

Translating Extra-linguistic Elements for Dubbing into Arabic: The Case of *The Simpsons*

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ABSTRACT

Despite the dominance of subtitling on the Arab screen, dubbing reigns supreme when it comes to cartoons and animations. This is attributed to the nature of the programmes and their audience—children, who cannot read, and teenagers, who are considered as the most impressionable and vulnerable segment of viewers, and thus needing tightly filtered material. This study aims at shedding light on how extralinguistic elements in Western culture have been rendered for the Arab audience. For this aim, the selected corpus used for this study is a compilation of the animated series *The Simpsons*. This choice sprang from *The Simpsons*' universal appeal and influence and its use of various cultural references. This study draws on Nida's notion of equivalence and leans on the Descriptive Translation Studies framework, which many scholars in the field (Díaz-Cintas, Even-Zohar, Hermans, Lefèvre and Toury, among others) strongly advocate and consider as an ideal platform within which to investigate audiovisual material. In order to establish how extralinguistic elements were dealt with in the process of translating *The Simpsons* for dubbing into Arabic, the extra-linguistic instances extracted from the source language text corpus were contrasted to their target language text counterparts and analysed. The analysis reveals a number of constraints the translator had to deal with, and by consequence, a significant intervention on his part. Largely, this intervention is demonstrated by the lexical/syntactic choices and the translation strategies employed. These constraints along with the translator's interference resulted, at times, in a considerable loss in terms of the source text's intended message.

Keywords: Dubbing, *The Simpsons*, Puns, Idioms, Extralinguistic elements.

Introduction

Translation as an interlingual and intercultural communication is not always a straight forward process, especially when two very different languages and cultures are involved; the greater the disparity, the more challenging transferring content is, as is the case with Arabic and English (Semitic and Germanic). Among some of the most difficult elements to successfully find adequate equivalences for are the extralinguistic ones (puns, idiomatic expressions, newly coined expressions, taboo words etc.). Although the translation of idioms and taboo words have been fairly investigated in Arabic, no study to our knowledge has undertaken the task of looking into a number of elements in a single corpus. Thus, this study is intended to fill this gap.

The main difficulty seems to lie in identifying and interpreting these extralinguistic elements in a manner that gives them the same meaning-making effect they have in the source language/culture, as the intended meaning is quite difficult to delineate from their lexical units only, as Baker (1992) stipulates. This 'inability' to provide *true-to-form* meaning of these elements in the target language and culture is not necessarily a *de facto* issue related to the translator's competence alone. The recipient language and culture bear an equal, if not more, share of the blame.

Professional translators resort to an array of strategies to deal with the difficulties extralinguistic components

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present in an effort to provide an adequate and acceptable equivalent in their corresponding context. However, often times, a loss of meaning resulting from the linguistic competence or sociocultural constraints is inevitable.

In search of equivalence, translators may opt for, among many other options, what Katan (1999, pp. 147-57) 'chunking'; either up (narrow to broad) or down (general to specific). Delabastita (1999) prescribes paraphrasing or replacing source text (ST) units. However, these strategies are not always enough when dealing with an audiovisual product that is dubbed in a culturally constrained milieu, as is the case with Arabic. ST element could easily have similar equivalence, but due to this sociocultural 'patronage', translators are left with no alternative but to conform to the prescribed guidelines.

Dubbing, in a nutshell, is the substitution of ST dialogue with a target language (TL) one (Luyken 1991; Dries, 1995; Chaume, 2012). The absence of the source text gives almost a free hand to the translator, who becomes a linguistic and cultural ventriloquist, to recontextualise the audiovisual product. The original, becomes a mere 'blueprint, which often shifts its status from that of a finished and culturally specific text to that of a transcultural denationalized raw material, which is to be reinscribed into a new cultural context' (Ascheid, 1997, p. 33).

Dubbing, as succinctly argued by Hatim and Mason (1997) has "a normalising and neutralising effect, depriving source text producers of their voice and re-expressing foreign cultural values in terms of what is familiar (and therefore unchallenging) to the dominant [target] culture" (p. 145). The "foreign" audiovisual product is, consequently, shackled artistically, linguistically and ideologically in the receiving culture.

Case Study

In 2005, the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) tapped into the unknown by dubbing a simple, yet a cultural minefield, audiovisual product to break the dull broadcasting routine of many Arab TV channels. Little did it know that the mines of *The Simpsons* were ready to detonate once they hit desert land. The famous Egyptian trans adaptor *Hosni* was assigned the mammoth task of making *Al Shamshoon* a hit in the Arb World, just as *The Simpsons* did in the rest of the world. Seventeen episodes from seasons one and two dubbed into Egyptian vernacular were scripted, tabulated, then contrasted to the English ones and analysed with the focus on linguistic shifts.

The iconic American sitcom *The Simpsons* was selected as a corpus for this case study for two main reasons **a)** it is an ideal representation of the mosaic of Western culture and **b)** it is linguistically complex and superior to any other animated series in terms of language variety, register, word play, novel expressions etc. This combination of cultural specificity and linguistic ingenuity is potentially an unsurmountable task for many translators, especially when operating within an ideologically controlled environment.

