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Ideological and Cultural Constraints in Audiovisual Translation: Dubbing *The Simpsons* Into Arabic

An approach to raise awareness and understanding of practitioners involved in the dubbing and subtitling industry

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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To my beloved family

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Glossary[1]

AUC	American University in Cairo
AVT	audiovisual translation
CDA	critical discourse analysis
DTS	descriptive translation studies
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
Filmi	Filmi Production Company
ICRs	ideological and cultural references
JCC	Aljazeera Children's Channel
MBC	Middle East Broadcasting Corporation
TV	television

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[1] To avoid an excessive use of acronyms, they have been used discerningly, preferring the explicit noun couplets where the discourse allows me to have a more elegant flow in the explicit form.

Abstract

Although Audiovisual Translation has received considerable attention in recent years, evidence suggests that there is a paucity of empirical research carried out on the topic of ideological and cultural constraints in audiovisual translation from English into Arabic. This is despite the fact that subtitling and dubbing Western animation into Arabic has been on the increase ever since television sets entered Arab homes; which is why several authority figures are calling for tighter control and moral screening of what is aired on television sets, in particular that which is aimed at children.

This study aims to add some understanding of the problems facing practitioners in the dubbing/subtitling industry, such as the reasons for their alleged reality distortion and how these problems are dealt with by the dubbing agencies. This is achieved by exploring the extent ideological and cultural norms, as well as other agents, shape the outcome of dubbed English animations/films when rendered into Arabic by manipulation, subversion and/or appropriation.

Fifty-two dubbed episodes of *The Simpsons* were selected for this study. *The Simpsons* was chosen due to its universal appeal and influence. It addresses many sensitive issues, such as sex, drugs, religion, politics, racial and gender stereotypes, with a bluntness and boldness rarely seen before, and goes beyond passive entertainment and school education. Therefore, it is looked at with suspicion and vigilance in the Arab World.

The methodological approach adopted for this study is primarily qualitative, which is proven to provide the kind of expert understanding this study aims to achieve, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994) attest. Because this research springs from the conviction that the issues involved constitute a complex phenomenon, and because the aim is to uncover what could be learnt about intrinsic and extrinsic conditions, it is important to adopt Toury's (1980, 1995) descriptive translation studies paradigm as well as critical discourse analysis strategy. This paradigm enables researchers to describe, explore, analyse, interpret views of the participants, and bring forth the representational properties of the screen discourse as a vehicle for ideological and cultural power transfer.

The contrastive analysis of the English and Arabic versions of *The Simpsons* yielded interesting results; it established that the translation process is marred by many intrinsic and extrinsic factors, either exercised by the translator or imposed upon him. Ideological and socio-cultural factors are the chief culprits in the case of translating *The Simpsons* into Arabic.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, ideology, culture, dubbing, subtitling, constraints, norms, The Simpsons.

Declaration

I declare that:

this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented is clearly acknowledged.

Signed by:

Rashid Yahiaoui

Acknowledgements

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

When you offer a translation to a nation, that nation will almost always look at translation as an act of violence against itself.

Victor Hugo (cited in Lefèvere, 1992, p. 14)

This chapter sets out to introduce the present study by giving an overview of the research area in question, its importance, the reasons behind the need for such a study, and its significance. It also lays out the structure of the thesis and its outline.

1.1 Research overview

Language is a powerful conduit of culture, and it is even more potent when transmitted by means of modern mass media and communication channels as well as through translation, or what has become known as audiovisual translation (AVT). The power of AVT lies in its ability to transmit cultural and ideological representations in both image and language, and thus the influence on the target audience is much greater, or as the saying goes 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

Translation is no longer seen as purely a linguistic process whereby a translator renders linguistic units of a source language to their equivalents in the target language. Rather, it is a complex operation and an influential vehicle that transports values, both positive and negative, across cultures. As Hatim and Mason (1996, p. 223) argue, translators need 'not only a bilingual ability but also a bi-cultural vision. Translators mediate between cultures (including ideologies, moral systems, and socio-cultural structures), seeking to overcome those incompatibilities which stand in the way of transfer of meaning'.

Audiovisual translators, contrary to literary translators, have to deal with multi-layered semiotic texts, or material, composed of an array of signs, such as verbal, nonverbal, intentional, unintentional, implicit and explicit, which make up the whole code system within which the message is transferred (Delabastita, 1989; Gottlieb, 1994). This task is made even more cumbersome by the multifaceted interference of various agents in their work, or what is referred to as patronage (Díaz Cintas, 1997; Lefèvere, 1985) (cf. Section 4.6). Zabalbeascoa (1996, p. 249) goes as far as claiming that 'it is frequently the case that translators do not have the last word on their work, unlike many other professionals'. Many scholars (Bassnett and Trivaldi, 1999; Díaz Cintas 1997, 2003; Lefèvere, 1985; Venuti, 1998) discuss the issues surrounding the use of AVT as an effective tool to propagate ideological, socio-cultural and linguistic values and/or promote nationalism and cultural identity. Furthermore, AVT is an activity that perpetually involves conscious acts of selection and manipulation at several levels: linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, political

or other (Díaz-Cintas, 2003). It is within this context that this study attempts to address ideological and socio-cultural factors affecting AVT into Arabic with reference to the dubbing of *The Simpsons*.

Since the 1990s, AVT has gained considerable ground within descriptive translation studies (DTS) due to the advent of the internet and the great revolution in the television (TV) industry in terms of production and hardware innovation, which made AVT material more readily accessible. 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. Note, however, that although *The Simpsons*, the audiovisual material used for this study, is an animation, it is intended for children, teenagers and adults alike (cf. Chapter Four).

Dubbing, as one of the most popular modes of AVT, has received a fair share of investigation, mainly in English and Spanish, (e.g.; Chaume 2000, 2003, 2004, 2004a, 2012; Díaz-Cintas, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2009; O'Connell, 1998, 2000, 2003; Orero, 2004; Robson, 1993; Whitman-Linsen, 1992), but it has barely been researched in Arabic save for few brave efforts by doctoral research students (Darwish, 2009; Yacoub, 2010; Zitawi, 2004) and independent researchers (Gamal, 2008; Maluf, 2005). This lack of research could be ascribed to the collaborative nature of the dubbing process and the technical difficulties associated with it.

The popularity of TV, and its effectiveness, if not potency, has ultimately been exploited to convey embedded messages within its AVT material to viewers. These messages range from mere advertising for certain consumer products to propagating the cultural and ideological hegemony of the dominant and powerful. Moreover, when the receptor of a translation is susceptible, the translator has to tread carefully between a balanced translation, creating a bridge between cultures and a fertile ground for disseminating ideas and ideologies on the one hand, and the accepted outcome of audiovisual materials which conform to the norms of the target culture on the other. Such a task is, as mentioned earlier, not an easy one, bearing in mind the multitude of factors affecting a translator's work.

The Arab translator, perhaps more than any other, is under constant scrutiny, censorship and patronage (Cohen, 2001; Makiya, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 2003). Despite the tangible freedom the Arab satellite broadcasting industry has witnessed in the last decade, and the private sector ownership of most TV channels, the programmes broadcast are still subject to local censorship guidelines.

1.2 Aims of the study

The present study aims to discern various ideological and socio-cultural forces behind the manipulation of the dubbing of *The Simpsons* into Arabic. It is one of the few such studies carried out in the Arab World, despite the huge demand, popularity and consumption of dubbed material and the mushrooming of satellite TV channels in this vast region (cf. Chapter Four). This paradox demonstrates the worrying imbalance between the great impact of AVT on society, on one hand, and the lack of research in this area in Arabic on the other.

The objectives of this study are to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the forces behind the need for cultural and ideological manipulation in AVT of animation into Arabic?

2. How do ideological and cultural barriers and censorship impede universality of culture and message transfer?

3. What strategies are proposed to overcome the need for subversion and manipulation?

To answer these questions, this study leans on the DTS theoretical framework, which many scholars in the field strongly advocate and consider as an ideal platform within which to investigate audiovisual material (as discussed in Chapter Five). Scholars and researchers such as Díaz-Cintas, Even-Zohar, Hermans, Lefèvere and Toury, among others, laid out guidelines governing such an investigation. Polysystem theory, norms and patronage are key concepts that keep giving impetus to further research and interest in the field, opening new avenues of study and setting a solid theoretical paradigm for analysis. It is important to note that this current study is undertaken bearing in mind that DTS encompasses not only norms, but the polysystem theory too, since they are complementary, as Díaz-Cintas (2004) points out (cf. Chapter Five).

The sheer volume of research carried out within the framework of DTS demonstrates that it is the ideal model, as it is a flexible and uniform construct. The research carried out by authors like Díaz Cintas (1997), Gutiérrez Lanza (1999), Karamitroglou (2000), Remael (2000), Sokoli (2000), Ballester Casado (2001), Zitawi (2004), Darwish (2009) and Yacoub (2010) amongst others, is an endorsement of the strength and viability of this model. Consequently, this study transcends the linguistic approach in its investigation and draws on cultural studies, as AVT is seen as a language and culture amalgam. As discussed in Chapter Two, cultural and ideological factors have a great effect on both the *process* and the *product* of translation.

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis begins with a review of the literature of key concepts of the study: culture and ideology, AVT and its modes, the norms governing AVT, and the status of dubbing in the Arab World. The research methodology and theoretical framework are then discussed, explained and justified. The data generated from both the interviews and the corpus are analysed within the DTS framework using the discourse analysis approach, then the results are discussed and conclusions drawn. The structure of the thesis is as follows:

- **Chapter One** gives an overview of the study, its importance and the organisation of the thesis.

- **Chapter Two** introduces and discusses key concepts of ideology, culture and language and how their intertwined nature affects cross cultural communication in the process of translation. It also examines translation as manipulation and the various constraints that govern both translation as a process and a product, leaning heavily on Toury's (1999) notion of norms.

- **Chapter Three** reviews AVT; it discusses the definitions and classifications of AVT modes, with special emphasis on subtitling and dubbing; gives a brief historical review, and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of subtitling and dubbing. Finally, the chapter investigates AVT within its ideological context. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the significance of AVT and its close relation with ideology, which helps to determine the ideological

factors that affect both translators and the translation process, and underline the norms governing dubbing into Arabic.

- **Chapter Four** examines dubbing in the Arab World in detail by providing a diachronic overview. It also looks into the Arabic language diglossia; factors that might motivate favouring a particular vernacular over others and the age-old ideological conflict between the modernists and the conservatives over which form of Arabic to use. The chapter also introduces the Simpson family and discusses what makes *The Simpsons* such a powerful, controversial yet iconic, American[2] product, and the cultural and ideological challenges and constraints dubbing into Arabic poses. The chapter also sheds light on the role of patronage and various agents affecting the message transfer in translation. Finally, the chapter highlights the main strategies used when translating into Arabic. The focus is on domestication and foreignisation strategies, and the various techniques they utilise.

- **Chapter Five** explains the research model adopted for this study, and clarifies the research design and methodology. It discusses the theoretical framework adopted, and the methods used to collect data and assess the validity and reliability of the study, including the tools and procedures used to analyse data.

- **Chapter Six** focuses on the analysis of the data collected via interviews with the translator/dubber and the producer of *The Simpsons*, and two more professionals in the field of AVT in the Arab World (a script writer and translator, and a producer and dubber of animations). In addition it analyses the corpus of the study, consisting of 52 episodes of *The Simpsons*. It starts by explaining and justifying the extraction process of various ideological and cultural references from the data, their categorisation, and the tools used to this aim. As the concepts of ideology and culture are broad and encompass many elements, the extracted data are arranged into specific categories reflecting their content relevance, such as ideological factors, socio-cultural issues, linguistic and extra-linguistic manipulation, and intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Sub categories facilitate the relevance of data and coherence of the analysis.

- **Chapter Seven** discusses the findings of the analysis, summarises the study and draws the main conclusions and implications of the results with regard to the

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[2] The use of 'America' in this study refers to United States of America only.

theoretical framework and the research model. Additionally, this chapter provides recommendations for further research in AVT, particularly as it applies to the Arab World.

CHAPTER TWO

2. IDEOLOGY, LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND TRANSLATION

No man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking.

Ruth Benedict (1959, p. 2)

This chapter explores the effect of translators' personal ideology, and external influences imposed on them, that may result in manipulation and distortion of the source text in order to serve a certain ideology and culture at the expense of others. I begin with ideology and culture, their definitions and aspects. I also provide an insight into the various forces behind the ever-changing face of cultures, values and politics of the world; changes that translation, as a power-carrier medium, spreads across the globe; how ideology shapes translation; and how translators can influence and manipulate, as re-writers of the source text, the outcome of their work. I also analyse external influences and constraints.

2.1 Background

Translation has a paramount effect on shaping cultural and national identities and enhancing or undermining entities (Bassnett, 1996; Fawcett, 1998; Lefèvere, 1992). Translation is far from being a transfer of ideas above suspicion; research shows how in the process of translation, ideas, notions and, at times, complete ways of life can be censored and manipulated. The process even implants codes to undermine the target culture or change perceptions. Bassnett (1996, p. 22) stipulates that, 'Once considered a subservient, transparent filter through which a text could and should pass without adulteration, the translation can now be seen as a process in which intervention is crucial'.

The reality is that language is not always neutral: the very words we choose to convey meaning in fact shape that meaning. Likewise, translation is not always neutral. Conveying ideas between languages incurs loss or gain, consciously or otherwise. These ideas are subject to multileveled interpretation as well, depending on the receiving audience. Consequently, the process of translation operates under the constraints of particular agents and circumstances that force translators to be biased or subversive. The decisions taken by translators in this regard are not always idiosyncratic, but are, as O'Connell (2000) argues, often constrained by factors such as the languages involved, the text genre, and the audience.

Translation Studies has in the last few decades shifted interest from the outmoded notions of faithful translation and equivalence to dissecting the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translation; such norms as power and

ideology (in its broadest sense) that shape re-writing and manipulation of the source text (Hatim and Munday, 2004).

The translator's intervention, ideologically motivated or otherwise, could have far reaching implications on the target audience. Alvarez and Vidal (1996) argue that the translator's choice to select, add or omit any words, or even place them in a given order in the text is an indication that 'there is a voluntary act that reveals his history and the socio-political milieu that surrounds him; in other words, his own culture and ideology' (p. 5).

Power play is the coined label these scholars use when discussing various factors that affect the process of translation. They believe that translators have power embedded within their ideologies, along with those imposed on them, to include or exclude certain ideological and cultural codes that may enhance or alter value systems, cultures and beliefs.

2.2 On ideology

> Ideology is perhaps one of the most equivocal and elusive concepts one can find in the social sciences; not only because of the variety of theoretical approaches which assign different meanings and functions to it, but also because it is a concept heavily charged with political connotations and widely used in everyday life with the most diverse significations (Larrain, 1979, pp. 13–16).

The term *ideology* was coined by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) in the 18th century to define the *science of ideas* in order to make a distinction between the philosophical realm of thought known as metaphysics and the actual science of ideas[3]. It was then introduced into English via a direct translation of *ideologie* to refer to the philosophy of mind, the way ideas are generated and the birth place of these ideas and concepts. However such definitions evolved rapidly and became associated with any particular constellation of beliefs, dispositions, habits or artistic expressions (Raymond, 1982). Consequently, ideology became more like a twin to culture, with a very fine line between the two.

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[3] For a detailed account see:
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/159424/Antoine-Louis-Claude-Comte-Destutt-de-Tracy.

David McLellan (1995, cited in Heywood, 2003, p. 5), affirms that: 'Ideology is the most elusive concept in the whole of social sciences', as the political meaning of ideology was mainly propagated by the writings of Karl Marx in his work *The German Ideology* published in 1846 where he states:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time the ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it (cited in Heywood 2003, p. 7).

Marx sees ideology as a delusion that perpetrates a false vision of the reality, or what Engels calls 'false consciousness' (cited in Manders, 2006, p. 5). He utilises ideology as a tool to unmask society's delusion and claims that his ideas are scientific as they are to uncover the way history and society work.

Ideology is thought to be temporary; it lasts the life of the class system that gives rise to it. Marx argues that the proletariat will eventually quash the capitalistic ideology, as a classless system will be born that will abolish inequality in society.

Van Dijk, (cited in Calzada-Pérez, 2003, p. 3), sees ideology through its negative political lens as 'a system of wrong, false, distorted or otherwise misguided beliefs'. However, Calzada-Pérez (2003, p. 5) argues that sometimes ideology is viewed in a more positive sense, 'as a vehicle to promote or legitimate interests of a particular social group (rather than a means to destroy contenders)'.

In its broadest sense, ideology is, as Seliger (1976) defines it, 'sets of ideas by which men [sic] posit, explain and justify ends and means of organised social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order' (p. 14). In this sense, ideology covers a vast array of aspects: political, social, epistemological, ethical and religious. When we understand ideology as a set of convictions aimed at some practical action (Seliger, 1976, pp. 91–92), we usually disregard the aspects of individual ideology to the advantage of the so-called collective ideologies, those around which political and social movements gravitate. This is because individual ideologies tend to melt within

the collective ones—either under the influence of the latter or to escape persecution and alienation.

The cross-cultural ideological friction is nothing new; history books unravel many events that led to the formation of nations, empires and cultures. People fought battles to dominate under the umbrella of religion (the Crusades for example), race (mainly the white supremacy that produced slavery and the Arian ideology) or simply to impose a culture or a language perceived superior (as was the case of the Greeks, the Romans, and the 19th century colonial movement). Perhaps the clearest example of today's imposed supremacy is globalisation with its multifaceted Western influence on the weaker parties. Ideological tension between Eastern and Western blocs resulting from the emergence of two different world views, communism and capitalism, and the attempt of the West to dominate the world and spread its values and way of life by the homogenising power of globalisation, is just another piece of the puzzle of the human nature that seeks to dominate the Other[4]. The 21st century seems to be the era of the ultimate clash of ideologies. This is due mainly to the Islamist resurgence on one hand and the emergence of the Western bloc as the opposing power on the other.

From the various definitions stated earlier, it is evident that ideology encompasses all elements of power to influence, manipulate and distort realities, perceptions and the way people interact. Although, there is no single definition of ideology which could encompass these various conceptualisations, I use 'ideology' in this study to mean 'the intellectual dimension of culture. It justifies its sets of beliefs, values and norms', as Facchini and Melki (2011, p.1) argue. This means that people follow, and abide by, certain socio-cultural norms because of the justification this dimension provides them with. This encompasses, for example, habits like food and drink (why certain people do not eat or drink certain items), the use of rude language, nudity, taboos...etc.

What is particularly relevant to this study is the role of the translation process, under ideological and cultural pressures, in shaping different agents in charge of the

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[4] This concept was coined by Emmanuel Levinas and made popular by Edward Said's 'Orientalism'. It refers to the process by which individuals and groups exclude others whom they think do not fit into their society.

translation—and how these agents shape the world around them as a result. It is apparent that we are influenced by one form of ideology or another, and consequently, we are subject to the ever-changing external cultural and political currents and trends that shape public opinion and seek to homogenise our view of the world.

This study looks at many conflicting influential factors from the perspective of their impact on the work of screen translators. It also sheds light on how subscribing to a certain set of beliefs, or being under the patronage[5] of decision-making agents, affects not only the end product of translation but also the impact of that product on the receiving audience, their culture, way of life, and thinking process as a whole.

2.3 Ideology or culture?

Some argue that there is no clear difference between ideology and culture, but rather they are two notions of the same concept. However, Calzada Pérez, (2003) suggests that the main difference is that ideology is 'the set of ideas, values and beliefs that govern a community by virtue of being regarded as the norm' (p. 5). Culture, on the other hand, is usually understood to be 'an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society' (p. 23). This is true to a large extent, since values and beliefs that bond people together are learned within society.

It is evident that the difference is barely tangible between the two definitions, but rather so subtle that some ask a plain question: 'When is something ideology rather than culture?' (Fawcett, 1998, p. 106).

Culture may be understood as referring to a society's customs, laws, learnt beliefs, traditions, heritage and way of life. Ideology on the other hand goes beyond such simple notions; it 'permeates (identity) groups of the most varied nature, which would not always relate to the conventional meaning of society', as Calzada-Pérez (2003, p. 6) argues. One can argue as well that ideology is associated with negative political connotations, whereas culture is a description of a given society's features.

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[5] For a detailed account on patronage in AVT, see Díaz Cintas (1997).

It is hard to guess if anyone could indeed provide Fawcett with a fulfilling and comprehensive answer to his burning question in the light of the significant overlap between the two notions.

Despite this overlap, I do not use these two notions interchangeably. I use ideology to indicate religious, political and personal opinions, and culture to the acquired traditions, customs and way of life of a given society. The difference between the two is that the environment and history that affects decision making constitutes culture, whereas how that history is used and conformed to acquire a general worldview is ideology. 'Jihad vs. McWorld' is a perfect example, to quote Barber's (2006) label of the struggle between globalisation and corporate control of politics on one hand and traditional values, in the form of religious orthodoxy and theocracy, on the other.

2.4 On language and culture

The connection between language and culture is profoundly entrenched. We use language to preserve and convey our culture and cultural ties. We use language, as a system of signs, to express thoughts, facts and ideas in order to communicate with others who share the same system of signs. However, this system is not a mere mechanism for linguistic exchange. The words we use, as Kramsch (2003, p. 3) puts it, 'reflect their authors' attitudes and beliefs, their point of view that are also of others. In both cases, language expresses cultural reality through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, language embodies and symbolizes cultural reality'.

It is apparent that language and its usage are not neutral devices for the transference of ideas. As Shapiro (1989, p. 14) contends, language is not simply 'transparent communication'.

The performative use of language[6] is immediately invocatory and charged with power. It is infused with symbolic currency, temporal contingency, value, and ultimately what is construed as truth—the language people use directly adjusts the meaning held in and of the social world.

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[6] The concept of performative language used in this context draws on Austin's much acclaimed analysis of language in use in his posthumous 'How to do things with words'.

Viewing language as not simply a medium of exchange, 'an unobtrusive conduit', but as the vehicle through which this exchange is interpreted, valued, and understood, consequently launches language into an unprecedented realm of human interpretation.

Many definitions have been given to culture since the world started to isolate and investigate this complex notion (cf. 2.3). One of the first to define culture was Edward Burnett Tylor in 1871, who describes it as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society', (cited in the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*).

Katan (1999) traces the origin of the word culture to the Latin *cultus*, cultivation, and *colere*, to till. There is a pertinent metaphorical connection between the words. 'Seeds continually absorb elements from the land, or rather the ecosystem, to ensure their development. In the same way, people continually absorb, unaware, vital elements from their immediate environment which influence their development within the human system' (Katan, 1999, p. 17). Thus, the relevant sense of the word culture here is the anthropological one:

> When we use the word 'culture' in its anthropological sense, we mean to say that culture is any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organization, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people which set that group apart as a distinctive group (Scollon and Scollon, 1995, p. 126).

One approach to explaining culture is through analogy with an iceberg. Similar to an iceberg, with its visible section above the waterline and its other larger section hidden under it, culture is multi-layered with some observable aspects and some indiscernible ones that we can only speculate on. Moreover, like an iceberg, the visible part of the culture, also known as observable behaviour, is only one section of a much bigger entity. Members of a culture correspond with each other based on a certain set of personalised languages or sign systems[7]. Therefore, one approach to

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[7] *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross Cultural Workbook*. US Government Printing Office, T0087. Available at: www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/culture/pdf/workbook.pdf

understanding a particular culture is through learning the language or sign systems operating within that culture.

Language not only serves as a tool for communication, but also, fundamentally, is a 'system of representation' of perception and thinking, as Bennett (1993, p. 9) argues. Others maintain that culture is the beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression (Hantrais, 1989). Therefore, everyone's views are reliant on the culture which shaped them. These views are, of course, conveyed using the same language that is shaped by that culture. Consequently, understanding a culture and its people is achievable only through the knowledge of their language. In this regard, Emmitt and Pollock (1997) argue that people brought up under similar cultural backgrounds, but speaking different languages, may have a very different worldview. In the same vein, Whorf (1958) argues that different thinking mechanisms are brought about by the use of different forms of language. Nonetheless, language is deeply rooted in culture, which in turn is mirrored and conveyed by language from one generation to the next.

2.4.1 The process of cultural conditioning

How culture is developed and how people develop a sense of behavioural righteousness within a society is referred to as *cultural conditioning*[8], and takes place in all cultures. The social, moral and identity specificities in the behaviours acquired by different people and the cultural make-up through which they are conditioned are significantly different across groups. Moreover, through the process of conditioning, which results in learned behaviours, people also involuntarily learn and take for granted the values and beliefs driving those behaviours. When a person realises how this process operates, they can comprehend how people from different cultures can act in entirely different ways and be absolutely convinced that they are right. Even though the bulk of the conditioning process occurs early in childhood, adults continue this process as they acquire new behaviours throughout their life.

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[8] For a detailed account on this concept see Hofstede (1991).

2.4.2 Translating language, translating culture

The main driving force behind translation from one language to another is the stark need of different communities to explore other cultures. This need generally arises from curiosity about theology, spirituality and all the other unknown and unexplored aspects of the *foreign* that can be quite intriguing to the minds of the uninformed. In its broadest sense, translation means cross-cultural communication and understanding.

The concept of culture is very closely tied to the *activity* of translating and to its *product*. Culture can be continuously innovated and moulded through the activity of translating which adds new texts into the pre-existing culture.

Snell-Hornby (1988, p. 42) ascertains that 'if language is an integral part of culture, the translator needs not only proficiency in two languages; he must also be at home in two cultures'. To be at home in two cultures necessitates awareness of both cultures' uniqueness and the foundations upon which these two cultures are built.

A contrasting point of view to that of Snell-Hornby is given by Nida, who argues that the universality of culture includes various aspects which free it from the geographical boundaries almost en masse:

> Human experience is so much alike throughout the world. Everyone eats, sleeps, works, is related to families, experiences, love, hate, jealousy, is capable of altruism, loyalty, and friendship, and employs many facial gestures which are almost universal. In fact, what people of various cultures have in common is far greater than what separates them from one another (Nida, 1982, p. 9).

Nida's argument, that the similarities among the human population would not leave enough room for cultural differences to significantly surface and become problematic for the translator, is debatable. The universality of people's physiological processes defines human qualities that distinguish them from other animals. Nonetheless, within that homogeneity lies cultural differences that range from being insignificant to being vast enough to make human beings different from each other. The bigger the differences between the source and the target cultures are, the harder it becomes for a translator to determine linguistically sound expressions and equivalence in the target language:

The extent to which a text is translatable varies with the degree to which it is embedded in its own specific culture, also with the distance that separates the cultural background of source text and target audience in terms of time and place (Snell-Hornby, 1988 p. 41).

This argument supports the common belief that there is an intrinsic bond between culture and language, even if one does not subscribe to any strong form of linguistic relativity; a conclusion recently argued, for example, by Ochs (1996):

Using language and participating in society are closely related activities in that using language is integral to social life and participating in society is integral to the process of making sense of linguistic constructions. It is difficult to imagine, on the one hand, how one might assign meanings to lexical, grammatical, phonological, and discursive structures without an understanding of the social situations which those structures depict. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine how one might engage in social interactions, social institutions, social relationships, and other societal phenomena without the use of language (p. 407).

It is quite clear from the above that language and culture are two sides of the same coin. Thus, translating a language necessitates a thorough understanding of its users' culture in order to decode and transmit any embedded extra-linguistic elements. It should be emphasised that translation activity is a process by which cultural mechanisms are brought to the forefront and made clear to the target audience.

2.5 Ideology, culture and translation

The exercise of ideology taking place as a result of contact portrayed in the form of a linguistic and cultural exchange is as old as translation itself, as Fawcett (1998, p.107) asserts: 'throughout the centuries, individuals and institutions applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effect in translation'. He further adds: 'an ideological approach to translation can be found in some of the earliest examples of translation known to us' (p. 106).

Since the *cultural turn*[9], a concept proposed by Snell-Hornby and advocated by Bassnett and Lefèvere, translation studies began to tackle translation problems from their diverse cultural perspectives. Snell-Hornby (1988) describes a culture-oriented translation theory and succinctly argues that translation is a cross-cultural communication process. Concepts like *history, function, rewriting and manipulation* were introduced in translation studies by Bassnett and Lefèvere (1990), who claim that the process of translation should function as per the cultural requirements of the target audience. In order to uncover and analyse constraints on the mechanism of translation and various norms that translators abide by, Lefèvere (1990) introduces the theory of patronage, poetics and ideology, which probes the process of translation by placing literary systems into social and cultural contexts.

Translation Studies were given a lease of life to further investigate aspects other than linguistics. Thanks to many scholars such as Bassnett, Calzada-Pérez, Lefèvere, Schäffner, Toury, Tymoczko and Venuti, the focal point shifted towards the role of *agency* or what has become known as the *power turn*, as suggested by Tymockzo and Gentzler (2002), that is, the ideology in its various aspects that determine the outcome of translation. Ideology and translation are inextricably linked—a text to be translated is determined by agents' interests and aims, and ideological markers are embedded within the text itself both at lexical and grammatical levels (e.g. selection of particular words and expressions, and the use of passive voice etc). These ideological markers are more apparent in the political discourse where a target text is produced for specific purposes. However, translation studies did not address the issue of ideology until recent years, as the main focus of research was limited to the scientific models and the empirical findings they collect (Venuti, 1998a). And that, in Venuti's view, is what makes Translation Studies' researchers 'remain reluctant to take into account the social values (and ideologies) that enter into translating as well as the study of it' (Venuti, 1998a, p. 1).

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[9] In the 1970s, scholars in Translation Studies realised that the linguistic model, which had dominated the field for decades, was not sufficient to account for the complexity of the translation process and that linguistic issues in translation could not be dealt with in isolation from cultural ones. This was the claim central to the so-called *cultural turn*, which occurred in translation studies in the 1980s. It appeared that translators do not in fact deal with individual words or signs deprived of context, but with whole *texts* which are culturally embedded, thus largely accounting for the difficulties involved in translation. Snell-Hornby (1988, p. 39) describes translation as 'a cross-cultural event'.

The deficiency in considering such social aspects and other values was behind the launch of critical discourse analysis (CDA)[10], a new aspect of research 'to expose the ideological forces that underlie communicative exchanges (like translating)' (Calzada-Pérez, 2003, p. 2). CDA theorists argue that language use as a whole is ideological; hence translation is a major site for ideological encounters. In support of this point, Schäffner (2003a, p. 23) suggests that 'the choice of a source text and the use to which the subsequent target text is put are determined by the interests, aims and objectives of social agents'. This implies that translation is a process that manipulates, rewrites and produces *new* texts that comply with target language and cultural norms. Translations, as Lefèvere (1992a) claims, 'whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation undertaken in the service of power' (p. vii).

In the same vein, Lefèvere (1991, p. 1) asks some valid and thought provoking questions:

A. Why is it necessary to represent a foreign text in one's own culture? Does the very fact of doing that not amount to an admission of the inadequacy of that culture?

B. Secondly, who makes the text in one's own culture 'represent' the text in the foreign culture? In other words: who translates, why and with what aim in mind?

C. Who selects texts as candidates to 'be represented'? Do translators? And are those translators alone? Are there other factors involved?

D. Why produce texts that 'refer to' other texts? Why not simply produce originals in the first place?

If we accept the assumption that every aspect of human life is governed by one form of ideology or another, then the exercise of translation becomes a prime suspect every time it is practised. Even rendering *'une baguette de pain'* as *'a loaf of bread'*, as Baker (2010, p. 107) puts it, questions the intention of the translator. If, on the

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[10] CDA encompasses the analysis of many linguistic categories such as the relationship between the structure of the text and the agent of the text; the orders of discourse; a method for analysing discourse that involves *genres*, or ways of acting, *discourses*, or ways of representing, and *styles*, or ways of being (Fairclough, 2003).

other hand, one agrees with the claim that the 'original is impossible to find', this opens the door of 'permissibility' wide open (Baker, 2010, p.107), freeing the translator from the shackles of the source text, to take complete control over the manner in which to render it. All they need is an ideological cover.

Translation, despite all, remains a tool to establish authority and gain legitimacy; it is not made save to exercise a certain influence on the receiving culture and in many cases to subvert it. Jordan (2002, p.98) asserts that: 'Translation is a process shot through with historically situated power dynamics and that most cultural translations continue to be conveyed in powerful western languages and many in authoritative academic discourses'.

So how does ideology manifest itself in translation? According to Tymoczko (2003), ideology in translation is a melange of the source text content and the various acts represented that are relevant to the source context, as well as the content and its relevance to the target audience and the variety of the speech acts utilised in the process of translation addressing the target context and the various differences between the two processes. In addition, there is the position and the voice of the translator and its intent:

> Ideological aspect[s] can be determined within a text itself, both at the lexical level (reflected, for example, in the deliberate choice or avoidance of a particular word and the grammatical level (for example, use of passive structures to avoid an expression of agency). Ideological aspects can be more or less obvious in texts, depending on the topic of a text, its genre and communicative purposes (Schäffner, 2003a, p. 23).

The translator as an interpreter of the source text and the producer of the target text seems to possess huge influential power to mould the outcome and steer it in the desired direction. True as this assumption might be, the translator is not the only mastermind of this operation; rather, many external factors interject their own views and visions and in many cases impose them on the translator, as shall be explained in the following chapters.

2.6 Translation as manipulation (rewriting)

The functionalist approach's[11] ultimate aim is to do away with the source text and shift attention to the role of the translator as the inventor of the target text, applying the skopos theory[12] to the act of translation; that is, the aim and purpose of the target text have more power to influence than the original. In so doing, the translator is given a free hand in determining the outcome. The translator, thus, selects and determines, under the *pretence* of the skopos theory, the features and aspects of the target text as determined by the target recipient's requirements. Schäffner (1998, p. 236) argues that: 'The production of functionally appropriate target text based on an existing source text and the relationship between the two texts is specified according to the skopos of the translation'.

Ultimately, translators, in freeing themselves from the restrictions and limitations dictated by the concepts of loyalty to the source text, become the authors of the target text (Schäffner, 1998, p. 238).

The idea that translation can be viewed as rewriting was first developed by Lefèvere (1992a), who considers it as a process undertaken under the influence of various norms and systems of a society. Most important of all are ideology, patronage, poetics, and the universe of discourse (p. 13). Lefèvere further argues that rewriting is carried out for the main purpose of influencing the recipients. Any translated text is bound to evidence the translator/agent's intention of adopting it to a certain ideology or poetics.

Translators could, for one ideological reason or another, manipulate a text and produce something far from being a mirror image of the source text. Perhaps the most illustrative example is Edward Fitzgerald's *translation* of the *Rubaiyat of Omar El Khayyam*. In a letter to his friend Cowell, he proudly declares: 'It is an amusement for me to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who (as I think) are not poets

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[11] 'Functionalist approach is a kind of cover term for the research of scholars who argue that the purpose of the TT [target text] is the most important criterion in any translation' (Schäffner, 1996, p. 2). Functionalism is a major shift from *linguistic equivalence* to *functional appropriateness*.
[12] Skopos theory focuses, above all, on the purpose of the translation. The purpose of the target text determines the translation methods and strategies in order to produce a functionally adequate or appropriate result (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984).

enough to frighten one from excursions, and who really do want a little art to shape them' (cited in Lefèvere, 1992, p. 4).

Fitzgerald's statement bears much cultural, poetic and linguistic arrogance and undermining of the Other, and illustrates how a personal motive could play a major role in manipulating and presenting the image of the foreign. In the process of translation, the source text undergoes much adjustment and manipulation in order to conform with a desired model, correctness notion, and poetics in order to achieve a certain acceptance. In translation, especially that of post-colonial literature:

> The exotic discourse can be manipulated to such an extent as to conceive it, as Edward Said argues, as an invented geography, an imaginary space built according to the ideology, cultural values and norms of the West—the Oriental orientalised—something as it should have been but not what it in fact is (Alvarez and Vidal, 1996, p. 3).

Many are the currents that pull translations while being processed and manipulated. The views and attitudes of the translator and their ideological convictions from poetics, norms, gender, politics, and religion to the misconceptions held about the Other, language and culture, are at the centre of the whole operation. Translators, as the trustees of human communication, remain key players, nonetheless, in the whole equation despite the sea of constraints they face, starting with:

> Their own ideology; by their feelings of superiority or inferiority towards the language in which they are writing the text being translated; by the prevailing poetical rules at that time; by the very language in which the text they are translating is written; by what the dominant institutions and ideology expect of them; by the public for whom the translation is intended. (Alvarez and Vidal, 1996, p. 6)

Indeed, translation is a powerful tool for promoting an appreciation of literature across peoples' languages and cultures. However, 'the translator, who takes a text and transposes it into another culture, needs to consider carefully the ideological implications of that transposition' as Bassnett (2002, p. xv) warns. Translators cannot always avoid changing and manipulating source texts, since certain cultural, ideological and aesthetic values are embedded within their persona as textual interpreters.

2.7 Translation norms

The pioneers in the materialisation of the notion of norms within Translation Studies are Gideon Toury, Even-Zohar and Theo Hermans. Toury was the first scholar who investigated the notion of translation being a norm-governed activity, as described in his revolutionary book *In Search of a Theory of Translation* in 1980. His model was further fine-tuned and updated in *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*[13] published in 1995.

Toury is a member of a group of translation scholars known as the *manipulation school*, (Hermans, 1985b), who began developing impetus in the mid-1970s. Under the influence of Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory (cf. Chapter Five for an in-depth account), and James Holmes's ideas[14] of translation studies, Toury visualised a descriptive and essentially target-oriented approach to translation or what has become known as the DTS paradigm.

One of the major and the most, at first, contentious arguments made by Toury was that the position and the role of what is considered translation in a given culture are dictated by the target culture (Toury, 1995, p. 26) and that translations are primarily 'facts of target cultures' (p. 29). Translational activity is under the influence of a set of norms that are culturally relevant in the target culture venue in which the translator performs their activity.

Toury defines norms as:

> the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community—as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate—into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is pre-scribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension (Toury, 1995, p. 14).

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[13] Studies that aim to describe translation and what translators do, as opposed to prescriptive translation studies or mere speculation (Toury, 1995).

[14] Holmes' conception of translation studies, also known as Holmes' Map. His categories were simple, scientifically framed, and hierarchically arranged: *applied* as opposed to *pure*, and broken down into *theoretical* and *descriptive*, then descriptive was further divided into *product oriented, process oriented* and *function oriented* (cited in Toury 1991, p. 181).

A translated text is no longer considered as a result of 'transcoding linguistic signs' but rather as 're-textualizing' the source language text (Schäffner 1999, p. 3), thus rendering it 'acceptable' or 'appropriate' within the norms structure of the target language/culture.

The old position on translation was simply one that relates texts or language systems to each other. Today translation is perceived as an operation that takes place within the contexts of culture, society and communication among cultures, which necessitates proper consideration of the translator as a being at one with social and cultural milieu.

Translation is not a passive process; it involves active social mediators who have inherent prejudices and presumptions. The process of translation itself is also an operation in which different parties have interests or benefits in it taking place. Accordingly, the *intrinsic* agents of text transferors and *extrinsic* factors of interested parties govern the outcome of this translational operation. Section 3.10 develops this point further.

Norms, or social and cultural constraints, are crucial in these processes. These agents are the primary subject of the focus in my study, rather than the source-target text relationships, that is, the emphasis is on ideological and cultural subversions the source text has to undergo as a result of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. It is worth noting, however, that the set of norms and translational guidelines that govern any community specify what translation represents for that particular community. These norms and guidelines are the factors that influence what material is considered appropriate to be selected for translation, how translators should go about translating this material, and how the target audience will receive and react to the material in its translated format.

From a sociological stand point, Toury (1995, p.51) clarifies that norms are 'the general values or ideas shared by a certain community as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate—into specific performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to specific situations providing they are not (yet) formulated as laws'. Toury (1980, p. 53ff) also describes three kinds of norms:

1. preliminary norms, which decide the overall translation strategy and the choice of texts to be translated
2. initial norms, which govern the translator's decision to adhere primarily to the source text or to the target culture
3. operational norms, which control the actual decisions made during the act of translation.

Toury's (2000) classification of norms demonstrates that translation is truly controlled by norms at every stage; ranging from the text selection to the final presentation of the text within a certain cultural context through the strategies adopted.

This highlights that translation in the target language and the culture associated with it has an obvious causality nature, (causality in which the effect is explained by an end). This essentially draws on the causal dimension of the skopos theory, which argues that translation is a phenomenon that causes an *intended effect*. This effect is part of the translator's awareness while translating, or as Chesterman (cited in Tennent, 2005 pp. 195–196) puts it: 'I translate like this, because I know what the intended effect of translation is. I want my translation to achieve this effect'. This makes it almost inevitable for every translation to display remnants of the two often opposing extremes within which it is meant to serve as a medium, that of the source text and culture on one hand, and the target language and culture on the other.

Further distinct norms include *preliminary* ones, which refer to translation guidelines within a community, and an *operational* set of norms, which influence the process of translation and the translator's decisions. The extent to which the occurrence of various norms of translation is common in translated texts varies. As a result, Toury (1995, p. 67), among other translation scholars, points out a distinction between basic or *primary* norms whose omnipresence makes them almost indispensable for translation phenomena; *secondary* norms which are common and quite popular but optional; and tolerated or *permitted* norms which are not frequent but functional. Other scholars propose additional norms with different names[15], yet, despite

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[15] Chesterman's (1997, pp. 68–69) expectancy norms: norms set by the consumers or readers of translations (accountability norm, relation norm); Lefèvere (1992, pp. 15–30): 1. professionals within the literary system (e.g. critics, teachers, translators), 2. patronage outside the literary system.

nomenclature, almost all scholars agree that the study of norms has become a crucial step that precedes the study of translated texts.

As agents with predefined social contexts, translators often have their own goals, beliefs, interests and viewpoints or political positions that they need to achieve, adhere to, or help to prevail through translation. Despite stringent ideological control of translation in particular societies, some translators defy and challenge norms and choose to remain loyal to the source text, even if it is unsympathetic, or even hostile, to the prevailing political or ethical values in the target culture[16]. This can also operate in the opposite direction, and may be due to the translators' indifference to disapproval or even defiance of ideological norms in either the source or the target cultures.

