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Faculty of Arts

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Cultural Problems in Subtitling Disney Films from English into Arabic

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Examining Committee
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Abstract

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The study investigates translating cultural references in Disney's animated films, in Subtitling. It highlights mistranslations and possible failures caused by cultural dissimilarities between Arab and foreign cultures. A descriptive and analytic approach is followed to examine the corpus of the study. Examples from English animated films and their translated versions in Arabic are collected, classified and analyzed. The study also examine the various strategies used by translators in dealing with these breakdowns. Results show that the subtitlers tend to adopt literal translation as a main strategy, while they sometimes have tried to bridge the gap that might result from this strategy by using various strategies as omitting or euphemizing the source text terms.

Key words: Cultural, problems, Subtitling, Disney, Films, Arabic.
Arabic Abstract

مستخلص الدراسة

محاسنة، جمي. المشاكل الثقافية في أفلام ديزني أطروحة ماجستير، جامعة اليرموك، 2018

المشرف: د. محمد محمود عبيدات

تتناول هذه الدراسة القضايا في ترجمة الشاشة للمكونات الثقافية في أفلام ديزني وكيفية التعامل معها.

وكما تستعرض بعض العوائق وربما الاختلافات في ترجمة تلك المكونات والتي عادةً ما تنشأ بسبب الاختلافات الثقافية بين الثقافات العربية والغربية بشكل خاص.

وقد أعتمد الباحث عند تحليل تلك المكونات على المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي، حيث عمد إلى إجراء مقارنة بين ترجمة تلك المكونات الثقافية وذلك من خلال جمع وتصنيف وتحليل بعض الأمثلة المختارة في النسخ المرجعة من الأفلام.

أما فيما يتعلق بالنتائج، فقد أظهر تحليل الأمثلة أن الترجمة الحرفية هي الاستراتيجية الأكثر استخداماً في النسخ المرجعة من الأفلام. وفي بعض الأحيان، استخدمت تعابير التلفيف أو الحذف لتقليل الفجوة الناجمة عن استخدام الترجمة الحرفية تلك المكونات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المشاكل الثقافية، ترجمة الشاشة، اللغة العربية، أفلام ديزني.
The English scripts and the Arabic subtitles were juxtaposed and the content analysis method was used in the codification and categorisation of the most recurrent problems in the corpus. In the translation comparison process between the source texts and their subtitled versions, Toury’s (1995) 'coupled pairs' model with the back translation technique was used. In two studies on problems of subtitling movies from English into Arabic and vice versa (Thawabteh, 2011a) and (2011a) analysed the problems encountered by a sample of Master of Arts™ translation. Questions, exclamations, discoursal problems, cultural (translation of culture specific references), as well as technical problems (e.g., typeface and distribution, segmentation, space superfluity) In this regard, the problems found in the subtitles of this film are studied in order to determine which translating strategies are used and how they reconstitute the cultural notion of the source text in the target text. Culture-bound terms or as some call them cultural-specific items refer to those which have no equivalents or different positions in target reader’s cultural system, thus causing difficulties of translation of their functions and meanings in the source text into target text. He classifies culture-bound terms into two categories, namely intralinguistic and extralinguistic culture-bound references; the former category consists of idioms, proverbs, slang and dialects, while the later refers to the expressions pertaining to cultural items which are not part of a language system. For me subtitles only. I watch dubbed only if there is no subtitled available. I find on all but the most complex speech, I follow the subtitles with little effort. Some dubbed are not bad, but dubbed you are accepted some person’s interpretation. Their way of expressing themselves sounds totally funny if you actually translate it into English. Because Japanese language is highly contextual. Just the way a character apologizes by saying Gomen or Gomen nasai, the tonality and form all play a crucial part in that scene. As film-making has evolved, subtitling has become a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, which seeks to deliver the original dialogue of the speakers (Diaz-Cintas and Remael 2007: 8). Subtitle translation in the field of Audiovisual Translation has attracted increasing interest from scholars, who believe that the quality of subtitling. In recent decades, animated films produced by Disney and others have moved far. That said, specific investigations into the subtitle translation of English animation films are still limited. Thus, this comparative study of E-C subtitle translation in 15 selected animation films should make a useful contribution at both the theoretical and practical levels of E-C subtitling in animation films. 4 ABSTRACT This study investigates the problems that translators tend to face in the subtitling and dubbing of English-language films and television programmes into Arabic and suggests solutions for these problems. In the light of an examination of the generic features of audiovisual translation and of the particular cultural constraints inherent in translation for Arabic-speaking audiences, it is proposed that certain elements of translation theory can be useful in overcoming the technical and cultural barriers identified. This proposition is tested through analysis of the translation of three feature films, one television sitcom and an animation series that have been subtitled and dubbed into Arabic, with a particular focus on the translation of dialect, swear words, and humour.