Since *The Simpsons* has never been dubbed into MSA or any other regional dialect, it is beyond the scope of this study to address issues of reception or translation assessment of a contrastive analysis of MSA and other language variants. Although this study focuses on the Egyptian vernacular, which is considered a *lingua franca* for Arabs, it is plausible that some Arabs, due to regional and linguistic variations, may still not understand certain expressions.

Theoretical Framework

The Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) paradigm consists of two main interwoven frameworks: polysystem theory and norms. Even-Zohar (1978) worked on developing a dynamic-structuralism approach for dealing with the interdependency and complexity of various socio-cultural systems, which he considers heterogeneous and versatile networks. His study and analysis of norms in translation demonstrate that it is possible to explain the incongruity between the source text and the target text and attribute any discrepancy to attitudes and actions governed by domestic norms. This approach opened the door for inter-cultural research in translation studies.

Even-Zohar (1990, p. 51) argues that 'translation is no longer a phenomenon whose nature and borders are given once and for all, but an activity dependent on the relations within a certain culture system'. Such a system is made up of many systems, (e.g. language, customs, ethics and religious beliefs), which give each culture its distinctiveness. These interrelated systems (the polysystem) are never static according to O'Connell (2003), but rather dynamic, constantly transforming themselves and shifting their position in relation to one another.

This new trend in translation studies resulted in a considerable shift of interest from merely analysing the process of translation to focusing on a study of the product of translation in the target language, and how it is affected by the target polysystem and its literary and cultural norms. This leads us to the notion of equivalence and how the cultural milieu affects the linguistic choices Arab translators make in order to achieve acceptability by both patronage and audience.

Nida's (1964) notion of formal and dynamic (functional) equivalence provides us with a reliable model for analysis of inter-lingual and inter-cultural translation of various elements. While formal equivalence puts greater emphasis on form and content of the source text, dynamic or (functional) equivalence stresses the importance of rendering meaning in order to reproduce a natural sounding text which befits the target language and culture's norms.

Extra-linguistic manipulation

Preserving the authenticity of the original material in the course of dubbing is almost impossible, argues Toepser-Ziegert (cited in Whitman-Linsen, 1992, p. 127), since language is socially and culturally determined. In this regard Karamitroglou (2000, p. 104) argues that 'the number of possible audiovisual translation problems is endless and a list that would account for each one of them can never be finite'; consequently, the original text writer's creativity and ingenuity are bound to be withered down to pale equivalents, if not completely vanish.

Whitman-Linsen (1992) claims that many translators choose to explain rather than find an equivalent to extra-linguistic element, like a humorous passage for example. In the same vein, Rowe, (cited in Whitman-Linsen, 1992), asserts that when the goal is to create a certain reaction in the target audience, such as laughter, changing words is unavoidable as long as the spirit of the original is maintained.

Let us now explore to what extent these claims are relevant to Hosny's translation of certain extra-linguistic elements such as puns, idioms, local expressions, and newly coined expressions.

4.1 Puns

Wordplay, or punning, is a 'textual phenomenon' contrasting 'linguistic structures with *different meanings* on the basis of their *formal similarity*', as defined by Delabastita (1996, p.128). Such a phenomenon encompasses many categories, depending on the nature and degree of similarity, such as homophony, homography, homonymy, and paronymy (Delabastita, 1996). This classification, however, is rather difficult to discern since we are dealing with a complex phenomenon which defies straightforward labelling. Many issues of untranslatability of humour are often attributed to these various types of wordplay.

The Simpsons' translator had an array of approaches up his sleeve when faced with such issues. Because of their language-specificity, Hosny often omitted English puns, using other techniques instead. He resorted to substitution, enhancing and toning down techniques depending on the context. Out of 33 examples of puns and idioms, 23 (70%) were substituted, seven (20%) toned down, and three (10 %) enhanced.

Table 1. Examples of puns

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Lenny: Sure, they've made mistakes in the past, but <i>that's why pencils have erasers</i> (8F09)	طبعاً، كان ليهم أخطاء زمان، بس الزمن بيحى كل حاجة	Sure, they've made mistakes in the past, but <i>time erases everything</i> .
2. Magic: Looks like <i>I pulled a Homer</i> . (8F04)	يظهر اتعديت من عمر	Looks like <i>I caught something off Omar</i> .
3. Otto: <i>Get off the bus and forever hold your peace</i> , little dudes (7F03)	يا تركب بسلام يا تنزل بدون كلام يا صاحبي	<i>Get on peacefully or get off quietly, my friend</i> .
4. Smithers: <i>T.G.I.M., sir (thank God it's Monday)</i> (8F04)	و لا يهكم ألف سلامه يا باشا	<i>Not to worry, as long as you are safe Pasha</i> .
5. Homer: <i>Got to shake the dew off the lily</i> (8F02)	طيب، لازم أقوم عشان أجهز للشغل	<i>Ok, I must get up and get ready for work</i> .