Occasionally, minor violations of norms can go beyond being accepted to actually being encouraged by publishers or marketing agents, as Chesterman (1997, p. 60) stipulates: 'Some literary translators might claim that their intention is precisely to break these norms. And translations of advertisements sometimes appear deliberately to flout the expectancy norms of the target culture'.

Norms are 'the main factors ensuring the establishment and stability of a social order' (Toury, 2000, p. 55), but they can also restrict modernisation. From this perspective, they ought to be challenged and modified at times, otherwise predispositions will long prevail. In such cases, rebellion against norms becomes the origin of cultural originality and prevents stagnation. By going against trends imposed by norms, translators play a major part in the evolution of their culture.

Translation is norms-governed and thus subject to constraints of several types. Translators are often under the manipulation of patronage. Nevertheless, being the actual operators of the translation activity, they can occasionally break the norms. In fact, this very act of breaching some norms goes hand in hand with the stimulus of translation in the first place. Translation invokes message transmission despite constraints; this is why certain translations are undertaken only because they are challenging to the target language/culture norms. Some translators with a political

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[16] Hitoshi Igarashi, the Japanese translator of *The Satanic Verses*, was found slain.
William Tyndale (1536), the Bible translator was declared heretic and killed.

agenda work hard on subverting the prevalent norms. Others either defy, or are unsympathetic to, the target culture's socio-political and ethical norms and remain faithful to the source text despite running the risk of clashing with the governing political or ethical values. However, those who challenge the target culture's ideological norms run an even bigger risk and could face severe punishment, as mentioned earlier.

To study translation norms, we have two sources at our disposal: textual sources, actual translations displaying the effects of norms; and extra-textual sources, prescriptive and critical observations and comments from those involved (Toury, 1995, p. 65). A careful study of these sources enables the scholar to identify whether norms, based on their source, are *basic* or rule-like norms, *secondary* norms or inclinations, or *tolerated behaviour* (p. 67). This represents the core of my investigation in this study.

Delabastita (1989, p. 193) adopts a different approach to translation, using the viewpoint of audiovisual communication. He argues that this area of research is largely ignored in scholarly societies despite the increasing quantitative significance of translation in mass media. He attributes this to the study of famous cultural phenomena never having had a leading position on the priority list for most scholars. Delabastita realises that recently there has been an increase in the number of individual field studies, yet concomitantly condemns the lack of a comprehensive approach to the subject. However, AVT has seen considerable growth in the last couple of decades as Díaz-Cintas (2009, p.1) reports: 'thanks primarily to the digital revolution, AVT has now become a resolute and prominent area of academic research'. Many researchers have carried out studies investigating an array of topics related to AVT, for example; humour (Chiaro, 1992, 2010; Jaskanen, 1999, Martinez-Sierra, 2006), cultural references (Pedersen, 2007; Ramière, 2007), language play (Schröter, 2005), norms (Pedersen, 2011). Some scholars have published ground-breaking volumes on the subject (e.g. Díaz-Cintas, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2009; Gambier, 1995, 1996, 1998; Gottlieb, 1997a).

Delabastita (1989, p. 194) supports the identification of the special qualities of AVT and that it constitutes a developed discipline in its own right. Rather than trying to find incomplete solutions and approaching only one aspect of film and TV

translation, there is a stark need for adopting a more holistic view by scholars. AVT should be dealt with within an intercultural context. In an attempt to do this, Delabastita sets on the task of trying to provide scholars and translators with an outline of a theory covering the entire problem.

Delabastita (1989, p. 194) starts his discussion by utilising the triad classification of 'translational relationships' into competence, norms, and performance suggested by Toury (1980). He approves of Toury's argument in that Translation Studies should be descriptive instead of prescriptive. He argues that the term *competence* encompasses all available modes of translation theoretically available for a translator, while the term *performance* covers actual patterns of translational behaviour intrinsic to a given culture. Therefore, amidst the theoretical competence and the practical performance, it is possible to start a set of culture-bound *norms* that control the choices made by a translator.

To elaborate on competence, Delabastita (1989, p. 194) defines *film* (which he uses as an umbrella term to include feature films, documentaries, etc.) from a semiotic point of view as a complex sign which communicates a multi-code meaning; a film conveys both verbal and non-verbal signals via visual and acoustic channels. Baker (2010, p. 245) states that film is a semiotic composition of four channels: verbal auditory, non-verbal auditory, verbal visual and non-verbal visual, that is, dialogue, sound, subtitles and image. This renders it a kind of mass-communication and inflicts various technical constraints under whose influence a film translator must operate. Delabastita (1989, p. 199) suggests 'a film translation scheme' to comprise all the available options. A film conveys verbal and non-verbal signs, and Delabastita justifiably argues that these do not necessarily overlap with the distinction 'acoustic channel/visual channel'. The modes available in theory are usually part of competence, whereas in practice and in a given target culture, there exists a set of norms influencing the choices made by translators. Delabastita (1989, p. 205) points out that 'the effect of norms can be deduced from particular regularities of

behaviour' yet they are also detectable in metatexts, that is, 'in prescriptive statements but also in scholarly discussions of the subject'[17].

Next, Delabastita (1989) suggests two sets of questions scholars should ask while investigating a particular translation for the purpose of identifying a norm, or rather 'a complex interactive group of norms' (p. 206). The primary set aims to define the type of translation of an individual film, e.g. what technique is used? Does the syntax sound foreign? (Delabastita, 1989, p. 207). In subtitling, the translator should know, for example, what the presentation time of the subtitles is and what sort of source text information has been lost. The second set of questions is applicable to a large body of translated texts to establish the holistic frame of culture. This is still lacking in AVT, despite calls by many scholars such as Díaz-Cintas (2004, p. 63) who urge for '[carrying] out work, in research groups, that analyses sufficiently broad corpora and allows the derivation of substantial conclusions' to address issues such as the kinds of relationships between the source and the target cultures. According to Delabastita (1989, pp. 210–211), studying film translation 'is necessarily part of the larger project of the analysis of the "polysystem" of culture as a whole'. Under the guidance of questions similar to those above, a scholar can be led to figure out what drives a translator's choices.

Nonetheless, this cannot be inferred, rather it must be established through a systematic study of actual translational *performance*, that is, a huge number of individual translations.

In an attempt to empower translators as well as scholars, Delabastita (1989) suggests an interesting theoretical framework, which places film translations into a bigger cultural context and demonstrates that they do not operate in a cultural vacuum.

2.8 Roots and ramifications of manipulation

2.8.1 Roots of manipulation

Manipulation might be viewed as the result of manipulative tactics used in translation as well as in day-to-day instances in order to mask a person's genuine

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[17] A modern example of such a metatext is Karamitroglou's (1998), who suggested a trans-European set of standards for subtitling.

intentions. Two types of manipulation can be distinguished—conscious and unconscious—with the former being the type of manipulation that arises due to ideological, economic, and cultural considerations. Manipulation attributed to the characteristics of human psychology, and that resulting from ignorance of either language or world knowledge, is often referred to as unconscious manipulation.

Lefèvere (1992, p. 9) thinks that because translation is 'the most obvious recognizable type of rewriting', it cannot be freed from the political and literary power structures that are built-in to a given culture. Translators, who seek publication and acceptance by the target audience, or any other constraining agents, are often more or less obliged to heed those constraints. Farahzad (1999) also distinguishes the two aforementioned types of manipulation—conscious and unconscious—and hence illustrates two types of processes that result in manipulation of texts in translation: 'The conscious process leads to conscious manipulation intentionally carried out by the translator because of various social, political and other factors. The unconscious manipulation is mostly a psychological phenomenon, and occurs under the influence of psychological factors' (Farahzad, 1999, p. 156)

The reasons why manipulation—particularly unconscious—occurs may also be clarified by referring to Toury's (1995) translation laws. The law of growing standardisation, according to Toury (1995, p. 268), states that: 'In translation, textual relations of the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored, in favour of [more] habitual options offered by a target repertoire'.

Toury (1995, p. 270) elucidates that the translator's behaviour is under the influence of a huge number of variables, 'such as biological and bilingual age, or previous experience in translation of different kinds and for different purposes'. Another affecter according to Toury is the translation status within a particular culture. Thus, 'the more peripheral this status, the more translation will accommodate itself to established models and repertoires' (Toury, 1995, pp. 270–271). The law of interference constitutes the second law mentioned by Toury and can be utilised to justify the occurrence of manipulation. It states that: 'In translation, phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text' (Toury, 1995, p. 275).

Therefore, Toury explains, manipulation is often the result of the translator's strive for maintaining the adequacy of the original text. Manipulation takes effect by the translator producing a translation that is as close as possible to the original, while concomitantly attempting to achieve acceptability within the target language and culture. This acceptability is achieved by complying with the requirements of the language to attain fluency and near native texts that are ideologically and culturally adequate: 'The more the make-up of a text is taken as a factor in the formulation of its translation, the more the target text can be expected to show traces of interference' (Toury, 1995, p. 276).

Interference is largely due to power relations and the mutual status of languages and cultures at stake. The more esteemed the source culture is, as viewed by the target culture, the higher the chances of interference taking place and vice versa. Financial considerations also govern the selection of texts to be translated, as further discussed in Section 3.4.3.

2.8.2 Ramifications of manipulation

Manipulation, or the fact that there is an understanding of translation as manipulation, has devastating outcomes. With a belief that translation is manipulation, it is rendered useless since it is untrustworthy. Once a translator's or patron's own agenda comes into play, distortion of the source text message is inevitable. This in turn makes honest communication a difficult task:

> when words become the tools, not of clarity and precision but of confusion and obfuscation in order to promote a particular ideology or social program or some very intimate personal or private agenda, genuine communication between opposing parties becomes impossible (Stockert, 1996, cited in Kramina, 2004, p. 37).

Concurrently, it can be argued that everything is manipulation; this includes political dialogues, sermons, conversations—not to mention films and advertisements. Yet it is translation that is in an unlucky situation, since there is always the potential of comparison with the original. Bassnett and Lefèvere (1992), when discussing the outcomes of manipulation, argue that manipulation:

> in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a *[sic]* literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the

history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort, and contain (p. vii).

The outcome of translation may be conducive to an attitude of criticism to a pre-established order and its received interpretation. Certainly, cultural shifts can be confusing and misleading, and differing cultural awareness influences the operating method of specific properties of cultural forms in order to serve diverse political and cultural interests. For instance, Western foreignness may be used as a universal to be forced on a given home culture, which is afterwards obliged and compelled to conform to a strange culture and foreign way of thinking. Often, it is not completely shocking to see anti-foreign campaigns being launched to eliminate what is regarded as the influence of a malicious alien. A perfect example is the campaign launched by Le Penne, the French right-winger, against Muslims in France in which he used the map of France covered by the Algerian flag to symbolise the danger of 'Islamisation' and 'foreignisation' of France.

2.8.3 Translator's agency

The translator's agency is manifested not only in the translator's comprehension, interpretation and artistic re-presentation of the source texts, but also in the selection of source texts, the cultural motivations of translation, the adoption of strategies, and the manipulation in the prefaces of the expected functions of the translations in the target culture (Cha and Tian 2003, p. 22).

The text selection is often not for the translator to choose; it is a choice made by publishers, or other agents like producers and distributors, who decide what texts need to be translated. The translator, however, usually has the choice of whether or not to take over a certain text chosen by these agents. This very act of acceptance or rejection of selected texts puts the translator under the spotlight of criticism.

Many factors affect translation and its quality. This includes translation strategies utilised by the translator, their understanding of the source text, and their overall aptitude to performing the task. Nonetheless, and no matter how apt the translator is, the mere fact that this text has to go through this human interface makes human intervention inevitable, whether deliberately or accidentally, and it can be shaped in the form of deletions, insertions or rewritings. This modification is not strictly

limited to the text itself but also includes prefaces and appendices, which are often used as effective tools to manipulate the readers to achieve a desired cultural outcome. When *The International Jew*, a compilation of a total of 91 articles written by Henry Ford, was translated into German, his anti-Semitic ideas presented a fertile ground for the burgeoning Nazi movement in Germany. What fuelled the public even more was what the German translator did: he added footnotes to Ford's articles, every time he felt Ford did not go far enough in his opinions about the Jews (Robert Mulcahy, n.d). This technique[18] is what Chesterman (1997, p. 112) calls 'visibility change' as it brings to the fore the translator's views.

Sponsors of translation also manipulate translators, who in turn manipulate source texts. As a result, the target reader is also manipulated. Occasionally, translators manipulate their sponsors: 'Translation involves trust. The audience, who does not know the original, trusts that the translation is a fair representation of it' (Lefèvere, 1990, p. 15). Translators are then the subject of trust, from both readers and sponsors, which renders them powerful. The exercise of their power is a reflection of the translator's dependability and faithfulness. When translators have exclusive access to information or when they lack some, they might make full use of this and influence the texts and the sponsors to achieve specific goals. This is why translators who have exclusive access to information that is unavailable to those in power are usually under close supervision and scrutiny for political loyalty (Hermans, 1996).

Through manipulation, the translator can become revolutionary—through text manipulation, one can rebel against the dominant constraints of the time under the protective umbrella of a different name. By so doing, translators are given some leeway in two aspects. First, as less renowned figures, they depend on the power of the author to express their own opinion more forcibly without being immediately held accountable for it. Second, such deviations from the cultural norms that take place through the translation process are better tolerated and have better chances to bypass censorship, which tends to be more lenient in the case of translations. This can be due to the presumption that the foreign source of translations renders them less dangerous as well as to the fact that the *absent* author, who is the primary

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[18] The addition of footnote is also suggested by von Flotow (1991) in the context of feminist translation strategies.

culprit, cannot be pursued. Translation is therefore a very efficient way of culture innovation without facing much opposition or resentment, particularly in cultures where innovation is strongly resisted (Toury, 1999, p. 41). Being a bridge between the source and the target cultures, translation needs to follow certain norms; either those of the source or those of the target, and translators tend to choose some norms of each set of norms and reflect them in their translations.

2.8.4 Socio-cultural constraints

Academics in the school of manipulation have more consideration for the cultural constraints on translation than the mainstream translation scholars. This results in criticism from other scholars. For example, Antoine Berman (1984) asserts that since translators are supposed to adhere to and follow norms, that in turn pre-shapes translations and moulds them. Consequently, translators and translation are stripped of all creativity that could otherwise be quite useful. Anthony Pym adds that the automated application of the concept of norms suppresses the translator's role (cited in Hermans, 1999b, pp. 154–5). But Hermans argues that: 'Constraints are conditioning factors, not absolutes. Individuals can choose to go with or against them. Translators too can decide to defer to the powers or foment opposition, be it poetic or political' (Hermans, 1999b, p. 128–132).

The translator is a social being as well as an individual who is accordingly constrained by current norms; norms of the society, culture and individuality. The translators' agency and the constraints imposed on them are also significant constraining factors. On the one hand, the translator is constrained by certain factors in the exercise of agency, and on the other, faced with many constraints, s/he still has room to exert agency. Translation is a mixture of collective constraints on translators as a group as well as the agency of translators as individuals. 'Translation decisions are neither fully predetermined nor totally idiosyncratic', as Hermans, (1999b, p. 74) rightly points out. Overlooking the translator's agency while highlighting social constraints leads to a fall in the translator's status and accountability as well as translation quality. Disregard of social norms might lead to random translation. Being a work of originality governed by norms, translation requires the translator to follow their own personal tendencies and impulses within an acceptable range of norms.

All these impediments exist because all translators work in specific socio-cultural contexts. Unavoidably, they are influenced by presumptions dictated by the culture that fostered them. In order to eliminate any bias that may result from perceiving the original from their cultural point of view, translators need to be aware of the pre-structure forced upon their consciousness by their cultural background. To avoid misreading and misinterpretations of the source text, translators should use target language resources to elucidate any potentially misleading meanings linguistic signs could have in the target context.

Clearly, cultural constraints also apply to Arabic linguistic practices. Accordingly, as put forth by Hatim (1997, pp. 157–173) and Hatim and Mason (1997, p. 127ff), English and Arabic speakers display certain differences, for example, in the use of the numerous forms of argumentation. These differences are significant from a translational standpoint because it is only through their appropriate, i.e. established, language or culture-specific uses that one can ensure meeting the expectations of the readers in each language. In other words, as clarified by Hatim (1997), improper use of linguistic techniques or use that is culturally different from standard may be conducive to a text where the 'text-initial element sets off the kind of expectations which are totally defied by the way the text continues. That is, the reader is in a sense thwarted' (Hatim, 1997, p. 160).

This matter can be partly attributed to the deficiency of accurate cultural adaptation through linguistics; similar culturally induced inconsistencies between certain textual items and the continuation of the texts in question can be detected. The distinction between the behaviour of beginners and that of experienced translators, however, needs to be noted. This is true because, in most cases, it is generally more likely for a person who is a relatively newcomer to a particular culture to violate its general cultural norms, be they linguistic or non-linguistic. In contrast, more experienced translators, with a more profound knowledge of the culture (which should protect them from similar pitfalls) deal adequately with these norms, assuming they can recognise the need for cultural adaptation more than their novice colleagues can.

2.8.5 External constraints

Financial considerations are also considered a main source of manipulation. Many literary works are either not translated or only partially translated due to the lack of

resources for the execution of the task at hand. In contrast, other works, such as cultural myths or cults, are established solely provoked by profit, for example, Harry Potter or Madonna's children's book series. Lefèvere writes:

> Institutions enforce or, at least, try to enforce the dominant poetics of a period by using it as a yardstick against which current production is measured. Accordingly, certain works of literature will be elevated to the level of 'classics' within a relatively short time after publication, while others are rejected, some to reach the exalted position of a classic later, when the dominant poetics has changed (Lefèvere, 1992, p. 19).

Additionally, ideological considerations are crucial in shaping translation policy. Translation of varied texts has been either completely banned, or subject to control measures during certain historic eras. One of the best examples of control measures is the translation policy adopted in Franco's Spain, Hitler's Germany and Stalin's former Soviet Union. Because of control measures in the Arab World, many works were not translated, while others were subjected to various omissions and alterations due to rampant censorship, where the state tends to control every aspect of people's social activities and intellectual thinking. Section 4.7.2 further explores this point.

2.9 Ideological and cultural norms in audiovisual translation

Constraints on AVT are not to be equated only with technical restrictions on the process, however significant the latter may be. It is not the aim of this research to discuss technical constraints, but to unveil the ideological and cultural forces that hinder or manipulate the process of message transmission.

Translation is always under the influence of several constraints. Mayoral, Kelly and Gallardo (1988, p. 361) mention ordinary or non-constrained translation of prose versus constrained translation of films. However, their reference to constraints in this context falls short of describing any but technical hurdles encountered in the process of translation, while our notion of constraints has a much wider range of application.

Some scholars, such as Susan Bassnett, argue that through dubbing, political censorship exercised and regulated by the government is clear because the original is never heard. Subtitling, however, is more democratic because it allows for comparison (Bassnett and Lefèvere 2002); nonetheless, the choice of AVT mode can

potentially be driven by political reasons as well. Matricial norms[19] (Toury, 1995, pp. 58–59) come into play through dubbing, subtitling, or voice over. However, this is one of the manifestations of the constraints of AVT. AVT is very specific, and may necessitate a redefinition of the notion of translational constraints, as proposed by Toury (1995), when applied to this particular type of translation, as detailed in Section 2.7. Norms help the translator in the overwhelming process of decision-making. On the other hand, the multi-faceted restrictions forced on the screen translator minimise the domain of translational equivalents and strategies available for use by the translator.

The taxonomy of constraints proposed by Chesterman (2000, p. 69) includes the social norm of communication, emphasising the translator's mission to guarantee optimal communication between the parties involved. Chesterman speaks of prescriptive expectancy norms, directed by translation tradition and genre conventions and established by the expectations of the audience, occasionally 'validated by a norm-authority of some kind' (Chesterman, 2000, p. 66). The norm-authority in the case of subtitling is usually a stylebook, issued by subtitling companies, defining the normative guidelines.

Gottlieb (1992) describes two types of constraints on subtitling: formal, or quantitative; and textual, or qualitative. The former are forced on the subtitles by the visual context of the film, and the latter are temporal and spatial factors. In the words of Díaz-Cintas (2001, pp. 189–190): 'The degree of excellence of an audiovisual translation has to be measured against what the subtitlers decide to translate as well as what they decide not to translate because they prefer to exploit other semiotic dimensions of the film'.

Therefore, the application of various constraints and cultural filters are key factors in producing a contained target text. In an ideal situation, when presented to the audience, the visual, verbal and sonic stimuli of the original should reproduce a high

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[19] Matricial norms control the existence of target language material that may function as a substitute for the source language material and determine its location, distribution and segmentation in target text.

level of comprehension and appreciation with a negligible processing effort, just as they do with the source language audience.

2.10 Conclusion

The presence of rival norms in a society entails choices. Translators have a general tendency to comply with the norms in order to secure sponsorship from a patron for translational activity. Occasionally, nonetheless, and especially during times of cultural transition, several opposing norms may be equally domineering. This is when translators are enabled to choose to go with one norm and hence agree to one patronage as opposed to another.

As opposed to scholars from the philological school who highly appreciate artistic constructions and the freedom of a translator in literary translation, scholars belonging to the manipulation school give more importance to the cultural constraints on translation. This provokes criticism among some scholars. Because norms are likely to stipulate translations of the naturalising (normalising) kind, and translators are expected to conform to norms, a norm-based approach strips translation and translators of all creativity, as Berman (1999) argues. Anthony Pym notes that applying the norms' concept mechanistically inevitably demotes the individual translator's agency (cited in Hermans, 1999b, pp. 154–155). Yet Hermans (1999b, pp. 128–132) argues: 'Constraints are conditioning factors, not absolutes. Individuals can choose to go with or against them. Translators, too, can decide to defer to the powers or foment opposition, be it poetic or political.'

A translator is a social being as well as an individual, and hence is constrained by temporal social and cultural norms, and concomitantly, has his/her own individuality and agency. The translator's agency is co-existent with the factors that constrain that agency. The translator is definitely constrained by definite factors through exercise of agency on one hand, and among the various constraints they are faced with on the other. The translator still has some freedom to apply their own agency. Translation is thus an amalgam of universal constraints on translators as a group and a great deal of agency of translators as individuals.

Hermans (1999b, p. 74) argues: 'Translation decisions are neither fully predetermined nor totally idiosyncratic'. Stressing social constraints while

disregarding the translator's agency will eventually lead to the decline of the translator's status and accountability as well as translation quality. In addition, neglecting social norms might result in random translations. Translation, being a norms-governed original work, necessitates the translator to go with their personal inclinations within a suitable range of norms. This is where the optimal use of the translator's agency becomes necessary. Norms could guarantee loyalty to the source texts and the origin of the translator's creativity is their agency.

It can be claimed, therefore, that translation is manipulation because no translated material can ever be the exact replica of the original. Even if the corresponding elements exist across languages, their connotations would not always be similar, especially when referring to cultural items (Rabassa, 1984).

However, although the arguments for translation as manipulation seem to be stronger, it cannot categorically be claimed that everything a translator does is manipulation, but certain strategies under certain constraints, as well as a variety of factors, result in manipulation. In this vein, Katan declares that manipulation is an essential part of a translation. He believes that 'the very act of translating involves skilful manipulation' (Katan, 1999, p. 140).

CHAPTER THREE

3. AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

If language consisted just of words, subtitling would be easy. The problem lies in the fact that behind the words lies a world of associations, customs and institutions: in short, a whole culture.

Luyken, 1991, p. 157.

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This chapter is dedicated to a short survey of AVT and its modes. The review is based on the research of many prominent scholars in the field, (notably Danan, 1991; Delabastita, 1989, 1990; Díaz-Cintas, 1998, 1999, 2001c, 2009; Gottlieb, 1994, 1997, 2001; Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998). It contains a short synchronic survey of only two AVT methods: dubbing and subtitling; although there are many other modes. Since this study is not essentially diachronic in focus, I will not engage in an extensive historical or technical review. Rather, this chapter entails a more thorough description of subtitling and dubbing as a phenomenon and as a procedure. Nonetheless, the most important aspect is that translators are often faced with the task of having to translate seemingly untranslatable cultural references and ideological innuendos while not reducing the effect, which invariably tests their capacity for making creative solutions.

The concept of ideology and its influence on the process of translation is developed further here, but within the focus of AVT.

3.1 Audiovisual translation

3.1.1 Terminology

AVT is one of the many terms describing inter-lingual transfer of texts that are expressed through various semiotic channels concurrently—image and sound. While AVT is descriptive, and generally refers to the translation of films and programmes that are produced for TV, cinema, video and digital versatile disc, commonly known as DVD, Yunxing (1998, p. 151) suggests a different alternative, *film dialogue translation,* as 'it is only the film dialogue that can be altered or re-encoded'.

Audiovisual *language transfer* refers to the process that renders a film or a TV programme understandable to a target audience for whom the source language of the original is unknown (Luyken, 1991, p. 11). Some scholars, e.g. Hay (1998), Whitman-Linsen (1992), incorporate theatre plays and operas within AVT. However, this study adopts Luyken's definition.

Within the various types of audiovisual language transfer, subtitling and dubbing have become particularly important with the increasing appeal of foreign programmes in filling the escalating number of television channel schedules. Additionally, many countries use subtitles as a method of restoring and teaching

minority languages, enhancing mother-tongue literacy, teaching countries' languages to groups of immigrants and encouraging competency in foreign languages. Furthermore, recent digital technologies, such as DVD, make it feasible to deliver different types of language transfer concurrently. A single DVD could potentially contain many different dubbed/subtitled versions of a film or programme, resulting in a higher demand for professionally produced dubbed/subtitled versions that can only be achieved by professional dubbers/subtitlers who have received special training and have unique proficiency.

All of the above-mentioned AVT labels share the element *translation*, the study of which as a separate academic discipline has been stretched to include all kinds of translation activities besides literary translation, including AVT: all such activities are deemed worthy of scholarly attention.

Delabastita (1989, p. 213) defines translation as 'a maximally faithful linguistic recoding process', which is generally supposed to maintain the same (written) mode. There are still relatively narrow terms through which some people tend to understand translation, according to which '*doubler n'est pas traduire* [dubbing is not translating]', as said by a dubber cited in Gautier (1981, p. 116), and 'a subtitle is not a translation—or only rarely a translation', as stated by an active subtitler (Wildblood, 2002, p. 41). If this is the case, then *adaptation* or *adjustment* would probably be better labels for these modes of transfer, as argued by the likes of Gambier and Suomela-Salmi (1994) and Hesse-Quack (1967). Dubbing and subtitling have also been labelled as forms of *constrained translation*, but as Zabalbeascoa (1997) argues, *unconstrained* forms of translation simply do not exist, only 'different forms of translation [being] constrained in different ways and by different factors' (p. 330). Accordingly, the majority of practitioners and theorists tend to follow Delabastita's definition, favouring a broad, rather than a restrictive understanding of the concept of translation that is more realistically reflective of the translation practice beyond the realms of film media (Delabastita, 1989, p. 214).

3.1.2 A brief history

Before the introduction of sound to film, dubbing, as we know it, did not really occur, although what was called 'piano men' commented on silent cinema. Silent films included a few inter-titles—written renditions of the dialogues in the original

scenes—or a few comments, which covered the screen and interrupted the screen action for a short time. These were easily exchanged for target language equivalences. This procedure was under relatively few constraints and scarcely meddled with the artistic entity of the film.

However, by the late 1920s, the era of silent films was practically over. And so, significant translation obstacles faced producers and distributors since a considerable share of the studios' profits was yielded by film exports to countries that spoke different languages.

Producing versions of the same film in various languages, also known as double versions, attempted to satisfy the foreign market. However, these productions were low quality and economically unviable. Eventually, dubbing and/or subtitling became the most important method of translating films in most parts of the world. This led to a proportional growth between the dubbing and subtitling industries and the constantly growing film business. Needless to say, most productions were in English and dominated cinema and television.

Throughout the course of the last century, translated films became widely available and consumable; however, despite their importance and effect, little had been written about the translation process until 1990s.

Research into AVT has seen a considerable growth in the last couple of decades, as Díaz-Cintas (2009, p. 1) reports: '[...] thanks primarily to the digital revolution, AVT has now become a resolute and prominent area of academic research'. Many researchers have investigated an array of topics related to AVT; History of foreign films in America (Seagrave, 2004), history of subtitling (Ivarsson, 2002; Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998; Danan, 1991 ; Delabastita, 1989, 1990), humour (Jaskanen, 1990), cultural references (Ramière, 2006, 2007), language play (Schröter, 2005), gender (De Marco, 2006, 2012), norms (Pedersen, 2007), ideology and power (Ballester, 2000, 2001; Remael, 2000), domesticating and foreignising strategies (Fawcett, 1983, 1995, 1996, 2003). Some scholars have published ground-breaking volumes on the subject (e.g. Chaume, 2000, 2003; Díaz-Cintas, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2008a, 2009; Gambier, 1995, 1996, 1998; Gottlieb, 1997a, 2000).

Scholars' interest in AVT became so prominent that it developed into a mainstream enterprise within translation studies, as evidenced by Gottlieb's (2002) and Orero's (2004) bibliographies of literature in AVT. Consequently, Translation Studies, as a separate academic discipline, was stretched to include all kinds of translation activities besides literary translation, including AVT, with all such activities deemed worthy of scholarly attention.

3.2 Modes of audiovisual translation

As discussed earlier, multiple modes of audiovisual language transfer exist, including mainly dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, narration and free commentary. However, this study is only concerned with dubbing and subtitling, and what is considered ostensibly a technical hindrance is omitted.

3.2.1 Dubbing

Dubbing, can be defined as the process of replacing a programme's voice track in the source language with another version of the same voice track translated into another language in which the timing, phrasing and lip movements must be synchronised Luyken (1991, p. 73).

Dubbing aims to lure viewers into believing that they are experiencing the original production in their mother tongue without losing any of the characteristics of the original. Dries (1995, p. 9) argues that a programme is well dubbed when the viewers are unaware that they are viewing a dubbed version.

Terms related to audiovisual translation, such as *translation* and *dubbing*, are used to refer to both the process itself as well as its product, but the reference is generally easily understood from the context. In films and other visual media, the act of substituting the original dialogue with a different language in a way that maintains a correspondence between the dialogue and the film's visual elements, mainly lip movements, is dubbing. Dubbing aims to make the new dialogue seem as the original actors speak it to optimise viewers' experience of foreign productions.

Simply stated, dubbing substitutes source language verbal elements with target language ones, a process in which 'the foreign dialogue is adjusted to the mouth movements of the actor in the film' (Dries 1995, p. 9). According to Shochat and

Stam (1985, p. 49), the audiences then 'repress all awareness of the possibility of an incorrect translation' and in fact, they 'forget that there has been any translation at all'.

While subtitling is more or less individual work, dubbing is mainly teamwork, requiring the joint efforts of a main dubbing translator as well as a group of actors and technicians for its success. This justifies the increased cost of dubbing as opposed to subtitling.

A few alternative terms are used in English as complete or partial synonyms for dubbing; one is *post-synchronisation*, which is generally used to indicate the intra-lingual dubbing that is an essential step in the process of producing the original version of a TV series or a film.

The process of intra-lingual post-synchronisation has become increasingly popular, as reported by Whitman-Linsen (1992) and Chaume (2004); using this technique can significantly enhance the sound quality of a film, particularly for outdoor screen shots. When it comes to animated cartoons, the challenge of lip and kinetic synchrony element synchronisation presents itself even before the film's release within the country of origin, and is by no means restricted to international co-productions when actors pretend to be local while speaking different languages.

3.2.2 Subtitling

Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, p. 161) define subtitling as 'the process of providing synchronized captions for film and television dialogue'. It is the most commonly used type of AVT in Finland and other Nordic countries, The Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, and Greece, as noted by Gottlieb (1992, p. 169). To a certain extent, this is because subtitling is almost 15 times more cost-effective when compared to dubbing (Dries, 1995; Luyken, 1991).

However, Gottlieb (1992, p. 162) adds a more detailed perspective by defining subtitling as a written, additive (i.e. new verbal material is added in the form of subtitles), immediate, synchronous, and polymedial (i.e. at least two channels are employed) form of translation. Like Jakobson (1966), Gottlieb also distinguishes between different types of subtitling that are distinct from a linguistic standpoint,

intra-lingual (within the same language) and inter-lingual (between two languages) translation. Essentially, TV subtitling is inter-lingual and open, meaning that source language speech and other linguistic material is converted into target language subtitles which are broadcast concurrently with the programme. Shochat and Stam (1985, p. 41) state that 'the interlingual film experience is perceptually bifurcated: we hear another's language while we read our own'.

3.4 Subtitling as translation?

Luyken (1996) emphasises that inter-lingual subtitling is significantly different from text translation; it comprises additional, mainly audiovisual, components—images, subtitles and spoken dialogue. The text must be in complete synchrony with the two other semiotic components of the film, sound and image, and entails a change from spoken to written language, which involves a significant decline in the original dialogue. With these differences in mind, whether subtitling is a form of translation at all is questionable. Luyken (1991) characterises translation as a method of relaying a given message from one language to another language. His argument is that subtitling cannot be viewed as a form of translation because it is only the language component that is replaced in a situation that includes a whole range of audiovisual components such as sound, image, acting and language (p. 154). In contrast, Gottlieb (2001a, p. 2) describes 'translation' as 'any process ... in which a text is transferred from one speech community to another, and where verbal elements are replaced by other verbal elements', and he clearly pins subtitled film material to this definition. Along the same lines, De Linde (1995, p. 4) suggests that subtitling 'still relate[s] to the source utterance, thereby warranting the same kind of analysis as a translation'. To add more weight to this argument, Díaz-Cintas (2001c) accentuates the need to adopt a dynamic and heterogeneous definition of translation, which allows for a range of experiential realities and hence promotes referring to subtitling as AVT.

In today's increasingly media-oriented world, new forms of linguistic and cultural transfer have emerged which necessitate a broader definition of translation than that which Luyken endorses. This makes the opinions of De Linde, Gottlieb and Díaz-Cintas more convincing—they consider the new media in which translation currently occurs. In conclusion, despite the fact that there are various aspects in which

subtitling and text translations differ, subtitling can still be considered as a unique form of translation.

3.5 The impact of dubbing

The exact impact of, and the extent to which dubbing, subtitling, or any other form of AVT is spread globally is still unknown. Nonetheless, the typically referred to *dubbing countries*, that is countries where dubbing comprises the main method of AVT, include the large Western European nations such as Germany, France, Italy and Spain, and even more so the Arab countries. However, the situation in English speaking countries is more complicated. In the UK for example, British audiences are generally neither particularly interested in foreign-language material nor are they offered it in great magnitude. This renders AVT a minor issue in most of the country anyway, as Kilborn (1993) remarks. Even outside Europe, such as in mainland China, Japan, Latin America, and Québec, dubbing is the norm on TV (Yunxing, 1998).

O'Connell (1996) suggests that the strong support for dubbing in regions aspiring for more autonomy and independence, like the Basque and Québec, springs from it being a means of promoting the language and identity of a minority group despite the fact that dubbing costs a lot more than subtitling. Yvane (1996), agreeing with O'Connell, claims that dubbing protects against linguistic imperialism since major parts of the dubbed material are translated from English.

It is certainly true then, as Barbe (1994, p. 255) points out, that 'the sheer quantity of dubbed material in the receptor culture appears to be an indication of the dominance of one culture over another'. However, even in dubbing countries, there is an indirect influence from the dominant culture in the form of films:

> The dubbing industry is greatly responsible for the way one country is viewed by another. There is no question that the image Europeans have of America is enormously influenced by motion pictures. What is often overlooked is that it is the dubbing industry handling these films which ultimately does the cultural filtering. Dubbing has the power to represent and misrepresent, distort, sway, and in general make a tremendous contribution (positive or negative) to America's image abroad (Whitman-Linsen, 1992, p. 11).

Dubbing, thus, has a great impact on the majority of dubbing countries especially that of material produced in English. According to Gautier (1981) around 90% of foreign films shown in French cinemas are dubbed. This is the case too in Germany, where subtitled films are only found in specialised cinemas or on TV where the viewer can choose between the dubbed version or that with the original sound track. The situation is slightly different in Spain though; Díaz-Cintas (1998) and Zabalbeascoa, Izard and Santamaria (2001) report that subtitling is gradually gaining momentum. And in the 'strongly pro-subtitling Scandinavia', as Gottlieb (2001b, p. 141) points out, the release of both the dubbed and subtitled versions of the same film is on the increase.

Due to differences in the audience of audiovisual programmes, distributors and television managers are increasingly providing them with the opportunity to choose between subtitles, dubbed and original versions. This choice is also made more feasible because of technical innovations such as DVDs.

The way dubbing modifies audiovisual production, by substituting the original languages and voices with local ones, seems to be hard to be accepted by people who are not accustomed to this concept. Not only does the concept of dubbing, per se, seem awkward, but it is also the actual practices and outcomes that are criticised frequently, particularly by people who are familiar with dubbing. Many scholars and researchers believe that AVT language is out to be recognised as a genre in its own right; Chaume (2004) speaks of audiovisual translationese and Chiaro (2006), and others, prefer the term dubbese. The specificity of AVT language lies in it being greatly influenced by the source text and the source language, thus sounding 'stilted and contrived' as Fresco (2006, p. 1) stipulates.

As often argued, the dubbing dialogue tends to be more or less dreary, monotonous and pretentious. Yvane (1996, p. 141) speaks of *'ton doublage'* that is the result of the differences between the picture and the properties of the source language on one hand and that of the target language on the other. Whitman-Linsen (1992, p. 118) belittles 'unimaginative and devitalized dialogues', 'linguistic whitewashing' and even 'dull, drooping and limp' target language use. All this contributes to the 'unnaturalness of dubbed text':

Just as most people—without seeing the pictures—would be able to tell on the basis of a tape recording whether they are listening to a recording of spontaneous conversation or the soundtrack of a film ... they are also able to tell quite easily whether they are listening to the soundtrack of an original or a dubbed film (Herbst, 1997, p. 294).

The predominant absence of markers of regional dialects also plays an important role in making some dubbing dialogues appear unnatural, particularly when the original versions make regular use of different dialects to suggest the origin, the attitudes and the social status of the speakers, as is the case of *The Simpsons*. Herbst (1997) claims that it is hardly possible to substitute source language dialects with 'corresponding' target language dialects and believes that 'the use of a regionally neutral pronunciation (in situation[s] where it would not normally be expected) must be seen as a key characteristic of dubbed films' (p. 295).

In Arabic, the standard variety is commonly employed because anything other than that would provoke inadequate and probably inappropriate associations in the viewers' minds. The dilemma of translating dialects is not restricted to dubbing (consider, for example, *The Simpsons*). Written texts are characterised by being regionally unmarked, whether they are translations or not. Spoken dialogues, however, have a strange effect when they are delivered in well-articulated standard Arabic or the Egyptian dialect, in some instances where they are supposed to sound informal, spontaneous and authentic. Yet, there seems to be a consensus that a viable alternative is non-existent, and using standard dialects leads to more understanding as opposed to using little-known regional varieties. Something that should be kept in mind is that not everything is lost because, in instances when social hierarchies are expressed through characters' speech, the quintessence of the dialogue can still be achieved with the aid of enthused choices regarding vocabulary, intonation and diction that do not have much to do with geography.

3.6 Source language impact on translation and the target language

The text from which a translation is made inevitably influences every translation, as it is the mould around which the target text is formulated. Yet this influence is shown in more respects than mere similarity of content; the source text and its language can also appear in the target text in the form of relatively unidiomatic lexical and

grammatical choices. In the case of Arabic dubbing, often direct and conscious transfer of lexical items from the source language into the target language mainly concerns forms of address and title, while other language items that designate culture-specific incidents are purposefully omitted or modified. This is a clear indication that Arabic dubbing generally attempts to domesticate foreign movies (Mdallel, 2003; Yacoub, 2010; Zitawi, 2003, 2004).

However, other than explicit cultural markers, dubbing, more so than other forms of translation, is more prone to be affected by unintended transfer of forms, structures and meanings that are not adequate in the established target language system. In the words of Díaz-Cintas (1998, p. 66); 'dubbing shows a greater proclivity to linguistic pollution'.

Whitman-Linsen (1992) also presents many examples of what she believes to be inadequate dubbing solutions that remain very similar to the source text[20]. Supportive of her observation is a very methodical and objective study carried out by Gottlieb (2001b), who used three American family films to count and categorise instances of Anglicism. His results reveal that Danish dubbing features more Anglicised instances, and more specifically *marked* Anglicism, which can be labelled as faulty use of target language, when compared to the subtitles. This remains true even when one considers the higher availability of linguistic material in the dubbed versions.

All the above-mentioned findings support the notion that more often than not, and at least when it comes to English films, the dubbed dialogues contain features distinctive of the source dialogue and that are not acceptable in the prescribed rules of the target language. This also implies that dubbing can have a considerable impact on the diffusion of foreignness—ideological, linguistic and cultural—in dubbing countries.

3.7 Audiovisual translation within an ideological context

The following section is dedicated to identifying the role of ideology in AVT and introduces later chapters which discuss the ideological factors that might contribute to the choice of a particular Arabic dialect in the dubbing of *The Simpsons* in the

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[20] For extensive samples cf. Whitman-Linsen (1992: 230ff).

Arab World. The meaning of the term *ideology* is defined within the framework of this study and a possible clarification of the relationship between ideology in general and AVT in particular is also offered.

Translators' partiality, originality, absolute equivalence and supremacy of the original text over translation, are issues that have recently been brought up for discussion and debate. In an attempt to understand the role of translators in the translation process and to highlight the necessity to analyse the interventions made by them, Bassnett (1996, p. 22) argues: 'once considered a subservient, transparent filter through which a text could and should pass without adulteration, the translation can now be seen as a process in which intervention is crucial'.

The role played by ideology in the translation process can be better appreciated by understanding the complexity of the latter and recognising that it is not as simple as substituting one linguistic code by another. Lefèvere (1992, p. 39) states that: 'on every level of translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature the latter tend to win out'.

