model, exhibited more preferable translation results in the culture-based humor chapter. Dialect translation, by virtue of its familiarity to the pop culture of the target audience, has shown to be able to convey the humorous function in numerous cases of culture-specific contexts. Due to the countless options dialects provide in the humor genre, shifting, cultural substitution and several other translation strategies have made it possible for the communicative function to be transmitted in all reviewed cases.

All in all, this chapter attempted to explain the difficulties in translating an audiovisual medium into Arabic, particularly when it comes to transmitting the humor, whether it is language based such as wordplay and appellation or culture based as the case is with cultural references and swearwords. By using excerpts from the animated film *Toy Story* (1995) as a case study, this chapter has attempted to illustrate how impediments related to humor in all of its forms are handled by translators. This section highlighted both the accuracy, the difficulties, and sometimes the errors borne with opting for either a dialect variety or MSA in translating humor. However, such inaccuracies should not necessarily be attributed to translators who struggle between what the audience want, the language they have access to written MSA, and what the time and space on the screen will allow.

4.3 Genre Considerations

Based on the literature review of translating the genre under scrutiny, clarifying a number of key points helps us connect to reach informed conclusions about this area in translation studies. A wide-ranging survey had been made on several previous researches conducted by translators and translation theorists within the area of translating humor, accordingly, certain conventional methods of translating were found in this particular field.

First and foremost, it is essential to mention the fact that on most Arabic TV channels, cartoons and animations up until recently were translated, whether dubbed or subtitled, into MSA, mostly due to the fact that standard Arabic caters extensively to all Arab speaking audience, "when dubbed into MSA, such audiovisuals may address a wider audience: people who do not have a good idea about a certain dialect. In the case of

animations, children who are probably ignorant of that dialect would probably prefer MSA” (Alkadi, 2010, p. 55). However, with the development of the internet and easy access to different streaming websites, there has been a change in the translation trend in recent years, using mostly Egyptian dialect.

To provide a few examples; the Dubai-based satellite network MBC has dubbed *The Simpsons* into Egyptian Arabic. There’s also Pixar’s *Monsters Inc* (2020) dubbed into Egyptian Arabic with its fan-favorite rendering of Mike Wazowski by the actor Mohamed Henedi. Additionally, there were few animated films that had a mixture of dialects in the dubbing, such as *Brother Bear* with Egyptian as the standard variety, while the two moose in the film spoke in a Levantine dialect. Netflix has also joined in on this trend by dubbing several cartoons and anime into Egyptian Arabic, one of which is *We Can Be Heroes* (2020), which can also be found dubbed in Egyptian on Algerian 4kids TV channel. Moreover, after the launch of Disney+ in 2022, 10 years after their decision to dub entirely in MSA, Disney decided to go back to the Egyptian dialect in the dubbing of its films such as, *Encanto* (2021). In accordance with (Almanna & Farghal, 2015), most animated films which are aimed for children are dubbed into colloquial Arabic to preserve “the humorous and casual nature of the discourse” (p. 160) they also believe that Egyptian dialect conveys the English humor appropriately on the linguistic level as well as the cultural one.

Nonetheless, and as observed from the analysis in this thesis, MSA seems to fall short when it comes to translating texts of humorous genres. Whereas, Egyptian Arabic dialect provides a much wider range of translations options and possibilities, this language variety also conforms to the pop culture of the target audience, making associating with the text and context of daily life occurrences more feasible. Therefore, dialect translation proves to have the upper hand when it comes to conveying texts of a humorous genre. This contrast explains the reason behind the rising trend of using colloquial Arabic in translating and dubbing animated series and films in the Arab world over the last few years.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Research Limitation

Since the subject of humor in translation is broad and extensive, this research restricts itself to examining one particular case study in regard to translating humor, and the subject of analysis is the animated film, *Toy Story* (1995). The *Toy Story* franchise is a family comedy that was created by Pixar Animation Studios in 1995 and was later on released by Walt Disney Pictures. The story revolves around a group of toys that pretend to be lifeless in the presence of people, but move and talk when humans are not around. The toys belong to a boy called “Andy” and the plot begins with their main concern being the fear of being thrown away or replaced by other toys. David A. Price, on writing the screenplay of *Toy Story* (1995): “toys deeply want children to play with them, and that this desire drives their hopes, fears, and actions” (Price, 2008, p. 121). Although according to Pixar’s description of the premise, one would assume that the targeted audience for this animated film is children. However, the animated franchise was acknowledged for its technical innovation, refined thematic screenplay, witty humor, and for its vocal performances. Accordingly, the film received appreciation by both children and adults alike, and, in addition to the countless film awards *Toy Story* (1995) grossed in the industry, it even earned a place in the United States Library of Congress for being aesthetically, culturally, and historically significant.