In example 2, where wordplay is based on an inter-textual reference known to only those who are familiar with *The Simpsons*, Hosny opted for a paraphrase. In examples 1 and 3, he decided on a literal translation. The reasons behind choosing such strategies could be attributed to Hosny missing wordplay, as in example 2, where *pulling a Homer* is a pun for succeeding despite idiocy or having so much dumb luck. Example 3 is a pun for a common expression said in a Christian wedding ceremony when the preacher asks if anyone has an objection to the wedding: 'speak now or *forever hold your peace*'. Hosny was very creative in finding an equivalent on this occasion. He resorted to assonance, as he does quite often, by rhyming the Arabic expression, 'يا تركب بسلام يا تنزل بدون كلام يا صاحبي' (*Get on peacefully or get off quietly, my friend*), producing a very close meaning to the original albeit missing the context in which it is usually used.

As for example 4, in which Mr Burns slams his employees: 'Ah, Monday morning. Time to pay...for your two days of debauchery ... you hung-over drones', to which his adoring assistant Smithers replies 'T.G.I.M, sir' (Thank God It Is Monday) a pun for (Thank God It's Friday), which indicates the end of a working week and the arrival of the weekend. This Western tradition is not familiar to the Arab audience as their weekends vary from one country to another, and they are not in the habit of partying on weekends. Consequently, Hosny decided to replace it with a common expression that reflects nothing of the original 'يا باشا و لا يهكم، ألف سلامه' (*Not to worry, as long as you are safe Pasha*).

Example 5 is rather challenging, as it has a range of connotations (nudity, reference to male genitalia and urinating). When Homer woke up screaming, Marge asked him:

'Did you have a nightmare?'

Homer: 'No, Bart bit me.'

Bart: 'You were crushing me. I tried to scream, but my mouth was full of flab.'

Homer: 'Got to shake the dew off the lily.'

Homer wanted to end the conversation and go about his morning ritual to get ready for work. The first thing he does is going to the bathroom (to pee). Men usually shake their private parts after peeing to get rid of any drops of urine left, hence the use of a softer, more polite expression to indicate the act of urinating.

Hosny abridged the whole process by simply saying 'لازم أقوم عشان أجهز للشغل' (*I must get up and get ready for work*). The humour and wit of the original is therefore lost completely. This was necessary, in Hosny's view, because Arabs are quite shy and reserved when such matters are discussed.

4.2 Idioms

If puns were quite challenging and problematic for Hosny, by and large, he excelled in rendering idioms, as this section reveals. Not only did he provide Arabic idioms equivalent to the English ones, he also managed to find Arabic idioms for ordinary English expressions. Table 2 illustrates a few examples:

Table 1. Examples of idioms

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Bart: <i>Lisa never lifts a finger. Go yell at her</i> (7F11)	هو فيه أيه، أنا باشتغل أكثر من بيسة دي على رجليها نقش الحنة. ما تتشطر عليها هي؟	What's wrong? I <i>work harder than</i> <i>Bisa</i> ; <i>does she have a Henna tattoo on her foot?</i> Yell at her!
2. Bart: <i>Penny for your thoughts, Miss K</i> (8F16)	الذي وأخذ عقلك يا مس كابوريا	<i>Whoever stole your mind</i> , Miss Kaborya.
5. Homer: Tell you what. <i>Let's sleep on it. Okay</i> (7F04)	باقولك أيه الصباح رباح. ماشي؟	Tell you what? <i>Tomorrow brings profit with it</i> , ok?
6. Homer: <i>You can't fire the players, so you fire the mascot! -You make me sick</i> (7F05)	آ آ. فهمتك. مش قادر على الحمار فبتتشطر ع البردعة دي مش أصول	Ah, I get it. <i>You can't deal with the donkey, so you take it on the saddle! That's not honourable!</i>
7. Homer: Well, <i>all's well that ends well. Good night, Marge</i> (8F14)	الحمد لله جت سليمه. تصبحي على خير	<i>Thank God no harm is done!</i> Good night.
8. Marge: Well ... the moral is, <i>the squeaky wheel gets the grease</i> (7F22)	كويس...يبقى المعنى هو، الذي صوته عال يكسب الغالي	Well, the idea is <i>who shouts the loudest wins the finest</i> .
9. Homer: It sounds like a <i>pretty dumb idea to me</i> . (8F23)	بص، آ، ف رأيي أنها فكره نص كم	Look! I think it's <i>not a good idea</i> .
10. Mr Burns: <i>Smithers, I keep my friends close ... and my enemies even closer. He'll slowly regain his confidence ... as the months and years drift by ... blissfully unaware ... that the sword of Damocles is dangling just above his head</i> (8F09)	سماوي، بأقرب صحابي مني و باخلي أعدائي أقرب سيستعيد ثقته بنفسه مع مرور الشهور و السنين، من غير مايا خذ باله أن السيف يفضل متعلق فوق دماغه و بعدها فجأة ف يوم و هو مش متوقع	Samawi, I keep my friends close...and my enemies even closer. He'll slowly regain his confidence ... as the months and years drift by ... unaware ... <i>the sword is hanging over his head</i> and one day unexpectedly ...