Additionally, Penrod (1993) argues that translators are regularly supposed to '*take positions*' (p. 39) when translating and therefore must be very alert to the nature of the position they choose. Fawcett (1998, p. 107) takes it even a step further by maintaining that the dispute between 'literal' versus 'free' translation strategies in particular, among others, tends to be ideologically provoked.

3.7.1 Audiovisual translation and ideology

Dubbing became popular in some countries because of protectionism, nationalism and censorship, as is the case in the Arab countries. In fascist Germany, Italy and Spain, the power figures were in favour of promoting the domestic language, safeguarding the national film industry, and more importantly fully controlling what was being said on the screens (Danan, 1991; Del Camino, 1997).

Even though France was a democratic country during that time, it also became a dubbing country due, in part, to the same reasons; namely, cultural and linguistic 'chauvinism' (Danan, 1996, p. 127f).

Undoubtedly, dubbing makes it easy to conceal utterances considered inappropriate for the target audience; a practice very prevalent in the Arab World. This is in contrast to subtitling, particularly when viewers understand the source language. When freedom of speech is favoured and there is enough reason to suspect that those in power may want to repress unfavourable comments made on the screen, subtitling becomes the best tool to preserve the viewers' right to know. Subtitling is also preferred when full access to the inappropriate language and sexual references expressed in the original versions is essential, as they are often suppressed in dubbing over time (Hesse-Quack, 1967, p. 98).

Supporters of dubbing and subtitling are becoming less divergent in their views, and this appears to be the trend for the future. Luyken's (1991) suggestion for determining the choice of the method of AVT based on the genre of a TV programme means that when there is a close link between the linguistic content and a programme's nature, such as cultural programmes and educational broadcasts, subtitles are used. When entertainment is the most important factor, including cartoons and fictional programmes, dubbing is used. This results in using a mixture of methods of AVT instead of using a particular method based on the habits of the nation.

The choice of the medium that transfers translation to its audience is a key indicator of ideology in AVT. Audiovisual material (e.g. films, drama, plays, documentaries and talk shows), includes tools of ideology utilised to spread the producers' ideology that is dissimilar to that of the target audience. Accordingly, the *translation body*, that is, translators, dubbing producers and marketing agents, is not willingly going to recognise and agree to it.

The awareness of media influence on spreading ideology is prevalent among politicians and authoritative social classes. Ballester-Casado (2001), points out that American films between 1928 and 1948 were viewed as tools of imperialism with which Hollywood imposed its genres and ideological and aesthetic models on a Spanish audience. In addition, materials of an audiovisual nature were the means of establishing an ideological environment; in Italy, Germany and Spain, for instance, the post-war film industry was based on the legacy of the preceding fascist governments, as Danan (1991) accounts. Consequently, and in order to prevent the

audience from accessing foreign ideologies portrayed in alien audiovisual materials, censorship practices were rigorously imposed in some countries. Surely, dubbing was the evident method of choice for translation since the voice track could be re-voiced to serve the state's ideology. In some places, censoring got to the point where dubbing was the only allowed mode of AVT. In Italy, for example, Mussolini banned the import of any non-dubbed version of audiovisual material. Similarly, in Spain, Franco preferred dubbing; out of 80 foreign films allowed to enter the country, 68 were dubbed while 12 were subtitled. Dubbing was also methodically encouraged in Hitler's Germany allegedly because it reduced the number of unemployed actors (Danan, 1991, p. 611).

Furthermore, dubbing frequently resulted from an explicit government policy to promote national identity through encouraging national language. This policy was clearly adopted in Germany, Italy and Spain. Having a single standardised national language and achieving political unity were some of the goals of these countries' governments, hence, stringent language policies were established and minorities were not allowed to speak their own languages or dialects. For example, a legislation decree in Spain prevented the screening of films in languages other than Spanish in 1942. This was advantageous to dubbing being selected as the only choice for AVT (Ballester-Casado, 2001). France also achieved political and cultural centralisation by encouraging the use of French. Even now, the maintenance of the *purity* of the French language and its world influence is still important and efforts are still made in this aspect (Danan, 1991, p. 612). In the Arab World, there is a growing tendency to use only standard Arabic in AVT. Some, as in the Gulf, are opposed to the dominance of the Egyptian vernacular and seem to have decided to put an end to it by, on one hand switching to the Levant vernacular and, on the other hand, setting stringent rules on state-owned TV channels to use only standard Arabic.

On occasions, politicians have used dubbing as a means of teaching and promoting provincial languages that serve as an expression of national identity. The use of Irish, Scottish and Welsh in some TV and radio stations in the UK, and Galician and Basque in Spain are examples of countries that prove this true. Agost (2004) talks of the use of strictly normative Catalan in a Catalonian station, where no programmes are broadcast in Spanish.

The choice of dubbing as a mode of AVT is not solely driven by the aforementioned political motivation; cultural and ideological factors also contribute to the choice of such a mode of translation. The target cultures' traditions, religious inclinations and norms of the society determine what is acceptable and appropriate and what is not, especially when the audiovisual material comes from a source culture that is very different from the target one, in which case the translator and/or other agents decide which of the cultures would take precedence (Agost, 2004, p. 69). It is, therefore, safe to argue that the role of the translator is not simply translating a text for a new audience, but rather exploring an *alien* culture and intervening in ways to make it acceptable to the target audience.

In its essence, AVT can be seen as the culprit in translation manipulation, since it aims to affect the target audience in just the same way the source material affects the source audience. This can only be realised through some intervention from the translator/agents who have to attempt to minimise cultural differences and maintain parallelism with the source audiovisual product. This intervention can render the final translation product very different from the original. Along the same lines, Ascheid (1997) regards that, in dubbing, issues such as 'authenticity and originality' are meaningless as the target text of the dubbed production is 'a new and fundamentally recontexualized' (p. 33) version of the original. The original source text becomes a mere 'blueprint, which 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 culture context' (Ascheid, 1997, p. 33). Within the same context, Capanaga, Navarro and Rodrigo (1996, p. 228) describe dubbing as a 'betrayal of the original', while Kovarski (1996) refers to dubbing as a conscious manipulation. Nonetheless, there is no consensus yet regarding the limits at which translators/agents' interference should stop, thus, in the words of Zabalbeascoa (1996, p. 235), AVT will always remain as 'a necessary evil'.

3.8 Conclusion

Since the advent of television and the introduction of the talkies, exporting movies to foreign markets became a crucial enterprise for the film industry. Since the reproduction of the same movie in the receiving countries' languages was not an economically viable option, the industry decided to introduce subtitled, and later

dubbed, versions instead. This technique has gained an even greater momentum in the last few decades with the expansion of the entertainment field and currents of globalisation.

AVT has acquired a fundamental and increasing importance; with its two most popular forms, subtitling and dubbing, now a well-established enterprise within the show-business industry, albeit at different levels. Bearing in mind the practicality and cost of each form, subtitling seems to be the winner at most levels, despite its technical and contextual constraints.

Telecasting representations of popular cultures is generally perceived as a carrier of values of the dominant countries, which work hard to spread their influence and grip on a homogenised world. *The Simpsons* is a clear example of the American modern cultural invasion of the world. Consequently, dubbing is deemed the safer mode in countries with high illiteracy, and which are sensitive to foreign cultures and prone to influence, or those which merely strive to protect their linguistic and cultural identities. Dubbing is seen as the battleground for censorship, manipulation and subversion of the target source material. This is so because the original soundtrack is removed and replaced by whatever suits the target audience, as per the discretion of the various authorities. Translators can also play a crucial role in this regard; their intrinsic ideological and socio-cultural motives have the best chance to be exposed in this arena (cf. Section 6.3.3).

Due to the amount of distortion the source text may undergo when this is audiovisually translated, especially in dubbing, some scholars, such as Delabastita (1989), question whether or not film translation can be regarded as proper translation. He claims that film translation is likely not translation, in the narrow sense of the word, that is, 'a maximally faithful linguistic recoding process' (p. 213).

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DUBBING IN THE ARAB WORLD AND *THE SIMPSONS*

> There is no doubt that the age of television provides us with a common cultural currency, a set of ideas and images that most of us share. This gives television the power to create a degree of ideological uniformity.
>
> Lewis, 1991, p.6

This chapter discusses the history of dubbing in the Arab World, from being a means to fill the gap in TV broadcasting schedules to becoming a developed industry. Arabic diglossia and dubbing is also briefly discussed. I then focus on *The Simpsons* TV series as a global phenomenon and a powerful tool to transmit Western, namely American, ideology and culture across the world. I also identify and evaluate the features of the series and the exploits of its translation in re-contextualising the archetypical and stereotypical elements to suit a cultural and ideological setup of the target audience. In addition, I shed light on some of the adaptive techniques applied to some of the many cultural references embedded within *The Simpsons* while attempting to maintain its humorous and satirical appeal.

4.1 Dubbing in the Arab World: a diachronic overview

The launch of the telecommunications satellites Arabsat in 1976, its subsequent 4th generation models in 2006 and 2008, and the Nilesat in 1996 was a precursor for the mushrooming of satellite channels in the Arab World. By 2010, there were over 1,100 satellite channels broadcasting in Arabic[21]. This rapid increase in the number of TV channels and the increasing number of film productions caused the number of subtitled/dubbed products generated for various forms of media to surge significantly over the last few decades.

In spite of a high illiteracy rate in the Arab World, (over 40% of the Arab-speaking people are illiterate (UNESCO, 2006), which should in theory contribute to increasing the use of dubbing rather than subtitling, dubbing has for the large part not enjoyed much popularity in the Arab World, save for cartoons and productions for young audiences (Maluf, 2005, pp. 2–3).

In French speaking North African countries, most foreign movies are dubbed in French due to the colonial history of these countries and because French is still dominant, especially within the elite segment of society. Another contributing factor is the marginalisation of national languages. State and privately owned media companies avoid dubbing, as they cannot afford the high costs. It was not until the 1980s that dubbing took hold in the Arab World; children's cartoons were dubbed in

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[21] Based on a Cambridge study reported by Al-Arabiya:
http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/10/23/123345.html

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and became quite a popular genre amongst TV channels. While dubbing is carried out in those Arab countries with a strong tradition of dubbing and subtitling, such as Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, other countries, like Tunisia, would not allow any content shown in any language other than Arabic. This worked in favour of the dubbing industry, which started dubbing popular children programmes in Tunisian dialect and MSA (Maluf, 2003).

In Egypt, although dubbing imported movies was an option, the thought was not entertained due to the sheer technical superiority of the American films. This led to the remake of many Hollywood films in Egyptian dialect. Dubbing was considered a major threat to an Egyptian cinema industry in its infancy. Thus, it was decided that subtitling was the lesser of two evils to protect the local film industry from competition. Gamal (2008b, p. 7) reports how Egypt 'had the equivalent of the Japanese *Benshi* in the form of the multitalented *Mefahemati* (interpreter) who commented, explained and acted out silent films'.

As for the Levant and the Middle East, according to Maluf (2005), the Beirut-based al-Itihad al-fani Company was the pioneer of dubbing into Arabic in 1963. The children's cartoon سندباد *Sinbad* became the first video show to be dubbed into Arabic in 1974 by Filmi Production Company. This show enjoyed a very positive reception, paving the way for the dubbing of more cartoons like زينة ونحول *zeena wa naḥul* (*Maya, the honey bee*) in 1975 by Filmi. أبطال الملاعب *abtal al-mala'eb* (*The heroes of the football ground*) was Jordan's first children show to be dubbed in the late 1970s. The next decade saw the advent of dubbing children's shows in Egypt and the Gulf region. Interestingly, all of these dubbings were produced in MSA. At present, dubbing of cartoons is carried out mainly in Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. While the dubbing is in MSA in the first two countries, the others carry out dubbing into both their own dialects and MSA (more on this in Section 4.2).

In 1991, Filmi became the first to dub a series of Mexican soaps into MSA, in addition to the dubbing of cartoons. This was aired by the Lebanese Broadcast Corporation. The show was called أنت أو لا أحد *anta aw la aḥad* (*You or no one*) and was a great hit with the Arab audience. Filmi capitalised on its success and dubbed 11 Mexican and Brazilian soaps into MSA in only eight years (Maluf, 2005). One of the main reasons behind this warm reception of the foreign soaps was that the

storyline values and ideas exhibited in the Mexican soaps were born in comparatively traditionalist communities and were quite similar to those of the Arab society and, hence, suitable for Arab viewers (Maluf, 2005).

This achievement set the pace for other Arab nations, for example Jordan, to start dubbing Latin American soaps. The main reason for allowing the dubbing of the Mexican series was the desire to increase broadcasting time at a minimum cost, since dubbing an existing show was less costly than making a new locally produced one (Maluf, 2005).

However, dubbed Hollywood shows were not as popular among the viewers as the Mexican *telenovelas*. The first full-length dubbed film, *Police Academy*, was aired by Murr TV of Lebanon in 1999. It was translated to Educated Spoken Arabic, which is a combination of MSA and Vernacular Arabic, but it had too small an audience and Murr TV had to cancel it. According to Maluf (2005), this venture was unpopular because the film clashed with the culture and values of the Arab society. The attempt to bring such foreign views and ideas to the Arab public in order to acquaint them with Hollywood's actors and films was not received very well by viewers. According to Abou Samah, Director of Filmi, 'Arab heroes do not use curse words, they don't jump on a moving train, slide down a window and machinegun 10 criminals' (cited in Maluf, 2005, p. 3). Maluf further notes that 'Arab audiences are accustomed to hear Hollywood actors speak English and prefer to read subtitles' (p. 3).

The satellite network Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) made another effort at dubbing a foreign show with the translation of a renowned American show, *The Simpsons* (or *Al-Shamshoon)* آل شمشون, into Egyptian vernacular (cf. Section 4.5). This show was launched in Ramadan of 2005, the month with the highest number of TV viewers. This project was a failure according to many despite having a star-studded Egyptian cast voicing the characters. Roberts (2005) and El-Rashidi[22] (2005) note that this venture was unsuccessful because the efforts to bring American culture and humour to the Arabs were fundamentally flawed, as the dubbing depicted

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[22] Yasmine El-Rashidi: Arabized Simpsons not getting many laugh. *The Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 14, 2005)

a story and characters very different from the original. For example, the dubbed character of Homer, Omer Shamshoon, was not shown drinking beer, eating bacon and frequenting bars with alcoholics and other undesirable characters. Al Jean, Executive Producer of *The Simpsons*, observed that 'If *Homer* doesn't drink and eat bacon and generally act like a pig, which I guess is also against Islam, then it's not *Homer*' (cited in Roberts, 2005). As a result, most of Homer Simpson's Arab-speaking fans did not identify with the *Arabisation* of his character, which was too distant from the original one. They felt it was 'incredibly dumb' and the dubbing reduced the show to a cartoon (Khalil and Zayan, 2005). (cf. Section 4.5 for a detailed insight into *The Simpsons*).

Despite the tumultuous history that ties the Turks with the Arabs, they still share the same religious and cultural values, which is why Turkish soap operas became a hit on Arab television. It all started when the ever adventurous MBC aired the Syrian dubbed Turkish series إكليل الورد *Iklil el Ward* (*The crown of flowers*), soon after the first effort with *The Simpsons*. سنوات الضياع *Sanawat Adaya'* (*The lost years*), نور *Noor* (*The Light*), العشق الممنوع *El 'ishq El Mamnou'* (*Forbidden love*), الأوراق المتساقطة *El Awraq El Mutasaqita* (*The falling leaves*) and many more followed. MBC realised that it hit the jackpot with this move as millions tuned in to watch the dubbed series. Consequently, scores of movies and soap operas were dubbed and aired on its network. The reason behind this triumph is that Turkish and Arab traditions and cultures are similar in many ways. This helps the audience relate to the characters in the shows and understand them better. Another factor is that the dubbing was in colloquial Syrian, which has gained recognition in the Arab population over a long period of locally produced popular TV shows.

Dubai TV dubbed a few Korean shows into MSA جوهرة القصر *Jawharat El Qasr* (*Jewel of the palace*) for example, which was moderately popular among the audience. Japanese shows and movies were recently translated into MSA and aired on Space Power, a satellite channel dedicated to the 16 to 25-year-old market.

The choice of dubbing over subtitling as an AVT mode for Far Eastern programmes is deemed necessary because Arab viewers are not accustomed to these languages, namely Japanese and Korean. Unlike French and English, which are taught in several Arab countries, the languages of this part of the world are completely unknown to the

Arabs. Consequently, by using MSA, the producers managed to preserve the foreignness and exoticness of the original material.

There are many factors, other than the cultural gulf, that have made dubbing a less successful mode of AVT among the Arabs, Maluf (2005) argues. He discusses the multi-faceted nature of Arabic, which is necessary to determine which vernacular of Arabic should be used for different dubbings. Dialects are often highly localised in the Arab World, with some dialects completely unused among some people. Some TV programmes, however, use Educated Spoken Arabic, which melds together MSA and Vernacular Arabic. Other shows, such as *The Simpsons* and some Walt Disney cartoons were translated into Colloquial Egyptian Arabic. Although Colloquial Egyptian is recognised far and wide due to the spread of movies and songs from Egypt, Arab viewers have still not been presented with any American programmes in Colloquial Egyptian (barring Disney's animated movies for children) and so it is unheard of in that context. Conversely, MSA usage in Latin American *telenovelas*, while popular among viewers, carries certain awkwardness (cf. Section 4.2). In the same vein, El-Sakran (1997, p. 96) talks about how 'the change of the channel may deprive the viewers of the flavour of the original variety of the language used in films and programmes' when the original, unchanged and natural language is dubbed into MSA, which is not exactly an 'everyday' language.

Along with the cultural gap and the question of which vernacular to choose, politics and deep-rooted traditions and mindsets often work together against the practice of dubbing. There is the primary question of whether the morals and cultural values, political opinions and role of the society and its importance would be threatened. Another concern is, Maluf (2005) argues, that the break in the control exercised by state-owned TV channels, which had long dominated the market until the 1990s, would lead to a change in viewership number and profits in the business. Such concerns were until then not even present in the Arab World.

Financial matters are also a crucial consideration in the choice of subtitling over dubbing in the Arab World. In reality, producers are nervous about dubbing, especially when subtitling the same programme costs only about 10 to 15 per cent of dubbing costs (Maluf, 2005). However, dubbing is still the preferred mode in translating animations into Arabic, because as Maluf (2005) argues:

- most of the children who watch TV are either too young to be able to read or can read a little or with difficulty;

- children usually understand one sequence at a time while watching, allowing any irregularities between scene and dialogue or dialogue and real life to pass unnoticed;

- of censorship issues, possibly the main reason, since an all-encompassing translation, like dubbing, allows producers and broadcasters to gauge the *appropriateness* or *inappropriateness* of the programme for the Arab audience, who often watch with cultural, educational, political and religious mind-sets or expectations.

4.2 Arabic diglossia[23] and dubbing

A diglossic language such as Arabic has two coexisting variants. The formal variant, used for literature, the media, government institutions and education, is called الفصحى *Fusha* (MSA). The informal variant is the one used in everyday life and referred to as العامية *'amiyia* (Colloquial Arabic). Each of the 22 Arab countries uses its own Arabic variant.

Gamal (2005) argues that Egyptian dialect has spread across the Arab World more than any other dialect, claiming a status of the '*lingua franca* of the Middle East' (p. 7). This is mainly due to Egypt's music and film industry, which had a much earlier start than other countries. In the same vein, Amin and Napoli (2000) stipulate that the launch of the Voice of the Arabs radio in 1950s, not to mention the millions of Egyptian expatriates working in different Arab countries, were other crucial factors in giving the Egyptian dialect such a strong hold. However, in the past few years, Egypt seems to have lost its grip on the Arab tongue, as the Syrian dialect has emerged as a strong competitor with some powerful locally produced TV drama and the dubbing of many Turkish *musalsalat* (soap operas), which the Arab audience seems to have a great appetite for, as discussed earlier. The Turkish series managed at last to dethrone both Latin American *telenovelas* and Egyptian *musalsalat* that dominated Arab screens for decades. This has been achieved through an accessible language, sophisticated and easy on the tongue and the ear. Buccianti (2010) reports

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[23] Some researchers, such as Elgibali, consider Arabic a multi-glossic language.

that the 'Syrian dubbing did not only translate, it transposed and adapted'. Characters names were Arabized, just as in other foreign movies, and erotic scenes from some series were censored, as they were judged as violating the region's religious and cultural values. However, after all the filtering the series had to undergo, some were still unsatisfied, as Buccianti (2010) confirms: 'This censorship was nevertheless insufficient for some newspapers such as the Saudi *Al Jazeera*, which described the broadcast of Turkish drama as an assault on public decency'.

Despite its success, the Turkish adventure is viewed by many as an assault on the Arab culture, a continuation of the Latin American saga, and an extension to the resurgence of the Turkish political might in the Middle East.

4.3 The process of dubbing animations in the Arab World

With regard to the issue of dubbing animations, Zitawi (1995), and Athamneh and Zitawi (1999) summarise the production procedures of translating children cartoons shown on Arab television channels as follows[24]:

A. After selecting a suitable programme, a copy of the ST, which is normally packed with the picture, is given to a translator to be translated into Arabic. Translators should keep two things in mind: a) the attributes of the TL [target language] which should be plain, simple, and understandable. b) The moral teachings, values and instructive themes in the story of the children programme in question. It is also essential to note that the translator of these programmes may alter the meaning of some words, phrases and sentences so that conformity with censorship rules may be achieved. The nature of the dubbing procedure might also require the translator to abbreviate or stretch the translated words to synch with the character's lip movements.

B. The translation is played out by dubbing actors and actresses who carefully note timing and lip synchronisation. Often enough, one dubbing actor may act out many roles in the same children programme. As the translation is acted out, the dubbing director may make some unarranged adjustments whenever he finds it suitable, especially for lip synchronisation.

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[24] These phases were confirmed by the producers interviewed by the researcher.

C. The dubbed version is then recorded and prepared to be broadcast (Athamneh and Zitawi, 1999, p. 130).

The advent and mushrooming of satellite channels in the Arab world resulted in fierce competition between various networks. This compelled the broadcasters to search for better dubbing programmes they considered fit for their channels. Aljazeera for Children (JCC) devised stringent rules to be followed by producers assigned to any production, as demonstrated by the producer of *The Simpsons*[25]. This is corroborated by the findings of Zitawi (2003, p. 240), who notes the following steps when dubbing programmes for broadcast on their channel:

A. A section of dubbed episodes from a particular series is sent to the channel to be agreed upon.
B. Once the section is accepted, the dubbing team will move on to dub the whole series.
C. The dubbed series is returned to the channel for one more quality check, where they analyse it against the corresponding original language episode. When mistakes and discrepancies are found, the dubbing company is accountable for fixing the mistakes according to the rules.
D. When the dubbing for the series is all set, the dubbing house will play back the Arabic track onto the original video previously given.
E. The dubbed version will be subjected to one final quality control test, and occasionally the channel's standards and customs are applied, which might result in last minute alterations to the translation.

These are the same guidelines used by the producers interviewed for this research. Some channels depend solely on their subsidiary AVT production company (which also promotes its dubbed production among other channels) to achieve the quality of dubbing they desire.

4.4 On *The Simpsons*

The history of sitcoms goes back to the 1950s when they portrayed families as ideal—all family members interacted with each other with utmost respect and decency. In this regard, Van Allen (2000, par. 7) stipulates that, 'many critics cite

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[25] Cf. Appendix: A

shows like *Father Knows Best*, which was aired on prime-time television from 1955 to 1963 and which depicts the Anderson family as the model social unit for American society, as appropriate material for American families to watch on television'.

The fantasy genre arrived in the 1960s and depicted the family in a fantastical light by presenting the audience with fairy tales such as *Snow White, Cinderella, Peter Pan,* and *Sleeping Beauty.*

Realism followed at the turn of the decade, and in the 1970s, the sitcom illustrated the family more factually.

However, *The Simpsons* with their subversive family jokes profoundly revolutionised sitcoms. *The Simpsons* puts family relationships under the microscope more subversively, and this was only possible through animation. Flashbacks, complete dream sequences and voiceovers seem to have a more profound effect compared to real live action. Animation and the evolution of sitcoms helped the portrayal of realistic family relationships, with different prospects and mind-sets consequently highlighted.

The Simpsons is a TV show with massive worldwide popularity and, as Cantor (2001, p. 70) argues, it 'offers one of the most important images of the family in contemporary American culture, and in particular an image of the nuclear family'. The show depicts the multifaceted American modern society in an unprecedented manner. FOX, the TV network that produced the show, managed to shrink the entire American society in a small town called Springfield. This was only possible by employing a huge number of characters representing different aspects of the American way of life. Indeed, very few aspects have been spared the satiric grilling of *The Simpsons*. This has even expanded to various types of people in the world. One of *The Simpsons'* trademarks is its inclusion of all age groups, ethnicities and social classes, and in so doing, it brings together all societal opposites and ironies to form the frenzied and diversified Springfield. This is why *The Simpsons* is considered a unique genre, representing America's modern hyperreality. It is often indicted for depicting the American family as dysfunctional, and thus, bringing the *real* family to the foreground. It was clever and farsighted of the FOX network not to make *The*

Simpsons an exclusively American show that gives an account of no other era but the postmodern one. The Simpson family members have no time or place, as such, and do not represent a certain type of the American family per se, but, as Björnsson (2006, p. 8) contends, 'paradoxically they are every American family everywhere at any point in the postmodern era'.

The Simpsons is, in fact, a testimony to a postmodern fragmented society, which represents an array of cultures and subcultures by embracing the multifaceted diversity of the modern age.

Although the Simpson family is the centre stage of the show, the evolution of the storyline predictably leads to the introduction of many different characters. This leads, in turn, to a shifting of the focus of the subject matter in any given episode to a point where the viewer is exposed to 'fragments of characters from diverse parts of society that together form the multifarious picture of *Springfieldian* society' as Björnsson (2006, p. 9) points out.

The underlying message that is deeply buried under the satirical surface of the show is rebellion against all kinds of norms: social, cultural, political and religious. This is achieved by employing many supporting characters representing all aspects of authority, which is portrayed as either 'dangerously incompetent or criminally corrupt' (Björnsson, 2006, p. 11).

The negative portrayal of figures of authority brings to the fore a fundamental problem modern society is experiencing—distrust of authority—and, consequently, the need to rebel. This is exhibited in the character of **Bart**, who personifies rebellion. He is ferociously opposed to anyone who tries to exert authority over him, especially his arch nemesis, Principal Skinner, who is constantly the victim of Bart's wicked tricks.

Lisa is another anti-establishment guru with a never ending offensive on the totalitarian, sexist, and corrupt regime of Springfield. She is very critical of her society's status quo and works tirelessly to expose and incriminate authorities' wrong doings. However, her enthusiasm, criticism of Springfield's blind faith, and call for change is often met with fervent denial simply because faith in authority is synonymous to being a true American in Springfield.

Homer, however, is surely the hero of the series, and the most liked character. Homer hates his job and everything related to it. He is portrayed as a man with no brain; his idiotic behaviour is combined with his stupid appearance. He does not give any importance to his health and the harmful effects of bulky body. The only dream Homer has is never to go to work. Many viewers wait for 'D'oh' in every episode, which is an indication of things not going according to Homer's plan. The popularity of Homer as a father can be seen from the poll results of a survey conducted by Woolworths among British children in which Homer was awarded 'the best dad in the World' (Appleyard, 2002).

Marge is the opposite of Homer. She is more complex, and her character is a blend of conservatism, activism and moralism. In the patriarchal household of *The Simpsons*, she has the most important role; she is responsible for nurturing the children as well as doing all the domestic work. She is only recognised as a female by her big hair and eyelashes; she is rarely seen wearing even basic makeup. Her feminine emotions are mostly told via the background music, but she is also seen vigorously staring, folding arms, and frowning at Homer whenever she gets to know of his outrageous plans.

Mr Burns is the traditional villain of the series. He is Homer's rich boss, and is overly preoccupied with his health and fitness. The directors adopt different camera angles to make viewers completely sure of his evilness. He uses huge, long chairs, so he is on a higher level than his employees. His dress code includes a Yale University blue on white sweater, which is a sign of his higher academic achievements.

The villain (Mr Burns) in *The Simpsons* is represented differently to most American villains, who are shown to have non-American speaking accents and an appearance unlike common Americans, to make them stand out and seem to not fit with American ideology.

Waylon Smither, Mr Burns' personal assistant, is a closet gay who is madly in love with Mr Burns. His gay traits make him seem like a villain to the America's dominant ideology, which deplores and outlaws homosexuality across much of its States.

Mike Sculley (cited in Appleyard, 2002), is of the opinion that animated characters are better off being complete stereotypes[26] of the different people they wish to present as 'embodiments of ideological values' in comparison to the real actors whose characters have already been encrypted by our society's morals. In support of this opinion, the executive producer of *The Simpsons* adds that if we have a candid look at our society, we will find many *Homer*s living in our midst. However, the only distinguishing factor can be that Homer speaks about everything openly while others do not.

All of *The Simpsons'* characters are almost alien in their appearance, yet they reflect many recognisable characteristics of human people, albeit in an extreme, stereotypical way. The following are recognisably conventional stereotypes of white cultures. This list is by no means exhaustive.

Couch Potato

Homer: loves sitting on the couch, watching TV whilst drinking beer.

Militant ideologist

Lisa: Moral centre and middle child, questions the government, served as Little Miss Springfield but became disillusioned by pageant sponsorship of Cigarette Company; intelligent, serious, passionate for the good of the world.

The Rebel

Bart: Devious, under-achieving, school hating, irreverent, clever, possesses a huge repertoire of practical jokes and methods of revenge. Once sawed off the head of a statue of town founder Jebediah Springfield, blew Agnes Skinner off the commode by throwing a cherry bomb into a toilet in the boys' bathroom, etc.

'Holier than Thou' Good neighbour

Ned Flanders: Happy-clappy type Christian. Always does everything correctly. Favourite book—The Bible. Homer once said, 'I don't care if Ned Flanders is the nicest guy in the world. He's a jerk—end of story'. (Groening 1997: episode 7F23:10.3.91)

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[26] The concept of stereotyping is discussed at length in 6.5.7.1

The Nerds

Benjamin, Doug and Gary: These three are physics students at Springfield University. Benjamin wears a calculator on his hip: Doug is fat and wears a pocket protector; Gary wears black-rimmed glasses. Their favourite game is Computer solitaire.

Scrooge

Mr Burns: Very rich and ancient, Springfield Nuclear Power Plant owner, most powerful man in Springfield.

The Creep

Smithers: Follows his boss, Mr Burns, everywhere like a little lap dog.

Dumb Blonde

Amber Dempsey: Curly, blonde hair, fluttery eyelashes, glittery smile. Once said, 'Hi, I'm Amber Dempsey, and when I grow up, I want to be a Sweetie Pie'.

The Teenage Yob

Otto: Long haired, gambles, plays guitar until all hours, hair clogs the drain in the bathroom. Fifteen driving accidents and not a single fatality. (Groening 1997: 87)

The Scumbag

Jimmy: Occupation: Criminal. Appearance: unshaven and tired (Smith, 1999)[27].

It is worth noting that the show depicts almost every known stereotype there is. It thrives on exposing people's double standards and hypocrisy (cf. Section 6.5.7 for an extensive discussion).

4.5 The power of *The Simpsons* as animation

The Simpsons is an animation series that gathered extreme levels of popularity from the outset. Because it is an animation, it is spared the wrath and criticism of viewers. The instances of the *Itchy and Scratchy* cartoons in *The Simpsons* epitomise the fact

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[27] Coral Smith: Viewers' Attitudes to Prejudice in 'The Simpsons'
http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/cos9701.html

that people find violence a lot more bearable in an animation than in a real-life portrayal.

The reason for this acceptance of violence via animation is perhaps because people take *The Simpsons* to be outrageously beyond reality, while if the same were to be done in reality, people would find the bloody images unwatchable. *The Simpsons* successfully utilises its animation to ridicule typical characters in society without the risk of offending. Tueth (2003) argues that by incorporating offensive material in a 'cartoon format' it becomes 'ludicrous beyond offense' (p. 142). This quality on its own makes it a huge success.

The most important aspect that makes *The Simpsons* so widely watched is its ability to have animations that do not target a single segment of viewers, unlike many other telecasted programmes. The show has many characters that have been regularly introduced in the past and are used in developing new themes and stories. This technique allows *The Simpsons* to have new and exciting stories compared to many shows with fewer actors around which the story revolves. The Simpson family is at liberty to move all over the world and incorporate new characters for each episode. While abroad, typical stereotypes of visited countries are depicted as reality. On their vacation to Egypt, in the 'Principal Charming' episode, the Simpson's reported back that their vacation was hindered by mosquitoes the size of elephants and Egypt was extremely dirty. On another trip to Brazil (in 'Blame it on Lisa'), monkeys are shown living in the streets and attacking people, children are delinquents who rob tourists and all men are bisexual.

The ability of *The Simpsons* to alter reality referents in the mind of the viewer, by allusions to past and present reality, creates a sense of confusion between real and fictional dimensions in the show. This creates a sense of hyperreality and the viewer's detachment from the surrounding environment, albeit temporarily, before realising that Springfield reality is all but fiction.

The Simpsons utilises its animation as a shield for its ridiculing jokes on different aspects of society. The animation gives *The Simpsons* a chance to thoroughly explore the boundaries of TV and be very open with its criticism and yet be labelled decent enough. This is how *The Simpsons* also easily puts its point across without risking

the loss of viewership. In short, *The Simpsons* gives TV the ability to have a strong say on the topic of culture. The show has completely transformed the animation industry with its inclusion of earlier TV precedents; the liberal mind-set of FOX regarding content along with the show's own popularity pushed the show to explore aspects previously untouched by the TV industry. In this respect, *The Simpsons* has ruled over TV when it comes to sardonic shows. Its success story is due to the integration of past programmes, like *The Flintstones*, in its content, and giving the genre of satire and sarcasm a modern makeover.

It is quite conceivable that *The Simpsons* evolution as a sitcom filled in for the *magicom* of Disney World, which itself had replaced the *moralist* family. Hence, there is no denying that the reason behind the success and wild popularity of *The Simpsons* is its unsurpassed ability to incorporate various methods and precedents within its content. In doing so, *The Simpsons* also created a mishmash of past and present for TV.

4.5.1 What makes The Simpsons different?

To have an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind the development of *The Simpsons* as a hugely successful comical and satirical show, one must understand how the show started, the reasons behind the success of its content, and its criticism of society. Why is it that this show has been so revolutionary in terms of exploring the unexplored in TV?

The manner in which the FOX network started its business adventure provides many indications as to how it developed. *The Simpsons* was an original idea because the attitude of FOX was to have a different and new programming style. It had a diverse programming criterion and wanted not to copy what the big channels were telecasting.

FOX produced very ambitious programmes such as *Married with children* and *In living colour* due to the tactic of hiring accomplished producers who developed such programmes which magnetised the 18 to 49 demographic and gave FOX the space to advance and the confidence to launch ground-breaking programmes like *The Simpsons*.

FOX had to work extremely efficiently to establish itself within the industry as Cartwright (2000, p. 44), the voice of Bart Simpson, argues. Thus, the network adopted a strategy of trying out newer things, so the corporation used *The Simpsons* as its ace card and tried to magnetise a newer audience. It decided to try out something new in an industry where everything had been tried and done, says Cartwright. The amalgamation of a satirical show, the variety show and animations resulted in a revolutionary programme that gave a sardonic view on American society, a programme the likes of which had never been seen before.

The masterminds behind *The Simpsons* calculated the harmlessness of animation perfectly and clearly estimated that they could take more risks in the direction and screenplay of the series. *The Simpsons* actually takes advantage of the animation of other programmes. It does not just maintain bright colours and humour to keep younger viewers watching, but also captures the imagination of adults with its varied dialogues and sarcasm:

> *The Simpsons* never fails to please children with its bright colours, comical
> characters, and slapstick antics. But every Simpsons' episode is also packed
> with cultural references that address a very wide audience, an audience so
> diverse, in fact, that it seems unlikely that any single viewer could notice all of
> them (Mullen, 2004, p. 74).

The Simpsons took a lot of inspiration from its predecessors. The team behind the series learnt that to attract young viewers, it is important to keep the cartoon bright and full of antic displays of absurd comedy. However, *The Simpsons* is also uniquely able to glue in an older audience with its critical analysis of cultural references in every episode; Wilson (1990) reports that Fox estimated that nearly 94 per cent of the audience was over 18. This is what makes *The Simpsons* an 'ambivalent text' as Shavit (1986, p. 67) puts it. This text genre operates on many levels of meaning; the way children interpret it is quite different to adults' interpretation.

The Simpsons needed strong backing from the audience and hence they had to follow the same plan of action that its predecessors had followed. Matt Groening and company needed able backing up from the people and had to provide monetary profits for its advertisers. As Tueth (2003, p. 133) argues, American society was ready for a different prospective and contexts in relation to family and wanted

someone to give different views and strongly challenge the abominable social norms that were being followed. Furthermore, subversive family jokes were continually generated in *The Simpsons,* as it was realised that they were liked by the general public.

FOX made use of the work done by its predecessors (like *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons,* representing the Stone Age and the Space Age respectively) efficiently, capitalising on the work of earlier creative writers and producers and finding a different way to challenge old concepts and beliefs. *The Simpsons* takes advantage of the approaches that previous people adopted, effectively utilises animation and gives a sarcastic and sardonic view on society, culture and family in a contrasting manner. In brief, the producer used the format of usual sitcoms but refreshed the same subject matter by providing a more practical judgement of modern society's perspective on life. *The Simpsons'* fundamental plot is the same as that of other sitcoms: putting family values under the microscope. In this regard, Sloane (2004, p. 140) states that the series revolves around family, as it is the heart of *The Simpsons'* plot, and even if it tries to criticise the institution of the American family, it still shows that the family members do love each other at heart.

4.5.2 The Simpsons and its controversial portrayal of family

The concept *The Simpsons* has provoked in people who have a critical view of the series is of what to believe and what not to believe in the tales told in the show. This show is unique. It has captured the imagination of passive viewers, made fun of the advertisements run on TV, formed exciting new stories and made use of the Simpson's TV set to highlight absurd talk shows, as Hall (1997, p. 5) argues.

The aspect that gives *The Simpsons* its superiority and uniqueness over other family-based comedies is its presentation of the family that never ages. All the characters have their ages fixed and thus the resemblance of the show to comedies that have comic situations derived from the growing up of children is avoided (Grote, 1983, p. 60). The satiric nature of the show is not the only factor behind the show's appeal; the fact that it is a cartoon is also a big contributor to its success.

Despite its popularity, however, *The Simpsons* is seen by many as an animated version of the *Married with children* dysfunctional family and, therefore, an anti-

family sitcom (Zoglin, 2009). In this regard, Waters (1990, p. 60) affirms 'what's indisputable is that TV's new blue-hued families are displaying an extraordinary disdain for the medium's wholesome familial stereotypes'. The early protests about *The Simpsons*, being a family TV show, were about the low level of family values portrayed in the series. These questions were largely highlighted by the remarks of the former president, George W Bush, about the show when he said: 'We need a nation closer to *The Waltons* than *The Simpsons*' (Fiske, 1996, p. 121).

Many complaints were filed to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) against FOX for an array of reasons, including the use of 'inappropriate language', 'sexual innuendos', 'violent scenes', 'students revolting against teachers and administrators', 'explicit content', 'same sex marriage', and 'Homer marrying two lesbians'. One angry complaint summed up many viewers disapproval of the show:

> *The Simpsons* has had many multiple episodes in which heavy emphasis was put on murder, prostitution, infidelity, pre-marital sex, kidnapping, suicide, and vast array of other actions either considered by the majority to be sinful or which are outright illegal in all fifty United States ... nearly every taboo has been broken, every ethnic group insulted, every scatological joke made (FCC, 2007, p. 256).

However, it is arguable that adult viewers should be able to distinguish between reality and representation, as *The Simpsons* represents cultural intricacies within reality, or what Baudrillard (1994) refers to as *hyperreality*, which simply means one's ability to generate mental replicas and simulation of something that goes beyond imitation to make it more factual than it really is. In this regard, Hall argues, 'They are perfectly capable of recognising the way the realities of working-class life are reorganised, reconstructed and reshaped by the way they are represented' (cited in Samuel, 1981, p. 232). Certainly, today's audience is well informed and understands the digital version of reality, thus is able to distinguish between the hyperreal families on TV and the real ones in their homes.

4.6 Dubbing *The Simpsons* for the Arab audience

In spite of the popularity of dubbing, predicting the outcome of the conversion of a cartoon depicting American pop culture into Arabic, such as *The Simpsons*[28], was challenging.

MBC executives employed celebrities like Mohamed Henidi, Rogeena and Hanan Turk to play the voice over of the Simpson family members: Homer, Marge and Lisa. The use of celebrities gave initial success to the series, but for a sustained level of achievement, more was needed.

A fan of the English version of *The Simpsons*, David Samuel (cited in Safieddine, 2005) is of the opinion that the Arabic version of the series could prove to be a success if the programme directors made it as educational and learning friendly as possible. Only if children develop a liking for it, can older viewers have passion for the show. He says that the original was funnier and more entertaining and had all the ingredients of a show that attracted all people; adults and children alike.

However, the professor of English Literature at Cairo University, Nadia El-Kholi, an expert in the field of children's literature, begged to differ with the concept that the cartoon series be made informative. She thinks that the Arab culture is very restrictive in nature and that there is an acute shortage of entertaining (as opposed to educational) cartoons. She is full of praise for the cartoon series in her articles in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, as Safieddine reports. She says that the innocent little fights between the son and father (Bart and Homer) provide the audience aged 12 to 17 a new brand of entertainment, which is quite refreshing and enjoyable. The simple nature of the characters is also a reason for its popularity all over the Arabian Gulf. The simple and ordinary outlook of the characters is more easily identifiable and recognisable than the glitzy and glamorous Disney characters that take fantasy to a completely new level. The professor also admires the series for its inclusion of Arabic and Egyptian culture. The use of Egyptian dishes and Arabic names of the characters reflect Arabic culture in the form of cartoons.

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[28] Cf. Appendix C for *The Simpsons* episodes transcript.