The film has been translated into two versions in Arabic, an MSA version and a colloquial one. The former is the official Arabic subtitled version on Netflix by Jehad Al-Qahtani, and the latter is also done by an official dubbing team in Egyptian dialect. Both parties have done a series of works for children animated films and cartoons on Arabic TV for Disney, Pixar, among other film making corporations. In light of the aforementioned, the translators under discussion are at the very least, if not adept, experienced translators.

5.2 Conclusion

This research was conducted with the aim of analyzing the types of humor used in the animated film, *Toy Story* (1995), and the two translated versions of this children film; the Egyptian and MSA varieties. This study of translating humorous instances in animated family comedies was restricted to two aspects of the text, the linguistic and cultural. The humorous utterances were assessed according to House's 1997 model of translation assessment, in which textual entities were ascribed to either a covert or an overt type of translation. Various humorous instances extracted from the film in question were investigated, where the MSA was compared to the Egyptian dialect translation, a less formal option, regarding the humorous function as well as the communicative one in order to make informed conclusions about the effectiveness of each translation at the macro level.

The MSA translation in the data analysis of this research demonstrates a consistent decision in most of the examples, by opting for an overt translation, where the translator prioritized being equivalent at the linguistic, textual, and genre level. However, these overt translations, more often than not, fell short at expressing either the communicative function of the text or the humorous function, or in certain cases, both functions. As House points out, "an original and its overt translation can be equivalent at the level of Language/Text and Register as well as Genre," but it does not transmit the function from the source language and culture into the target locale (House, 2014, p. 13).

The analyzed data also corroborate that dialect language is far more effective, and provides further translation options than MSA in translating texts of the humor genre. In the Egyptian dialect version, the translation overall behavior is classified under covert, where transmitting the humorous function of the text is prioritized over the form. Several types of text linguistic manipulation were observed in the colloquial translation, incorporating strategies such as omission, structure and class shifts, supplementing and substitution, all of which attributed to conveying the humorous function and, in some cases, the communicative function along with it. In doing so, the resultant translation succeeded in drawing the TT closer to the target linguistic and cultural norms, making it more familiar for the target audience and easier to associate with. In accordance with

(Attardo, 2001), the fundamental factor in the success of translating a text of the humor genre is transmitting the humorous effect, because “the essence of a humorous text, its *raison d’être* is that of being perceived as funny, and that is reflected in the text itself” (p. 33).

Although one might argue that MSA should be used in the translation of all media presented to Arabic speaking audience since it is the more inclusive variety and the *lingua franca* in the Arab world, the restricted domains in which MSA is being used; formal written and oral interactions, such as lectures, sermons, news broadcasting, and so on and forth, make it unsuitable for the characters of an animated film which revolves around daily life scenarios and addresses the pop culture of its audience to speak in MSA. Therefore, translating animated films for children in a dialect variety instead of MSA has been the new and rising trend in recent years, and more so in genres which contain humor.

As a conclusion, this study has discussed some of the difficulties encountered by translators of audiovisual conversations, particularly those translating from English into Arabic, as well as the many strategies used to overcome these challenges. To further comprehend how this may or may not affect the quality of a translation, it was investigated, for instance, whether translators of English-language audiovisuals into the two varieties of Arabic, dialect and MSA, utilize any of the discussed translation strategies and approaches. Also, the limitations that subtitling imposes due to linguistic and technical aspects tend to degrade the quality of the translated text, and, the cultural difference between the SL and the TL is added to these considerations. Therefore, it is safe to say that the transfer of the ST discourse's language variety as well as the available translation options are influenced by cultural as well as linguistic constraints.