As the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it, an idiom is 'a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (e.g. over the moon, see the light)' (*Oxford Dictionary Online*). In the expression 'to kick the bucket', if a listener knows only the meaning of *kick* and *bucket*, they would be unable to construe the intended meaning: *to die*. An idiom generally requires some background knowledge, experience and cultural references. Therefore, idioms are not considered part of the language per se, but part of the culture, and are often nonsensical beyond their local cultural context. Some idioms, however, are semantically universal and can be adequately translated, and their meaning correctly deduced. *The Simpsons* uses some of these idioms:

Never lift a finger (example 1), على رجليها نقش الحنة,

Let us sleep on it (example 5), الصباح رياح

You cannot fire the players, so you fire the mascot (example 6), مش قادر على الحمار فبتتشطر ع البردعه

All is well that ends well (example 7) الحمد لله جات سليمة

The squeaky wheel gets the grease (example 8) اللي صوته عالي يكسب الغالي

These English idioms have all been given their Arabic equivalents without losing any meaning or effect. Because idioms are culturally specific, one cannot argue that those of one culture are more expressive than others. This is also because: ‘The vocabulary of a language manifests the culturally important areas of a group of people in a particular setting whether religious, aesthetic, social, and environmental’ argues Bahameed (2010, par. 7). Consequently, one could argue that lexical items of different languages have dissimilar semantic functions, as they are environmentally determined.

There are instances where Hosny surpassed the ingenuity of the source text and produced a far richer cultural equivalence, as is the case in example 9. When Ned Flanders wanted to start a new business venture and wanted Homer’s opinion:

Flanders: ‘Like one out of every nine Americans, I’m left-handed, and let me tell you ... it ain’t all peaches and cream. Your writing gets smeared. Lord help you if you drive a standard transmission. I’m opening up a one-stop store for southpaws. Everything from left-handed apple peelers to left-handed scissors. Going to call it “The Leftorium”. So, Homer, I’m dying to know ... what do you think of “The Leftorium”?’

Homer: ‘It sounds like a pretty dumb idea to me’ ف رأيي أنها فكره نص كم (Look! I think it is a half-sleeve idea (not a good one)).

The Egyptian Arabic ‘نص كم’ (*half sleeve*) indicates an incomplete task, a bad design, a job not worth doing. This phrase is far more expressive and much more polite than the English one. Arabs are very sensitive to name-calling or insinuating stupidity, thus, Hosny was careful and successful in this case. However, there are other instances where he did not make the grade, as in example 10 when Homer lost his job as a safety inspector at the nuclear plant because Mr Burns was offered a ‘fat cheque’ for it by a German consortium. When Mr Burns, bored and sad, went with Smithers to the ‘blue-collar bar’ to drown his sorrows, he was greeted with contempt by Homer and his ‘drinking buddies’. Homer told Mr Burns that he was ugly and nobody loved him. The crowd cheered. Mr Burns realised, being the controlling freak that he was, that people did not fear him anymore. The next day, he decided to buy back the plant and rehire Homer. When Smithers asked him why, he replied with a devilish tone:

Smithers, I keep my friends close ... and my enemies even closer. He’ll slowly regain his confidence ... as the months and years drift by ... blissfully unaware ... *that the sword of Damocles is dangling just above his head.*

سماوي، بأقرب صحابي مني... و باخلى أعدائي أقرب ... حيسعيد ثقته بنفسه مع مرور الشهور و السنين... من غير مايا خذ باله ... إن السيف يفضل متعلق فوق دماغه

Samawi, I keep my friends close ... and my enemies even closer. He will slowly regain his confidence ... as the months and years drift by ... unaware ... *the sword is hanging over his head.*

In this example, Hosny did not preserve the depth and brutality the idiom carries. According to the legend, when **Damocles**, a flattering noble in the court of Dionysius II, a fourth century BC tyrant of Syracuse, Italy, pandered to his king how truly fortunate he was to possess such great power and authority, he was invited by Dionysius to switch places. Damocles accepted the offer. The King had a lavish feast prepared and ‘seated him beneath a naked **sword** that was suspended from the ceiling by a single thread. Thus, did the tyrant demonstrate that the fortunes of men who hold power are as precarious as the predicament in which he had placed his guest’ (Online Encyclopaedia Britannica).

By omitting any reference to the historic event and its significance, Hosny produced a plain non-thought provoking equivalent that does not do justice to the context.

4.3 Local expressions

This section presents examples of how Hosny localised certain English expressions into the Egyptian vernacular. In these instances, as illustrated in Table 3, both the American and Arab cultures share very similar perspectives on certain things.