MBC launched *Al-Shamshoon* in a bid to break the routine of repetitive soap operas that dominated viewing schedules for decades. The humorous and funny family sit-com was aired, with adequate modifications, throughout the month of Ramadan 2005. The aspects of the series that were altered in the Arab version were the absence of issues like sex, alcohol and other taboos that contradicted the Islamic culture. Instead, *Al-Shamshoon* had episodes that were largely based on the issues regarding family unity, morals and social conflicts, and how best to resolve them, argues Safieddine (2005). The general tone of the series was not changed and all the issues were addressed in a funny and humorous fashion. The few interesting topics the series did not touch on were the idolism of young children of negative characters like Krusty the Clown, and the lack of importance given to a mother in an Arab household.

The actress who is the voice behind the character of Lisa, Hanan Turk, is also a great admirer of the concept of the conversion of the American family comedy into an Arabic household series. She also gave rave reviews about the series in an interview she gave to *Al-Ahram Weekly* magazine (cited in Safieddine, 2005). She says that the way changes had been made to the programme to make it look like an Arab creation would make Arab people fall in love with the show.

With the show's prominence in mind, the biggest challenge was to pick the right people for executing this job. A very talented comic writer and three prominent movie stars were selected. It is common knowledge that over the years Cairo and Beirut have become the Arab World's own version of Hollywood. Hence, the best talent from all over the Arab World was handpicked to give *The Simpsons* a greater chance for success. Amr Hosny was selected as the translator of the show, while a very popular and prominent comedic force, Mohamed Henidi, was chosen by MBC to star as *Omer Al-Shamshoon*.

MBC knew that every episode of *The Simpsons* could not be shown in *Al-Shamshoon*. The network was wise enough not to show some episodes like the one in Season 4 named 'Homer the heretic', in which Homer started his own religion after allegedly receiving some divine revelations. A reference to Krusty the Clown's father, Rabbi Krustofski, was also thought to be offensive to the Arab World and hence was eliminated.

MBC had to concede that not all of the changes that they had made were a big hit. 'I would say that *Al-Shamshoon* was not a big success. I would say it was fairly received, but average. This made us reconsider', admitted Baddih Fattouh, head of acquisition and drama commissioner at MBC (cited in Poplak, 2009, p. 109). The show flopped, as it was inconsistent and sloppy, shocking many of MBC's loyal audience. The biggest problem was the Saudi Arabian market, which could not accept such a *confused* show. However, the reason that the producer of *Al-Shamshoon* gave to me for abandoning the series is quite different. *The Simpsons* producer, Gracie Films, the de facto owner of the show's copyright, after seeing the first Arabic dubbed season, insisted on keeping the original content intact, something MBC could not accept, thus dropping the show (M Abdulghaffar, pers. comm., 27th April, 2010).

Amr Hosny, *Al-Shamshoon's* translator, says that he could not truly understand what the sheiks at MBC wanted. Hosny is a household name in the Arab World, as most of the modifications and script-writing are done by him:

> When we started, I went back and studied [the show], and what I understood was that this was a very American brand of pop culture—and I thought that it should not be done like this. I came up with an idea that was objectively correlated to the people in the Arab World. The idea was to make an imaginary town known by the name Little Arab Town, which would have given us a good reason as to why these people are American, but also Arabs. The idea was rejected by the sheikhs (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

It was decided that Springfield was allowed to remain the name of the town of *Al-Shamshoon,* while no reason was given as to how and why an Arab family continued to live in the middle of America.

Hosny describes the reasoning behind the modifications the series had to undergo to adapt it to Arab viewers. Homer is seen with the favourite American beverage, beer, most of the time. This does not correspond to Arabic culture, as beer or any other alcoholic drink is forbidden in Islam. Discussions with MBC followed in which Hosny suggested an alternative drink she'ir شعير *(malt beer), a non-alcoholic malt drink* instead, but the insistence was on using 'asir عصير (juice) instead. Similar alternations were accommodated such as, a church replaced by *masğid* مسجد

(*M*osque), and bacon sandwiches and Moe's Tavern eliminated from the script (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April). Therefore, *The Simpsons* was 'whittled down to a shadow of itself', losing its originality and allure, Hosny argues. He expresses his dismay saying that *The Simpsons'* appeal lies in its originality, and that the show did not need any modifications and was produced in the best way possible. The team of multidimensional writers and talented artists injected life into this show. He applauds the efforts and the talent of the artists and the intelligence of the writers involved. He says that the characters are loveable, especially Homer, who can be well understood from the Egyptian perspective. For instance, Homer's simplicity and benevolence are appreciable with a sign of wisdom. However, in many instances, his stupidity is overwhelming. Curiously, an Egyptian character, if sketched, would hold similar traits. 'Sometimes I felt I was talking about an Egyptian person. Nothing is certain and taken for granted, it is not *ipso facto*, and this makes good art', Hosny says passionately (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Fattouh (cited in Poplak, 2009, p.109), on the other hand, argues that the series did not do well culturally owing to its typical American humour and style. Comedy, according to him, is subject to cultural sensitivity, and humour is generally born from local habits, learning and behaviour. Comedy has to be audience-specific, as subject matter that can be accepted as humorous in one context can be rejected in the other.

The Simpsons has emerged as an elucidation of an American life that has been falsely perceived as an ideal model pursued by many living in Third World countries. *The Simpsons*, as commended by Hosny, has transformed this cultural confusion and has revealed the blemishes of the American dream under the mask of humour.

Hosny further says that the series altered the Third World perspective of the American dream completely. Contrary to the American life being assumed as perfect, the series revealed many imperfections and flaws which in turn gave people hope, conveying the message that the people in the Third World can also dream and make a difference. Their society was no different than America's. Hosny was delighted by this altered perspective saying that in the past he was dismayed by people's perception of the American life as wonderful. In his opinion it was high time people were introduced to the fallible image of the developed world.

4.7 Translation agency: between patrons and translation ethics

4.7.1 Cultural challenges and constraints

The Simpsons' popularity should have eliminated the need for cross-cultural adaptation when aired in various cultural environments. Its increasing viewership indicates that viewers are familiar with the characters across the globe. However, the audience it captured outside of English-speaking countries was due to the various translations aired worldwide. *The Simpsons'* characters from Springfield are widely recognised among various world audiences because of the dubbed or subtitled episodes shown on different networks. MBC's attempt is, in fact, not the only transformation of *The Simpsons* being introduced to a divergent culture. This is despite FOX and Gracie Films (the producers of the series) showing an inclination towards the selection of voiceover actors and translators for introducing the series in various other countries.

The Simpsons posed a challenge for the broadcasting networks—the show is loaded with typically American ideological and cultural references delicately embedded within it. The networks discovered that translation was not as simple as previously thought; the cultural content needed to be judged delicately, as minute visual details can upset foreign viewership. For example, in the Japanese market, the series suffered a major blow when the audience rejected the series due to the four-fingered characters. In Japan, having fingers less than five is considered rather unfortunate as it signifies a lower class status, reports Sharon Swart (cited in Ferrari, 2010).

Ferrari (2010) states another clear example of culturally sensitive issues: the respect for the elder; something quite sacred in the Eastern part of the world. Bart's disrespectful character and his incorrigible impertinence towards authority were hard to ignore by viewers in Asian countries. Therefore, tactfully approaching the matter, the marketing strategy was changed by FOX by relying on Lisa's intellect rather than Bart's impudence for capturing those audiences (Ferrari, 2010). The characters are modified according to the national context and re-territorialised to suit the domestic stereotypes and local norms. By so doing, FOX managed to form cultural bridges with various world regions.

4.7.2 Translation and censorship

Censorship is defined as the:

> Supervision and control of the information and ideas circulated within a society. In modern times, censorship refers to the examination of media including books, periodicals, plays, motion pictures, and television and radio programs for the purpose of altering or suppressing parts thought to be offensive. The offensive material may be considered immoral or obscene, heretical or blasphemous, seditious or treasonable, or injurious to the national security (*Encarta Online Encyclopedia*).

Censorship in AVT encompasses the deletion or replacement of utterances and scenes classified as vulgar, erotic or presenting unacceptable references or allusions. However, censorship is not only confined to instances when government interventions, or any other influential power such as distribution networks, force a change in the translation of any movie or TV show to adhere to something that has been deemed politically relevant. Translators are also involved in censorship when they are ignorant of the existence of any offensive vocabulary such as sexual connotations, puns or taboo elements, and therefore unknowingly omit the translation. This mainly occurs due to the translator's ignorance of culture. There are, of course, instances when translators change the text on their own accord, believing that a certain text does not correspond well to the contextual and cultural setup, under the notion of protecting the audience.

Censorship is an old practice that has targeted various means of communication. It is a powerful tool in the hands of politicians and clergymen to subvert ideas and enforce certain agendas. AVT could be a magnet for exercising censorship; translators can censor for ideological reasons, or external agents such as governments or religious leaders can impose censorship. Gambier (1994, p. 278) argues that, 'in subtitling, it is important to study what is transformed and why'. However, dubbing is by far the largest battlefield of such activity, since the original text (soundtrack) is replaced with a target text that cannot be checked for accuracy.

Scandura (2004, p. 126) states the following reasons behind censorship on the screen:

1. Political reasons dominated censorship policies as the government felt that by confining the people to their culture and restricting access to other cultures and their ways of thinking they would easily rule their people. Dubbing was used to mask the original movie sounds while modified text was used for replacement which however was not always according to the government expectations.

2. Political correctness can be modified from time to time. For instance, Ellen, a show watched in the United States hosted by a lesbian turned women *[sic]*, was almost forced off air after the airing of an episode of 'coming out' on May 1998. The content was not found acceptable thus invoking displeasure among the masses. The Australian government has excluded the word 'F**k' from the list of abusive vocabulary and therefore its use has no implication whatsoever.

3. Religious parameters may also apply to the censorship policies, as was in the case of India where the characters carrying whisky during the scene had to be re-done with milk, corresponding to the religion where alcohol is forbidden. A further extension was included discouraging the use of alcohol.

4. Self-censorship is prevalent in cases of self-cautious translators who change a certain text under the notion of protecting the audience because they feel some text to be inappropriate or offensive in a certain context. Therefore, they are driven by a belief that they are responsible to decide the propriety of the content and act accordingly regardless of the spirit and the setting of the original scene.

Boase-Beier and Holman (1999) speak of other external factors that may lead to censorship; these could be in the form of productivity, quality and ideological requirements. These factors have influenced the outcome of shows throughout the history of contemporary cultures when translation is executed. In cases of cultural conflicts, censorship policies are imposed. Gamal (2008) argues that the AVT industry in Egypt is closely linked to the censorship office. Thus, it is compelled to apply the rules imposed on foreign films: 'No explicit sexual language, no blasphemous reference to the Almighty, prophets or revealed Books and no swear words were allowed', as JCC's *Translators code of conduct*, obtained from the producer of *Al Shamshoon*, states.

In certain cases, for personal reasons such as the potential of losing a job, translators are forced to exercise self-censorship. Darwish (1999) argues that self-censorship is, in most cases, an act of internal pressure exerted due to the cognitive and psychological factors of a personality acting consciously.

Religious authorities may utilise censorship to execute their control and power over the discourse with deadly consequences. Étienne Dolet and William Tyndale, in the 16th century, are a good testimony to this; they were strangled and then burnt for translating pagan texts going against the preaching of Christianity. Salman Rushdie was also in the spotlight for his highly controversial publication of *Satanic verses* in 1988. A *fatwa* warranting his death was issued by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Dunnett (2002) suggests that translators may have to deal with added restrictions such as dealing with the pressure in a particular period, like that of Franco's Spain, Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. Those translators were faced with censorial systems incorporated within the publishing industry under fascist ideological rule.

In case of a stable socio-political situation, the surroundings resort to maintaining the dominant discourse excluding the need for extreme measures of enforcement, as Bourdieu (1980, p. 91) claims. Where a certain area may be undergoing political and social change, external powers become more dominant than in transitional stages. In such instances, a dominating discourse and a cultural habitat has yet to materialise; therefore, external support for formal rules, laws and norms are applied to exercise censorship in an effort to strengthen future authorities.

Censorship has been used rigorously, throughout history, in order to achieve individual or collective objectives. The dominated are effectively silenced by the application of censorship, as Bourdieu (1980) states. At times translators' intrinsic motives could be key factors in subverting discourse, either because they are pressured by external agents or because they simply take liberties in challenging the governing prevalent norms.

4.8 Translation into Arabic: what strategy?

Scholars in the field of translation, such as Newmark, Baker, and Venuti, argue that there are ample strategies and techniques at the disposal of a translator to deal with and manage intercultural issues. They also contend that the use or misuse of any

given strategy could affect the target culture/audience's perception of the source culture, perpetuate stereotyping, highlighting or undermining cultural, national and identity specificities, and could ultimately lead to cross-cultural misunderstanding and conflict.

Below is a list of translation strategies operating in film translation suggested by Tomaszkiewicz (1993, p. 223–227). These strategies will be drawn upon in Chapter Six.

1. Adaptation, where the translation is adjusted to the target language and culture in an attempt to evoke similar connotations to the original.
2. Borrowing, where original terms from the source text are used in the target text.
3. Equivalence, where translation has a similar meaning and function in the target culture.
4. Explication, which usually involves a paraphrase to explain the cultural term.
5. Generalisation, which might also be referred to as neutralisation of the original.
6. Literal translation, where the solution in the target text matches the original as closely as possible.
7. Omission, whereby the cultural reference is omitted altogether.
8. Replacement of the cultural term with deictic expressions, particularly when supported by an on-screen gesture or a visual clue.

It is noteworthy that, at times, the translator may resort to more than one strategy concurrently to render a certain passage or convey/subvert an intended message.

4.8.1 Classic sequencing

Many scholars in the field have found the text translation and AVT to follow a trend, or a method, expressing it through explicit or implicit means, as illustrated in Figure 1. These trends show a gradual progression or a transition from an interesting, exotic interpretation to a more domestic version. Measuring these progressions can be visualised, as Olk (2001, p. 45) claims '[...] on a scale which ranks text procedures according to their degree of cultural transposition'. His diagram (Figure 1) facilitates

understanding of how cultural references could be dealt with, depending on context and the target culture:

Transference Cultural substitution	Transference + explicitation	Transference + explanation	Source-culture explanation	Neutral explanation	Omission
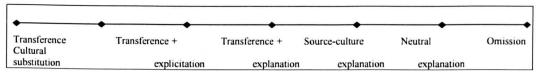
Figure 1 Classification of cultural specific references procedures (Olk, 2001, p. 43)

Hervey and Higgins (2002), Aixelá (1996), and Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) share and endorse similar views. Hervey and Higgins's understanding and visualisation of the procedures in dealing with cultural issues is in Figure 2.

Source-culture bias   **Target-culture bias**

Exoticism	Calque	Cultural borrowing	Communicative translation	Cultural transplantation
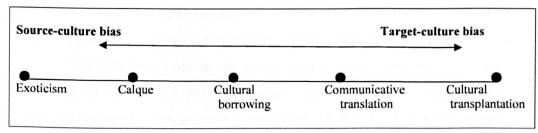
Figure 2 Classification of cultural specific references procedures (Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 33)

Despite the absence of consensus on labelling and interpreting the various translation strategies theorists prescribe for translators, Ramière (2007) summed up the variations and differing interpretations of these strategies in a chart (Figure 3), which simplifies the scale between two extremes of tendencies or global strategies according to their degree of cultural mediation.

Translation strategies are graded between two extremities on the scale termed *foreignisation* and *domestication*. Alternative terms are source/target, exoticism/assimilation, foreign/familiar, self/other and overt/covert. The translation procedures are placed on this scale according to the degree that the content responds to the cultural context of the target reader/viewer (Ramière, 2007). Franco Aixelà (1996) describes the basic model of grading as 'a continuum of various degrees of intercultural manipulation, defined as a scale of conservation vs. substitution strategies' (cited in Kwiecinski, 2001, p. 151).

4.8.2 Foreignisation versus domestication

> Whether domesticating or foreignising in its approach, any form of audiovisual translation ultimately plays a unique role in developing both national identities and national stereotypes (Baker and Hochel, 1997, p. 76).

Intercultural translation necessitates translators to opt for an appropriate strategy to convey the message to their audience. They usually use one of the two most useful strategies available: domestication and foreignisation. Domestication is, as Munday (2001, p. 146) puts it, 'translating in a transparent, fluent, "invisible" style in order to minimise the foreignness of the target text'. The result is the assimilation of all that is foreign into the receptor language and culture. Foreignisation, on the other hand, is quite the opposite; it keeps the source culture elements intact, thus bringing the exotic foreignness and flavour closer to the reader/viewer. Venuti (cited in Munday, 2001, p. 147) calls this 'sending the reader abroad', following in the footsteps of Schleiermacher who argues that 'the translator leaves the writer alone, as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer' (1818/1992, p. 42). The process of making the decision to opt for either strategy is not always an innocent one.

The foreignisation/domestication paradigm has become instrumental in adapting the translated content according to the target culture or the cultural settings in question, as illustrated in Figure 3.
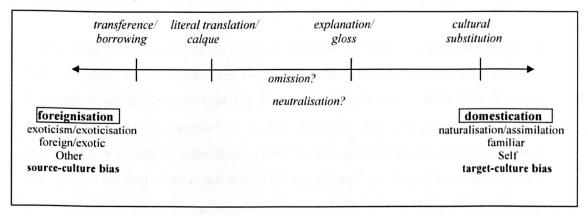
Figure 3 Typical progression of procedures found in the literature (Ramière, PhD Thesis, 2007, p. 84)

Venuti (1998b) argues that foreignisation/domestication strategies operate at two levels: the 'macro level', where the foreign text is being selected for translation and the 'micro level', where actual methods of translation are being applied (p. 240). He further argues that domestication produces more fluency and uses idiomatic expressions conveying a transparent message. This acts as a quality control agent,

which eradicates all signs of foreignness concurring to the values of the target culture. For example, if a translator from a Muslim/Arab conservative society has to translate 'I went shopping with my girlfriend', they would translate that as ' ذهبت للتسوق مع زوجتي' (I went shopping with my wife). It would be difficult, if not dangerous, to render the original meaning to conservative Muslim/Arab readers.

The choice between domesticating and foreignising is, at times, subject to political consideration. Al Dammad (2008) cites a good example in this regard: when the Kuwaiti royal family fled to Saudi Arabia, following Saddam's invasion in 1990. The BBC reported saying: '[...] most of the Kuwaiti ruling family fled to Saudi Arabia' (BBC Special Report, February 19, 1998), which was translated to غادرت معظم العائلة الحاكمة الكويتية إلى السعودية 'Most of the Kuwaiti ruling family *left* to Saudi Arabia'. The translator chose to substitute *left* for *fled* to avoid either embarrassment or reprisal.

According to Venuti (1995), domestication makes the translator 'invisible' and implies 'an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values' (p. 20). However, in Venuti's view (1998, p. 67), the reason behind opting for domestication is that translation holds the power to construct national identities, as it holds the key to changing domestic representations and forms stereotypes for foreign cultures.

On the other hand, foreignisation is also responsible for taking readers away from the norm; it keeps a link between the two cultures but at the same time introduces an alien culture deviating away from the domestic values (Venuti, 1995). Venuti argues that the 'foreignising method is highly desirable [as a way] to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation' (1995, p. 20) and 'makes the translated text a site where a cultural other is not erased but manifested' (p. 242). However, Venuti's advocacy for the use of foreignising has been met with criticism from many scholars. Robinson (1997c, p. 111) for example, argues that for '[some] readers the quaintness of foreignised texts ... makes their authors, and the source culture in general, seem childish, backward, primitive, precisely the reaction foreignism is supposed to counteract'. In this regard, Pym (1992, p.169) declares, 'the ultimate aim of translation is to improve intercultural relations'.

The objective of this current study is not to challenge Venuti's arguments but to explore the notions underlining the motives for using either strategy under the conceptual framework commonly utilised to interpret cultural transfer especially in the case of AVT (cf. also Section 3.3.2.).

4.8.3 Between the two poles of foreignising and domesticating

Some translation scholars (e.g. Kwiecinski, 2001; Olk, 2001) argue that sequencing from highly exoticising to domesticating procedures is simple and void of problems. Various procedures of cultural substitutions or transference deviate mostly towards one pole, that is, towards target culture or source culture. However, some procedures are not that easy to classify according to this scale.

Such holds true for procedures such as *neutralisation* and *omission*. These procedures adopt a culturally neutral approach to mask the specificity of the source culture making sure not to move towards the target culture; therefore eliminating the dividing boundaries. Similarly, in the case of *explanation*, the target requirements are facilitated by what Ivir (1987, p. 38) calls 'reducing the unknown to the known and shared to the unshared'. Nonetheless, a certain degree of foreignness is maintained via the use of mixed procedures such as explanation/transference.

Some scholars express reservations on the matter, though. Olk (2001), for example, questions the subjectivity of placing these procedures onto the scale, and according to Nedergaard-Larsen (1993, p. 220): 'It would not be true to say that an explicitation [is] always closer to the source language than a paraphrase. Similarly, an explicitation may in some instances be closer to the source language than an imitation.' Kwiecinski (2001, p. 94) believes that foreignisation and domestication should not be judged according to their procedures but rather on the basis of the subject and its contextual dependence applied in complex ways. Indeed this is valid to a large extent in the case of dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic as illustrated in Chapter Six and further discussed in Chapter Seven.

When I asked Amr Hosny (*The Simpsons* Arabic translator) if there was a predefined strategy used for *The Simpsons'* translation, he said, 'No. We do not have any particular guidelines, so we do it on a case-by-case basis. However, they had the filters before and after' (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Audiovisual translators select the best among the solutions available for a specific translation problem and do not possess a pre-planned strategy. The decisions are primarily based on a case-by-case basis rather than judging them by their ideological form, aesthetic parameters and didactic agenda. The text is viewed step by step especially in the case of cultural translations.

It is worth bearing in mind that professionals involved in the industry do not necessarily turn out to be reliable sources of unbiased information, as they may be unconscious of their decision. In some cases, they might be reluctant to disclose the information, as discussed earlier (Section 4.7).

4.9 Conclusion

TV has become essential in modern Arab society, and the advent of satellite channels has triggered a surge in demand for programmes to fill the ever-expanding broadcast schedules. However, the demise of Arab TV and cinematic production led to an inevitable increase in foreign subtitled and dubbed shows and films to fill the gap. The animation genre remains the Achilles heel of Arab entertainment. The superiority of Western, typically American, animated movies forced Arab TV networks to import and broadcast a huge quantity, after making the necessary appropriation adjustments to comply with local cultural values.

However, in recent years, a clash between tradition and modernity split the broadcasting networks. The traditional Gulf region, with its media empires, tends to broadcast and publicise its own brand of conservatism in the form of Arabic *musalsalat*. In the opposite direction stands the modernist networks with their new entertainment trends and vision for social change; these networks focus heavily on the commercial aspect of their programming. Instead of producing costly shows and programmes, they opt for telecasting dubbed and subtitled material. One such network is MBC, which decided to give the Arab audience a flavour of American pop culture when it decided to dub *The Simpsons* into Arabic. The show is a worldwide phenomenon that presents, as Beard (2004, p. 290) contends, 'not a form of global culture, but of local culture with a global reach'. *The Simpsons* achieves its huge popularity through a satirical portrayal of American society with global themes and international stereotypes.

The show, with its American pop culture representation along with its unsurpassed international reach, posed quite a challenge for MBC and dubbing personnel alike. This is mainly because the two cultures are at opposing poles. Moreover, since the audiovisual medium is a powerful vehicle for intercultural transfer of values and ideologies, which thus invade and manipulate the target culture, filters had to be put in place by the network to adhere to censorship rules imposed by various authorities.

There is no panacea and good-for-all mode of AVT. Dubbers tend to either domesticate or foreignise to different extents, therefore, the dubbing process can be placed along the domestication-foreignisation continuum. What is evident in dubbing *The Simpsons* is that MBC, the producer and the translator worked tirelessly to make the source text conform as much as possible to the target culture values and norms, as discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions
grow where only one grew before.
Thorstein Veblen, 1857–1929

This chapter rationalises the methodological approach and the theoretical framework used in this study to elucidate its focal questions about the way audiovisual translators perceive, understand and interpret ideological and cultural norms and their impact on the process and outcome of translation. The approach enables an in-depth exploration of the perceptions of culture and ideology and the hindrance caused by their use or misuse by professional dubbing translators and/or external agents.

The first section forms an account of research models employed in AVT, with a few perspectives of pioneers in the field briefly presented. The second section discusses and justifies the use of a qualitative method while leaning heavily on the DTS model. The subsequent sections present the data collection methods and the corpus of the study.

5.1 On Polysystem theory

Before I delve into giving an account of various research models developed over the years on how to investigate research in AVT, it is important to start with the pioneering model set by Even-Zohar, referred to as polysystem theory, which, in addition to the concept of norms, this study leans on.

A new trend within translation studies emerged in the 1970s that highlights the significance of a target-text-oriented descriptive analysis to uncover the underlying causes of shifts in translation other than the linguistic ones. This trend was pioneered by Even-Zohar in what has become known as DTS[29]; which, as O'Connell (2003) explains, aims to describe translation phenomena as they manifest themselves.

The DTS paradigm consists of two main interwoven frameworks: polysystem theory and norms[30]. 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. He argues that both diachronic and synchronic dimensions of these various systems should be taken into account when analysing any given phenomenon. His study and analysis of norms in translation demonstrate that it is possible to explain the

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[29] A comprehensive account of descriptive translation studies is covered in Chapter Two.

[30] Cf. Section 2.7 for a detailed review of norms.

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.

In addition, the polysystem framework provides analytical guidelines which focus on the choices at the macro-structural level (elements other than linguistic) in order to uncover the ideological and socio-cultural factors that affect the process of translating, thus governing translation choices in general. The framework also provides a social and cultural context for the debate in AVT in general and on dubbing and subtitling in particular (Díaz-Cintas, 2004; Karamitroglou, 2000).

Díaz-Cintas argues that the concept of polysystem lends itself as an ideal framework for describing the film polysystem:

> the film polysystem is made of the national products and the translated ones—
> dubbed or subtitled—and deals with the relationships that are established among
> all of them. This new approach to translation allows for the translated work to
> be studied as a product in itself that is integrated in the target polysystem (Díaz-
> Cintas, 2004, p. 23).

Thus, as the aim of the current study is to investigate the ideological and socio-cultural norms which affect dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic, polysystem theory provides a flexible framework to study the various factors governing the decisions and choices made. This is because it allows for the study of not only the text but also

the target polysystem and range of norms that govern both the translation and production of *The Simpsons*. The analysis of the study corpus is conducted by contrasting the target text with the source text, since, as Wai-ping (2007, p. 324) argues, the polysystem framework necessitates linking the translated text to the source text and examining the wider 'social force' or ideologies that influence these texts. Consequently, this current study relates the AVT to its original production in order to investigate the array of target culture factors which dictate the translation choices adopted.

It is important to note that this study is carried out bearing in mind that DTS encompasses not only norms, but polysystem theory too, since they are complementary, as Díaz Cintas (2004) argues.

5.2 Research models in audiovisual translation

Since its inception, AVT has been investigated from an array of perspectives. Pioneering investigators such as Fodor (1976) and Titford (1982) adopted and proposed an approach framed within the norms and constraints audiovisual translators face with emphasis on particular aspects of texts that set them apart from other texts.

Others, like Agost (1997, 1999a, 1999b) and Franco (2000), relied on the approach that combines discourse analysis and translation theory in order to investigate audiovisual text genres. The focus here is on the analysis of the source text according to the genre it represents (e.g. animation and drama). Herbst (1987), Delabastita, (1989) and Whitman-Linsen (1992), on the other hand, approached text analysis of a particular audiovisual corpus. The approach has at its core text quality, language variation, register and genre equivalence (Chaume, 2004a).

Recently, certain scholars and researchers offered new insights and modes of inquiry into AVT. Notable are Díaz Cintas (1998, 2004, 2009), Izard (1999), and Martínez-Sierra (2006, 2008) who, in addition to investigating linguistic and textual units of the target text, have gone a step further by analysing macro-textual elements to determine social, economic and historical frameworks within which the translation process took place and the target text was produced. This approach was further

supported by studies carried out by Ballester-Casado (2000) and Gutierrez-Lanza (2001), which tackled issues of censorship, and economic and political factors.

Drawing from the DTS paradigm, discussed in more detail in Section 5.3, Karamitroglou (2000) proposes an analysis model based on the polysystem theory pioneered by Even-Zohar (1978a). Karamitroglou proposes the use of a different system pertinent to AVT; one made up of three levels: the target translation system, the target AVT system and the translated audiovisual text. These levels could measure the degree of the significance and/or the factors that contribute to the manifestation of norms. These factors, Karamitroglou (2000, p. 81) argues, consist of:

- AVT human agents (production and marketing)
- the translated material (both linguistic and semiotic)
- the target audience for whom the product is intended
- the audiovisual mode
- the institution which governs the audiovisual industry at large, which 'intervenes at the pre-production stage by reflecting previous post-consumption established options' (i.e. critics, film makers, distributors and broadcasters)
- the market (i.e. the consumer) who 'intervene at the post production stage by placing a pre-consumption filter'.

It is worth noting that these factors are all markers present in the corpus of this current study, and influenced the dubbing, production and broadcast of *The Simpsons* as discussed in Chapter Six.

Sadly, AVT research in the Arab World is meagre, so it is hard to establish what mode of inquiry is employed other than investigative studies under the umbrella of DTS. A few recent studies, (Gamal, 2008; Maluf, 2005; Yacoub, 2010; Zitawi, 2003), investigated strategies to overcome cultural gaps, ideological factors influencing the choice of a language variant, subtitling and simultaneously interpreting news. These studies all employed the DTS paradigm with a particular focus on norms.

5.3 A qualitative study

The methodological approach adopted for this study is primarily qualitative. Denzin and Lincoln argue that qualitative researchers:

> study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials, case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, pp. 4–5).

Qualitative approaches using interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and observation, provide the kind of *expert understanding* this study aims to achieve. Because this research springs from the conviction that the issues involved constitute a complex phenomenon, and because the aim is to uncover what could be learnt about the intrinsic conditions, it is important to adopt the DTS paradigm and CDA[31] strategy. This paradigm enables researchers to describe, explore, analyse and interpret the views of the participants, and bring forth the representational properties of the *screen* discourse as a vehicle for ideological and cultural power transfer. Accordingly, the results of this study are based on experimental observation of translation behaviour rather than on criticism of moral or ethical statements of translation. The current study aims to investigate why certain aspects of translation are the way they are and not what translation ought to be, because DTS is meant to be descriptive and explanatory rather than being critical and prescriptive.

The DTS paradigm is very helpful for the study of AVT, as argued by Díaz Cintas (2004), mainly because it includes no presumptions. In fact, the paradigm does not even presume the existence of a source text. This flexibility in the paradigm renders it helpful in the study of newer forms of translation.

The use of the DTS paradigm also resolves the issue of whether or not dubbing is considered a form of translation due to the intrinsic equivalence problems involved.

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[31] Critical discourse analysis 'emphasises the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse' (Potter, 1996, p. 146).

Toury (1995) argues that equivalence is always assumed and the only thing that needs to be done is to establish the form that this equivalence takes.

Lambert and Van Gorp (1985) bring to readers' attention the many relationships, other than the most obvious one between source text and target text, which deserve the attention of translation scholars, such as that between the target text and original texts in the target language. Despite the fact that the relationship between target text and the reader is significant in the discussion of acceptability, the relationship between source text and target text remains the focal point of Toury's (1995) model of analysis. This can be seen through the use of 'coupled pairs'. These constitute 'solution + problem' units (Toury, 1995, p. 38), which are recognised and taken from the source text/target text pairs under study.

Although Toury (1995) regards translations as facts of the target culture, and all his analyses begin with the translation and not the source text, it is vital to contrast both the source and the target texts. This is because, the former contains the various elements (ideological, socio-cultural and linguistic) under study, and the latter demonstrates how these elements are conveyed into Arabic, which is a prime objective of this research. Nonetheless, the emphasis is on the translated version and how it is manipulated and/or subverted.

Conversation analysis (cf. 2.5) as well as discourse analysis will be used as tools to analyse verbal, visual and textual components of the data collected and the corpus of the study. As Wooffitt (2005, p. 2) argues: 'Conversation analysis offers the most sophisticated and robust account of language in action'. He also vehemently advocates the use of conversation analysis and discourse analysis as approaches to the study of language and communication in social sciences, as both conceptualise and probe discourse better than any other methodology.

The research is informed by the DTS paradigm, which assumes that this type of study aims to describe translation and what translators do, as opposed to prescriptive translation or mere speculation (Toury, 1995). Based on this perception, the qualitative research design aims to bring forth rich observed and empirical data about the phenomenon in the context within which it is negotiated and made meaningful. As Dingwall et al (1998) and Rees (1996) stipulate, qualitative research uses

questions related to people's experiences; thus, generating data comprehensive enough to make us understand those experiences and interpret them in their context. Bates (1995) and Morse (1996) go even further and argue that qualitative research has more strength and validity, as it is a holistic approach.

A qualitative approach is adopted because the issues under consideration (cultural and ideological norms and constraints in AVT) do not necessarily lend themselves to only a quantitative investigation since this is a descriptive and explanatory research. Consequently, a qualitative approach is more suitable because it answers the *how* and *why* questions, and is useful for analysing a phenomenon over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 1994). However, a quantitative method has also been used, albeit not so heavily, to reveal the extent the source text has been manipulated— statistically. In the same vein, the intention is to employ such methods as observation, questionnaire (in the shape of open-ended questions), and semi-structured interviews. Although each of these proposed methods have their strengths and weaknesses, Bryman (2006) informs us that a combination of methods (triangulation) is more useful as a means of providing credibility and validity than just one method.

Since ideological and cultural norms are such a complex phenomenon with such wide and multifarious interpretations, this research is based on the study of people's experiences and ways of viewing the world. Question-driven method is the appropriate technique for undertaking this kind of research, as many scholars stipulate (Barker, Pistrang, and Elliot, 2002; Patton, 2002). This phenomenological approach focuses primarily on:

> how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. To gather such data, one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

The overall chosen methodology is espoused from the nature of the research questions this study aims to answer:

1. What are the forces behind the need for cultural and ideological manipulation in AVT of animation into Arabic?[32]

2. How do ideological and cultural hurdles and censorship impede universality of culture and message transfer?[33]

3. What strategies are proposed to overcome the need for subversion and manipulation?

5.4 Research participants

The designated research participants are expert screen-translators from two of the major dubbing and subtitling agencies in the Middle East: Mash Productions in Egypt and Media Production House in Lebanon. While the former is responsible for rendering many Disney animated movies into Arabic as well as *The Simpsons*, the latter deals with an array of movie genres from different cultures. By using these two different agencies, I believe I was in a position to gather data richer in varied perspectives and interpretation.

Audiovisual translators are the *agents in the battlefield* who are constantly exposed to various pressures from *behind the scene commanders* who want a certain product formulated and delivered in a manner that conforms to the norms of a particular ideology and culture. These translators have a wealth of inside knowledge in terms of the degree of manipulation certain dubbed works have to undergo before they reach their audience. Thus, the views and opinions of these translators are crucial to warranting congruence between observation, analysis and outcome.

I carried out an extensive online search to filter the huge number of available translation agencies and focus only on those available in the Middle East or working on translation into Arabic. I was surprised at the scarcity of online availability of

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[32] *Forces* means all external influences the source language text (English) has to undergo in the process of translation in order to serve a certain purpose or comply with certain norms of the target language (Arabic) audience (viewers). This is usually achieved via the use of the appropriation method, i.e. to adopt some specific elements of one culture by another; this could include forms of dress, music, art, religion, language and social behaviour (cf. Chapter Six).

[33] As cultural universalism has become one of the most contested issues of our globalised world, it holds that *primitive* (non-Western) cultures will have to evolve to have the same Western system in order for them to survive. It is crucial to discuss the important role translation, notably on screen, plays in (mis)shaping world cultures and to what extent cultural universalism is achievable.

dubbing and subtitling agencies in the Arab World. I had to randomly send many unsolicited emails and requests to many agencies outside the Middle East; only then did I receive details of the agencies I was looking for.

I initiated contact with Mash Productions and Media Production House and requested assistance, which they gracefully accepted to offer. Arrangements were made to visit them onsite and carry out interviews.

Another group of participants were the academic scholars in the field of AVT who answered a questionnaire structured as a set of open-ended questions pertinent to the analysis of the current status of screen translator training and ways in which it could be improved (cf. Appendix B). I sent research-participation requests to particular and distinguished scholars, who offered a valuable input.

The findings were compared to those obtained from practitioners in the translation field, analysed and appropriate conclusions were drawn.

By using conversation analysis and discourse analysis, I thoroughly studied, analysed and compared the input from both groups of participants and sought further explanation and feedback when necessary.

This comparison served as a yardstick to verify academic-scholars' views as representative of practitioners' real-life experiences. It also indicated aspects of strength and weakness in actual screen-translator training; thus finding possible ways to address any shortcomings.

5.5 Research site

There were two research sites according to the phases of the study.

- *The observation phase*: watching and dissecting the selected movies at home.
- *The interviewing phase:* travelling to Egypt and Lebanon in April and July of 2010 respectively to interview experts in dubbing and translating for dubbing practitioners of Mash Production and Media House Production.

5.6 Study corpus

Evidence suggests that there is paucity of empirical research carried out on the topic of ideological and cultural constraints in AVT from English into Arabic. As stated

earlier (cf. Chapters Three and Four), a few attempts have been made to research certain aspects of this area. However, this has only occurred at an academic publication level at best; a handful of researchers have published some articles in this regard (such as Gully 1996; Viola 1998; Zitawi 2003).

For this study, I selected a compilation of animated series of *The Simpsons* aimed mainly at a young audience, although it has an equal fan base, if not bigger, in the adult population. The choice of programme sprang from *The Simpsons'* universal appeal and influence. The series addresses many sensitive issues with candour rarely seen in animation. As an animation, it is supposed to target children and teenagers; however, because it goes beyond passive entertainment and school education, it is looked at with suspicion and vigilance in the Arab World (cf. Chapter Four). My selected compilation comprises 52 episodes of *The Simpsons: Seasons 1, 2 and 3* dubbed into Arabic (cf. Appendices C and D)

The necessary study material for investigation was compiled (all the DVDs, both original and dubbed). Contact was also established with the translator and producer of the series and interviews were held in April 2010.

The Simpsons is an animated sitcom broadcast by FOX Television Network. The series is a satirical parody of the American lifestyle personified by its dysfunctional family, which consists of Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie. It is set in a fictional town called Springfield, and satirically critiques many aspects of the American way of life and world view.

Table 1 *The Simpsons*

Genre	Comedy
Movie Type	Satirical parody, domestic comedy, slapstick[34]
Themes	Corruption, suburban dysfunction, systemic failure, religious hypocrisy, child prodigies, mischievous children etc.
Release Year	1989
Country	US

With 23 seasons and over 500 episodes broadcast to date, the show has become an iconic American pop culture brand recognisable across the globe. The highly praised show has won '27 Emmy Awards ... 26 Annie Awards ... five Genesis Awards ... nine International Monitor Awards and seven Environmental Media Awards. *The Simpsons* holds the Guinness Book of World Records title for the Longest-Running Primetime Animated Television Series ... and named the "Best Show of the 20th Century by Times Magazine"' according to FOX's official website of the series (www.thesimpsons.com).

5.7 Sampling

Breadth and depth are not necessarily about numbers of participants or sample size, but rather about focus. Limited sample studies can yield findings that are used to focus on particular and highly textured details within their unique context (Todres, 2005).

Since this research is qualitative in nature, the sample is relatively small. Because this is a case study of a given phenomenon, that of challenges screen translators faced in dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic, it requires eliminating the use of probability sampling[35]. Instead, I opted for a purposive sampling technique; whereby the researcher selects a sample based on experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled.

Dane (1990) suggests that the benefit of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to make use of people or events who have solid grounds in their beliefs that will be crucial for the research.

Purposive sampling power and logic stem from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). I used this method since the sampled participants are paramount to providing answers to my research questions. I established contact with a specific and predefined group of screen translators, with demonstrable experience and expertise in dubbing animation in the Arab World. This group of participants is directly at the heart of the AVT of *The Simpsons* and Disney

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[34] Comedy characterised by broad humour, absurd situations, and vigorous, often violent, action.
[35] A sample that has been selected using a random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected (Bryman, 2008, p. 168).

animated movies, and through members of this group I established further links with other similar participants in what is referred to as 'snowball sampling[36]' (Bryman, 2008, p. 184). In the case of the present study, this technique enabled me to source a sufficient number of participants, due to the uncommon practice of partaking in such research projects in the Arab World.

5.8 Data collection methods

A variety of data collection methods were employed, as detailed in the following sections.

5.8.1 Observation

My observation of *The Simpsons* was twofold. First, I watched and dissected the original versions of *The Simpsons* and took note of any cultural/ideological references that might pose a problem to the translator. Then, I watched the dubbed versions and made an analytic comparison. I also analysed participants' interviews to evaluate to what extent their input matched my findings. I then raised any encountered issues with them and sought clarification.

5.8.2 Interviews

'The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research', Bryman (2008, p. 436) argues. This method's appeal stems from its simplicity, flexibility and the fact that observing participants is a time-consuming process that could be jeopardised by its non-continuity. It was extremely difficult to have a group of dubbing experts agree to regular meetings and/or observe them working on site. In fact, many producers and dubbing houses I contacted refused any in house meetings.

I opted for semi-structured interviews[37] for two main reasons. First, my research questions necessitate a semi-open question approach to spawn accurate information

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[36] 'Snowball sampling is a well-known, nonprobability method of survey sample selection that is commonly used to locate hidden populations. This method relies on referrals from initially sampled respondents to other persons believed to have the characteristic of interest.'
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/0470011815.b2a16070/abstract

[37] In semi structured interviews, the researcher prepares a set of questions or topics to be investigated; however, the participant has a great deal of leeway in how to respond. Further questions which are not

and keep the interviewees in check. Second, semi-structured interviews would allow me to generate the required data without either being restrained by structured interview methods or risking the incoherent conversation an unstructured interview might give rise to. Robson (1993) believes that flexibility of interviews allows researchers to modify their line of enquiry if necessary by following interesting segments of input and probing underlying causes; something questionnaires and structured interviews fail to achieve.