It is also worth mentioning that if an Arab-speaking audience find using Egyptian as a dialect in dubbing a hindrance to their full comprehension of the humor, regardless of the rationale, there is a minute possibility that other Arabic dialects might be utilized for dubbing, as Egyptian Arabic is the most widely spoken dialect in the Arab world. It is suggested that the lack of viewers understanding the humor of the dubbed audiovisual medium may have been due to culture rather than the Egyptian dialect. In the data analysis

of this research, the covert translation of the examined extracts from the film was done in most cases after adaptation of the script had been done to bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps and to suit the target audience more appropriately.

On a final note, if dialect is indeed the more capable variety in conveying the humor in translation, as seen in the findings of this research, why do the animated films and cartoons of the comedy genre that are translated into MSA still heavily outnumber those translated in dialect? In this context, it is necessary to reevaluate, or further research the claim that MSA is more adept than dialect variations at capturing the humor of the source text in audiovisual media.

5.3 Recommendations

The study suggests a few straightforward methods with low time and financial costs that could be applied to enhance the quality of translating audiovisual media into Arabic. When dealing with language-based humor, and culture-based humor, businesses need to establish clearly defined translation criteria that serve as direct guidelines for their translators, and coach them on how to use these guidelines effectively. A theoretical model that takes into account the full range of the linguistic and cultural factors, specifically in the humor genre, has to be created in order to formulate an applicable framework for these guidelines. Hence, a more practical method is needed to overcome cultural and linguistic impediments, and at the same time, reach a wider range of the target audience in the Arab world. While the present study's recommendations provide a solid basis for the sort of training that audiovisual translation firms or companies should provide, more research will be required to fully comprehend how these concepts can be applied to other audiovisual genres and other regions of the Arab world.

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فعالية استخدام اللهجة في ترجمة نصوص الفكاهة: مقارنة اللهجة بترجمة اللغة العربية الفصحى
باستخدام فيلم الرسوم المتحركة حكاية لعبة (1995) كدراسة حالة.

إعداد

أميمة سوالمة

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الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن أنواع الفكاهة المستخدمة في فيلم الرسوم المتحركة حكاية لعبة (1995)، وتحديد القيود اللغوية والثقافية في ترجمة الفكاهة في كل حالة تم فحصها، وتقييم جودة الترجمات العربية على المستوى العرضي وبشكل عام. مشروطاً بالتحقيق في الخيارات المتاحة التي توفرها كلتا الترجمتين. تم جمع البيانات من أول فيلم من سلسلة الأفلام المتحركة الأمريكية حكاية لعبة (1995)، إلى جانب نسختين مترجمتين إلى اللغة العربية الفصحى وإلى اللهجة المصرية. تم فرز البيانات وفق فئتين رئيسيتين، الفكاهة القائمة على اللغة؛ مع فئات فرعية خاصة بها من التورية والتسميات، والفكاهة القائمة على الثقافة؛ مع فئتين فرعيتين من المرجعية الثقافية والشتائم. تم تطبيق نموذج House لعام 1997 لتقييم جودة الترجمة على البيانات المستخرجة، وتوثيق الخطوط العريضة لجميع حالات الدعابة داخل الحالة المدروسة في النص المصدر، بالإضافة إلى كلتا النسختين من النص الهدف، ثم نسبها وفقاً لنموذج House إما لفئة ترجمة خفية (Covert) أو علنية (Overt). تظهر ترجمة اللغة العربية الفصحى قراراً ثابتاً في اختيار الترجمة العلنية، حيث يتم إعطاء الأولوية للحفاظ على شكل النص بدلاً من نقل الوظيفة، أي التأثير الفكاهي. بينما في النسخة العامية، تصنف الترجمة تحت صنف الترجمة الخفية، حيث يتم إعطاء الأولوية لوظيفة النص الفكاهية على صيغته اللغوية. وبما أن الترجمة العامية لا تقتصر على الشكل، فبالتالي، وباعتبارها الترجمة الحرة نسبياً، فهي تسهل تعريف النص بالمعايير اللغوية والثقافية للجمهور المستهدف و ربطه بحياتهم اليومية، وتؤدي إلى نتائج أفضل في نقل الوظيفتين التواصلية والفكاهية للنص.



جامعة النجاح الوطنية
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بترجمة اللغة العربية الفصحى باستخدام فيلم الرسوم المتحركة
حكاية لعبة (1995) كدراسة حالة

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