Table 2. Examples of local expressions (Egyptian)

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Homer: Well, you see, boy, it never hurts to grease the wheels a little (7G05)	شوف يا بدر يا بنى. ما يضّرش أن الواحد يمشى حاله شوية	Look Badr, my son, it doesn't hurt that <i>one does what it takes to sort things out.</i>
2. Homer: Tomorrow, how about making your patented pork chops (7F09)	بأقول بكرة بالليل، ما تعمليلنا ريش ضاني من بتاعة المرحومة أمي؟	I say, how about making us some <i>lamb chops like that mum used to make?</i>
3. Man 1: Oh, thank you Mr Burns. We are so glad we invited you (7G04)	شكراً يا محروقي بيه. دي منوره بوجدك	Thanks, Mahruqy Bey. <i>The house is lit by your presence.</i>
4. Marge: Thank God for Homer's Christmas bonus (7G08)	البركة بقي ف العلاوة بتاعة عمر	<i>The blessing is in Homer's bonus.</i>

Although it could be argued that the examples provided here reflect the translation strategies adopted by the translator. However, we are purely analysing them to uncover the underpinning motive that led the translator to opt for such strategies. As it is demonstrated here, Hosny used Egyptian local expressions exclusively despite the fact that *The Simpsons* is intended for the entire Arab audience. In fact, he 'localised' all the 43 (100%) examples extracted from the corpus.

Homer, giving some practical advice to his son, tells him 'it never hurts to *grease the wheels a little*' 'ما يضّرش أن' (it doesn't hurt that *one does what it takes to sort things out*). Poverty, injustice and corruption are universal contributors to breaking rules and forcing people to *push the envelope* to get things done. In countries where corruption is rampant, like the Arab World, it is common practice for people to bribe, do favours or even do belittling things to get what is rightly theirs.

In example 2, Hosny reveals Arabs' obsession with their mother's cooking; they tend to live in constant nostalgia for childhood feasts and tastes. Although Marge seems to be an excellent cook, and thus given due praise by Homer, Hosny renders the request 'how about making your *patented pork chops*' as 'ماتعمليلنا ريش ضاني من بتاعة المرحومة أمي؟' (How about making us some *lamb chops like that mum used to make*). Needless to say, pork becomes lamb, and the wife's culinary skills have to match those of the mother, or else the satisfaction is not guaranteed.

While a simple expression like: 'We are so glad we invited you' is given an equivalent that reflects Arabs' exaggerated culture of welcoming and generosity 'دي منوره بوجدك' (*The house is lit by your presence*), example 4, 'thank God', although a universal religious saying, was changed to a different, yet semantically similar, purely Islamic saying 'البركة' (*the blessing*). Although a literal translation (الحمد لله: *thank God*) could serve the purpose, the word *Baraka* is more profound and befitting, as it signifies the purity of divine blessings bestowed upon a person, a family, or a home.

Localising these expressions into Egyptian vernacular further demonstrates the translator's determination to provide an Egyptian *menu* for the Arab audience despite its diversity.

4.4 Newly coined expressions

The Simpsons had a major role in spawning hundreds of new words, idioms and catchphrases in the English language and modern Western culture, says Ben Macintyre (2009). The show, the longest running cartoon sitcom in the history of TV, produced a completely new kind of words and phrases that have been immersed into popular parlance. According to Mark Liberman, director of the Linguistic Data Consortium¹ (cited in Macintyre, 2009), '*The Simpsons* has apparently taken over from Shakespeare and the Bible as our culture's greatest source of idioms, catchphrases and sundry other textual allusions'. Undoubtedly, the most famous catchphrase is Homer's grunt of annoyance: 'D'oh!' So ubiquitous is the expression that it is now listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Other expressions like the trivialising 'Meh' have entered the *Collins Dictionary* as well.

Several quotations from the show also made it to the *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations*, like Groundskeeper Willy's 'cheese-eating surrender monkeys', Homer's 'Kids, you tried your best and you failed miserably. The lesson is never try', 'Kids are the best, Apu. You can teach them to hate the things you hate, and they practically raise themselves, what with the Internet and all', remarks Shorto Russell (2007).

Table four lists a few of the best and most recurring words, phrases and sounds of some of the show's prominent characters and how they were rendered into Arabic.

Table 3. Examples of newly coined expressions

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Homer: D'oh!	آه، أووو	<i>Aah! Ooh!</i>
Here, Bart-a-saurus (7F08)	بكل سرور يا مفترس	<i>Gladly you beast!</i>
Same as usual. Perfectomundo (7F06)	زى العادة. فل و قشطه	<i>As usual, Jasmine and cream?</i>
Hey, Bartely-boobely. Care for a steakarooni?		
Bart: Sounds scrum-diddley-umptious, dear old duddely-doodely. (7F20)	أيوه يا بدر البدور، تأكل لحمه مشوية؟ فكره مفتكسه قوى يا حلو أنت يا عموري	<i>Yeah Badr elbadur! You want grilled meat? It's a beastly idea you sweet Ammory!</i>
2. Bart: Ay, caramba! (7G08)	يادي الكارثة	<i>What a disaster!</i>
Whoa mama!	يادي الكارثة يالهي	
Don't have a cow, Dad (7F12)	تعاليلي يا أمه أهده يا بابا	<i>Mum! Help me! Calm down dad. Take it easy.</i>
Eat my shorts (8F15)	ما تعملش ف نفسك كدا دمك يلطش إلحس قفاك	<i>Humourous Lick the back of your head..</i>

¹ LDC: is an open consortium of universities, companies and government research laboratories. It creates, collects and distributes speech and text databases, lexicons, and other resources for linguistics research and development purposes. The University of Pennsylvania is the LDC's host institution (Wikipedia).