The interviews sought participants' perceptions and interpretations of ideological and cultural issues ubiquitous in the field of AVT in general and in translating *The Simpsons* in particular, as well as an experiential account of their experiences, (cf. Appendix B for the set of questions).

In total, four people were interviewed in two phases. The first phase tackled the core questions, while any elaboration or clarifications were dealt with in the second after listening to and studying the recordings. However, because the interviews took place in different countries, and clarification sessions were not sufficient to shed light on some issues, I followed up any need for explication via Skype.

After a series of contacts, the producer agreed to offer her help, and a meeting was scheduled in Cairo for April 27, 2010. The interviews[38] were held with the translator of *The Simpsons* series, poet and writer (Amr Hosny), its producer and owner of Mash Production dubbing house (Marwa Abdulghaffar), as well as with renowned owner/producer of Neo Productions, an animation-dubbing house in Egypt, (Rasha Aburish) and an equally popular translator/screen writer (Zainab Mubarak).

The interview with Abdulghaffar was recorded over a 50 minute session. We discussed many aspects of production and dubbing. We then talked at length about *The Simpsons* and the 'thorny' process of adapting the sitcom into Arabic.

The interview with Aburish lasted about 35 minutes. We discussed the world of animation in general, and Disney in particular, its dubbing and production, translator

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included in the original list may be asked as the researcher picks up on the participants input. (Bryman, 2008, p. 438).
[38] All audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews as well as the corpus DVDs and transcripts used for this study are available from the researcher.

training and so on. Aburish arranged the meeting with the translator of *The Simpsons* (Hosny), as they are close friends. She also introduced me to Mubarak, a translator and scenarist, whom I interviewed at Aburish's office immediately after for about 45 minutes.

Hosny, a football fanatic, agreed to meet me only after a game he was watching (the actual meeting took place around midnight over two sessions and lasted about 73 minutes). It was the most rewarding interview, in terms of relevant data on *The Simpsons* and other controversial views (cf. Section 6.2).

It must be stressed that all participants agreed to the use of their real names and any information they volunteered at the interviews, a consent form has been signed to that effect (cf. Appendix B).

The recorded interviews were then transcribed and fed into MAXQDA for coding, just as with *The Simpsons* and *Al Shamshoon* transcripts.

5.8.3 The corpus

The corpus selected for this study consists of 52 episodes of the American animated sitcom *The Simpsons* dubbed into Arabic and aired on the MBC in 2005. I chose the series as I was a devoted follower, at least in the early years of its broadcast, and because my research interest in my previous graduate years had culture, ideology, and their impact on translation at its core. However, the major factor behind this choice was my desire to find out how an iconic American pop culture animated sitcom, like *The Simpsons*, was portrayed for the Arab audience (for more on *The Simpsons*, cf. Section 4.4).

It must be stressed that only 30 of the 52 episodes selected were actually aired, with the remainder cancelled due to the original producer's objection to the adaptation (as discussed in Section 4. 5). I decided to include the other 20 episodes, as they were already dubbed and ready to be broadcast.

In contrast to the original, the Arabic version, *Al Shamshoon*, was quite a challenge to locate and acquire, as it is not available on the market. Eventually, I managed to purchase a recorded copy from a vendor in Canada. Acquiring the series' script was equally challenging; while the English version is abundantly available online, I had

to seek the *Al Shamshoon* producer's agreement to allow me access to her copies, which was gracefully granted along with the unaired episodes (on VHS), which I converted to DVD format.

It is worth mentioning that the transcripts were contrasted with the dialogue of the actual aired episodes to ascertain accuracy and consistency. Any discrepancies were corrected prior to beginning the coding process.

In total, I had over 1,000 pages of corpus transcribed material (English and Arabic combined). This huge amount of data presented a mammoth task for coding, so I had to resort to using MAXQDA. This helped immensely in the coding process, as discussed in Section 5.9 below.

5.9 Extraction and classification of ideological and cultural references

Prior to starting the extraction process, a thorough research on, and analysis of, characteristics of cultural and ideological references was undertaken in order to have a clear understanding of the issues to be discussed (cf. Chapter Two). An ICR code tree was then drafted (Appendix E), with four major codes (head codes) forming the framework of the design. These represent:

- ideological references
- socio-cultural references
- linguistic manipulation
- miscellaneous issues.

Going through the data, many other references, which could belong to one particular head code, were found and had to be categorised as sub codes according to their function; if a reference is related to nudity or rude language, for example, it was tagged to the main category of socio-cultural issues. This yielded quite a number of categories (as detailed in Table 2).

5.9.1 Extraction of ideological and cultural references from the interviews

What has been extracted from the interviews (cf. Appendix C) is more of an in-depth participants' reflection on the challenges and issues they had to deal with in the translation and dubbing process, rather than ICRs per se. Participants voiced their ideas and thoughts on many aspects relevant to the field of AVT.

After scrutinising the interviews, both in audio and transcript formats, potentially relevant data were noted and a code tree was drawn. A total of 85 references were collected and tagged as per the categories in Table 2.

Table 2 Interview code-tree categories

Code category	Code frequency	Code category	Code frequency
On audiovisual translation	10	On translator/dubber training	10
On censorship/guidelines	12	Translator/producer background	8
On patronage/cultural factors	25	Challenging issues	6
Translator ideology/manipulation	9	Creative solutions	2
On religious issues	3		

The data extracted from the interviews are an essential component of this study as they shed light on the views and attitudes of professionals in the field of the AVT industry. They are also a key tool for interpreting the data extracted from the corpus. Highlighted data from the interviews were categorised as per their relevance and significance to the key issues this study investigates. Since the *keywords* of this study are ideology, culture, patronage, and censorship in AVT, it was obvious to focus on data that served these aspects. As Table 2 shows, there are nine codes; however, some of them function merely as a background detail and an explication of certain aspects, like the *challenging issues* encountered and the *creative solutions* these professionals had to resort to in order to overcome them. Views of participants on controversial issues, such as *censorship, patronage and translator training* were categorised separately to corroborate the corpus analysis.

5.9.2 Extraction of ideological and cultural references from the corpus

Extracting ICRs from the corpus posed a much harder challenge because of the sheer amount of data and the fact that many of these references could belong to more than just one code or category. Just as with the interviews, I had to thoroughly go through the corpus transcript and highlight relevant segments. This was made possible since each of *The Simpsons* characters' utterances, both English and Arabic, were put in a separate row. The highlighted segments, with their context, were then inserted into the corresponding categories and sub-categories as demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3 Corpus code-tree categories

Main category and sub-categories	Code frequency	Main category and sub-categories	Code frequency
1. Ideological Issues	(384)	2. Socio-cultural Issues	(445)
Religious	109	Cultural References	63
Food and Drink	136	Foreign Cultural References	75
Extrinsic Factors	7	Songs and Poems	26
Intrinsic Factors	41	Nudity and Sexual References	70
Censored and Omitted	68	Insults and Rude Language	101
Challenging Issues	23	Violence References	6
3. Linguistic Manipulation	(126)	Gender Issues and Racial Issues	25
Accents	11	Humour and Satire	79
Idioms and Puns	33		
Local Expressions and customs	43		
Newly Coined Expressions	39		

Segments that were censored in the target text were noted as both source text and target text segments, whereas any omitted data from the target text was highlighted in the source text only.

For purely statistical purposes, all segment tokens were noted. In other words, if the same reference was mentioned more than once, it was counted and inserted under the relevant category. This is quite evident in the *food & drink* and *insults & rude language* categories.

As mentioned earlier, the corpus was scrutinised for the existence of ICRs and their occurrence within the source text prior to feeding the data into MAXQDA. A code tree was drawn (cf. Appendix E), which is formed of three *main code categories* and 18 *sub-categories*, as illustrated in Table 3.

I started by identifying the main codes around which the sub-codes revolve. Ideological, cultural and linguistic references formed the platform of the mapping process because they are the key elements under study. Ideological references encompass religious, food and drink, and extrinsic and intrinsic factors (cf. Sections 6.3.1.2 and 6.3.1.3). It is important to note that religious aspects tackle both Judaeo-Christian and Islamic issues like references to God, places of worship, and food and drink.

The socio-cultural category took the lion's share of sub-codes. This is attributed to the notion of culture and the array of aspects it conceptualises, including issues like songs, sexual references, violence, gender and race. The third main category is linguistic manipulation and deals purely with linguistic issues; it covers accents, idioms, puns, local expressions and newly coined phrases provided mainly by the source text characters—Bart, Flanders, and Homer. The remaining three categories, humour, censored and challenging issues, are stand-alone main codes that look at how issues of censorship and Western satire are dealt with.

Every effort was made to make an objective demarcation between various categories, and although it was straightforward to categorise most coded segments, very few were within the grey area and hence were fed into more than one sub-category. This has no effect on the overall quality or relevance of the acquired data, as a quality check was brought to bear on the main data relevant to this study, and only samples that weigh the most in terms of validity and robustness are used for analysis.

6. Data analysis

Qualitative interviews and their transcripts tend to yield a substantial volume of data, which must be condensed, categorised, interpreted and made meaningful.

Because of the nature of qualitative data acquired through interviews, questions, and observation, Bryman (2008, p. 538) argues that it is not straightforward to analyse, as 'clear cut rules about how qualitative data analysis should be carried out have not been developed'. However, to analyse the data and findings of this study, I employed a discourse analysis strategy within the *analytic induction* method. Analytic induction is an approach to the analysis of data in which the researcher seeks universal explanations of phenomena by pursuing the collection of data until no cases that are inconsistent with a hypothetical explanation of a phenomenon are found (Bryman, 2008 p. 539).

Data derived from the interviews, the questionnaires, and the observation sessions were transcribed and analysed. It is important, in this process, to suspend one's personal beliefs and assumptions, or what is referred to as *bracketing*, in order to be fully immersed in the data gathered and participants' ideas and perceptions. This warrants unbiased analysis.

By following the analytic induction approach, I uncovered and explicated the relevant universal explanations and interpretation of the phenomenon of ideological and cultural constraints in AVT of *The Simpsons*. This was made possible through collecting the significant statements (cf. Section 5.9) from various data resources and organising them into clusters of themes, (or *nodes*, in MAXQDA language), which were used to produce a comprehensive description of experiences.

As a helping tool for analysis, I used MAXQDA, a computer programme developed specifically for qualitative data analysis, to classify, organise and analyse large amounts of unstructured text-based and/or multimedia data. It also helps in identifying trends and parameters and cross-examining information. I organised my clusters and themes according to ideological, cultural and linguistic references extracted from corpus observation and participant interviews. This helped a great deal in sorting and filtering the huge amount of data gathered.

To explain the link between the original film and the dubbed version, Delabastita presents the following points, as first established by Toury (1995), to be taken into account:

1. The varieties of (local) dialect, social (register, jargon) or personal (idiosyncrasies, speech dialects)
2. The different treatment of various special types of verbal messages: character speech vs. narrator speech, flashbacks, letters written/read, musical texts, background conversation, paratextual signs such as titles and credits
3. The rendering of wordplay, other forms of humorous language use, taboo elements, prosodic features
4. The translator's attitude towards loan words and foreign idioms
5. The possible introduction of genre markers i.e. stereotyped elements that further conform the target film to the target audience's expectations
6. What governs the audience's behaviour?
7. The target culture's position in an internal context
8. The source culture's position in an internal context
9. If the target audience imposes restrictions on the translator
10. To which genre does the source film belong? Does the genre to which the source film belongs exist in the receiving culture? Does it have a

counterpart in the target culture? Is it a genre where the qualities of the vocal performance are important to the entire artistic sign? What culture status does the source film genre claim? Does the source film claim status within the genre to which it belongs?

11. The interaction between verbal narration and visual narration; the role of nonverbal information in dubbing; how relevant is the non-verbal information? (Delabastita, 1989, pp. 206–210).

These aspects are borne in mind in the extraction, classification and analysis processes. To analyse various textual components of the coded data (verbal, visual and textual), discourse analysis and conversation analysis approaches are used, as this offers 'the most sophisticated and robust account of language in action' as Wooffitt (2005, p 2) points out. The analysis is carried out by first watching the series (conversation analysis), both English and Arabic versions, noting the differences between the two and highlighting potential ICRs, then comparing the English and Arabic transcripts of the episodes (cf. Appendix C) and contrasting them to my initial notes (discourse analysis). This approach, Wooffitt further suggests, conceptualises and probes discourse better than any other method.

A thematic analysis method is adopted at the outset through exemplification in order to classify the type of data that relate to a given concept or category. Given the sheer volume of the filtered data for analysis, every effort was made to select the most vivid, expressive and capturing examples that best serve and validate each category. In order to minimise subjectivity, a focus group made up of fellow lecturers discussed the extracted examples and supported the selection made. The group consisted of five lecturers (35-55 years old) specialised in the following fields: Contrastive Linguistics (Arabic-English), Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Comparative Literature, and Translation Studies. They are well grounded in both Arabic and English languages and cultures as most of them were born/live and studied in western countries (Australia, UK, US, and Canada). After the initial one hour presentation on my research topic and the discussion of ideology, culture, censorship, AVT ...etc, I handed out the extracted samples for review and analysis by the colleagues. Two further meetings were scheduled and took place within 10 days, in which we discussed the relevance, strength and representativeness of the examples

in question. After hefty deliberation, a consensus was reached on the chosen samples used for analysis in this thesis.

This study's research questions were used as the organising principle of the analysis; this approach, as Gibson and Brown (2009, p. 197) argue, 'helps to create a very clear narrative as it is easy to map analysis on to research questions'. This, of course, included the questions the interviewees were asked (Appendix B) and the answers were presented as per their relation to thematic issues addressed, as demonstrated in Section 6.1.

As the objective of discourse analysis is to 'interrogate the minutiae of structured meaning' (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p. 199), the process of analysing the data acquired works through the transcribed examples, and demonstrates conceptual relevance of specific discourse markers. For instance, if an example was about the consumption of alcohol or pork, it was tagged and discussed under the 'food and drink' category.

To easily identify these discourse makers, (ICRs), a table of three columns was drawn for each category containing relevant samples for analysis. Column one represents the original English sound track material (transcribed text), followed by the Arabic translation in the second column and its back translation in the third. The units identified for analysis are italicised for clarity and ease of identification. A systematic analysis of these units was then performed by juxtaposing the original and translated versions. This was done by contrasting the transcripts of both versions (English and Arabic) and highlighting marked differences.

7. Limitations of the method used

The general limitations of the method this study adopted fall within those related to descriptive studies; the sample size, albeit representative of the genre, thwarts the chance of generating an outcome that could be generalised.

Moreover, another significant limitation lies in the fact that conducting interviews is subject to a very tight schedule and the chances of holding further follow-up sessions were quite slim due to participants' commitments, not to mention the extra expenses the researcher would incur in the process.

8. Ethical considerations

The very personal, conversational nature of interviews highlights many of the basic ethical issues of any research or evaluation method (Patton, 1990). Among these issues are:

- *Confidentiality:* Because respondents may be sharing personal and sensitive information, it is important to honestly assess how the confidentiality of individuals will be preserved when the data is analysed and reported.
- *Informed consent:* This will usually require that respondents sign a permission form agreeing to participate, after being informed of potential risks and benefits.
- *Risk assessment:* It is important to consider all potential risks and include them in the informed consent process.
- *Promises and reciprocity:* The issue here is what interview participants get in return for sharing their time and insights with you. Will they or their communities benefit in some way from the results of the study?

To guarantee adherence to ethical standards, permission was sought from London Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Committee to approve my application to carry out these interviews and questionnaires in accordance with its practice and policies. A consent form (cf. Appendix B), outlining the nature of my research, its purpose and objectives, was sent to the participants in which they were informed about the nature of their involvement, the method of conducting the interviews and ethical issues related to their participation (voluntary participation, anonymity and data protection).

All data generated from interviews and questionnaires were, and will be, dealt with in strictest confidence and kept in a safe place where only the researcher can gain access, and will be securely disposed of after the maximum period allowed by the Research Ethics Committee expires.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CORPUS ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Don't worry, MARGE. America's health care system is second only to Japan, Canada, Sweden, Great Britain, well, all of Europe, but you can thank your lucky stars we don't live in Paraguay! (9F09)

> Any film is a mirror of the culture in which it unfolds, along with the mentality, attitudes and intentions of its screenplay author and director, all conveyed through the language and visual images which serve as their vehicle. How then can these cultures, mentalities and attitudes be transposed in film so that they remain intelligible and digestible for an audience embedded in a different culture?
>
> Whitman Linsen, 1991, p. 125

This chapter analyses ideological and cultural references (ICRs) deemed the culprit in subverting the source text message from the corpus of this study—52 episodes of *The Simpsons*. The interviews, with both the translator and producer of the series, are also examined. The results of the coded data are then analysed as per each category.

6.1 Data analysis of interviews

This section presents an analysis of the data extracted from the interviews. The results are divided into two main sections. The first is an account of the background information of the participants in terms of their education, field of expertise and how they embarked on a career in AVT. The second section presents participants' views on an array of issues such as patronage, censorship and ideological factors, which could considerably affect the process and outcome of AVT.

6.1.1 Translator/producer background

Shedding light on the background of professionals in the field of AVT in general, and those closely related to the dubbing of *The Simpsons* in particular, is important because it helps the reader understand some issues that might have bearing on the analysis process.

What is striking is that none of the participants had any academic qualification related to translation. In fact, they are all university graduates with a variety of majors.

6.1.1.1 M Abdulghaffar

The producer of *Al Shamshoon* is a graduate in directing from the American University in Cairo (AUC). She lived in the United States and Switzerland and acquired a good command of the English language. As a fresh graduate, she worked in a production house, producing mainly TV commercials. Then, she worked for Image Productions, which was contracted by Disney's regional office in Egypt to dub their animations into Arabic. She later became the head of dubbing department, and directed and produced the famous *Sesame Street* in the Egyptian vernacular. In 2002, Abdulghaffar started her own production house, Mash Productions, which produced the Arabic version of *The Simpsons*.

6.1.1.2 A Hosny

The translator of *The Simpsons* is a biomedical engineer by education, but a poet and writer by passion. He started translating to 'earn my bread and butter', as he put it, when the producer at Disney Middle East, whom he met through mutual friends, was impressed by his language skills and creative mind. He was offered the job of translating *The Lion King* into Arabic; a challenge he relished, and he never looked back. He translated over 45 animated movies, of which some were extreme hits, the likes of *Peter Pan, Timon and Pumba,* and *Ant*. He published many poems and short stories and he is the editor of *Qatru Nada* magazine.

6.1.1.3 R Aburish

The owner of Neo Productions is an AUC graduate as well, majoring in communications. She worked in ART TV in Italy before returning to Egypt to work for Disney Studios. With no formal training in dubbing, she had to be trained on the basics when Disney sent a Spanish team to help with the setting up of its Arabic Dubbing Studio in Cairo. In 1997 Aburish started her own production house and produced many dubbed animations, such as *Monsters Inc., Finding Nemo, The Three Musketeers,* and *The Aristocats*.

6.1.1.4 Z Mubarak

A song and play writer and another AUC graduate, Mubarak believes life is a theatre in which she could write her own chapters (plays). Although her major is in anthropology, she studied theatre and 'owned' a puppet-show group for over 20 years. She travelled extensively in her early years and was exposed to the world of English literature, poetry and plays, as her education was mainly in English. Her excellent command of English and cultural awareness led her to translate for dubbing, again for Disney Studios in Egypt. In addition to translation, she writes short stories and rewrites lyrics of soundtracks.

6.1.2 Translator/producer's ideology and manipulation

It is evident from the answers received from all participants that, at one point or another, they interfere in the process of dubbing to varying degrees. While the producers tend to focus mainly on the technical aspects, clients' needs and marketing issues, translators engage in manipulating the source text at will, at least at the linguistic and religious/cultural levels. Sometimes projects are rejected when either

the translator or the producer thinks that it may have undesirable ramifications. Abdulghaffar recalls an incident when a European client asked her to dub an animated documentary on the prophets to which she responded:

> Where are you going to air this? If you are going to dub it in Arabic, then you want to air it in the Middle East … no one is going to buy this from you. I said no, I would not dub this for you. If you want to try to dub it somewhere else, go ahead (M Abdulghaffar, pers. comm., 27th April, 2010).

Clearly, the producer felt that undertaking such a task will have severe consequences on her business and may be targeted by religious figures; something she seems to have learnt from years of experience.

Hosny, on the other hand, seems to neutralise most foreign elements he feels are either not acceptable to the Arab audience or are contrary to his own way of thinking. He showed contempt for the sheikhs who own MBC and the way they wanted to impose their views every time he tried to introduce a new idea they did not agree with. A simple example, he recalled, is the use of Springfield, the town where *The Simpsons* family lives, in the Arabic version. He wanted to use 'Arab Town' to justify the existence of some Arabs in America. He also used the word *sha3ir*, a non-alcoholic beer, for Homer's Duff beer, and gave many other examples of his suggestions that were vetoed by the sheikhs. Another aspect Hosny does not approve of, nor does he practice, is the use of MSA in dubbing. He vehemently rejects the idea and argues:

> I refuse to write anything in Classical Arabic[39], not because I am against Classical Arabic, I love Classical Arabic, but because it is that sort of a language that is not capable to carry all the street puns, humour and the social interaction colloquial Arabic does (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

This friction between the modernists on one hand, who call for the use of daily spoken variants of Arabic at most levels, even in education, and the traditionalists on the other hand, who consider MSA as the last line of defence against further

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[39] Although the language used today in government institutions, education and media is referred to as Modern Standard Arabic, the term Classical Arabic is also used interchangeably by some; although it refers to the pre-Islamic era.

fragmentation of the Arab World, has been on the increase ever since satellite TV entered Arab homes (cf. Section 4.2).

Mubarak, albeit equally as liberal as Hosny, seems to recognise the religious and cultural sensitivities of her audience and tries to avoid controversial issues. When she worked for Disney in Malaysia dubbing an animation series for teens, the hero tended to have close body contact with female characters, so she would say, 'I am sorry, we can't have that'. They would ask, 'Why?' and Mubarak would reply, 'Because ... anything that has to do with sexual connotation will not go down within the Arab World' (Z Mubarak, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

She admits that there are instances when she feels caught between the Arab culture and certain scenes she sees as beneficial to the audience. She negotiates with the censors and patrons to come to a mutual agreement. A case in point, Mubarak recalls, is when she dealt with an episode of a Disney show tackling the issue of potty training. She says:

> I gave it a lot of thought and I called the producer, who was in charge of the Disney office in the Middle East, and I said, 'I don't know how I'm going to handle this. The whole episode is about potty training and you have the puppets who are the characters sitting on the toilet and talking about pooping and peeing'. I said, 'I don't think we can handle this episode'. So, she said put this in writing, and I did that, and she forwarded my email to whoever was in charge in Disney. He was an Arab too, a Lebanese. He said, 'Look, I know your concern, but think of it in a different way. Think of the fact that many Arab families have this problem. Children have a problem with potty training and maybe we can help them think of it in a different light'. So, I reconsidered, and I said, 'Okay. I will not cross the whole episode out. I will just find a different frame of reference. I will just be more careful with what I am saying. I'll just try ...', this was a challenge, trying to find proper wording to put the episode forward into production but in a way that will not be offensive. It seems the channel got highest ratings for that episode. People wrote to the channel and said, 'Thank you so much for broadcasting this because this is a huge problem and this helped' (Z Mubarak, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Although this case was resolved in favour of the audience, despite its cultural sensitivity, thanks to the broadmindedness and understanding of the person in charge,

the fact remains that interference in the process of dubbing animation into Arabic is common at almost every level, from product selection to translation and production. Each party involved in this process has their own motive, be it economic, cultural or ideological.

I now shed some light on the participants' feelings about external interference in their work.

6.1.3 On patronage and censorship

The state, religious authorities, media and private influential figures seem to have the upper hand when it comes to what is to be aired on TV, published and translated in the Arab World. This is evident from the responses from my interviewees when asked about the external pressures they face in their line of work. They admitted that they are always watched and their work is monitored and filtered by many *agents*, namely those who commission them to translate, dub or produce a given product. At times, the interviewees agree that certain filtering is necessary to protect the audience, to not breach religious or cultural boundaries or even to not criticise political figures. However, the translators, more than the producers, expressed more contempt, dismay and frustration at the state of affairs within the AVT industry and the total control various agents have over it. The translators' dismay seems to spring from the shackling of their creativity by some inept people of authority. Mubarak was livid while discussing the issue of patronage and censorship. She said:

> I am not opposed to it. Although I would definitely hate having someone, an employee, sitting at a desk with a red pen crossing out things he does not like. If I am going to accept any form of censorship, I think the person should have some kind of background that would allow him, or allow me to give him the privilege of that. Who are you, if you are just someone that is sitting on that desk because you were someone important? (Z Mubarak, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Hosny is equally as opposed to pressures and censorship. He thinks that there is a conspiracy against vernacular Arabic, especially Egyptian. He argues that the Arabs in the Gulf, with their wealth, impose the use of MSA so that their children will not lose their own spoken language (cf. Chapter Four). He spoke with sadness and regret:

They are fanatical about their own mother tongue. Classical Arabic is not their mother tongue. They do not use Classical Arabic as their everyday language, and actually, when they did that series in the Gulf on channel one; they did something very colloquial using their own mother tongue. They are against our Egyptian and the Lebanese colloquial languages. I think some people might say it is about inferiority complex (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Hosny said that negotiations with MBC lasted about two months before they agreed to dub *The Simpsons* in Egyptian vernacular. He refused from the start to translate in MSA and told the broadcasting channel that Henidi, the starring actor, would only work in Egyptian vernacular. 'They came back every time with another solution that some characters would speak classical and some others Egyptian. No, no way'. His answer was the same each time (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Hosny talked about the filtering mechanism MBC imposed on the production of *The Simpsons*. He expressed his disgust at the owners of the TV channel: 'There were too many filters, before and after. They cut things from scenes, whole scenes from episodes and you would get confused. They are hypersensitive about some words commonly used in the streets like *zabadi* (yogurt) because it sounds a little like another word with a sexual connotation' (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Hosny's stance on censorship stems from his belief that 'people in charge' do not understand, nor do they appreciate, the creative and artistic efforts the likes of him put into their work. He argues that unless these people 'open their minds and embrace other cultures', the cultural exchange between the outside world and the Arabs will remain stagnant, and this will enhance further ignorance and misunderstanding.

As for the producers, Abdulghaffar and Aburish, their concerns were mainly about the increasing demand for dubbing in MSA only. With the main clients from the Gulf countries, this issue is causing a huge distress to professionals in the AVT business, particularly in Egypt. With new satellite channels dedicated solely to toddlers and children, such as JCC, Baraim and Nickelodeon, which broadcast in MSA, the Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese dubbing and production houses are fuelling the competition. However, the use of MSA is not the only concern the producers voiced; they spoke of the filtering process and *Guidelines for translators* they have to adhere

to. Abdulghaffar, handing me a copy of JCC's guide (cf. Appendix A), complained how difficult it was to satisfy her bosses: 'whatever we do is always not perfect enough in their eyes, and they would say "no try … try … try make it a bit more Arabic and make it as classical as possible"' (M Abdulghaffar, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April). Aburish, on the other hand, seems to have given up completely on dubbing in the Egyptian vernacular: 'We do not do any dubbing in Egyptian anymore because all clients require Classical Arabic. For them it is completely unacceptable that their standard characters like Mickey, Goofy, Minnie, Donald Duck, speak a certain dialect' (R Aburish, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

In regard to censorship, the producers do not seem to care that much. Aburish bluntly said: 'It's not censorship; I mean they are the client, so they have to approve what we are doing. Sometimes it is annoying when you feel that the client knows less than you do, but you still have to listen to them' (Aburish, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April). This position is quite understandable, bearing in mind that producers are not critics or gatekeepers as such. They look at the process as a business transaction, which needs to be fulfilled in a manner that is beneficial to all parties.

Apart from Hosny, who argues for a more liberal role and practice of dubbing, participants were unanimous in their views that self-censorship should be used as a guide to promote local socio-cultural values and to escape patrons' interference in their profession. Hosny seems to have learnt to censor before getting censored. Referring to people of authority, Hosny said: 'I do not want to give them the opportunity to have the upper hand, correcting what I did'. Setting up certain filters 'helps find solutions to go around things without them knowing. It is better not to give them a chance'. Mubarak sees things from a slightly different angle arguing, that all concerned parties should 'act responsibly to protect society' from the hazards of globalisation which is bringing about a dangerous identity meltdown of the Arab society.

As stated earlier and demonstrated by the above examples, dubbing in the Arab World is a minefield of censorship and patronage, on which translators and producers alike have to tread with caution.

6.1.4 On audiovisual translation

The state of AVT in the Arab World has been criticised by many researchers, (El-Sakran 1997; Darwish, 2005; Gamal, 2008; Maluf, 2005; Zitawi, 2003), for being stagnant, unprofessional and lacking adequate infrastructure, in terms of institutions with specialised curricula, collaboration between education sectors and the industry, training, and the use of advanced technology.

Participants voiced equal criticism of the situation. The producers complained about the quality of translation graduates who knock on their doors seeking employment, only to realise that it takes more than just a degree to practise. Although mastering two languages is a must, being culturally aware is equally as important, in addition to having a creative mind, and this was echoed strongly by the translators because, as Abdulghaffar put it: 'We don't translate, we Arabize or adapt'. Hosny's impression was very similar. He believes that the dubbing process is a 're-creation' of the original script but in a different language for a different culture.

When asked how satisfied they were about AVT in the Arab World, and dubbing in particular, the participants expressed great disappointment. They were perplexed because the industry has not risen to the challenge despite the huge number of satellite channels available and increasing imports of audiovisual material for broadcast. Although the AVT industry and broadcasting channels are set to achieve great financial benefits from dubbing more products and diversifying their broadcast, they are lagging way behind their counterparts in Europe, for example, as Abdulghaffar argued: 'When you go to Holland or Italy, everything is dubbed. They are used to dubbing even for the cinema. You only find one or two cinemas showing the original movies in English and the rest is in Italian or in Dutch or whatever'. She further argued that the Arabs in general prefer subtitling to dubbing because viewers of foreign films, sitcoms and documentaries, are usually well versed in either English or French, the two most prevalent foreign languages in the Arab World. This is despite high illiteracy rates amongst the Arab population and the huge success of dubbed Turkish soap operas in the Arab World, as discussed in Section 4.1.

Hosny and Mubarak attribute the poor state of AVT in the Arab World to the sheer greed of the broadcasting sector. 'I am not satisfied with the product; they do it just

for money and as they say in Egypt 'كاش كاش' (cash cash), i.e., cut it short and get the money', Hosny said with sadness.

It is evident from the meagre research on AVT in the Arab World (cf. Chapters Three and Four), the participants' input, preliminary research and *in vivo* observation that this industry is in need of serious planning and regulation in order to thrive and serve as an entertaining and educational medium. It is also clear, as Abdulghaffar and Aburish attest, that dubbing from Arabic is largely neglected. This is due to many factors, namely the lack of serious production with a global appeal, the commercial viability for undertaking risky projects and, last but not least, the absence of a conscientious effort to build bridges with the Other and dispel stereotyping and misunderstanding of the Arab World.

6.1.5 On translator training

Audiovisual translators are faced with the challenging task of deconstructing and reconstructing an intricate semiotic system of different codes, be they linguistic, extra-linguistic or acoustic, as Chaume (2004) indicates. In order to adequately convey these elements to the target audience, it is paramount for these translators to be trained in a manner that empowers them to carry out a competent contrastive analysis of both the original text and the final product. Particular attention should be given to promoting and fostering in-depth knowledge and cultural awareness, as film dialogues are loaded with culture-specific references. This helps to preserve the originality of the source material, as Baldry (2004) argues.

As discussed in the previous section, there is consensus among participants that the situation of AVT in the Arab World leaves much to be desired at all levels. However, what is striking is that the industry (in the form of production houses) is not willing to invest in training graduates. Aburish and Abdulghaffar were adamant that they would not invest in such training, as they believe translators will migrate to the competition once they are well grounded in their work. They argue that the duty falls on those seeking employment, not the employer, to excel and prove their worthiness. However, they said that they provide guidance for each project, mainly on technical aspects. Abdulghaffar attributes this reluctance to train graduates to the weak market and uncertain financial viability of the projects undertaken.

In response to a question on how he perceives an ideal training programme for AVT translators, Hosny said:

> It is not easy to plan for things like this. It is not easy to plan on how to put someone on the right track to be a good translator or using his or her talent for dubbing. Studying at a university could help, but there are other personal characteristics, being talented, humorous, culturally aware, and above all being a creative writer (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Mubarak raised the same point believing that being a 'textbook translator' does not work for dubbing. A translator for dubbing needs to have 'a good ear and an artistic sense'.

Aburish agreed with this opinion saying, 'translating for the sake of translating has nothing to do with translating for dubbing. No, I do not believe that somebody who has learned this translation in a university, to translate papers, can be a good translator for dubbing'. She further expressed her disappointment in the absence of AVT-specialised institutions in the Arab World.

Clearly, translating for dubbing is a specialised field of translation that has not been given enough importance in the Arab World. In the absence of properly structured institutions with deeply rooted curricula in AVT and collaboration with the industry, translator training remains another huge obstacle facing the development of the industry and professionals alike.

6.2 Concluding remarks about dubbing in general

The previous sections analysed participants' responses to an array of questions pertinent to the dubbing industry in the Arab World. The investigative analysis aimed to provide an insight into respondents' profiles, in terms of their perception of, and thoughts on, certain aspects of the process of AVT. This was necessary in order to gain clearer understanding of the constraints these professionals face and how they are dealt with while dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic.

Despite participants' educational background being alien to AVT, they all seem to be well grounded in the industry and have a good understanding of the needs of both the clients and the audience. More importantly, they demonstrated that translating for

dubbing is an art that requires more than just language mastery or a degree in translation; creativity, wit, artistic sense and cultural awareness are key ingredients for successful dubbing. The absence of adequate training in translating for dubbing professionals is one of the major obstacles the industry has to overcome in order to compete and progress. Furthermore, for the industry to free itself from the constraints imposed by patrons and censors, and to promote and build cultural bridges with the Other, it needs to work closely with other sectors of society, such as education and cultural agencies to gain more autonomy and convey its message *to educate and entertain.*

I now shed some light on the challenges Hosny and Abdulghaffar had to deal with while producing *Al Shamshoon.*

6.3 Data analysis of the corpus

This section deals with the analysis of ICRs extracted from the corpus. As detailed in Section 5.9.2, a large number of potential translation problems relating to questions of ICRs were identified in the corpus. It must be stressed that despite the researcher's adherence to the concept of *bracketing* in the process of extracting these references, the detection process was unavoidably subjective to a certain degree, hence the approximate count.

As the notions of culture and ideology are difficult to narrow down to one or two aspects, the identified ICRs were distributed among a number of sub-categories under the umbrella of culture and ideology (cf. Section 5.9.2).

It is beyond the scope of this study to present and analyse every identified ICR; consequently, only a collection of examples that weigh the most in terms of interest and clear relevance are presented in order to reflect the variety of issues raised by the translation of ICRs of the corpus. These are deemed representative of the types of the constraints presented by all the ICRs extracted.

6.3.1 Ideological issues

Ideological references encompass an array of aspects; however, four categories emerged from the extraction process: religion, extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors and challenging issues. These categories are explored in more detail in the following

sections, including the challenges they presented to the Arabic translator of *The Simpsons*.

6.3.1.1 Religious issues

Out of the examples extracted from the corpus, 143 (40%) were adapted or completely omitted.

> Millhouse: 'What is it that television evangelists worship the most?'
> Bart: 'I'll say God'.
> Millhouse: 'I'll say Jesus'.
> Turning the page of the magazine reveals the answer *Money*. ('Team Homer', 3F10)[40]

The Simpsons, as a satirical sitcom, uses its animation format to neutralise viewers' perception of reality in order to present them with a critical look at societal practices and the world as a whole. The show plays on satire to soften any negative reaction from viewers, and thus often evades criticism.

One of the most satirised aspects of society in *The Simpsons* is religion. 'According to a study by John Heeren of California State University, at San Bernardino, religious content appears in nearly 70% of the show and 11% of *The Simpsons* episodes main theme is religious' (Dart, 2001, p. 13). Many of the characters are practising Christians who attend the First Church of Springfield presided over by Reverend Lovejoy. Others belong to other religions or denominations like the Jewish Krusty the Clown, the Hindu Apu, the Catholic Archbishop McGee, and even some pagans like Moe, the tavern owner. Despite the religious theme *The Simpsons* portrays, hardly any aspect of religion escapes ridicule; for example, Christianity, God, the Bible, the clergy, the church and the hereafter all receive attention.

Before presenting some samples of the religious aspects that posed considerable constraints on the translator of *Al Shamshoon*, I look at some of *The Simpsons'* characters religious affiliation.

Homer epitomises the religiously confused man. He is never sure whether he 'picked the right religion' ('Homer the heretic', 9F01), nor does he grasp the use of going to

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[40] cf. Appendix D for episode guide.

church: 'I'm not a bad guy! I work hard, and I love my kids. So why should I spend half my Sunday hearing about how I'm going to Hell?' ('Homer the heretic', 9F01). This episode, needless to say, never made it to the dubbing studios of *Al Shamshoon*.

The Simpsons' evangelical neighbour, Ned Flanders and his family, on the other hand, manifest the other extreme of Christian faith and healthy living. When asked about the secret of his youthful looks, Flanders declares, 'there is no magic formula. I just follow the three Cs: Clean living, Chewing thoroughly, and a daily dose of Church', ('Viva Ned Flanders', AABF06).

Lovejoy is a controversial liberal reverend who depicts the hypocrisy of the clergy within the Christian Church; he preaches against the sins of gambling and divorce, yet his Church hosts bingo and casino events. He even suggests divorce to couples who seek his counsel when faced with marital problems, as was the case when Homer and Marge had an argument:

> Lovejoy: 'Get a divorce'.
> Marge: 'But isn't that a sin?'
> Lovejoy: 'Marge, everything is a sin. You ever sat down and read [the Bible]?
> Technically, we are not allowed to go to the bathroom.' ('Secrets of a successful marriage', 1F20)

Bart is a classic example of the bad boy. He is an anarchist whose pranks on Moe are full of bad language and sexual innuendoes. His infamous and recurring catchphrases include 'Eat my shorts', 'Don't give a cow, man', 'I am Bart Simpson, who the hell are you?' His carelessness and total disregard for religious teachings led him to apparently selling his soul for $5 ('Bart sells his soul', 3F02).

Naturally, many criticised the show for its preposterous depiction of religion and morality in American society (cf. Chapter Four). This is summed up by George W Bush, 'We need a nation closer to *The Waltons* than *The Simpsons* (Sohn, 2001, p. 2).

However, others, such as Mullin (2001) defend the show's representation of religion and its figures in such a sardonic manner, claiming that no actual mischief was intended.

This could lead us to conclude that despite *The Simpsons'* outlook on religion, it succeeded in generating debate on controversial issues considered taboo. It also demonstrates that religion is an important part of people's lives.

Next, I investigate a few religious examples and analyse how Hosny rendered them into Arabic.

Table 4 Examples of references to the Bible and the Church

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Lovejoy**: Oh, *Matthew*: yeah, right. Ned, the *Good Book* says a gentle answer turneth away wrath. (7F08)	ا. أ. حكم كتاب النصايح، آه صح صح. أنت عارف يا شافعى. الحكمه بتقول الكلمه الطيبه تليّن الحجر.	*Oh! A proverb from the 'book of advice'*. Right! You know Shafiai, the proverb says '*a good word softens a stone*'
2. **Marge**: I know we didn't ask for this, Homer ... but doesn't the Bible say ... '*Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers ... that you do unto me*' (8F21)	عارفه اننا ماخدناش إذنك يا عمر. بس الأخلاق بتقول،إننا نساعد أى واحد عنده أزمه، إذا كان ف أستطاعتنا	I know we didn't ask your opinion Omar. But *ethics* tell us *to help anyone in crisis if we can*.
3. **Mr Burns**: *Oh, for the love of Peter. That's all anybody brought.* (7G04)	يا ساتر يا رب. كل الناس جابولى جيلى.	*Oh! Lord! Everyone brought me jelly.*
4. **Homer**: Sure. It gets rid ... of *the unpleasant aftertaste of church* (8F12)	طبعا ،دى احسن حاجة تضيع التأثير السىء لقعدة البيت	Sure, this is the best thing for getting rid of the *negative influence of staying home*.
5. **Flanders**: All right. *No Bible stories for you tonight* (8F16)	طيب، كفايه كده يا أستاذ. مش حاقرالك قصص تافهه قبل النوم	Ok, that's enough Mr I am not telling you *silly stories* before bed time.

These excerpts are a manifestation of how values of an alien culture could have such a great impact on, and interference with, the original discourse. The rendering of these excerpts into Arabic clearly indicates, from the outset, that the translator opted to cater for the Muslim audience, although the Bible is recognised by every Muslim as a revelation by God to Jesus and their faith would be incomplete by denying its existence. The problem, however, lies in the fact that Muslims believe that the Bible, in its current format, has been manipulated and subverted, and therefore, it is not the original book revealed to Jesus[41]. Consequently, its teachings are not to be taken as an authentic revelation from God and should not be propagated among Muslims.

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[41] Quran: Surah 2 verse 75

As the back translation of the above examples clearly demonstrates, references to the Bible, the Church, or quotes from the Bible have all been neutralised and replaced by expressions with no religious connotation. Mathew was rendered as 'حكم' (a proverb), the good Book as 'كتاب النصايح' (a book of advice), the Bible as 'الأخلاق' (ethics) and the Church became 'البيت' (home).

Although the content of most of these examples is morally acceptable to Muslims, the translator deemed it necessary to filter references to Christianity as a whole from the target text. This is in compliance with MBC bosses whose instructions were clear on such matters, as the producer and the translator indicated earlier, in addition to their own beliefs (cf. Section 6.1.3).