3. Flanders: Yes, indeedly-doodly (7G09)	عشان ننقرج و نتكيف	To watch and chill.
You have yourself a bet, you jackaninny (7G04)		
how-doodlie-do (7G02)	و أنت كمان بالمثل و حتجيبه لنفسك	The same to you and you bring it
Friday, I'm saying toodle-loo...to the pharmaceutical game (8F23)		on to yourself.
Abositively posolutely (8F23)	لأني من النهارده، حاقول باى باى لمشغل الموظفين انتظار العربية علينا	Because as from today, I say bye- bye to staff work. Car waiting is on us.
4. Mr Burns: We'll get the Simpson's an extravagant present. An unthinkable, utterly impossible present! A frabulous, grabulous, zip-zoop-zabulous present! Too practical. Too cutesy. Too cornball. A pool table? I'm not going to turn his home into a saloon. (7F22)	حنجيب لأسرة عمر هدية. هديه غالية قوى. هدية ما فيش زيتها و لا تخطر على بال حد. هدية مفتخرة مفتكسة و ملعوبة ف التمانيات. مش مطلوبة. مش ملعوبة قوى. دوشة قوى. بلياردو إنت عبيط؟ مش هأحول بيته لنادى.	We'll get Omar's family a present. A very expensive present. An exceptional present that no one has ever imagined. A beasty, fabulous, not on demand, not overly used and cute one. A billiard table. Are you stupid? I am not turning his home into a club.

Within the Simpson family circle, Bart and Homer are the most active members in terms of generating new language units. Homer, in excitement, would shout: 'Woo Hoo!'; when Bart annoys him: 'Why You Little ...'; and when food, especially donuts and chocolate, is mentioned or comes to his mind, he would say, in an unmistakable manner, 'Mmm ... donuts'. These sounds and expressions were oddly absent in the Arabic version despite their regular occurrence. However, Homer's trademark 'D'oh!', which he utters each time he is outsmarted, embarrassed or when he hurts himself or suffers a misfortune, has been translated merely as 'أوه' or 'آه' (*Aahh!*, *Oohh!*). It is worth noting that Hosny did not introduce or invent a single Arabic word to complement his overall creative rendering of the original text. It seems that he thought the Egyptian vernacular was expressive and up-to-date enough. He said that he rendered some of the strange expressions, especially Bart's, by resorting to the language of the 'kids in the streets' (personal comm. 2010)

Bart, being the ever unruly and mischievous kid, coined an even bigger repertoire of words and phrases. A few of his expressions did not make it to the Arabic version, like 'craptacular', a portmanteau of *crap* and *spectacular* and 'crap factory', invented by Bart as a malphemism for stomach after Nelson takes exception to his saying 'tummy' (5F11)

Bart: 'It's my tummy! (Nelson frowns at him). I mean stomach! Gut! Crap factory!' (Nelson nods)

'Ay carumba!' and 'Whoa Mama!' are used interchangeably by Bart to express how impressed he is by an item or a skill someone has, were rendered as 'يادي الكارثة، يادي الكارثة يالهو، تعاليلي يا أمه' (*What a disaster! Mum! Help me!*). Occasionally, 'يالهو' (*ya lahw*), a sound uttered in reaction to fear or a calamity, is used. However, this does not fully capture Bart's feeling for something. In contrast, 'eat my shorts', Bart's favourite insult, was given a stronger than usual Arabic equivalent 'دمك يلطش، إحس قفاك' (*lick the back of your head, killjoy*). The expression 'lick the back of your head' is used as a euphemism for (lick your butt) and is implicitly understood as such.

Another of Bart's catchphrases 'don't have a cow, man!', meaning calm down, or take it easy, was understood as

such and thus translated as such 'ماتعملش في نفسك كذا، أهده يا بابا' (*Calm down dad. Take it easy*).

Flanders is the linguistic nightingale of the show. Hardly does he utter a sentence without inserting a 'diddly' here and a 'doodly' there. He would greet people with 'Hey-dilly-ho' or 'Hi-Diddily-doo', meaning 'how do you do' and would agree by saying 'Okily-Dokily!' or 'Okely-dokely-do', a newer version of 'Okie, Dokie'.

Flanders uses 'diddly' or 'doodly' as a *filled pause* and an alliteration as in 'what can I diddly-do you for?' or a tmesis² as in 'de-diddly-lighted' and 'wel-diddly-elcome'. He also uses them to refer to embarrassing things like sex (*doodily*) or to avoid swearing, as in 'son of *diddly* ...'. Unfortunately, all this *fun* has been completely lost in translation.

4.5 Rude language

Another aspect considered taboo and anti-social behaviour in the Arab society is the use of rude language. Although *The Simpsons* can be compared to a few other cartoon animations that use copious amounts of unsavoury language, like *South Park*, it was considered decent enough to be watched by the whole family, even though occasional foul language is present. Table five presents examples of rude language used in the Arabic dubbed version.

Table 4. Examples of rude language expressions

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Barney: Teacher's pet, apple polisher, butt kisser (7G05)	هز الديل، مسح الجوخ، تمشية حال	<i>Tail wagging and shoe polishing is good for getting things done.</i>
2. Box: Shut up! Shut up! Kiss my butt! Go to hell (8F12)	اكنم. اكنم. بوس رجلي اكنم. غور بعيد. غور بعيد	Shut up! Shut up! Kiss my foot, go away, go away!
3. Bart: My name is Bart Simpson. Who the hell are you? (7F01)	بدر شمشون. و انت نطلع مين؟	Badr Shamshoon, and who are you?
4. Bart: Now, sit! I said, sit! Take a walk. Sniff that other dog's butt. See? He does exactly what I say (7F14)	دلوقتي إقعد. قلت إقعد. آ. امشي. شم أثر الكلب ده شفتي عمل كل اللي قللت عليه	Now sit! I said sit! Go! Sniff this dog's trail. You see, it has done all I asked.
5. Bart: I'll say, Dad, you must really love us to sink so low. (7G08)	يظهر يا بابا، حبك لنا خلاك تهين كرامتك	Dad, it seems your love for us made you tarnish your dignity.
6. Bart: Good morning. This is your wake-up call. Homer: Wake-up call? It's 2 a.m. Bart: Sorry, fatso (8F01)	صبح الخير، دا معاد الصحيان صحيان؟ الساعة اتنين الصبح أسفين يا كابتن	Good morning. This is the wake-up call. Are you awake? It's 2 am. Sorry captain.
7. Bart: Homer 'The Human Punching Bag' Simpson (7G06)	عمر، المأسوف على شبابه، شمشون	Omar, the not so young, Shamshoon
8. Bart: Know where this bastard lives (7F16)	و عندك فكرة الضايغ دا حنلاقية فين؟	Any idea where we can find this loser?
9. Emily: You son of a bitch! Good show! All right (7F14)	يا كلب يا عفريت. برافو	You dog! You devil! Bravo!

² The separation of parts of a compound word by an intervening word or words, used mainly in informal speech for emphasis (e.g. can't find it any-blooming-where) (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

Sterle, Jr. (2011) argues that *The Simpsons* has become the embodiment of all the wrong values in American society: mockery, drinking, cursing, violence, laziness and so on. The language used in the show caused controversy right from the start, although the level of vulgarity was certainly amplified after few seasons. Sometimes rude jokes zip past so quickly that only the focused viewer would get them. Within the chaotic life of Springfield, bad habits and ignorance are the norm. Name-calling, swearing and disrespect of parents and elders are present in most episodes.

As discussed earlier, rude behaviour, be it foul language or disrespect, is not condoned in the Arab society. Understandably, Hosny eliminated almost every reference to profanity or demeaning behaviour, as the first four examples in Table 5 demonstrate. Expressions like ‘*butt kisser*’, ‘*kiss my butt*’, ‘*sniff that other dog’s butt*’ and ‘*who the hell are you*’ were translated to ‘وأنت تطلع مين؟’ ‘ثُمَّ أُنْزِلْ الْكَلْبَ دَهْ’ ‘بُوس رَجُلِي’ ‘تَمْشِيَةِ حَالْ’ (*getting things done, kiss my foot, sniff this dog’s trail, who are you?*); a passive language indeed was used to conform to Arab sensitivities on these issues.

As Islam calls for utmost respect and reverence of parents and elders, disrespect of parents is considered an act which could have grave ramifications on family and social ties. In this regard, Hosny had no alternative but to observe these teachings in his rendering of ‘Dad, you must really love us to *sink so low*’, ‘*sorry fatso*’, ‘Homer, *the human punching bag*, Simpson’, with a softer tone ‘شَمْشُونِ عَمْرَ، الْمَأْسُوفِ عَلَى شَبَابِهِ،’ ‘أَسْفِينِ يَا كَابِتَنَ،’ ‘يَا بَابَا، حَبْك لِينَا خَلَاك تَهِينِ كِرَامَتِكَ’ (*it seems your love for us made you tarnish your dignity. Sorry captain. Omar, the not so young, Shamshoon*).

Another aspect the Arab society considers a consequence of a bad upbringing is name-calling. While Western expressions like ‘*bastard*’ and ‘*son of a bitch*’, in examples 8 and 9, have exact usable equivalents in Arabic (ابن زنا) and (ابن الكلبة), although in colloquial Arabic they bear a stronger insulting power, Hosny translated ‘*bastard*’ to ‘الصَّايِعُ’ (*loser*) and ‘*son of a bitch*’ to ‘يَا كَلْبَ يَا عَفْرِيَتَ’ (*you dog! You devil!*), hence eliminating any serious insulting significance the expressions hold in the original.