It is worth noting that, despite the fact that Muslims do not believe in the current format of the Bible, or the Torah for that matter, they do not condone any sacrilege of these Books or disrespect of either Jesus or Moses as they are instructed by their faith to believe in and revere all God's prophets and books[42]. No bodily depiction of any prophet is sanctioned, as many instances confirm; the prohibition of broadcasting Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* is a clear example. This is further validated by *the guidelines for translators* provided by JCC to Abdulghaffar, as indicated earlier (cf. Section 6.1.3).

Table 5 Examples of references to food and drink

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Moe**: Take it easy, Homer. *I learned how to make other drinks at bartender's school. Gin and ... Tonic? Do they mix* (8F08)	ماتاخدش ف بالك. انا خريج معهد صناع لمون و عسل؟ ينفعوا سوا؟ .المشروبات	Don't worry! *I am a graduate of the Drinks Institute. Lemon and honey? Do they mix?*
2. **Moe**: For the next half hour, *beer's on the house* (8F19)	النص ساعه الجايه الشعير على حسابى	The next half an hour, *barley malt is on me.*
3. **Otto**: '*Alcohol increases your ability to drive.*' False? (8F21)	المكيفات تزيد القدره على القياده. خطأ؟. دا كلام	'*drugs increase your ability to drive.*' False? Really?!
4. **Selma**: It takes a ripe piece of cheese to catch the mouse. It's time to give away my love like *cheap wine*.(7F15)	طيب، صيد الفيران محتاج لجبنه قديمه. حارمى أحلامى عن الحب زى الشبشب القديم	Ok, catching mice requires old cheese. I will abandon my dreams for love like *old slippers.*
5. **Eddie**: You got a *liquor license* (7F21)	أنت، عندك رخصه بيع عصير يا كابتن	You! You have a *juice licence, captain?*

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[42] Prophet's Hadith (saying) No: 4 in Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Chapter 2.

| 6. **Homer**: Good night, *my little pork chop* (8F14) | تصبحى على خير يا روح قلب بابا | Good night *daddy's heart and soul* |
| 7. **Herb**: You sure love *pork chops* (7F16) | أبوكم بيموت ف الريش الضانى | Your dad is crazy about *lamb chops*. |

All 105 references to food and drink, seven of which have been cited above, refer to alcohol and pigs, and their derivatives (beer, wine and champagne, and pork chops and ham). It was quite straightforward for the translator to substitute any reference to alcohol with 'عصير' (*juice*) and pork with 'الضانى' (*lamb*), as they are prohibited in Islam. However, Hosny protested vehemently to MBC for not accepting his original suggestion of 'شعير' (*non-alcoholic malt beer*), as discussed in Section 4.5.

There are instances where certain references are metaphoric, and thanks to the flexibility of the vernacular Arabic, Hosny demonstrated his creativity skills. When Lisa raised the question about whether her aunt Selma would ever get married (example 4), Marge asked Homer to play matchmaker to find a husband for her sister. He contemplated a few of his acquaintances and finally decided on Barney, but Marge declined to ask her sister to go out with such a 'loser', thus putting an end to Selma's chance of ever finding love, and so she declared 'It takes a ripe piece of cheese to catch the mouse. It's time to give away my love like *cheap wine*'. Hosny used 'الشبشب القديم' (*old slippers*) instead of cheap wine to express the worthlessness of something.

The second example shows how much Homer loves pork chops, thus using it as a metaphor for endearment. Some cultures use certain phrases to express similar sentiments like the French *'mon petit choux'* (*my little cabbage*), Arabic 'ياروحي' (*my soul*) or 'ياقرة عيني' (*apple of my eye*). Such expressions are used when one wants to say 'sweetheart' or 'dearest', and they are common knowledge for everyone belonging to that culture. However, to coin an expression referring to a personal obsession of something is rather extreme. Rendering such an expression did not pose a great challenge for the translator who resorted to using a common Arabic saying of endearment all Arabs would understand 'يا روح قلب بابا' (*daddy's heart and soul*).

Another problematic aspect of food and drink is references to alcohol. Homer is not himself without his *duff beer* and donuts. It is worth noting that Hosny used 'شعير' (*malt beer*) in some episodes, as in example 2, and then switched to 'عصير' (*juice*)

upon MBC's assertion. However, when more than one drink was mentioned, and depending on context, certain alcohol brands were localised, as is the case in example 1 when Moe declared '*I learned how to make other drinks at bartender's school. Gin and ... Tonic?*' 'انا خريج معهد صناع المشروبات، لمون وعسل؟' (*I am a graduate of the Drinks Institute. Lemon and honey?*). Two main changes occurred, the bartender's school became *Drinks Institute* and *Gin and ... Tonic* were localised for a popular drink, *lemon and honey,* used mainly for treating cold and flu, although also used as a refreshing summer drink in some Arab countries.

Interestingly, example 3 shows a clear violation of the censorship guidelines imposed by MBC. Hosny changed alcohol to 'المكيفات' (*drugs*), although the Arabic term literally means air-condition, in Egyptian vernacular, it means drugs. This duality in meaning worked in favour of the translator to please both the Egyptian audience and the rest of Arab viewers who do not know the connotation.

As mentioned earlier, religion, with its various references, form a significant part of *The Simpsons'* ideology and philosophy. Pinsky (1999, par. 11) argues that 'statistically speaking, there is more prayer on *The Simpsons* than any sitcom in broadcast history'. However, despite this sense of religiosity, the show attracted huge criticism from various religious organisations. According to Pinsky (2007), the Catholic Church complained about several jokes portraying the Catholic faith; one example is when Bart asks his mother if they could 'go Catholic' in order to be able to have 'booze and communion wafers' ('Lisa gets an A', AABF03). Another example is the show's unbalanced depiction of the ideal Christian family, represented by the Flanders, a family of religious nerds out of sync with today's world. They adhere to the teachings and interpretations of the Bible to the letter; thus, barring all channels on their satellite dish and allowing only religious shows. Ned Flanders considers insurance a form of gambling, so he has none.

Gerry Bowler (1996, par. 29) states some good examples about why all Christian denominations have a bone to chew with the show. First, they 'manifest a certain tension on the question of humour and religion'; therefore, they believe that a devout Christian would never joke about religion. They also argue, as Bowler claims, that 'the humour of *The Simpsons* is difficult to get in its entirety' (Bowler, 1996, par. 31) due mainly to the complexity of modern day culture cum humour; which sees no

harm in showing a foolish, drunken and non-practising father and a rude, non-conforming and blasphemous son leading their lives as a normal family.

Table 6 Examples of references to God

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Smithers**: You're my *god of generosity*. (7F22)	سيادتك..إنت كرمك مغرقنا	Sir, *you are spoiling us* with your generosity.
2. **Staff member**: The voters see you as *godlike*. (7F01)	الناخبين دلوقتى شايفينك راجل مثالى	The voters see you as an *ideal man*.
3. **Homer**: Dear God, *give a bald guy a break*. Amen (7F02)	يارب. حقق لى أمنيتى. آمين	God, *grant me my wish.* Amen

Perhaps the most important aspect of religion that touches all faiths of the world is reference to God. Although Matt Groening, the producer of *The Simpsons* (cited in Pinsky, 1999, par. 6), claims that God is never the target of criticism, references to God are customary in almost each and every episode, and they are not always adequately used. In fact they could be seen as a serious blasphemy that calls for a *deterring fatwa*, at least from the Muslims' perspective. The above examples in Table 7 are a clear indication of the misuse of God in different contexts. In examples 1 and 2, both Smithers and a staff member use the divine attribute to complement Mr Burns for being so generous and adored by voters. Needless to say, the use of 'god', with a lower case *g*, to refer to an entity of high esteem and reverence other than God, is very controversial. In Greek mythology, for example, there are many references to gods, like *Aphrodite*, goddess of love and beauty, *Ares* god of war and bloodlust, *Athena* goddess of wisdom, *Pluto* god of the dead and of course *Zeus* king of the gods. Religiously speaking, this is polytheism and a pagan tradition, which is against the teachings and beliefs of Islam, Christianity and Judaism—faiths that have the adherence of a large portion of world population today. The use of any divine attributes out of context is a serious offence to monotheists. Hosny is aware of this fact and believes that translating such references in *The Simpsons* into Arabic had to be rendered in a manner acceptable to the audience. Hence, 'you're my *god of generosity*' becomes 'إنت كرمك مغرقنا' (*you are spoiling us* with your generosity) and 'the voters see you as *godlike*' is rendered as 'الناخبين دلوقتى شايفينك راجل مثالى' (the voters see you as an *ideal man*). By eliminating any reference to God and using a local expression instead in the first example to indicate Mr Burns' extreme

generosity, and that he is the ideal man for the post he was running for in the second, Hosny managed to convey the intended message without risking any offence.

Example 3, (Dear God, *give a bald guy a break),* could be seen as harmless if taken literally and with a non-sarcastic tone. However, Homer's indignation and cynical tone could be interpreted as a sign of disrespect towards God and thus had to be rendered as a prayer and with adequate and sincere tone ' يارب. حقق لى أمنيتى ' (God, *grant me my wish).*

6.3.1.2 Extrinsic factors

As discussed in Sections 4.6, 4.6.1 and 4.6.2, the process of transferring audiovisual material in general, and *The Simpsons* in particular, into Arabic is considered treacherous territory that needs to be treaded upon with utmost caution. Consequently, the show was a scene of muscle flexing of two main players, the translator on one hand and the patrons, that is, MBC, the producer and the actors, on the other. Any pressure applied on the translator to alter, delete or subvert his initial ideas and thoughts on the translated material is referred to as *extrinsic factors* or external pressures. Sometimes, it is difficult to discern what is imposed on Hosny and his own ideology, as there is a fine line between the two in certain cases. To dispel the ambiguity, I contacted the translator via Skype and discussed the ambiguities. Based on this personal communication, the following samples are presented for analysis:

Table 7 Examples of extrinsic factors

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Lisa: I believe everything you say, with your words and *Semitic good looks. You seem to be Jewish* (7F19)	مصدقة كل اللى تقوله، بكلامك، و حركتك و شكلك العربى النبيل شكلك كدا من أصل عربى	I believe everything you say, the way you talk, your movements and *noble Arab looks, you seem to be of Arab origin.*
2. Landlady: He moved out this morning. He took his *Copernicus costume* (7F19)	أيوه، ساب الأوضه النهارده. حيروح مدرسة تانية كان معاه زى فارس عربى	Yes, yes! He left the room today. He is joining another school. *He had an Arab knight costume.*
3. Marge: Dear Lord, if you spare this town...from becoming a smoking hole in the ground...I'll try to be a *better Christian.* I don't know what I can do. Um... oh, the next time there's a canned food drive...I'll give the poor something they'd actually like...instead of old lima beans and pumpkin mix (8F04)	يارب، لو حفظت المدينه دى من انها تتحول لغبار نووى، حاصلى خمس مرات ف اليوم و لما تفضل لحمة م الغدا حاديها للفقرا عشان ينبسطوا بدل بواقى الفاصوليا و الخضار البايت اللى مالوش طعم	God! If you spare this town from becoming a nuclear dust, *I will pray five times a day* and when there is some leftover meat, I will give it to the poor to make them happy instead of the tasteless beans and vegetable from the night before.

Remember that MBC is a Saudi-owned satellite TV corporation that broadcasts from Dubai. Although outwardly it presents itself as a pioneering channel with a modern outlook, the sheikhs, according to Hosny and Abdulghaffar, have strict guidelines regarding religion and Arab nationalism. Hosny recalls how he was instructed to disregard any mention of Jews, Christianity or Western values and replace them with local equivalents, as the examples in Table 8 illustrate. In the first excerpt: 'I believe everything you say, with your words and *Semitic good looks you seem to be Jewish*', Hosny had to change 'Semitic' and 'Jewish' to 'شكلك العربى النبيل شكلك كدا من أصل عربى' (with your *noble Arab looks*, you seem to be of *Arab* origin). He deemed the manipulation necessary, despite 'Semitic (السامية)' encompassing both Arabs and Jews, as they are cousins from the ethnological perspective.

The second example illustrates Arabs' protectionist attitude towards their cultural heritage and linguistic identity. A reference to a famous Western astronomer who promulgated the theory that Earth and other planets in our solar system gravitate around the sun is seen as doing injustice to the illustrious scientific history of the Arabs, the pioneers and fathers of many modern branches of science. Consequently, *'Copernicus costume'* was replaced with 'زى فارس عربى' (*an Arab knight costume*) to celebrate the age-old tradition of Arab knighthood, which epitomises courage and generosity.

In example 3, reference to Christianity in 'I'll try to be a *better Christian*' is, as is the case with all religious items, substituted with 'حاصلى خمس مرات ف اليوم' (*I will pray five times a day*), indicating the number of prayers a Muslim performs every day. It is interesting to note that Hosny did not use an explicit and simple reference to Muslims by saying 'I will be a better Muslim', which is the exact equivalent to the source text, but, rather, he opted for an expression that reflects a stronger commitment on behalf of Mona, Marge's counterpart in Al Shamshoon. Again, this, according to Hosny, is imposed by the sheikhs from MBC.

6.3.1.3 Intrinsic factors (translator's ideology)

Out of the total examples extracted 21 (6%) were foreignised (retained). I now examine the translator's own influence on the outcome of certain aspects of *The Simpsons* Hosny intentionally felt compelled to filter or subvert. These internal manipulative tendencies form what is referred to as *intrinsic factors*. These could

portray Hosny's political, religious, nationalistic and cultural inner beliefs. The prevalent intrinsic factors extracted from the corpus fall within two categories. While examples in Table 9 represent Hosny's nationalistic propensity reflected in his ardent love for his country (Egypt), Table 10 mirrors his loathing of America, as a role model and an ideal for the world, and exclusion of any foreign (mainly Arab) competition to Egypt.

Table 8 Intrinsic factors prompted by a nationalistic tendency

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **British commentator:** Like the elegant Roman in *Judah Ben-Hur* ... these modern charioteers battle ferociously. No quarter given, none asked. The world has not seen the likes of this ... *since the French carried Lucky Lindy off on their shoulders ... from Le Bourget Field* (8F07)	زى الأبطال الرومان فى عصور الأستعباد، سيدور سباق اليوم بمنتهى الضراوة. ماحدش حيرحم و لا يطلب الرحمة العالم ماشافش بطوله زى دى من أيام المصريين ماشالوا مختار التتش على كتافهم ف ملعب النادى الأهلى	Like the Roman heroes from *the slavery days.* A ferocious race will take place. No mercy is asked nor granted. The world has not seen such championship *since the Egyptians carried Mukhtar Altitsh on their shoulders in Al Ahli stadium.*
2. **Executive 3:** Some *gypsy curse* (7F16)	أه، جايز لعنة الفراعنه؟	Ah! May be the curse of the pharaohs?
3. **Kent:** You won't find the *freeloader* or Charlie Chaplin's little tramp here (7F07)	لأ، مش حتلاقى بينهم اسماعيل ياسين و لا أنور وجدى و لا حتى متشرد شارلى شابلن المسكين	No! You will not find *Ismail Yasin, Anwar Wujdy* among them or Charlie Chaplin's poor tramp.
4. **Mr Burns:** Smithers, come here. I wanted to give you something ... and I know you wanted this photo ... *of Elvis and me* (8F02)	سماوى، تعالى. عايزك. عايز ادبلك حاجة تفتكرنى بيها و أنا عارف انك كنت حاطط عنيك على صورتى مع عبد الحليم	Samawi, come here, I want to give you something to remember me by. I know you had your eyes on *my photo with Abdulhalim.*
5. **Skinner:** So, Patty, tell me, tell me more about *your trip to Egypt.* **Patty:** Nothing more to tell, really. *The Nile smells and the horseflies are huge.* (7F15)	أحكيلى أحكيلى أكتر عن رحلتك لأفريقيا قلت كل حاجة . حقيقى. التماسيح ريحتها مش ولابد و الغابات كلها دبان أكبر من راسك	Tell me; tell me about *your trip to Africa.* I told you everything. Really, The crocodiles stink and the forests were full of flies bigger than your head.
6. **Marge:** Well, *Selma hated Egypt too. A camel spit on her* (7F15)	و سلمى كرهت افريقيا هى كمان زرافه عطست عليها	Salma hated *Africa too, a giraffe sneezed on her.*

In these examples, Hosny's bias to his country and culture is evident. Seldom does any reference to foreign aspects in *The Simpsons* escape subversion. Although the show is intended for the entire Arab World, Hosny made it look like it was 'made in America and assembled in Egypt'.

In example 1 Bart and his friend Martin decide to partake in a car-racing contest. The competition was fierce and the commentator was as excited as the racers.

British commentator: 'Like the elegant Roman in Judah Ben-Hur ... these modern charioteers battle ferociously. No quarter given, none asked. The world has not seen the likes of this ... since the French carried Lucky Lindy off on their shoulders ... from Le Bourget Field.'

زى الأبطال الرومان فى عصور الأستعباد، سيدور سباق اليوم بمنتهى الضراوه. ماحدش حيرحم و لا يطلب الرحمه العالم ماشافش بطوله زى دى من أيام المصريين ماشالوا مختار التتش على كتافهم ف ملعب النادى الأهلى

(Like the Roman heroes from the slavery days, a ferocious race will take place. No mercy is asked for nor granted. The world has not seen such championship since the Egyptians carried Mukhtar Altitsh on their shoulders in Al Ahli stadium).

The historical event of Charles Lindbergh, the American pilot who landed at Le Bourget Field in Paris in 1927, successfully completing the first solo, nonstop transatlantic flight between New York and Paris, was completely transformed into an Egyptian spineless story of a famous local footballer who played for Hosny's favourite team (*Al-Ahli*). Hosny also did away with any reference to *Judah Ben-Hur*, the epic film that depicted the nativity of Jesus Christ and winner of 11 Academy awards in 1959, for Ben-Hur was a Jew during the Roman Empire devoted to freeing his people from the unjust rule of Rome, just as Moses did during the Pharaohs' time.

Examples 2, 3 and 4 further demonstrate Hosny's bias to employing local cultural references at the expense of the entire Arab culture. Although he might be forgiven for rendering '*the gypsy curse*' as 'لعنة الفراعنه' (*the curse of the pharaohs*), as the expression has gained international recognition ever since the discoverer of the tomb of Tutankhamen, Howard Carter, died a mysterious death, limiting the use of famous artists and singers to Egyptians only, 'عبد الحليم ,اسماعيل ياسين وأنور وجدى' (*Abdulhalim, Ismail Yasin, Anwar Wujdy*), is a clear indication of ulterior motives.

If further proof is needed to demonstrate Hosny's influence on, and manipulation of, the original text, examples 5 and 6 are clear incriminating evidence. Homer set up Principal Skinner and Patty, Marge's sister, on a blind date, and to start a friendly conversation, Skinner asked Patty about her trip overseas:

Skinner: 'So, Patty, tell me, tell me more about your trip to Egypt.'
Patty: 'Nothing more to tell, really. The Nile smells and the horseflies are huge.'

أحكيلى أحكيلى أكتر عن رحلتك لأفريقيا-

قلت كل حاجة. حقيقى. التماسيح ريحتها مش ولابد و الغابات كلها دبان أكبر من راسك-

(Tell me; tell me about your trip to Africa.)

(I told you everything. Really, the crocodiles stink and the forests were full of flies bigger than your head)

Marge: 'Well, Selma hated Egypt too. A camel spit on her.'

و سلمى كرهت افريقيا هى كمان زرافه عطست عليها-

(Salma hated Africa too. A giraffe sneezed on her)

Contrary to how Hosny dealt with foreign *positive* reference, which he substituted with Egyptian ones, references with *negative* connotations were deemed disparaging, and, as in this example, were totally shifted to represent *'Others'; Egypt, the Nile,* and *camels* were changed to *Africa, stinky crocodiles* and *spitting giraffes,* respectively.

It is understandable that a patriotic translator would not tarnish his country's image for the sake of a cartoon; however, to portray an entire continent as a dumpster could be perceived as rather unethical.

Table 10 illustrates Hosny's perception of America, which, as stated in Section 4.5, is depicted in a rather negative light.

Table 9 Intrinsic factors prompted by vilifying and exclusion

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Kent: Good evening. *Did you know that thirty four million American adults are obese?* That excess blubber could fill two-fifths of the Grand Canyon. (8F22)	مساء الخير. تعرفوا ان ف أمريكا 34 مليون بدين؟ لو حطيناهم على بعض ممكن يملوا حوالى نص أخدود الجراند كانيون.	Good evening, *did you know that in America there are 34 million obese?* If we put them all on top of each other, they may fill half the Grand Canyon.
2. Kent: *Americans have grown up with the image of the jolly fat man—Dom DeLuise Alfred Hitchcock, and, of course Santa Claus.* (8F22)	الأمريكان بتشدهم فكره الرجل البدين الفخم مارلون براندو و ألفرد هتشكوك و طبعاً بابا نويل	*Americans are impressed by the jolly Fat Man, Marlin Brando, Alfred Hitchcock and, of course, Santa Claus.*
3. Merchant: I strongly advise you, do not purchase this. Behind every wish lurks grave misfortune. *I was once president of Algeria* (8F22)	يا سيد، لازم انصحك بشده ماتشتريهاش كل أمنيه وراها نحس مستخبى أنا نفسى كنت فى يوم واحد مهم قوى	Mr! I must strongly advise you not to buy it. Every wish comes with a hidden jinx. *I myself used to be a very important man once.*

Examples 1 and 2, which portray Americans as unhealthy, obese people, who are drawn to big-sized everything, like super-sized meals and monster cars, and are

fascinated with large people, are translated literally by Hosny; not a rare incident in the entire show. This reflects, contrary to many Arabs, his low regard of America. During the interview, he expressed his displeasure at people's admiration of the 'American civilisation' despite its decadent and decaying society. By translating literally these negative traits of Americans, Hosny tries to propagate his views and demonstrate to his audience that America is not everything it is believed to be and 'The American Dream' is nothing but a mirage.

In the third example, '*I was once president of Algeria*' is rendered as ' أنا نفسى كنت فى يوم واحد مهم قوى' (*I myself used to be a very important man once*). This is attributed to two main reasons; first, dealing with heads of states and national figures is subject to strict guidelines, as the document from JCC clearly states (Appendix A). Second, as mentioned before, Hosny is a football fanatic, and as it is well known in the Arab World, there is no love lost between Algeria and Egypt when it comes to football. In fact, the 2010 World Cup qualifying games between the two nations created a dangerous commotion that almost led to severing diplomatic ties. Hosny did not openly admit that excluding 'Algeria' from the text was instigated by his resentment of the Algerian people, however, his smile, when answering, hinted that he 'had an axe to grind' with them.

What is surprising is the inconsistency of MBC in applying a standardised level of filtering and censorship. Hosny, being liberal minded, seems to have surprisingly got away with many passages that are deemed against Islam and the Arab culture. Although Hosny lives within a conservative Muslim society, which, in recent times, has been calling for renewed moralistic approach to repair the damage modern life style has inflicted on this generation's morals, many counter-productive samples could be easily detected in *Al Shamshoon*, as the examples in the following section illustrate.

6.3.1.4 Challenging issues

The Simpsons, as discussed in Chapter 4, is a sitcom with unparalleled *satirisation* of society at every level. Its central characters, mainly the Simpson family, have no code of ethics, as we know it, to live by. Everything is in the open and up for discussion and criticism: religion, sexuality, gambling etc. No issue is taboo. Of course, the Arab society, as open and liberal as it may be, lives by religious, cultural

and, in some countries, tribal values. Hosny, with his fascination of the vivid imagination and creativity of the show's writers as well as his desire to convey the message intended by each episode, deliberately kept certain controversial, and at times *throat slitting* issues, as in example 4 in Table 10. During our communication, he expressed his dismay and frustration at the difficulty of changing the 'old fashioned and closed Arab society' and stressed that he would challenge taboos at every given opportunity. Table 10 presents the result of Hosny's intervention.

Table 10 Examples of some challenging issues

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Lisa**: So gambling makes a good thing even better? **Homer**: *That's right!* My God...it's like there's some kind of bond between us. (8F12)	يعنى الرهان بيخلى طبعاً الحاجة احلى مظبوط.مدهش,حاسس ان فيه تفاهم رهيب بينا	So betting makes a good thing even better? *That's right!* My God...it's like there's some kind of bond between us.
2. **Bart**: Bad influence, *my butt! Never listen to your mother* (8F04)	تأثير سىء ايه. كام مره اقولك ما تسمعش كلام مامتك	What bad influence? *How many times did I tell you not to listen to your mother?*
3. **Homer**: Wow, Flash Bailor *came on to my wife!* You've still got the magic, Marge. (7F05)	واو. جمال بيبو بيعاكس مراتى. لسه الرجالة بيتهبلوا عليكى	Wow! Jamal Bibo is flirting with *my wife!* Men are still crazy about you.
4. **Homer**: I'm going to stand here...and *watch you smoke every one of those cigarettes.* Then maybe you'll learn (8F03)	حاقف و اتفرج عليك و انت بتشرب السجاير دى كلها جايز تعرف غلطتك	I'm going to stand here...and *watch you smoke every one of those cigarettes.* Maybe you'll learn.

Each excerpt represents a taboo for almost any Arab. The first example addresses the issue of gambling, which is forbidden in Islam and is considered an illegal practice in most Arab countries.

When Homer decided to go on a betting spree on football games and lost few bets, Lisa decided to watch the games with him just to cheer him up. He, of course, never gave hope of winning, as gamblers do, so he called the betting line and, in the midst of his indecision to pick a team, he asked for Lisa's opinion, who, luckily enough, picked the winner. In his excitement, Homer decided to watch every Sunday game with Lisa who would chose the foreseeable winning team and instructed Lisa not to tell Marge, his wife, about the bet. When Lisa asked him if it was a bet, Homer replied 'I wouldn't call it a bet. It's a little thing daddies do ... to make football more exciting'. Then, he gave her an enticing example:

Homer: 'Well, you know. You like ice cream, don't you? Don't you like ice cream better ... when it's covered with hot fudge...and mounds of whipped cream, chopped nuts ... and those crumbled-up cookie things they mash up? (Mmm... crumbled-up cookie things)'

Lisa replied 'So gambling makes a good thing even better?'

يعنى الرهان بيخلى طبعا الحاجة احلى؟

Homer excitedly replies 'That's right! My God...it's like there's some kind of bond between us'

مظبوط! مدهش،حاسس ان فيه تفاهم رهيب بينا .

For Hosny not to censor any reference to gambling raises few questions, and to make it sound as if it is good and fun is rather unethical by Arab society's standards. Hosny argues that since gambling is available in many Arab countries, albeit not as prevalent as in the West or the Far East, why should the subject not be in the open and 'stop kicking the can and putting our heads in the sand like an ostrich', he said with a hint of antagonism.

The second example deals with an issue dear to Muslims and Arabs alike, that of respecting and obeying parents. Although, it could be argued that an expression like 'Bad influence, *my butt! Never listen to your mother*', as Bart tells his friend Millhouse, when his mother told him that Bart is a bad influence on him, is often uttered innocently, it is perceived as setting a bad moral and ethical example for children. Hosny diluted it, by eliminating the vulgarity, and maintained the call for not listening to one's mother:

تأثير سىء ايه. كام مره اقولك ماتسمعش كلام مامتك

What bad influence? How many times did I tell you not to listen to your mother?

The third example represents the main taboo subject any Arab's blood would boil over. Although it is often considered a compliment in Western societies if someone flirts or 'hits on' someone's wife or girlfriend, as this indicates their attractiveness, seduction and allure, it is an act of disrespect, transgression and ill morals in the Arab society. Such an incident could lead to honour crimes and feuds between families and tribes. When the Simpson family went to watch a baseball game, Bart asked one of the star players, Flash, to autograph a ball, but he refused. Marge decided to try

her luck. Upon seeing her, Flash, suggestively, says 'little lady, what can Flash do for you?' and writes on the ball 'Springfield Kozy Kort Motel, Room 26. How about it? Flash'. When Homer read it, he shouted in excitement 'Wow, Flash Bailor *came on to my wife! You've still got the magic,* Marge'. 'لسه الرجالة. واو. جمال بيبو بيعاكس مراتى. بيتهبلوا عليكى' (Wow! Jamal Bibo *is flirting with my wife! Men are still crazy about you*). Hosny took quite a risk in rendering this passage literally. However, his liberal stance on such issues, determination to change attitudes, and challenging the gurus of the AVT industry seem to be the driving force behind this cultural appropriation.

In the last example, Homer, to punish his son caught smoking, decides to make him smoke the whole packet:

> I'm going to stand here ... and watch you smoke every one of those cigarettes.
> Then maybe you'll learn
>
> حاقف و اتفرج عليك و انت بتشرب السجاير دى كلها جايز تعرف غلطتك
>
> (I'm going to stand here ... and watch you smoke every one of those cigarettes.
> Maybe you'll learn).

Of course, in a dysfunctional family, this father's bizarre attitude is considered normal behaviour. However, in a society that considers even smoking in the presence of one's parents or elder relatives a major act of disrespect, Hosny, again, challenges the socio-cultural norms and argues 'since smoking is not against the teachings of Islam, and in every family there is at least one smoker, why should it be taboo. Besides, too much of something makes it less appealing; therefore, Homer has a valid point'. Such reasoning could be attributed to Hosny's perception of the Arab society as hypocritical.

6.3.2 Concluding remarks

Dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic has been subject to considerable ideologically motivated manipulation. Such manipulation occurred at two levels, that which sprang from the translator's own attitudes towards the source text, ideology and rigor, and that imposed by outside forces, such as the owners of the TV channel, or merely in compliance with socio-cultural norms; these included any religious references to Christianity, Judaism or the entity of God. While Hosny's filtering of some controversial aspects, deemed contradictory to Islamic teachings and cultural taboos of the Arab society, is justifiable, many of his other interventions, instigated, at

times, by his liberal outlook, nationalistic stance or aversion to the American civilisation, provide more proof that the translator has, in many instances, the upper hand in what message of the source material to be conveyed to the target audience.

6.4 Linguistic and extra-linguistic manipulation

Of the total examples extracted, 37 (10%) were enhanced as demonstrated in sections 6.4.1 to 6.4.3 below.

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.

I 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.

6.4.1 Puns

Wordplay, or punning, is a 'textual phenomenonon' 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, 7 (20%) toned down, and 3 (10 %) enhanced.

Table 11 Examples of puns

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

In example 2, where wordplay is based on an inter-textual reference, 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 every 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 صاحبى' (*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 يهمك، 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 penis 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.

6.4.2 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 12 illustrates a few examples:

Table 12 Examples of idioms

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Bart:** Lisa *never lifts a finger.* Go yell at her (7F11)	هو فيه ايه,انا باشتغل اكتر من بيسة دى على رجليها نقش الحنة.ماتتشطر عليها هى؟	*What's wrong? I work harder than Bisa; does she have a Henna tattoo on her foot? Yell at her!*
2. **Bart:** *Penny for your thoughts,* Miss K (8F16)	اللى واخد عقلك يا مس كابوريا	*Whoever stole your mind,* Miss Kaborya.

3. **Flanders:** I'm afraid *I have a bone to pick with you* (8F16)	عايز أكلمك ف موضوع	*I want to talk to you*
4. **Homer:** *Burning the candle at both ends,* boy (7F03)	حتاكل الكتب أكل. مش كده؟ اديها شطارة	You're *devouring books*, aren't you? That's the way!
5. **Homer:** *Tell you what. Let's sleep on it.* Okay (7F04)	باقولك ايه الصباح رباح. ماشى؟	*Tell you what? Tomorrow brings profit with it*, ok?
6. **Homer:** *You can't fire the players, so you fire the mascot!* - You make me sick (7F05)	أ أ. فهمتك. مش قادر على الحمار فبتتشطر ع البردعه دى مش أصول	Ah, I get it. *You can't deal with the donkey, so you take it on the saddle! That's not honourable!*
7. **Homer:** Well, *all's well that ends well.* Good night, Marge (8F14)	الحمد لله جت سليمه . تصبحى على خير Than.	*Thank God no harm is done!* Good night.
8. **Marge:** Well ... the moral is, *the squeaky wheel gets the grease* (Y2 7F22)	كويس..يبقى المعنى هوّ، اللى صوته عالى يكسب الغالى	Well, the idea is *who shouts the loudest wins the finest.*
9. **Homer:** It sounds like a *pretty dumb* idea to me. (8F23)	بص، أ، ف رأيى أنها فكره نص كم	Look! I think it's *not a good idea.*
10. **Mr Burns:** 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* (8F09)	سماوى، باقرب صحابى منى و باخلى أعدائى أقرب حيستعيد ثقته بنفسه مع مرور الشهور و السنين، من غير مايخد باله ان السيف يفضل متعلق فوق دماغه و بعدها فجأة ف يوم و هوّ 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 ... *the sword is hanging over his head* 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, 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 رباح

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 سليمه

The squeaky wheel gets the grease (example 8) اللى صوته عالى يكسب الغالى

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 and better 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 رأيى أنها فكره نص كم (*Look! I think it is (half-sleeve) not a good idea*).

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.*
>
> سماوى، باقرب صحابى منى و باخلى أعدائى أقرب حيستعيد ثقته بنفسه مع مرور الشهور و السنين، من غير ماياخد باله ان 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.

6.4.3 Local expressions

This section presents examples of how Hosny localised certain English expressions into the Egyptian vernacular. In these instances, as illustrated in Table 13, both the American and Arab cultures share very similar perspectives on certain things.

Table 13 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. مايضترش أن الواحد يمشى حاله شويه	Look Badr, my son, it doesn't hurt that *one does what it takes to sort things out.*
2. **Homer:** Tomorrow, how about making *your patented pork chops*	باقول بكره بالليل، ماتعملينا ريش ضانى من بتاعة المرحومة أمى؟	I say, how about making us some *lamb chops like those mum used to*

(7F09)		*make?*
3. Man 1: Oh, thank you Mr Burns. *We are so glad we invited you* (7G04)	شكرا يا 'محروقى ' بيه. دى منوره بوجودك	Thanks Mahruqy Bey. *The house is lit by your presence.*
4. Marge: *Thank God* for Homer's Christmas bonus (7G08)	البركة بقى ف العلاوة بتاعة عمر	*The blessing* is in Homer's bonus.

Although it could be argued that the examples provided in Table 13 reflect the translation strategies adopted by the translator. However, I am purely analyzing it to uncover the underpinning ideological motive that led the translator to opt for such strategy. 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*' 'مايضترش أن الواحد يمشّى حاله شويه' (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 ' ماتعملينا ريش ضانى من بتاعة المرحومة أمى؟' (How about making us some *lamb chops like those 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 ' دى منوره بوجودك' (*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.

6.4.4 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 Consortium[43] (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 14 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. Following the table is an analysis of the expressions and their translation.

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[43] 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).

Table 14 Examples of newly coined expressions

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Homer: *D'oh!*	اه، أوو	*Aah! Ooh!*
Here, Bart-a-saurus (7F08)	بكل سرور يا مفترس	*Gladly you beast!*
Same as usual. *Perfectomundo* (7F06)	زى العادة. فل و قشطه	*As usual, Jasmine and cream?*
Hey, Bartely-boobely. *Care for a steakarooni?*	أيوه يا بدر البدور، تاكل لحمه مشويه؟	*Yeah Badr elbadur! You want grilled meat?*
Bart: *Sounds scrum-diddley-umptious, dear old duddely-doodely.* (7F20)	فكره مفتكسه قوى يا حلو انت يا عمورى	*It's a beasty idea you sweet Ammory!*
2. Bart: *Ay, caramba!* (7G08)	يادى الكارثة	*What a disaster!*
	يادى الكارثه يالهوى	
Whoa mama!	تعاليلى يا أمه	*Mum! Help me!*
Don't have a cow, Dad (7F12)	أهده يا بابا	*Calm down dad. Take it easy.*
	ماتعملش ف نفسك كدا	
Eat my shorts (8F15)	دمك يلطش	*Humourous*
	إلحس قفاك	*Lick the back of your head..*
3. Flanders: Yes, *indeedly-doodly* (7G09)	عشان نتفرج و نتكيف	To *watch and chill.*
You have yourself a bet, you jackaninny (7G04)	و أنت كمان بالمثل و حتجيبه لنفسك	*The same to you and you bring it on to yourself.*
how-doodlie-do (7G02)		
Friday, I'm saying *toodle-loo...to the pharmaceutical game* (8F23)	لأنى من النهارده، حاقول باى باى لشغل الموظفين.	*Because as from today, I say bye-bye to staff work.*
Absitively posolutely (8F23)	انتظار العربيه علينا	*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. هديه مافيش زيها و لا تخطر على بال حد. هديه 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 'أوو' or 'أه' (*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'.

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 ' يادى الكارثة، يادى الكارثه يالهوى، تعاليلى يا أمه ، يالهوى' (*What a disaster! Mum! Help me!*). Occasionally, '*يالهوى*' (*ya lahwi*), 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، إلحس 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 ف نفسك كدا، 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 tmesis[44] 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.

6.4.5 Concluding remarks about linguistic manipulation

The previous section examined the rendering of an array of linguistic and extra-linguistic units, such as idioms and puns, 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 Hosny, who completely overlooked such components.

The next section gives a detailed account on coping with and overcoming socio-cultural issues posed by *The Simpsons* and the extent to which Hosny succeeded in delivering satisfactory equivalents.

6.5 Socio-cultural issues

Of the total examples extracted (102), almost a third (28%) were substituted as discussed below in sections 6.5.1 to 6.5.5. Other examples in sections 6.5.2 and 6.6.5, which were not substituted, were toned down (59) (16%).

6.5.1 Western cultural references

Whitman Linsen (1992) argues that translating culture-specific content is very intricate. In addition to dealing with patrons and censorship issues, the translator needs to make well-informed decisions in order to make culturally foreign, and at times completely alien, material clear to the target audience. Things that are taken for

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[44] 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*).

granted by the original audience belonging to homogenous linguistic and cultural communities, which in turn shape their moral values, political affiliation, identity and aesthetic tastes, all have to be carefully analysed and adequately rendered to conform to the target audience's own setting. This is because, as Whitman Linsen suggests, when the target audience is exposed to a foreign film 'the threads interwoven in the particular socio-cultural skein have to be rewound for those coming from different backgrounds' (1992, p. 125). Table 15 cites samples of Western cultural references that could be problematic for the Arabic translator.

Table 15 Examples of Western cultural references

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Barney:** Hi, Estelle? Will you go to *the prom* with me (7F12)	أهلا سامية، تتمشى ف الجنينة معايا؟	Hi Samia, care to *walk with me in the garden*?
2. **Grampa:** We never danced *the hootchy-koo* either (7F11)	وهو احنا عمرنا رقصنا بلدى يعنى.عايز تقول ايه؟	We have never tried the *folk dance.* What are you driving at?
3. **Marge:** Homer, is this some kind of *stag-party*? (7G10)	عمر، دى حفلة توديع العزوبية؟	Omar, is this a *celibacy-farewell party*?
4. **Homer:** Oh, I went to thousands of *heavy metal concerts* ... and it never hurt me (8F21)	يا منى، ماانا رحت مليون حفلة موسيقى شبابية و ماحصليش حاجة	Mona, I have been to a million of *youth concerts* and nothing happened to me.
5. **Homer:** Are you nuts? That's *the Super Bowl*. How about the Sunday after that (8F12)	برعى انت عبيط؟دا نهائى الدورى.ايه رايك الحد اللى بعده؟	Burai, are you stupid? It's the *championship final*. How about the Sunday after?
6. **Kent:** Thanks for your help. This reporter smells another *Emmy* (7F07)	شكرا على المساعدة يا رجالة. البرنامج بتاع النهارده كان حلو قوى	Thanks for the help guys. Today's *programme* was fantastic.
7. **Kids:** *Trick or treat*, man. (8F02)	يا حلاوة يا شقاوة	*Sweets or kicks*
8. **Dr. Hibbert:** I won't show the horrors of our *Three Stooges* ward (7F06)	و مش حاحتاج أوريلك باقى الحالات المرعبة اللى عندنا	I need not show you the other *horrible things we have.*
9. **Bart:** *Mom and Dad have been kissing* (7F02)	ماما و بابا رجعوا يحبوا بعض تانى	Mum and dad *love each other once again*
10. **Bart:** He has *a girlfriend*. **Marge:** Milhouse? **Bart:** Yeah. *All they do is kiss.* **Marge:** How cute. They don't open their mouths, do they? (8F22)	أصله مصاحب بنت ملوانى؟ أيوه..و طول الوقت باصين ف السقف لطيف قوى. بيبصوا فى السقف؟	He *befriended a girl* Milawany? Yeah! And all the time *they look at the ceiling* How nice! *They look at the ceiling?*

As discussed in Section 6.4.3, *The Simpsons* employed a large collection of cultural references over its broadcast years, so much so that such references have become an essential component of humour and satire in the show. While the allusion of *Itchy*

and Scratchy to *Tom and Jerry* is easily grasped by children, many references require in-depth familiarity with cultural issues and a good grounding in inter-textual references.

Since it is quite difficult for the Arab audience, especially those with little exposure to Western culture, to make a connection between various source cultural references, I decided to analyse only the translation of elements specific to the American (US) culture, excluding other cultures' references.

Certain references were relatively difficult to translate because they have no equivalence in the Arab society, such as 'going to the prom', 'stag-party', 'the Emmy', and the 'Super Bowl'. Hosny eliminated any reference to going to the prom ball, as this indicates teenage courting, mixed partying and the dangers such practices pose to society. He simply referred to it as 'تتمشى ف الجنينة معايا' (*walk with me in the garden*). He translated '*stag party*' as it is understood in Western culture 'حفلة توديع العزوبية' (*celibacy-farewell party*); however, such an event does not officially exist in the Arab society; neither does 'trick or treat' 'يا حلاوة يا شقاوة' (*sweets or kicks*). As for the 'Super Bowl', he substituted it with 'نهائى الدورى' (*the championship final*) since American football is virtually unknown to the Arab audience.

While the '*hootchy-koo*[45] dance was rendered as 'رقص بلدى' (*belly dance*), keeping the exoticness of the original, '*heavy metal concerts*', whose words and routine style are associated with masculinity, was rendered as 'حفلة موسيقى شبابية' (*youth concerts*), indicating that the youth of today are more inclined towards proving their manliness than past generations.

One of the most problematic references Hosny had to contend with is allusion to anything that has a sexual connotation (this is discussed in more detail in Section 6.5.5). Kissing in public or in front of children, which is considered normal practice in Western societies, is seen as lewd conduct and something that only married people can do in the privacy of their bedrooms, and children should never be exposed to it. Bart, dreading the loss of some of the quality time he usually has with his friend, tells

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[45] The *Hoochie coochie*, also spelt *(hootchy kootchy)*, is a deliberately sensual form of belly dance, typically performed as part of a carnival. It is performed by women of (or presented as having) an Eastern European gypsy heritage (*American Heritage Dictionary 4*).

his mother that Milhouse 'has a *girlfriend*' 'بنت مصاحب' (*he befriended a girl*) and that '*all they do is kiss*' 'طول الوقت باصين ف السقف' (*all the time they look at the ceiling*). Marge, intrigued, says 'they *don't open their mouths do they?*' 'بيصصوا فى السقف؟' (*They look at the ceiling?*). As we can see, reference to kissing and the manner in which Milhouse and his girlfriend practise has been equated with gazing at the ceiling. This did not pose a contradiction in the narrative, since there were no visual scenes of the actual kissing.

Table 16 Examples of references to certain Western traditions and beliefs

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Marge**: Hello, everyone. You know, *Halloween* is a strange holiday. I don't understand it. *Kids worshiping ghosts, pretending to be devils.* Oooh! Things on TV that are completely inappropriate for younger viewers. *(7F04)*	أهلا بيكم. عيد 'الأشباح المضحكه' دا غريب جدا. و أنا شخصياً مش فاهماه خالص. الأطفال بيحبوا الأشباح و بيعملوا نفسهم عفاريت و التليفزيون بيعرض حاجات مش مناسبه أبداً للصغيرين.	Hello! This '*funny ghost*' holiday is very strange. Personally, I don't understand it at all. *Kids like ghosts and pretend to be demons!* TV shows things that are not suitable for kids at all!
2. **Gypsy**: Chief Wiggum, *I am merely a conduit for the spirits. Willie Nelson* will astound his fans...by swimming the English Channel *(8F03)*	حضرة الظابط. اللى بييجى قدامى باقول عليه (تشهق) ألفريد نوبل حيعمل جايزه كبيره قوى للمخترعين.	Officer, *whatever comes before me I will tell* (gasping) *Alfred Nobel* will offer a very big prize for inventors.

As with religious references, Western traditions and customs have undergone a complete transformation. Example 1, from the 'Tree-house of Horror' (7F04), is full of references specific to Western culture. This episode, which draws on many other horror movies like *Casper: the Friendly Ghost, Psycho, The Exorcist,* and *Adam's Family,* celebrates Halloween, an alien concept to the Arab audience. Although the translator tried to find something equivalent for Halloween in Arabic culture by using 'عيد الأشباح المضحكه' (*Fiesta of the funny ghosts*), such a fiesta is non-existent in the Arab World, although many people believe in the existence of ghosts. Expanding on the title, by explaining what the event is about, makes it easier for the audience to understand the theme of the episode.

The most problematic reference in this example, however, is '*Kids worshiping ghosts, pretending to be devils*'. Worshipping anything other than Allah is forbidden in Islam; it is considered *shirk* (polytheism), and any reference made to that effect is considered gross blasphemy and will put one's life in jeopardy. Hosny is well aware of this fact and hence rendered this as 'الأطفال بيحبوا الأشباح وبيعملوا نفسهم عفاريت' '*Kids like ghosts and pretend to be demons*'. Eliminating the religious element from the

text and substituting it with a much softer and more acceptable notion made the target text more credible, albeit the notion of demons is still not something people discuss casually.

Another issue that is considered taboo and looked upon as un-Islamic practice is one's claim to be in contact with spirits, let alone being a conduit of spirits, (example 2). When Chief Wiggum, heading a police man-hunt mission in a desperate attempt to locate the body of the missing Principal Skinner, thought to be kidnapped and probably killed by the Mafia, resorted to a gypsy for assistance, he gave her a photograph of the principal and the following exchange took place:

> Gypsy: (roaming her hands over a picture of Skinner) 'I see wedding bells for
> Vanna White and Teddy Kennedy.'
> Wiggum: 'Please, Princess Opal, if we could just stick to Principal Skinner.'
> Gypsy: 'Chief Wiggum, I am merely a conduit for the spirits.'

Being able to utilise one's body as a channel to communicate with spirits of the dead or for healing matters is an old claim. The *medium* is said to possess the ability to establish contact with spirits in the *other world* and acquire information about certain people or things. This practice is prohibited in Islam and anyone found guilty could face dire consequences. The South American Incan tradition uses the shamanic healing technique in a slightly different way; it claims the ability to communicate with a *higher power* to heal the luminous energy field of the sick person.

The translator rendered the sentence in quite a vague manner. By saying ' اللى بييجى قدامى باقول عليه' (*whatever comes before me, I will tell*), the matter is open for interpretation. It is clear, however, that it is more of a *clairvoyance* reference than *spirit channelling*. Tarot, palm and cup readings are quite rampant in certain countries of the Arab World, like Egypt and Morocco, and it is more tolerated than claims of contacting spirits or Jin.

6.5.2 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 17 presents examples of rude language used in the Arabic dubbed version.

Table 17 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	*Tail wagging and shoe polishing is good for getting things done.*
2. **Box**: Shut up! Shut up! *Kiss my butt!* Go to hell (8F12)	اكتم .اكتم.بوس رجلي اكتم.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 تطلع 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)	دلوقتى إقعد. قلت اقعد. آ. إمشى. شم أثر الكلب ده شفتى عمل كل اللى قلتله 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 لينا 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.*	صبح الخير، دا معاد الصحيان صحيان؟ الساعة اتنين الصبح آسفين 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 الضايع دا حنلاقيه 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!

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 17

demonstrate. Expressions like 'butt kisser', 'kiss my butt', 'sniff that other dog's butt' and 'who the hell are you' were translated to 'ثم أثر الكلب ده' ، 'بوس رجلى' ، 'تمشية حال' 'وانت تطلع مين؟' (getting things done, kiss my foot, sniff this dog's trail, who are you?); a very 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 'يا بابا، حبك لينا خلاك تهين كرامتك', 'آسفين يا كابتن'، 'ثمشون عمر، المأسوف على شبابه،' (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 result 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 (إبن زنا) and (إبن الكلبة), although in colloquial Arabic they bear a stronger insulting power, Hosny translated '*bastard*' to 'الصايع' (loser) and '*son of a bitch*' to 'يا كلب يا عفريت' (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, as discussed in Section 6.6.

6.5.3 Gender issues

> Gender stereotypes are those negative or positive assumptions and generalisations people have about male and female differences, attributes and the *presumed* roles of each gender. By applying these assumptions, we perpetuate stereotypes.

In *The Simpsons*, females are portrayed as bored or boring housewives or superficial bimbos always competing for the attention of men and worrying about their image. They are also depicted as inferior to men in almost every aspect of life except for

rearing children. Equally, certain types of men have not been spared social stereotyping; they are represented as a beer-loving, family-neglecting, foul-mouthed and seldom-happy-with-their-lives 'bunch of losers' who take Moe's tavern as refuge from life's hardships.

Considerations of gender are significant markers which influence social interaction and translate directly into economic and power differentials in the overwhelming majority of Arab countries. While men dominate the external sphere of society, women's status is high in the family, particularly in their roles as mothers, wives and sisters. However, the old age gender stereotypes are rampant in the Arab society, albeit to varying degrees; the further East one goes in the Arab World, the more fossilised the stereotypes are. Although a considerable number of women demonstrate high levels of success in many areas of society such as academia, business and literary production, their accomplishments tend to go unnoticed and they are excluded from most aspects of public life. This is a reflection of the typical stereotypes society at large holds on women, who are seen as *second rank soldiers* rather than *equal senior officers*. Table 18 provides a few examples that exhibit men's typical stereotyping of women.

Table 18 Examples of gender related references

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Ex. wife 1**: He had *some bimbo* in Kansas City (7F05)	و بعدها يختى لقيته ماشى مع واحدة تافهة ف بلد تانيه	Then, I found him with *another useless* one in another town.
2. **Homer**: See, I'm trying to teach my son here about *treating women as objects* (7G10)	بص، أنا عايز اعلم ابنى ازاى يعامل الستات باحترام	Look, I want to teach my son *how to treat women with respect*.
3. **Bart**: What's with *the skirt*? (8F22)	ايه، ليه جايب معاك بنت؟	What! Why did you bring *a girl* with you?
4. **Homer**: *You express yourself in the home you keep and the food you serve* (7F01)	مانتى حتعبرى عن رأيك ف البيت اللى حتوضبيه و الأكل اللى حتقدميه	You will *express your opinion through keeping the house and serving food!*
5. **Homer**: *As the pants-wearer of* this house ... I get the first wish (8F02)	لا أنت و لا هيِّ بصنتى أكبر راس هنا. أول أمنية ليّا	Neither of you! *As the boss here*, the first wish is mine.
6. **Mr Burns**: A bit overly familiar, but I'll allow it. I took in a movie. A piece of filth featuring a *blonde harlot* ... who spent half the film naked as a *jaybird* (8F04)	أيوه، أنت خدت عليا قوى، بس حاسمحلك. اتفرجت على فيلم. تافه و مايساويش بصلة. البطلة بتاعته كانت شقرا فضلت نص الوقت عمالة تلف و تدور زى الدره المشوى	Yes, overly familiar, but will forgive you. I watched *a stupid and worthless movie*. The heroine is a blonde who was tossing and turning like *'toasted corn on a cub'*.
7. **Player**: Check out the *mature quail* heading over (7F05)	يا جمال، شايف الفرخة العتاقى اللى جاية دى	Jamal, you see that *mature hen* coming our way?

8. **Young Selma:** *Women can't be astronauts.* **Young Marge:** Why not? **Young Patty:** *They distract the men ... so they wouldn't keep their minds on the road.* (8F15)	الستات مينفعوش فى الفضاء ليه لأ؟ حيشوشرروا على رواد الفضاء ويخلوهم مايركزوش فى السواقة	Women *won't do in space* Why not? They will *distract the astronauts, so they won't focus on driving!*

Certain universal stereotypes, like *the woman's place is at home* and *the man is boss*, as examples 4 and 5 illustrate: 'you express yourself in the home you keep and the food you serve' and 'as the pants-wearer of this house ...', are rendered in the same manner into Arabic, as this is seen as a normal and accepted practice within Arab societies, regardless how liberal the man claims to be. By giving the chance to his wife to express her opinion by being the 'kitchen master', (or mistress, to apply the stereotype), Homer undermines Marge's opinion on important matters just for being a woman. Hosny's rendering ' ماانتى حتعبرى عن رأيك ف البيت اللى حتوضبيه والأكل اللى حتقدميه' (You will express your opinion through keeping the house and serving food!) and 'بصفتى أكبر راس هنا ' (As the oldest here) advocates the same understanding of a man's perception of his other half.

Although the woman ought to be revered, as per the teachings of Islam, she is not treated as an equal in the Arab World. Ironically, as hypocritical as it may sound, men's rhetoric calls for respecting and treating women as *diamonds and pearls*, an expression often used in religious sermons. Hosny's rendering of example 2 reflects this attitude by giving an opposite meaning of the original 'I'm trying to teach my son here about *treating women as objects*' 'أنا عايز اعلم ابنى ازاى يعامل الستات باحترام' (I want to teach my son *how to treat women with respect).*

Examples 1, 3, and 7 provide a clear picture of how women are perceived by men, especially in the West; they are often referred to as chicks, '*quails*' (الفرخة) and '*skirts*' etc, and the '*blonde*'(شقرا) is thought of as dumb and a '*bimbo*' (تافهة), good for nothing but fun. Hines (1994, p. 295) argues that: 'There is a consistent, widespread, largely, unconscious and undocumented metaphor in English equating women as sex objects with desserts, manifested both in linguistic expressions (such as *cheesecake, cookie, tart*, etc)' (emphasis original).

These demeaning perceptions and derogatory labels demonstrate men's age-old endeavour to manipulate and undermine his opposite gender. It is worth noting that a

blonde woman has her hair to thank for being highly sought after by Arab men; this is by no means out of respect, but out of lust and confirmation of the *opposites attract* rule.

The woman is also seen as the one to blame even for men's carelessness and mistakes as example 8 shows:

Young Selma: Women can't be astronauts.

Young Marge: Why not?

Young Patty: They distract the men ... so they wouldn't keep their minds on the road.

ـالستات مينفعوش فى الفضاء

ـليه لأ؟

ـحيشوشروا على رواد الفضاء ويخلوهم مايركزوش فى السواقة

(Women won't do in space)

(Why not?)

(They will distract the astronauts, so they won't focus on driving!)

Although this declaration comes from a woman, it is confirmation that men, by nature, are incapable of concentrating in the presence of women and consequently blame them for such weakness.

As demonstrated in this section, universal gender stereotypes are rampant in the Arab society and women seem to bear most of the brunt of callous and insensitive attitudes and perceptions of men despite Islamic teachings and the much boasted about Arab saying 'وراء كل رجل عظيم امرأة' *(behind the success of every great man there is a woman)*.

6.5.4 Racial issues

The show uses its characters to portray a range of stereotypes that exist within the American society, and race is prominent in every episode. The characters of the Mexican Bee, Willy, and Apu, for example, are used to represent Latino, Scottish and Asian/Middle Eastern race stereotypes. While the Mexican Bee, the actor on a Spanish TV channel, is always droning around in his absurd bee outfit, Willy, the Scott, is perceived as the strong man always ready for digging and *donkey work*. Apu, the Indian Kwik-E-Mart convenience-store owner, on the other hand, sells products with passed use-by-dates at high prices, speaks with a strong accent and

looks down on his customers. These portrayals send signals that make the viewer believe that Latinos are an absurd race not to be taken seriously, the Scottish are brainless and only fit for physical work, and Asians are rude convenience-store and petrol-station owners. The makers of *The Simpsons* cleverly deploy Americans' secret assumptions about various races to develop and exemplify characteristics of any particular race. Although the race references are largely construed through image portrayal, there are ample incidents when characters voice their racial remarks openly, as the excerpts in Table 19 illustrate.

Table 19 Examples of racially related references

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Marge:** Hmm ... Hostage negotiations. Homer: Listen, *Tabbouleh*, we're ignoring all your demands. What do you say to that? (8F22)	آه، المفاوضات مع المجرمين إسمع يا دهشوري، احنا رافضيين كل طلباتك. إيه رأيك بقى دلوقتي؟	Ah! Negotiations with criminals. *Listen Dahshury, we don't accept your demands. Now, what do you think about that?*
2. **Mr Burns:** Damnation! Find me some good players, living players. Scour the professional ranks, the American League, the National League ... *the Negro leagues* (8F13)	على بختي. طيب، شوفلي لعيبة كويسة. عايشين إقلب إتحاد الكورة، نقابة اللاعبين، جمعيات الزنوج	My bad luck! Ok, get me some good living players. Scour the football federation, players and *Negros' associations.*
3. **Troy:** Our tour starts in your own room ... where Relaxo-vision offers you the latest Hollywood hits ... and after midnight ... the finest 'R' rated movies Europe has to offer. (8F14)	جولتنا تبتدى من حجراتكم الخاصة حيث متعة مشاهدة أحدث أفلام هولي وود. و بعد نص الليل مع أرقى الأفلام الثقافية اللى بتنتجها أوروبا.	Our tour starts in your own room where you can see the latest Hollywood movies and after mid night the best *educational films produced in Europe.*

When Lisa summarises an article she read in a magazine, which claims that one 'can lose weight subliminally. An idea is subtly implanted in your head without your knowing it. You listen to tapes while you sleep. As you hear New Age music, a powerful message goes to your brain telling you to eat less', Homer asks Marge's opinion: 'Lose weight and listen to New Age music? Wow! What do you think, Marge?' To which she replies: 'Oh, Homer, I love you just the way you are. Lisa, what's that number?'

After calling the hotline number, Marge is presented with few tape options: 'Would he like to lose weight, stop smoking, learn the state capitals, or master hostage negotiations? The operator said. After a few hesitating moments, Marge, mysteriously, decided on 'hostage negotiations'. Homer, hearing his wife on the phone, started the negotiation process: 'Listen, *Tabbouleh*, we're ignoring all your

demands. What do you say to that?' The key word here is '*Tabbouleh*', as it refers to a Middle Eastern appetiser. Thanks to the media, people from the Middle East are equated with violence and acts of terrorism, especially since 9/11, although this episode, (*Bart's friend falls in love*), was aired in 1994. Homer used '*Tabbouleh*' as a metaphor to refer to the terrorists and hostage takers he is dealing with. Hosny, being an Arab, did not convey the racial stereotype as it is disparaging and self-incriminating, ؟'إسمع يا دهشوري،احنا رافضيين كل طلباتك. إيه رأيك بقى دلوقتى؟' (*Listen Dahshury, we don't accept your demands. Now, what do you think about that?*).

The second example typifies the racist stereotype some people have about black people. Mr Burns was challenged by his friend Ari, another power plant owner, to a one million dollar bet that his football team would crash Mr Burns' old and slothful 'bunch of bums'. When Smithers confirms that indeed the team stands no chance of winning, Mr Burns, seeking to revamp the squad, orders him: 'Find me some good players, living players. Scour the professional ranks, the American League, the National League ... *the Negro leagues*'. Black players are known for their skills in the game; however, the derogatory '*Negro*', black in Spanish, is associated with a long history of slavery, segregation and discrimination. Its use nowadays is considered politically incorrect and racist. Interestingly, Hosny used the exact Arabic equivalent 'الزنوج', an old Arabic word hardly used in a society that considers absolute equality between people, regardless of race or colour, a God-given right, as the prophet Mohammed said: 'Truly, the most honourable person in the Sight of Your Lord, the Almighty Allah, is the most pious among you. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab. There is no superiority for a non-Arab over an Arab. There is no superiority for a red (race) person over a white person. Likewise, there is no superiority of a white over a red (race) person except for the level of piety (mindfulness of God, the Almighty Allah in life and practices)' [46]. Maybe Hosny's decision was based on being adamant in exposing America's fake claims of equality, justice and civility, as discussed in Section 6.3.1.3.

Another typical stereotype is the widespread perception Americans have about Europeans being sex maniacs whose pornographic industry is part and parcel of their cultural identity. Once stressed, Marge decided to take a break from her family and

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[46] Hadith No: 411 narrated in Musnad Ahmed

go on a vacation by herself, leaving frantic Homer behind to get a taste of what it means to be a housewife (husband). The tour operator announces that: 'Our tour starts in your own room ... where Relaxo-vision offers you the latest Hollywood hits ... and after midnight ... the finest "*R*" *rated movies Europe has to offer.*' Movies classified as 'R' are not suitable for the under 18s, as they have adult content, which could be extreme violence, horror or explicit sexual activity. Being made in Europe, and, as the suggestive operator's tone alludes, the movies in question are pornographic. Hosny renders the explicit sexual connotation with *educational material* 'و بعد نص الليل مع أرقى الأفلام الثقافية اللى بتنتجها أوروبا' (and after mid night *the best educational films*[47] *produced in Europe)*; however, the content is still open to interpretation.

Dealing with stereotypes is a complex process for translators as this phenomenon has broad cultural significance for each society. Although stereotypes are discouraged in the Arab World, mainly because of religious teachings, stereotyping is still widespread. However, due to the stringent guidelines imposed on the translator and the producer, the transfer of Western labels in *The Simpsons* to Arab viewers is very limited.

6.5.5 Nudity and sexual references

In its early years *The Simpsons* was considered a family show with mild sexual overtones and violence. However, as the seasons went by, the show steered away from its original agenda of being a family-entertainment animation to a more adult-oriented product. Sexual references became an integral part of the show; visual scenes and sexual innuendos became a common occurrence. An example of explicit visual scenes is shown in the *Homer of Saville* episode (JABF18), in which Homer discovers the talent of opera singing, when a young and seductive woman proposed to be his fan club manager; however, her real intentions were to seduce him. When things progressed, under the spell of soft music, she stood

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[47] In Egyptian Arabic, this reffers to pornographic films. However, literally, it means educational films, and is understood so by most non Egyptians.

in front of him suggestively, unzipped her leather rubber-suit and exposed her naked body. Although viewers could not see the front of her body, the vivid imagination could. Despite this scene, linguistic and acoustic references to sex and nudity are used in the show more than visual ones, and many characters are involved in generating various innuendoes. Table 20 illustrates this point.

Table 20 Examples of sexual/nudity references

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Bart:** Like *strip poker* (7G08)	بيلعبوا سيجة	They play *Sija (Os and Xs game)*
2. **Bart:** But never a girl. What if I want to *strut around nude* (8F22)	أيوه،مافهمش و لا بنت. احنا ولاد و نحب نلعب براحتنا	Yes, not a single girl. We are boys and we *like to play at our leisure.*
3. **Mr Burns:** A bit overly familiar, but I'll allow it. I took in a movie. A piece of filth featuring a *blonde harlot ... who spent half the film naked as a jaybird* (8F04)	أيوه، أنت خدت عليا قوى، بس حاسمحلك. اتفرجت على فيلم. تافه و مايساويش بصلة. البطلة بتاعته كانت شقرا فضلت نص الوقت عمالة تلف و تدور زى الدرة المشوى	Yes, overly familiar, but will forgive you. I watched a stupid and worthless movie. The heroine is *a blonde who was tossing and turning like 'toasted corn on a cub'.*
4. **Otto:** No time, Bart Dude. My girlfriend's *dancing topless* at the airport bar (Y3 8F22)	أسف يا بدر البدور. ماينفعش لازم الحق اتفرج على الحلقة الأجنبية ف التليفزيون من اربعة و ربع لاربعة و تلت	I have to make it home in time to *watch this foreign episode on TV from 4:15 to 4:20*
5. **Bart:** Oh, fine. I'm tired of watching you two *lip wrestle.* There's plenty of other ways to be grossed out (8F22)	حلو قوى. أنا زهقت م الفرجة عليكم فيه حاجات تانية ممكن تسلينى ف البلد دى غيركم	Great! I am *bored of watching you.* There are other things that could entertain me in this town.
6. **Fat one:** *Your mother didn't think so* (7F12)	صاحبتك كانت عاجباها شقتى	*Your friend liked my apartment.*
7. **Gloria:** My name's Gloria. I'm here because Johnny ... *hasn't been able to cut it, man wise,* for some time. Not that I'd want his odour of sour defeat pressed against me (7F20)	أنا اسمى جلوريا. أنا جيت لأن جيمى مابيبطلش يتأمر عليا طول الوقت. و كمان بيزود ف الكلام و مابيعملش أى أحترام	My name is Gloria. I came because *Jimmy keeps bothering me, he says bad things and doesn't respect me.*
8. **Marge:** He's much happier at work. Just between us girls, *he hasn't been this frisky in years* (7F02)	بقى مبسوط أكتر ف شغله. صراحة بينى و بينكم يا بنات أنا، ماشفتوش مرح كده من سنين	He's much happier at work. Just between us girls, *I haven't seen him this happy for years.*

The Arab society is quite reserved and considers issues like sex strictly taboo; there is no sex education in schools and discussing the subject is deemed bad behaviour and immoral. *The Simpsons'* scenes with visual sexual references were censored in the Arabic version and verbal ones were manipulated so much so that any sexual innuendos were replaced with random expressions that fill the gap without ruining the flow of the story. The first four examples illustrate this point clearly; references to nudity, as in playing 'strip poker', 'strutting around naked' or 'dancing topless', were all either eliminated or replaced by something more culturally adequate like

'بيلعبوا سيجة' (playing Sija (Os and Xs game)), 'نحب نلعب براحتنا' (we like to play at our leisure) and 'لازم الحق اتفرج على الحلقة الأجنبية ف التليفزيون' (I have to make it home in time to watch the 'foreign' episode on TV) respectively. Interestingly, Hosny used an intriguing expression to render 'a blonde harlot ... who spent half the film *naked as a jaybird*', to 'بنت شقرا فضلت نص الوقت عمالة تلف و تدوور زى الدرة المشوى' (a blonde who was tossing and turning like toasted corn on a cub), leaving those with vivid imagination to figure out the implied message.

References with stronger sexual connotations, as in examples 5 to 8, received the same fate. In fact, they were thoroughly cleansed and coated with passive and simplistic linguistic formula to make the grade with MBC's gatekeepers. Bart's outburst at Milhouse's long kissing sessions with his newly found love: 'I'm tired of watching you two *lip wrestle*'; Fat one's implicit reference at being good in bed when his friend told him that he 'sucks at it', '*Your mother didn't think so*'; and Gloria and Marge's mixed fortunes about their partners performance, the first complaining that 'Johnny ... *hasn't been able to cut it, man wise*, for some time' and the second unable to contain her satisfaction: 'Just between us girls, *he hasn't been this frisky in years*' were translated to 'أنا زهقت م الفرجة عليكم' (I am bored of watching you), 'صاحبتك كانت عاجباها شقتى' (Your friend liked my apartment), 'جيمى مابيبطلش يتأمر عليا طول الوقت و كمان بيزود ف الكلام و مابيعملش أى أحترام' (Jimmy keeps bothering me. He says bad things and doesn't respect me) and 'صراحة بينى و بينكم يا بنات أنا, ماشفتوش مرح كده من سنين' (Just between us girls, I haven't seen him this happy for years).

As one expects, and as discussed at the beginning of this section, translating taboo issues into Arabic is a restricted area, as the back translation of these excerpts clearly exemplifies. Even reference to someone's mother having sex with someone could lead to serious fall-out, if not a brawl, between the ever macho Arab males. Consequently, Hosny, bearing this sensitivity in mind, used '*your friend*' instead of '*your mother*' to make sure the original message is not transmitted to the Arab audience (example 6).

6.5.6 References to violence

Strangling Bart occurs in almost every episode of *The Simpsons*, which has a penchant for depicting

violence, in its most gruesome forms in its *Itchy and Scratchy* cartoon. Homer's attempt to '*squeeze the life out*' of Bart has become tantamount to a difficult father and son relationship where failure to resolve issues results in violent action, usually perpetrated by Homer. However, visual acts of grisly violence are shown in Bart and Lisa's favourite animated cartoon, *Itchy and Scratchy*, which features two archenemies, a cat and a mouse, whose only purpose is to use the most horrific means to destroy one another. They tend to slice, dice, behead, stab and skewer each other in scenes filled with gratuitous pouring blood.

According to Kroeker (2009, p. 164), American children, with an average of 27 weekly hours of TV, are exposed to 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before even completing elementary schooling. Remarkably, most *Itchy and Scratchy* violent scenes were kept in *Al Shamshoon*.

I now turn to the verbal expressions of violence in the show and analyse how Hosny dealt with them. Out of the 6 examples, he toned down 2 (30%) and kept the original violent verbal depiction in the rest (70%).

Table 21 Examples of references related to violence

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Announcer**: It all comes down to this one play. If Washington scores, happy *fans will be looting ... and turning over cars in our nation's capital tonight* (8F12)	دلوقتى الموقف بقى حرج جدا، فاضل نقطة واحدة لو أتسجلت يكسب فريق واشنطن الكل هنا ف الملعب حابس أنفاسه	Now, it is a critical situation. Just one point and Washington wins. *Everyone in the stadium is on a cliff hanger.*
2. **Apu**: If you need money ... *you should have jammed a gun in my ribs* ... or inquire about my help wanted sign (8F06)	حلو، لو محتاج فلوس كان ممكن تهددنى بمسدس مية. أو مثلا، تشتغل معايا لأنى محتاج عامل	Fine, if you needed money you could have *threatened me with a water gun.* Or maybe you work with me because I need someone.
3. **Moe**: When I get you, *I'm gonna use your head for a bucket...and paint my house with your brains* (8F09)	يا ملعون، لما اعتر عليك حاعمل دماغك جردل و ادهن بمخك حيطان البيت	You wicked one! when I find you, *I will use your head for a bucket ... and paint my house with your brains.*
4. **Myers**: We figured he'd grab Itchy ... and *toss him in acid* (7F09)	قلنا ممكن يعنى يمسك مخربش و يحطه ف برميل كيماويات	We thought maybe he would catch Mkharbesh and *put him in a barrel of chemicals.*
5. **Sideshow Bob**: Bart, if I wanted to kill you ... *I'd have choked you as soon as I walked in* (8F20)	لو كنت عايز أعمل حاجة كنت قطعتك زى الفرخة ف اللحظة اللى دخلت فيها بيتكم	If I wanted to do something, *I would have cut you like a chicken* the moment you walked into your house.

Looking at the examples in Table 21, it seems that Hosny did not entirely opt for a censoring approach to violence. In examples 1 and 2, he chose not to convey the language that encourages bad behaviour or the use of guns. By rendering *'fans will be looting ... and turning over cars in our nation's capital tonight'* as ' الكل هنا ف الملعب حابس أنفاسه' (*Everyone in the stadium is on a cliff hanger*) and *'you should have jammed a gun in my ribs'* as 'كان ممكن تهددنى بمسدس مية' (*you could have threatened me with a water gun*), Hosny demonstrates the Arab society's abhorrence of hooliganism and street physical violence, which has marred sporting events, especially football games, in recent years.

In contrast to physical violence, verbal abusive and aggressive references seem to be regarded less of a real threat to a social homogeneous structure. Although the use of threatening language is highly discouraged, it is often not taken seriously, as it is considered venting steam rather than a genuine and hazardous threat. Perhaps this is why Hosny used expressions of violence, as graphic as those in the original, when he rendered 'When I get you, *I'm gonna use your head for a bucket ... and paint my house with your brains'* as 'لما اعتر عليك حاعمل دماغك جردل و ادهن بمخك حيطان البيت' (when I find you, *I will use your head for a bucket ... and paint my house with your brains*) and 'he'd grab Itchy ... *and toss him in acid'* as 'يمسك مخربش و يحطه ف برميل كيماويات' (he would catch Mkharbesh *and put him in a barrel of chemicals*).

Bearing in mind the humorous context in which these violent expressions are used and the fact that they are uttered by cartoon characters, Hosny argues that they do not pose as serious a danger to the audience as visually violent scenes do, as many instances of copycat violent incidents in America clearly demonstrate.

The following section presents one of the thorniest translation genres for AVT translators, that of translating humour and satire.

6.5.7 Satirical humour

Whitman-Linsen (1992, p.147) argues that: 'If film dubbing represents the quintessence of the art of translating, and the rendering of humour sets the highest hurdles within this film dubbing, then the translating of visually-linked humour tops the hierarchy of supreme difficulties'.

Satire, as defined by the *Oxford Dictionary*, is 'the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues'. What distinguishes satire from other forms of humour is the fact that it functions within the audience's pre-existing knowledge and established cultural awareness of particular information. It relies on the use of a range of registers of culturally specific commonalities in order to communicate and convey the desired message to the audience. This means that satirical humour can only be understood and have the desired effect if certain socio-cultural norms are shared. This is quite problematic because these norms differ between societies and cultures; thus translating it poses a great challenge, especially when coupled with visual images.

When dealing with satire, it is often up to the dubber to determine what could be considered humorous for the audience and how the desired reaction could be achieved without distorting the original message or the flow of the storyline in the dubbed version. This is by no means an easy task. Lopez (2002) argues that studies have established that the more extra-linguistically and culturally dependant a text is, the harder it is for a translator to convey faithfully. The translator aims to reconstruct the humour and satire to conform to their socio-cultural norms in order to be understood and accepted by the audience.

Satirical humour in *The Simpsons* originates from its being entrenched in the American society's popular culture as well as the attitudes of its central characters, who are often ambivalent towards, and incongruous regarding, socio-cultural and political issues. Thompson (2003) argues that *The Simpsons* uses a 'flurry of cultural references, intentionally inconsistent characterisation, and considerable self-reflexivity about television conventions and the status of the programme as a television show.' (pp. 139).

Indeed, *The Simpsons* uses satirical humour as a tool for social critique because it plays with the norms of society. To this effect, Bakhtin (1981) argues that humour and laughter are instrumental in social analysis and criticism, as they allow scrutiny of any social issue from a distance. This is achieved by 'drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out ... doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it' (p. 23).

As stated earlier, to understand extra-linguistic humour, particularly the satirical genre, the audience has to recognise it and be an interactive part of it. Consequently, successfully conveying the connotative load of any cultural specific reference embedded within it is a daunting task.

A variety of satirical-humour categories have been identified in *The Simpsons*; however, these categories represent by no means the entire spectrum of satire in the show. Due to the limited scope of this study only three categories are discussed in the following sections. It is noteworthy that the 79 examples of satire relating to corruption, the American intellect, and perception of the other, were all retained verbatim (100%). This is in line with Hosny's agenda to vilify America and its way of life.

6.5.7.1 Perception of the Other

Perpetuating stereotypes is often a show of humour, sarcasm, hate and discrimination, but many people take most stereotypes at face value and believe them to be a reflection of reality. The American perception of foreigners, or the Other, is generally understood as ill informed, judgmental and narrow-minded. Although America is an amalgam of various ethnicities, races and colours, it is perplexing to note how different races within the American society perceive the Other.

It is only fair to assume that other countries also have their share of stereotyping of foreigners. However, what *The Simpsons* portrays clearly reflects only those perceptions Americans have. For example, India is seen as the land of *cow worshipers and cheap labour*, the Middle East is considered the *bastion of terrorism and women's oppression*, and Africa is a massive *clinic of witchdoctors and a huge zoo with swamps full of exotic animals*. In a typical episode, 'Blame it on Lisa' (DABF10), Brazil is depicted as *a haven for crime, slums*, and Rio as a *brothel*. However, certain stereotypes seem to surface in times of crises more than others; as Gary Younge reported in the Guardian (2003) how the American press, from tabloids to the most respected newspapers, lashed out at the European-led opposition to America's war plans on Iraq. Such a stance was portrayed as 'not as a diplomatic position to be negotiated [but] as a *genetic weakness in the European mindset* which

makes them *reluctant to fight* wars and *incapable of winning* them [my emphasis]'. In *The Simpsons*, the French are referred to as '*cheese-eating surrender monkeys*', a phrase quoted from 'Round Springfield' (2F32) coined by the custodian of the Springfield elementary school, Groundskeeper Willy, who happened to be a Scottish immigrant himself. While teaching a French class, Willy greets his student saying: 'bonjour, you cheese-eating surrender monkeys!'; a satirical and insulting phrase, referring to the 'collaborationist Vichy France regime's surrender in World War II' (simpsons.wikia.com).

Asians had their share of ridicule too. In 'Last exit to Springfield' (9F15), Mr Burns' grandfather refers to the Japanese as '*sandal-wearing goldfish tenders*'.

Table 22 Example of stereotyping the foreigner

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Apu**: Homer, *you are asleep at your post! Go change the expiration dates ... on the dairy products* (8F06)	عمر، انت نايم ف الشغل. روح غير تاريخ الصلاحية على منتجات الحليب	Omar, *you are sleeping on duty. Go and change the expiry date on milk products.*

The portrayal of Apu, the Kwik-E-Mart proprietor, is highly discriminatory, stereotyped and smacks of racism. He is depicted as an Indian immigrant with a strong accent, works 18-hour daily shifts, met his wife through an arranged marriage and has eight children. However, the dangerous depiction of Apu is that he is a *dishonest* person who sells spoiled products and charges ridiculous prices. This is clearly marked in Table 22, where Apu tells Homer, who in desperation worked for him for a day, '*you are asleep at your post! Go change the expiration dates ... on the dairy products*' 'عمر، انت نايم ف الشغل. روح غير تاريخ الصلاحية على منتجات الحليب' (*Omar, you are sleeping on duty. Go and change the expiry date on milk products*). Interestingly, Hosny translated the text literally, either unaware of the negative stereotype or to keep his own depiction of the Sudanese character, who played Apu, in the same image as in the original.

It is worth noting that, in contrast to Hosny's version, the Sudanese are stereotyped by many Arabs as lazy, fun loving and generally cool, honest and nice people. Apu's depiction as a dishonest American of foreign origin, albeit in a humorous and

cartoony style, is observed by viewers, young children and adults alike, and applied towards those they meet in real-life. This is due to the misrepresentation of the Other and its propagation in the media, which has become the source of *the gospel truth* in the minds of many in the West. Hosny might have overlooked the serious implications such stereotyping could have on society's homogeny, but in so doing he exposed the ills of the American society he intended to reveal to the world, as discussed in Section 6.3.1.3. This too is reflected by the script writers of *The Simpsons,* who seem to 'sympathize with the plight of immigrants at the hands of intolerant, bigoted and often-ignorant American-born citizens' as Frank G. Sterle, Jr. (2011) argues. A hard working family man trying to make ends meet in such cruel environment, Apu, whose store is robbed by armed bandits frequently, keeps repeating his memorable line: 'I have asked you nicely not to mangle my merchandise. You leave me no choice but to ... ask you nicely again.'

6.5.7.2 Corruption

Corruption is one of the modern age's greatest challenges to social equality and economic prosperity across the world. It is a non-discriminatory disease that decays political, social and government institutions. *The Simpsons* brings to the fore the ugly side of modern America, exposing an extensive and pervasive culture of corruption that afflicts America's institutions. It is so widely spread and systemically entrenched that it is beyond denigration. Even when a corrupt official is caught red handed, rarely does the legal system issue an arrest warrant, as Bill Clinton's sex scandal attests.

In this regard, *The Simpsons'* writers try to fight corruption, rampant within the American institutions, using satire as a means to both expose and educate, as the examples in Table 23 illustrate.

Table 23 Examples of corruption within American institutions

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. Lisa: The police will catch you. Bart: *The police couldn't catch a cold.* (8F11)	البوليس حيمسكك عاجلا أم أجلا يمسكني؟ (صوت) ماحدش ماسك عليا فلة	The police will catch you sooner or later. *Catch me? No one ever can.*

2. Mr Burns' lawyer: *My client's instructed me to remind you how rich he is ... and that he's not like other men.* **Mr Burns:** *I should be able to run over as many kids as I want!* Judge: I warn you, if you continue to disrupt the court ... I'll cite you for contempt. **Mr Burns:** *You wouldn't dare!* Judge: *Well, no, I guess I wouldn't.* (7F10)	جنابك، موكلى كلفنى افكر المحكمة قد ايه هو غنى و مهم و انه مش زى باقى الخلق مفروض أنى أدوس ولاد الناس زى ماحب استاذ محروقى، أنا باحذرك لو استمريت تقاطع بالطريقة دى حاتهمك بازدراء المحكمة مش حتجرؤ معقول، حاعديهالك	Sir, My client's instructed me to remind you how rich he is ... and that he's not like other men. I should be able to run over as many kids as I want! I warn you, if you continue to disrupt the court ... I'll cite you for contempt. You wouldn't dare! Reasonable. I let you off.
3. Hutz: Yes, Harvard, Yale, MIT, Oxford, the Sorbonne, the Louvre. Oh, well. *Mr Simpson, the state bar forbids me ... from promising you a big cash settlement. But just between you and me, I promise you ... a big cash settlement. My fee is 50 per cent.* **Homer:** 50 per cent? **Hutz:** You'll be getting more than a lawyer! You'll also get this faux pearl necklace ... a $99 value, as our gift. (7F10)	أه.. هارفارد. يل، مت، اوكسفورد، السوربون، اللوفر.آه. شوف بقى يا سيد عمر، القانون يمنعنى إنى أوعدك بتعويضات ضخمة. بس بينى و بينك كدا، حاوعدك.. بتعويضات ضخمة و اتعابى خمسين بالمية خمسين بالميه؟ دى مش أتعاب المحامه بس يا سيد عمر كمان حتاخد عقد لولى حر مدهش ب 99 دولار هديه منى ليك	Yes, Harvard, Yale, MIT, Oxford, the Sorbonne, the Louvre. Oh, well. Mr Omar, law forbids me ... from promising you a big settlements. But just between you and me, I promise you ... a big cash settlement. My fee is 50 per cent. 50 per cent? You'll be getting more than a lawyer! You'll also get this pearl necklace ... a $99, as our gift.
4. Hutz: Now, *let's pretend you're on the witness stand. - How are you, Bart?* **Bart:** *Fine.* **Hutz:** *Bart says he's fine. You are not fine! You are in constant pain!* (7F10)	بص، حنمثل انك على منصة الشهود..ازيك يا بدر؟ كويس آ، كويس. مش بالذمه لطيف؟ بدر بيقول كويس غلط. أنت مش كويس. أنت ف عذاب مستديم	Look, we pretend you're on the witness stand. - How are you, Badr? Fine Ah! Good. Isn't he wonderful? Badr says he is fine! Wrong! You are not fine, you are in constant pain.

The Simpsons sometimes depicts the justice system in America as a corrupt apparatus in the service of the rich and powerful. In the episode *Marge vs. The monorail* (9F10), Mr Burns was arrested for dumping his nuclear-power plant's toxic waste in the city park. When the judge ordered him to pay a large fine, Mr Burns tells his assistant Smithers to take the money from his pocket and pay the judge the fine as well as buying the statue of justice next to the witness stand. The judge slams his gavel down hard and cries out '*Sold!*'

On a similar occasion, 'The boy who knew too much' (1F19), Marge sued Mr Burns for sexual harassment. In a show of force, he appeared in court escorted by a gang of highly sophisticated and overly paid lawyers to intimidate Marge's Lionel Hutz, the affordable and inept lawyer, who eventually succumbs to the intimidation and exits the court room leaving Marge sighing: '*Well, I guess that's it; people like us can't afford justice ... we might as well go home*'.

In line with his convictions and mission to expose the 'ills' of the American society, as he claims, Hosny decided again to render the original script word for word. In examples 2 to 4 in Table 23, Mr Burns hits Bart with his car and when brought to court his attorney tells the judge that his client is extremely rich; Mr Burns adds 'I should be able to run over as many kids as I want' 'مفروض أنى أدوس ولاد الناس زى ماأحب' (I should be able to run over as many kids as I want!). The judge threatens to charge him for contempt, but Mr Burns blatantly challenges and threatens him back: 'You wouldn't dare!' 'مش حتجرؤ' (You wouldn't dare!), and the judge submits. Later on, although the law states clearly that a lawyer cannot promise clients compensation, Hutz assures Homer he will receive a 'big cash settlement', of which 50% is his fee.