It is worth mentioning that rude language, along with many other aspects, of *The Simpsons* has been subject to censorship in many other societies as well. In Japan, for instance, the episode ‘Thirty minutes over Tokyo’ (AABF20) was banned for showing Homer throwing the emperor into a pile of ladies’ underwear and declaring himself ‘Emperor Clobbersaurus’. A similar episode, Goo Goo Gai Pan (GABF06), was banned in China for referring to Mao as ‘a little angel who killed 50 million people’.

Concluding remarks

This study examined the rendering of an array of extralinguistic units, such as idioms and puns, some of which are rooted in the English language structure and are very engrossed within its culture. Translating such items into Arabic necessitates a considerable effort on behalf of the translator, a deep knowledge of both cultures and a creative mind. Localising certain expressions with a universal nature into Arabic was an easy task, as the Egyptian vernacular is rich and expressive. The translator demonstrated awareness of the compensation tools of translation to ensure appropriate transmission of intended meaning to the target audience. However, newly coined terms, expressions and catchphrases posed a greater challenge to the translator, who completely overlooked such components. Such deliberate or unconscious act on the part of Hosny resulted in a plain target text void of source script’s ingenuity intended to entertain.

The Simpsons Episodes

Season 1		Season 2	
No	Title	No	Title
7G02	Bart The Genius	7F01	Two Cars in Every Garage
7G03	Homer's Odyssey	7F06	Bart The Daredevil
7G04	There Is No Disgrace Like Homer	7F08	Dead Putting Society
7G05	Bart the General	7F09	Itchy & Scratchy & Marge
7G06	Moaning Lisa	7F12	The Way We Was
7G08	Simpson's Roasting on An Open Fire	7F14	Bart's Dog Gets An 'F'
	The Call of The Simpsons	7F16	Oh, Brother, Where Art Thou
7G09	Bjorn To Be Wild (Life on The Fast Lane)	7F20	War of The Simpsons
7G11		7F22	Blood Feud
Season 3			
8F01	Mr. Lisa Goes To Washington	8F14	Homer Alone
8F02	Tree House of Horror	8F16	Bart The Lover
8F04	Homer Defined	8F23	When Flanders Failed
8F09	Burns Verkaufen Der Kraftwerk		
8F12	Lisa The Greek		

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ترجمة العناصر غير اللغوية إلى اللغة العربية: دبلجة المسلسل الكرتوني "عائلة سيمبسون" أنموذجاً

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ملخص

بالرغم من هيمنة المترجمة على الشاشات العربية، تظل الدبلجة الخيار الأمثل حين يتعلق الأمر ببرامج الكرتون والرسوم المتحركة، ويعزى هذا التفضيل في كون طبيعة هذه البرامج تستهدف فئة محددة من المشاهدين -الأطفال غير القادرين على القراءة والمراهقين- باعتبارهم شريحة المشاهدين الأكثر تأثراً بالمحتوى المعروض، لذا يستدعي الأمر تهذيب المحتوى بطريقة مُحكمة ومتقنة حتى يكون ملائماً للعرض. وفي هذا الصدد، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على كفاءات ترجمة العناصر غيراللغوية والمُقتزنة بالثقافة الغربية، وطرق نقلها إلى المشاهد العربي. ولهذا الغرض، فإن متن هذه الدراسة مؤلف من مجموعة مختارة من المسلسل التلفزيوني "عائلة سيمبسون". ويرجع سبب اختيار هذا المسلسل الكرتوني إلى نسبة شيوع عاملِي الجذب وقوة التأثير فيه، إضافة إلى توظيفه كماً وفيراً من الإشارات والإيحاءات الثقافية. وتعتمد هذه الدراسة على نظرية التكافؤ التي وضعها يوجين نايدا وتستند إلى إطار دراسات الترجمة الوصفية، الحائز على إقرار العديد من الباحثين في مجال الترجمة (أمثال دياز سينتاس، إيفين- زوهار، هيرمانز، لوفيفر، توري، من بين آخرين) وتأييدهم لهذا الإطار البحثي باعتباره المنهج المثالي لتقصي المحتوى السمعي البصري. ولتحديد كيف تم التعامل مع ترجمة العناصر غير اللغوية من خلال عملية دبلجة: "عائلة سيمبسون" إلى العربية، وتمت مقارنة وتحليل المواضيع المُستخلصة من متن النص الأصلي مع نظائرها في النص الهدف، ويُظهر التحليل عدداً من القيود التي وجب على المترجم التعامل معها، وتبعاً لجوء المترجم إلى أسلوب التدخل بشكل ملحوظ. وجاءت أغلبية التدخلات في اختيار المفردات المُعجمية والتراكيب النحوية، وأيضاً في الاستراتيجيات المُنتَجة، وتَجَمَّ عن هذه القيود وتداخلات المترجم ضياع المعنى المراد به في النص الأصلي بشكل كبير في النص المترجم.

الكلمات الدالة: الدبلجة، عائلة سيمبسون، التورية، عبارات اصطلاحية، العناصر غير اللغوية.

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