While rehearsing for the trial, Bart took the stand to answer a few expected questions:

> Hutz: 'Now, let's pretend you're on the witness stand. How are you, Bart?
> Bart: 'Fine.'
> Hutz: 'Bart says he's fine. You are not fine! You are in constant pain!'
>
> بص، حنمثل انك على منصة الشهود..ازيك يا بدر؟
>
> كويس
>
> أ، كويس. مش بالذمه لطيف؟ بدر بيقول كويس غلط. أنت مش كويس. أنت ف عذاب مستديم
>
> (Look, we pretend you're on the witness stand. How are you, Badr?)
> (Fine)
> (Ah! Good. Isn't he wonderful? Badr says he is fine! Wrong! You are not fine,
> you are in constant pain.)

This example typifies the sly tactics lawyers resort to in order to scam the system. One might argue that by conveying the original *corrupt* message to the Arab audience, Hosny is spreading a *corrupt mentality* within the society. However, Hosny is also an avid 'socio-political reformist' who witnesses rampant corruption infesting his own society. Thus, by literally translating the script, he shares his agenda for change with the American writers.

Of course, a corrupt justice system leaves no room for reforming other institutions. The police force in Springfield is seen as corrupt, inept and a burden on society. This sentiment is echoed by Bart in example 1. When Bart received a radio transmitter from Homer for his birthday, he used it to trick everyone in Springfield and make

them believe that a boy fell down the old well. Lisa told him 'the police will catch you' 'حيمسكك عاجلا أم أجلا' (The police will catch you sooner or later) to which replied 'the police couldn't catch a cold' 'يمسكنى؟ ماحدش ماسك عليا فلة' (Catch me? No one ever can). Although the humorous effect is lost in translation, the intended message was still effectively delivered.

6.5.7.3 The American intellect deficiency

According to Dr Miller, a political scientist and authority on American scientific trends, on a survey to determine American awareness conducted by the *New York Times*, 'American adults in general do not understand what molecules are ... fewer than a third can identify DNA as a key to heredity. Only about 10 per cent know what radiation is. One adult American in five thinks the Sun revolves around the Earth ... and only 20 to 25 per cent of Americans are "scientifically savvy and alert"', adding that 'most of the rest don't have a clue.'[48]

As far as languages are concerned, Americans are monolingual (English), contrary to their European counterparts who master an average of three languages. Americans' 'cultural knowledge' of the outside world is limited to 'wars, blood and gore like the American Civil War, World War I and II ... [which] gives them a bleak and xenophobic outlook of the world which ultimately leads to racial bias and subconscious racism', claims Dmitri (2007).

No one epitomises dumbness in *The Simpsons* like Homer, the character who represents the average American. The scriptwriters use him constantly and very effectively to inject shots of humour, sarcasm and satire in the show. However, despite his obvious intellectual deficiency, the majority of the male adult audience sympathises with him and relates to his simple-mindedness in one way or another. Hosny repeatedly talked about his love and admiration of the character; he said 'I see myself and many simple Egyptians in him'. He obviously refers to the simplicity and commonness of Homer, which is why he decided from the outset to render literally

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[48] www.nytimes.com/2005/08/30/science/30profile.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

almost every word Homer utters, as he declared in our interview, and as shown in Table 24.

Table 24 Examples of idiocy and lack of common sense

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Homer**: *Rainy day? There's never gonna be one. There's not a cloud in the sky.* What does my little girl want (7F02)	عوزة؟ عمرنا ماحنبقى ف وقت عوزة يا منى العوز و الفقر بره و بعيد. حبيبتى الصغننة بقى عاوزه ايه؟	*Need ? We'll never be in need Mona. Need and poverty are nowhere near us!* What does my little girl want?
2. **Homer**: *English? Who needs that? I'm never going to England. Let's smoke* (7F12)	انجليزى. حاعمل بيه ايه؟ عمرى ماحاروح انجلترا ، بينا ، نديها تدخين	*English? Who needs it? I'm never going to England. Let's smoke*
3. **Homer**: *Yeah, what do you want?* **Marge**: *My husband by my side.* **Homer**: *You want fries with that?* (8F10)	أيوه، طلبك ايه؟ عايزة جوزى جنبى مع بطاطس محمرة	*Yeah, what do you want?* *My husband by my side.* *You want fries with that?*
4. **Marge**: *We agreed to consult before major purchases.* **Homer**: *You bought those smoke alarms, and we haven't had a single fire.* (7F14)	مش أتفقنا نتشاور قبل مانشترى أى حاجة غالية بصى، ما انتى اشتريتى جهاز انذار للحريق و ماحصلش من وقتها و لا حريقة	*Didn't we agree to consult before we buy anything expensive?* *You bought those smoke alarms, and we haven't had a single fire.*
5. **Marge**: *Hmm, dear. We're in serious trouble here. We're just going to have to cut down on luxuries.* **Homer**: *Well, we're always buying Maggie ... vaccinations for diseases she doesn't even have.* (8F06)	يا خبر، عندنا مشكلة بجد. حنبطل شرا كل الحاجات اللى مش ضرورية حاقولك، طول عمرنا بندى لبطة تطعيمات أمراض مابتجيلهاش	*Oh dear. We're in serious trouble here. We're just going to stop buying unnecessary things.* *Well, we're always buying Batta ... vaccinations for diseases she doesn't even have.*

The examples chosen for analysis in this section reflect both Homer's, and thus the average hard working person's, logic, lack of perception and insight and certain *wisdom* only the likes of him would understand and relate to. When Marge, feeling the pinch of hard times, asks Homer to refrain from spending unnecessarily and save for 'The rainy day', Homer takes her words literally and declares '*Rainy day? There's never gonna be one. There's not a cloud in the sky*' ف ماحنبقى عمرنا عوزة؟ (Need? We'll never be in need Mona. Need and poverty are nowhere near us). Hosny did not use the sarcasm and satire of the original in order to demonstrate Homer's lack of mental alertness and quick wit; rather, he rendered the '*rainy day*' as 'عوزة' (*need)* instead of 'يوم ماطر' (*rainy day*). Linguistics and the cultural aspect of the Arabic language compel this choice, not incompetence of the translator.

The rest of the examples in Table 24 were translated word for word. In example 2, Barny told Homer that he was late for the English class; he simply shrugged and said 'English? Who needs that? I'm never going to England. Let's smoke!' ' انجليزى؟ حاعمل ' نديها تدخين ، بينا ، عمرى ماحاروح انجلترا ؟ايه بيه' (English? Who needs it? I'm never going to England. Let's smoke). By assuming that English is only spoken in England, Homer confirms what many around the world think of Americans; he even thinks that the English he was about to learn is different from the one he speaks!

In the episode *I married Marge* (8F10), Homer and Marge are newlyweds and expecting a baby. Unemployed, they were both worried about the future. Homer tried various jobs, but being the *goof-off* that he is, he did not last long in any of them. As they failed to pay for the baby items they purchased on credit, the man from 'Repo Depot' came and repossessed all the items along with Marge's ring. A distraught Homer decides to leave, as he thought Marge deserved better. He leaves her a note promising to send her all he earns to take care of the baby and disappears in the darkness. Marge, having read the note, decided to go and find him. She eventually spots him working in a fast food outlet. Absent mindedly, he starts taking her order:

Homer: 'Yeah, what do you want?'

Marge: 'My husband by my side'

Homer: 'You want fries with that?'

أيوه، طلبك ايه؟

عايزة جوزى جنبى

مع بطاطس محمرة

(Yeah, what do you want?)

(My husband by my side)

(You want fries with that?)

Hosny's literal rendering of the original gave it an *original* humorous flavour. He managed to convey Homer's preoccupied mind as well as being completely absorbed in his job, which could be interpreted as 'changed man' attitude.

Homer's rushed and inattentive responses are further demonstrated by examples 4 and 5, where he gives Marge bizarre answers when she suggested they cut on unnecessary spending. Worried that this means cutting on beer and donuts, he lashes at her *'You bought those smoke alarms, and we haven't had a single fire'* ' ما ،بصى ' انتى اشتريتى جهاز انذار للحريق و ماحصلش من وقتها و لا حريقة' and *'Well, we're always buying*

Maggie ... vaccinations for diseases she doesn't even have ' 'حاقولك طول عمرنا بندى لبطة

تطعيمات أمراض مابتجيلهاش'.

The prevalence of satire in *The Simpsons* is indicative of scriptwriters' awareness and desire to change people's perceptions and negative attitudes towards certain issues in their lives. Satire is effectively used in the show to critique the status quo in America; issues like their view of foreigners, immigrants, lack of intellectual curiosity and the rampant corruption within many government and political institutions are all subject to a dose of satirical treatment.

The Arabic dubbed version, by and large, remained true to the spirit of the original, thanks mainly to the translator's stance on similar issues in his society as well as his internal motives to expose the 'decay' eating away the essence of America.

6.6 Censorship

'I'm not wild about these high-risk ventures. They sound a little risky'. Marge (4F08)

Censorship is a *necessary evil* no translator can completely circumvent, as discussed in Section 4.6.2. Lefèvere (1983, p. 25) argues that 'Nobody ever speaks or writes in complete freedom, at least if they want to be listened to, read and understood'. Of course, to be censored usually means that an outside force or agent is imposing certain parameters on the translator. However, the translator's own ideology, culture and political stance all have a considerable effect on the target text production, (cf. Sections 6.3.1.2 and 6.3.1.3).

The Simpsons was subject to heavy criticism and censorship across the world. 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'. However, the Ukrainian censoring body won the competition by banning *The Simpsons* altogether.

Table 25 Examples of censored and/or omitted references

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
1. **Homer:** They are our mothers. And you know something, folks? As ridiculous as this sounds, I would rather feel the sweet breath of my beautiful wife ... on the back of my neck as I sleep ... *than to stuff dollar bills into some stranger's G-string. Am I wrong? Or am I right* (7G10)	Omitted	
2. **Homer:** Three simple words: '*I am gay.*' (8F16)	كلمتين و خلاص. أنا متجوز	Just two words ... *I'm married.*
3. **Homer:** Huh? Ow! Hey! Ow! Sweetheart, what's the matter? *Not getting enough of the good stuff?* (8F14)	أهلا يا حلوة، زعلانة ليه؟ جوزك مقصر ف واجباته المنزلية؟	Hi gorgeous! Why are you upset? *Your husband is not doing his house chores?*
4. **Homer:** I'm not done yet, Marge. What's that word you use for when you and I ...? **Marge:** *When we're intimate?* **Homer:** 'Be intimate with Marge.' (7F11)	أفتكرى كويس يا منى. إنتى بتقولى إيه لما تكونى مبسوطه منّى لما بنكون سعداء أيوه..قولى يا حبيبتى	Mona, try to remember that word you tell me when you are happy with me. *When we are happy.* Yes, say it dear.
5. **Mrs. Krabappel:** In order to explain why your hormones will soon make you an easy target for every smooth-talking lothario with a car and tight jeans I will now show a short *sex education film.* Ezekiel and Ishmael in accordance with your parents' wishes you may step out into the hall and pray for our souls. (8F22)	ولاد حاوركم فيلم قصيّر عن الهرمونات. هادى و ربيع بناء على رغبة والدكم تقدروا ماتحضروش الفيلم و تدعولنا معاكو	Kids *I will show you a short film on hormones.* Hadi and Rabi, upon your parents' request, you may skip the film and pray for us.
6. **Troy:** Hello. I'm actor Troy McClure. You kids might remember me from such educational films as Lead Paint: Delicious But Deadly and Here Comes The Metric System. *I'm here to provide the facts about sex in a frank and straightforward manner.* And now, here's ... this is Fuzzy Bunny. About a year ago he noticed his voice was changing he had terrible acne and had fur where there was no fur before. He also noticed Fluffy Bunny. (8F22)	أهلا، أنا الممثل خورى فهلوى. جايز تعرفونى من أفلام تعليمية تانية زى 'طلاء الرصاص لذيذ و قاتل' و 'مرحباً بالنظام العشرى'. دلوقتى حاقولكم حقائق الحياة بطريقة واضحة و مباشرة قوى. دلوقتى معانا 'دليل الأرنب فوزى لشنون الحياة'. ده الأرنب فوزى . من حوالى سنة صوته اتغير و حب الشباب ملا وشه و طلعله فرو غطى جسمه كله. و فى يوم لاحظ الأرنبه فيفى.	Hello. I'm actor Khuri Fahlawi. You might remember me from such educational films as Lead Paint: Delicious But Deadly and Here Comes The Metric System. *Now I will tell you facts about life in a clear and straightforward manner. Now here is the 'Fawzi, the rabbit guide, for life issues'. This is Fawzi, the rabbit.* About a year ago he noticed his voice was changing he had terrible acne and had fur everywhere. He also noticed Fiffy Bunny.

Dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic was subject to a high level of scrutiny from the patrons who commissioned the work, the producer of the show and the translator of the script, as discussed in Section 6.3.1. The excerpts in Table 25 are testimony to the power of censorship. It has been uncovered that 143 examples in the original were completely omitted and 68 either partially censored.

The whole content was omitted from the target text in example 1, as it contains explicit sexual items ('*to stuff dollar bills into some stranger's G-string*'). Any references to homosexuality or explicit sexual innuendos were either completely overlooked or replaced with more culturally correct expressions as in examples 2 to 6. Expressions like '*I am gay*', '*Not getting enough of the good stuff*', '*sex education film*' and '*I'm here to provide the facts about sex in a frank and straightforward manner*' were all censored and replace with 'أنا متجوز' (*I am married*), 'جوزك مقصرف فيلم قصيّر عن الهرمونات?' (*Your husband is not doing his house chores*), 'واجباته المنزلية؟ حاقولكم حقائق الحياة بطريقة واضحة و مباشرة' (*I will show you a short film on hormones*), 'قوى' (*I will tell you facts about life in a very clear and straightforward manner*). As explained in 6.5.5, discussing sex is taboo for most Arabs let alone admitting being gay. Hosny has hardly left anything of the original in these passages; under the pressures from the sheikhs of MBC, the conservative Arab society and to a certain degree his own views, he produced a passive and conformist text for his audience. As discussed in many sections previously, almost every aspect of *The Simpsons* was subject to censorship, albeit at varying degrees; religion and belief, political views, national figures, relationships, race, violence etc have all been domesticated or foreignised[49] to conform to socio-cultural and ideological norms of the target audience.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the process analysing ICRs identified in the corpus of the study. Many aspects of translating *The Simpsons* into Arabic, related to culture and ideology, were scrutinised and discussed. The outcome reveals that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a major role in the process of translating and conveying the intended message to a target audience with cultural and ideological values different from those of the source audience. Indeed, religious beliefs, socio-cultural norms and personal views tend to leave an indelible mark on the dubbed product.

Dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic was subject to many constraints and norms, which influenced the choices made by the translator as well as the producer. However, such constraints are, at times, justifiable due to the huge gap between Arab

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[49] For a detailed account on these two concepts, cf. Chapter Four.

and Western cultures as well as Arab 'Gate-keepers' fear of cultural shift among Arab audiences, who are under significant influence of today's world of satellite TV and internet. These tools free Arab youth in particular from the shackles of local socio-cultural values defined by their geographical space.

By applying censorship and strict guidelines on the production and dissemination of sensitive material targeting young audiences, the 'Gatekeepers' hope to minimise the level of Western ideological and socio-cultural encroachment on local cultures.

Hosny's *Al Shamshoon*, despite its thrilling entertainment at times, leaves much to be desired in terms of being a cultural gap-filler and an honest message-transfer conduit that could achieve the desired rapprochement between two almost alien cultures with conflicting values and agendas.

The gap between the very disjunct Western and Arab cultures makes the task of translation even more difficult, and culturally emotive expressions of the original text often lose their connotative meaning in the process of translation. As a result, they do not bring forth the likely response from the target audience as they do from the source culture.

Such failure of being an honest broker in dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic could be attributed to various factors, but most influential is the role of censorship, be it imposed by external agents or induced by the translator's own credence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

One thing I would not venture to do … is tackle the intriguing question of how, and to what extent, the environment affects the workings of the brain, or how the cognitive is influenced by the socio-cultural, even though this would surely make an invaluable contribution to our understanding of translation.

Toury (1999, p. 18)

In this chapter, the findings of the corpus analysis in Chapter Six are discussed and the results are qualified with respect to the research questions and the research model adopted to determine if the study yielded significant findings. Conclusions and implications of the study are then drawn on the basis of the relevance of these findings and their implication for AVT as a process and a product in general, and on dubbing in the Arab World in particular. Finally, I make recommendations for potential areas in need of further research and exploration.

7.1 Introduction

The aims of this study, as stated in Chapters One and Five, are threefold:

1. To determine the ICRs in AVT with reference to dubbing *The Simpsons* into Arabic.

2. To shed light on the strategies employed by the translator: first to overcome these constraints, and second to manipulate and subvert the source text for ulterior motives.

3. To clarify how these constraints impede the transfer of the source text message.

The handling of the source text ICRs in translation is indicative of how a target text is formulated; the reproduction of ICRs could be used as an effective instrument for measuring the level of interference of the translator and other agents in the reconstruction and/or rewriting of the source text.

In order to establish the level of interference that took place in the process of translating *The Simpsons* for dubbing into Arabic, the ICRs extracted from the target language text corpus were contrasted to their source language text counterparts and analysed in Chapter Six. The analysis reveals a number of constraints the translator had to deal with as well as a significant intervention on his part in the process of translating *The Simpsons*. Largely, this intervention is demonstrated by the lexical/syntactic choices and the translation strategies employed by the translator. These constraints along with the translator's interference resulted in a considerable loss in terms of the source text's intended message.

There are two main constraints this study has uncovered: First, religious and socio-cultural, and second, ideological constraints, both intrinsic and extrinsic (cf. Sections

6.3.1 and 6.5). I start by discussing religious and socio-cultural constraints and how they affected the dubbing of *The Simpsons*.

7.2 Religious and socio-cultural constraints

Translation is a linguistic as well as a socio-cultural representation of a society. It transmits people's world-view through language which 'expresses cultural reality' as Kramsch (1998, p.3) asserts. As discussed in Chapter Two, language and culture are strongly bound together. Thus, the process of translation cannot function outside the realm of this symbiotic relationship. The translator's objectivity, therefore, is constrained by the socio-cultural norms governing their society.

Despite the liberal mindset of *Al-Shamshoon*'s translator, he operates within the cultural constraints of the Arab society, which is arguably one of the most conservative societies in the world. Islam as well as traditions have a great impact on Arabs' lives and shape the way they see and perceive the outside world. Hosny, the translator, had to manage the shackles and constraints of his society in order to produce an *adequate* and *acceptable* translation. He had to contend with many constraining Western concepts, ideas and ways of life *alien* to his culture, and he had to render them into Arabic by observing Arabs' religious and socio-cultural sensitivities to assure acceptability. These constraints include issues pertaining to:

- Western cultural references related to social occasions like *'going to a prom, a stag party and Halloween'* (Section 6.5.1)
- morality as in the use of rude language like *'bastard, butt kisser, son of a bitch'* (Section 6.5.2)
- gender discriminatory language like reference to women as *'bimbos, skirts, treating them like objects'* (Section 6.5.3)
- racial connotations deemed discerning or derogatory such as *'Tabboulah'* to refer to people from the Middle East, *'cheese-eating surrender monkeys'* to refer to the French and clear name calling like *'Negros'* (Section 6.5.4)
- sexual innuendos and/or explicit language like *'strip, nude, topless, frisky,* and *he hasn't been able to cut it man wise'* (Section 6.5.5).

Other obvious norms Hosny had to observe are references to Judaic and Christian faiths and practices. Words and expressions relating to Church, the Bible, Jews, the

Sabbath and Christmas; and food and drink items like wine, beer, pork chops and ham are all either omitted or substituted. Understandably, most of these foreign 'cultural encounters', as Faiq (2004) calls them, and immoral attitudes are contrary to Islamic teachings on which Arabs' morals are based; hence, they are considered a red flag not to be meddled with by any translator in order to avoid being censored.

Indeed, religious beliefs wield great influence on the translator and the strategies used to deal with other religions; if a passage in the source text is considered offensive, immoral, forbidden, or blasphemous, it is either domesticated, manipulated or excluded. This by no means pertains to Arabic translators alone; in his study on translations of Harriet de Onis, Munday (2008, p. 63) uncovered that 'Christian terminology appears incongruous in *The Lost Steps*', and that 'examples of Christian terminology run through Onis's translations'. Munday also states that 'religious terminology is even adopted for political context', referring to describing Venezuela as a 'country beyond hope of *redemption*' by the pro-European Choncho (Munday, 2008, p. 63).

Toury (2001, p. 118), in commenting on Schwartz's translation of Shakespeare's sonnets, intended for a young man, into Hebrew, states that, 'because love between two men was simply out of bounds' in Jewish society, changing the gender of the addressee in the Hebrew version could easily be justified and understood. He further argues that the translator's decision to voluntarily apply censorship is justified in order to attain moral propriety.

In a similar example, Pei (2010, p. 33) refers to the translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into Chinese by Lin Shu, who felt compelled to either 'cross out or simplify its religious content in order not to get himself in some unavoidable trouble'.

Disregarding the guidelines for dealing with religious and culturally-sensitive matters are *sins* not to be committed when translating into Arabic, especially for a young audience. Zitawi (2004) and Yacoub (2010) corroborate this, concluding that, depending on the target audience and the religiosity of the material to be dubbed, when religious themes are absent in the original, the translator re-writes the whole theme basing it on a religious one; however, any material with religious references other than Islamic is substituted or deleted.

This adherence to guidelines means that the translator operates within a constrained framework and makes decisions to produce a text that conforms to the target-culture norms. These decisions are by no means arbitrary. While some are made unconsciously[50] due to years of religious and cultural conditioning, others reveal the translator's ideological beliefs and agendas, as argued by many scholars (e.g. Alvarez and Vidal, 1996; Bassnett, 1996; Díaz Cintas, 2004; Lefèvere, 1992a; Munday, 2007; O'Connell, 2000; Venuti, 1998a). This is also confirmed by the findings of this study, as demonstrated in the next section.

7.3 Ideological constraints

Ideology plays an extremely important part in translation, both as an activity and a process. It operates as an 'invisible hand', to borrow Yan's words (2007, p. 63), and it is determined by two key factors. First, the translator's own ideology (the intrinsic factors in this study) and second, the target culture's patrons, or what I prefer to call *gatekeepers* (extrinsic factors), as discussed in Chapter Six. In the same vein, Van Dijk (1985a, p. 43) stresses the impact ideology has on translation. He argues that there are two kinds of ideology; the *explicit* ideology which accounts for attitudes and opinions of members of society, which of course encompass the decision makers (patrons), and the *implicit* ideology related to the translator's own assumptions.

The following section discusses the gatekeepers' influence on the process of dubbing *The Simpsons*.

7.3.1 Patrons' pressures and intervention

Lefèvere (1984, p. 92) defines patronage as 'any kind of force that can be influential in encouraging and propagating, but also in discouraging, censoring and destroying works of literature'. The patron's ideological constraints imposed on the translator dictate to a large extent the strategies to be used and the degree of intervention needed to produce a translation that meets the patron's requirements. As Lefèvere (1983, p. 25) famously declared, 'nobody ever speaks or writes in complete freedom' and the process of translation is 'carried out in the service of power'. He further stipulates that this power, in the form of patrons, leverages translators to work and produce translations that conform to their ideology (1992b, p. 16).

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[50] Cf. Section 2.8.1 for an expanded review of conscious and unconscious manipulation.

The translator and the producer of *Al-Shamshoon* substantiated the influence and interference of both the original producer (Gracie Films) and the agent who commissioned the dubbing (MBC) (cf. Chapter Four). Although Gracie Films was initially quite flexible in the manner the translation was done, the executives complained to MBC about the content of the Arabic version after the second season. According to Abdulghaffar, the producer, (M Abdulghaffar, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April)[51], Gracie Films claimed that *Al-Shamshoon* was a completely new version of *The Simpsons* stripped of its 'American spirit' and withered down to 'a mere cartoon with no message or vision'. Gracie Films warned MBC to keep the original script's content with minimal changes or the studio would be forced to withdraw the broadcast licence. MBC refused and insisted that *Al-Shamshoon* was made for a completely different culture and therefore needed to cater for and respect the local tastes and customs. Eventually, Gracie Films cancelled its contract with MBC and pulled the plug from *The Simpsons*, contrary to the claims made by MBC that the show 'did not meet its popularity standards and thus had to drop its Arabic dubbing', as Abdulghaffar stated.

The interference of MBC in the translation/dubbing and producing of *Al-Shamshoon* was at two levels. At the first level, after months of negotiating the terms and the conditions of contract with Hosny and their insistence on using standard Arabic instead of Egyptian vernacular, the cultural officers of MBC applied censorship at will on the Arabic text without even 'tolerating discussions with the translator' as Hosny said (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April). Instances of this intervention were many according to Hosny, but he recalled their refusal to use the name 'Arab Town' 'مدينة العرب' instead of Springfield and *'she'ir'* 'شعير' (alcohol-free malt beer) instead of 'عصير' *''asir'* (juice). This is in addition to clear instructions not to use any reference to any religion other than Islam and not to tarnish the image of Arabs, Muslims or heads of states as discussed in Sections 4.5 and 6.1.1.1.

Despite the negative connotations associated with censorship, some argue that it could be positively applied and 'can be productive' (Leckie, 1993, p. 3). In this context, I contend that on many occasions the pressure wielded by patrons in the dubbing of *The Simpsons* stems from patrons being the overseers, the quality

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[51] Cf. Appendix B

controllers of any commissioned material for translation, and the link between the dubber and their audience. Hence, patrons bear greater moral responsibility and accountability towards the content quality of the end product. This in turn means that the translator has to work within the limitations of the patron's ideological tendencies; failing to remain within the perimeters will result in conflict with the patron and possible exclusion of either the translator or the product. Evidently, Hosny had to play by the rules of the game and used many tricks up his sleeve to get away with many controversial instances as discussed in Section 6.3.1.3 and further examined in Section 7.3.2.

At the second level, Abdulghaffar had to bear the brunt of MBC's constant 'phone calls and returned dubbed material with complete scenes missing', and insistence on using 'proper Arabic pronunciation of certain letters such as 'ق' and 'ج' (M Abdulghaffar, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April) (cf. Appendix F for Arabic alphabet and transliteration).

Another proxy the producer had to deal with, albeit rarely, was the actors' own beliefs and ideological or political stance. Abdulghaffar revealed that Hanan Turk, the actor behind the voice of Lisa, on one occasion refused to do the part when the theme was about the glory of America, the land of the free. She threatened to quit if the script was not changed (M Abdulghaffar, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

MBC's intervention, in the form of setting guidelines and censorship, mirrors the patrons' exercise of power that shadows the translator at every stage of the translation process. Instances of patrons exerting power over translators are countless throughout history; ranging from governments' monitoring and censorship, as were the cases of Stalin Russia, Mussolini Italy, and Nazi Germany, to religious authorities like the Catholic Church forbidding the translation of religious texts in the 13th century under the pretext of heresy and blasphemy, then allowing only one version of the Bible written in Latin and prohibiting any other translations fearing the 'text might be corrupted or misinterpreted' (Karolides, Sova and Bald, 2011, p. 178). The Church equally forbade the translation of the Qur'an, as it never recognised it as a sacred book revealed by God until 1141, and then it was banned from circulation by the Inquisition (Karolides, Sova and Bald, 2011).

In his study of James Legge's translations of Chinese classics into English, Girardot (2002, p. 63) reveals the considerable influence the patrons of the project, London Missionary Society and Anglo-Chinese College, had on the translator. They stipulated that any Confucius teachings in conflict with Christian beliefs should not be annotated to debate, prove, or disapprove any content over the other. Consequently, Legge opted to distance himself from any ideological clash between the two patrons.

Hosny, albeit in opposition to the status quo of the Arab society's *cultural stagnation*, had no alternative but to function within its dominant religious and socio-cultural norms and comply with the ideology of his patrons. As stated throughout Chapter Six, Hosny opted to detach his beliefs from any religiously sensitive material and translate it according to MBC's demands. As discussed in Section 6.3.1.1, any expressions considered blasphemous like: 'You're my *god* of generosity', 'The voters see you as *godlike*' were substituted and toned down in order not to offend as well as to avoid being edited and censored, something he deeply despises (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April).

Lefèvere's (1992) insightful theory of manipulation, which places translation within the construct of the influence of ideology and patronage, is validated, yet again, in the dubbing of *The Simpsons* into Arabic. In order to produce a version of the source text acceptable to the target audience and that functions within their socio-cultural norms, the translator had to work according to the tenets imposed by the patrons and their ideology. Clearly, the producer and the dubber of *The Simpsons* were under considerable pressure to work within a framework of patron-constraints in order to comply with certain norms. While the business-minded producer did not mind such interference, the translator, being the artist and *fountain of thought* that he was, resisted many norms and navigated his way through the constraints, as we can see in the following section.

7.3.2 The translator's intervention (agency)

The translator is bound to leave their mark on the target text; as Lefèvere (1992, p. 7) rightly states, 'rewritings are inspired by ideological motivations, or produced under ideological constraints'. Consequently, it could be argued that both ideological motivations and constraints, and the translator's inner motivation for manipulation,

govern the entire activity of translation; while the former prescribes the socio-cultural constraints on the translator, the latter, in an attempt to breach these constraints, consciously or unconsciously, manipulates and subverts the original text for ulterior motives (cf. Section 2.8.3).

The paradoxical relationship between the constraints imposed on the translator by the source text, culture, and ideology on the one hand and the translator's agency on the other hand represents what Dryden perfectly describes as 'dancing on ropes with fettered legs' (cited in Baker, 2010, p. 153). Since the Western and Arab cultures are very different, the norms governing the cultures are at competing, conflicting, and, at times, opposing poles. Consequently, the translator has to work within the mainstream constraints of the religious and socio-cultural environment. However, Hosny believes that translation is a creative art; hence, often tends to employ his agency for two main reasons:

- to achieve an artistically satisfying translation
- to intentionally challenge and break the governing norms.

The translator's agency, Cha and Tian (2003, p. 22) argue, 'is manifested not only in the translator's comprehension, interpretation and artistic re-presentation of the source texts, but also in the selection of source texts, *the cultural motivations of translation, the adoption of strategies, and the manipulation ... of the expected functions of the translations in the target culture* [my emphasis]'. In this regard, Popović (1976, p.80) contends that the translator 'has the right to differ organically, to be independent, as long as independence is pursued for the sake of the original ... thus, shifts do not occur because the translator wishes to "change" a work, but because he strives to reproduce it as faithfully as possible'.

In order to understand and validate Hosny's agenda for intervention, it is important to determine the nature of the ICRs identified in the corpus. References deemed problematic for the translator, as categorised in Chapter Six, include Western cultural references (Section 6.5.1), the use of local cultural expressions, and linguistic and extra-linguistic references (Section 6.4).

When it comes to cultural references, Hosny had a much freer say and, sometimes, he conveyed certain passages in a manner that conforms to his own ideology; for

instance, applying substitution or retention strategies when dealing with the portrayal of Egypt or controversial issues within Arab culture, as the following examples illustrate.

- Substituting certain historic events by local ones, as in:

  Since the *French* carried *Lucky Lindy* off on their shoulder, from *Le Bourget Field* (Y3 8F07)

  زى دى من أيام المصريين ماشالوا مختار التتش على كتافهم ف ملعب النادى الأهلى

  (Since the *Egyptians* carried *Mukhtar Altinsh* on their shoulders *in Al Ahli stadium*).

- Substituting the names of famous Western figures with Egyptian ones, as in:

  Mr Burns: 'I know you wanted this photo ... *of Elvis and me*' (Y3 8F09)

  أنا عارف انك كنت حاطط عنيك على صورتى مع عبد الحليم

  (I know you had your eyes on *my photo with Abdulhalim*).

- Blame-shifting and exporting image-tarnishing references to Egypt, as in:

  Skinner: 'So, Patty, tell me, tell me more about *your trip to Egypt*' (Y2 7F15)

  أحكيلى أحكيلى أكتر عن رحلتك لأفريقيا

  (Tell me; tell me about *your trip to Africa*).

  Patty: 'Nothing more to tell, really. *The Nile smells and the horseflies are huge*'

  قلت كل حاجة. حقيقى. التماسيح ريحتها مش ولابد و الغابات كلها دبان أكبر من راسك

  (I told you everything. Really, *the crocodiles stink and the forests were full of flies bigger than your head*).

- Challenging local norms, as in:

  Lisa: 'So gambling makes a good thing even better?'

  يعنى الرهان بيخلى الحاجة احلى

  Homer: 'That's right!' (Y3 8F12)

  طبعاً مظبوط

  Homer: 'I'm going to stand here ... and watch you smoke every one of those cigarettes. Then maybe you'll learn' (Y3 8F03)

  حاقف و اتفرج عليك و انت بتشرب السجاير دى كلها جايز تعرف غلطتك

Hosny deliberately kept the original messages because he wanted to strike a chord with the gatekeepers; as discussed in Section 6.3.1, he feels strongly about the prevalent hypocritical politics in the Arab society and the power censoring bodies have over translation and production of audiovisual material. This indicates that the translator is able to challenge their own society's *status quo* if and when possible,

and propagate a certain reformist ideology to break the existing norms. This is echoed by many researchers (e.g. Chesterman, 2000; Fairclough, 1992; Janks and Ivanic, 1992), who call for *emancipatory translation* which liberates translators from unnecessary constraints and empowers them to become active participants in the communicative process of translation. Translators make evaluative judgement of the socio-cultural norms and act in a manner to create new social, cultural or political/ideological values. These new values are imbued with new norms and, inevitably, affect the translation product and its potential influence on the receiving audience.

Clearly, manipulation of the examples in this thesis is not motivated by artistic or stylistic literary norms alone. It is evident that Hosny's intervention is ideologically motivated. He intentionally glorified all that is positive about his country while exposing his own prejudices about the Other, for example Africa, even though Egypt is part of Africa. In contrast, he, being true to his views of America, retained all that is negative about it in order to 'clarify and explain to people that America is not what it seems to be' (A Hosny, 2010, pers. comm., 27th April). I argue that his aim is to vilify more than to clarify, as the following examples rendered literally into Arabic further demonstrate (cf. Section 6.3.1.3).

> Did you know that thirty four million American adults are obese? That excess blubber could fill two-fifths of the Grand Canyon (Y3 8F22).
> تعرفوا ان ف أمريكا 34 مليون بدين؟ لو حطيناهم على بعض ممكن يملوا حوالى نص أخدود الجراند كانيون.
> Americans have grown up with the image of the jolly fat man--Dom De Luise Alfred Hitchcock, and, of course Santa Claus (Y3 8F22).
> مارلون براندو و ألفريد هتشكوك و طبعاً بابا نويل الأمريكان بتشدهم فكره الرجل البدين الفخم

Granted, the role of translators is very important indeed, as they are, in addition to patrons, the religious and socio-cultural filterer and conduit of what the audience receives. However, as Hermans (1999, p. 74) puts it, 'translation decisions are neither predetermined nor fully idiosyncratic'. This view is further advocated by Schäffner (2003a, p. 23) who argues that 'all translations are ideological, since the choice of source text and the use to which the subsequent target text is put are determined by the interests, aims, and objectives of social agents'.

Examples are many to illustrate these arguments; Li's investigation of Manshu's translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, for example, reveals that the translator rendered the epic work:

> ... in a rather casual and unfaithful way in the sense that he gave readers a distorted image of Bishop Myriel in addition to creating a hero named Ming Nande. Yet the decisions to translate in such a way were not always casual, rather they reflected the translator's ideologies, namely Buddhism, the dominant ideology of the Qing Dynasty, and Confucianism (Li, 2008)[52].

The manipulation and subversion of the source text of *The Simpsons* is achieved through translation, which gave cover for the translator to challenge and breach the constraints within which he operates in the name of the original author. Hosny's intelligent choice of passages that could be subverted without patrons' objection further demonstrates the translator's power to manipulate, not only the text, but also the patrons. This is evident in passages which are clearly against the mainstream constraints of Arab culture, as in instances of retaining original references to gambling and smoking (cf. Section 6.3.1.4).

In order to remain within the boundaries of religious and socio-cultural constraints and patrons' imposed guidelines, and still influence and manipulate the dubbing of *The Simpsons*, Hosny resorted to carefully selected strategies, as demonstrated in the following section.

7.3.3 Translation strategies used in dubbing The Simpsons

As discussed in Sections 4.7 and 4.7.2, the translator, as a mediator between two languages and cultures, works within a spectrum of two major strategies; they either opt to *domesticate* or *foreignise* the source text. The decision, however, is 'consciously or unconsciously guided by ideological criteria' as Nord (2003, p. 111) rightly asserts. As a result, the translator of *The Simpsons*, working within a multitude of constraints as discussed above, resorted largely to a 'functionally appropriate translation strategy sanctioned by the clients and the audience within the historical and socio-cultural context [he] belongs to', as Nord (2003, p. 111) puts it. On other occasions, however, he went against both the patrons and socio-cultural

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[52] http://durgundionysus.blogspot.com/2008/10/li-li.html

constraints which governed his activity, as the statistical data in Table 26 demonstrate.

Table 26 Translation strategies used in dubbing The Simpsons into Arabic

Domestication	*Frequency (%)*	*Foreignisation*	*Frequency (%)*
Substitution	102 (28%)	**Retention**	21 (6%)
Enhancing	37 (10%)		
Toning Down	59 (16%)		
Omission	143 (40%)		

Hosny domesticated the bulk of *The Simpsons* in its translation into Arabic. This is not surprising given the huge gulf between Western and Arab cultures in addition to the censoring agents' filtering mechanism. However, religious and socio-cultural norms which govern the Arab society as well as the patron's ideologically-motivated interference gave Hosny little room to manoeuvre when dealing with sensitive issues (cf. Section 6.5); on the other hand, in instances where he was able to influence the source text, he foreignised at will. The next section discusses the procedures/techniques Hosny used to deal with source culture issues he believed to be problematic.

7.3.3.1 Strategies to overcome source culture constraints
The domestication process was achieved by adopting two procedures:

- *Substitution*: removing certain references from passages and replacing them with new localised versions, bringing the dialogue strongly to the target culture/audience (cf. Sections 6.4.3 and 6.5.1 to 6.5.5). This entailed substituting any allusions to Judaic/Christian faiths and Western cultural references with Islamic and Arabic ones, respectively (cf. Section 6.3.1.1 for examples 1 and 2, and Section 6.4.2).

- *Omission and/or adaptation*: removing certain references only, or entire passages of the original text, and reproducing new versions compatible with the target audience values.

In the first instance, substituting source text religious and cultural references was straightforward; the translator omitted references to Judaeo-Christian faiths (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Church, Jewish, reverend) and replaced them with either

Islamic ones or toned them down to mere local expressions free from any religious connotation (مشرف، عيد، صلاة، عربي). Equally, references to pig and its derivatives, and alcohol, and explicit expressions received the same fate; pork, ham, tavern, beer, liquor, champagne, dating and kissing were either substituted with lamb, café, juice and engaged, or omitted altogether (cf. Section 6.3.1.1).

It is hardly surprising that Hosny adopted this technique when dealing with these references, since the two cultures stand at opposing poles in this respect; Islam prohibits the consumption of pork and alcohol and stands firm against propagating them. It also advocates high morals and a stringent social code of conduct.

While omission was straightforward in its application, as was the case with certain songs with religious or political themes, adaptation, on the other hand, presented Hosny with a golden opportunity to display his creative ability. What is interesting in this respect is that he excelled in rendering the *in need of adaptation* passages he encountered and, at times, surpassed the original writer's creativity. He resorted to what I call *enhancing* and *toning-down* techniques.

By *enhancing*, I mean rendering an original expression with a semantically stronger or stylistically superior one while preserving the intended message. This is evident in using idiomatic or religious expressions when the original writer used simple ones (cf. Section 6.4.1 to 6.4.3) as in the following examples.

زيادة الخير خيرين
More power to you (Y2 7F07)
اقترح عليك تنام مطرح ماكنت بترقص
My suggestion is for you to sleep in the filth you created (Y1 7G10)
إنت بتخنق عبقريتى بالكرافته
You're stifling my creativity, Dad (Y1 7G02)
جنت على نفسها براقش
So you've ruined your life (Y3 8F10).

Toning-down, on the other hand, was used to absorb the impact of certain expressions on the audience were they to be rendered literally; such expressions deal mainly with aspects of religion, nudity and foul language (cf. Section 6.5.2 and 6.5.5) as these excerpts demonstrate.

شكراً انك ستُرتيني شويه

Thanks for not making fun of my *genitalia* (Y2 7F18) = *(covering me)*

إحساس مذهل

Extremely *sensual* (Y1 7G10) = *(great feeling)*

يتهيألى مش فاضل غير أنك تودعني وتبوس صلعتي

I guess there's nothing left but to *kiss my sorry ass* good-bye (Y3 8F04) = *(kiss my bald head)*.

These two techniques were used frequently (26%) to avoid omission or substitution of parts of the content deemed not too offensive. They were also used to avoid censorship of content and/or style by the patrons. By opting for such techniques, Hosny managed to demonstrate the influence he could exert not only on the source text but also on the target text stylistic markers.

Enhancing and *toning-down* techniques are also used in journalistic emotive texts to serve political or ideological agendas. Daraghmeh, Herzallah and Karim (2010, pp. 25–28) researched Palestinian press coverage of events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and uncovered how terms like 'female suicide bomber' and 'suicide bombing' were enhanced and given a religious coating in order to convey a certain message by rendering them as 'استشهادية' ، عملية استشهادية' (*martyred woman*) and 'فدائية' (*martyrdom operation*). Suicide has a negative overtone because it is against Islam and harms the Palestinian cause.

The authors also toned-down expression like 'Israeli territories' 'الأراضي المحتلة ، أراضي فلسطين' (*Occupied territories, Palestinian land*) in an attempt to remove any conjured up association with legitimacy of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

Applying the domestication strategy serves to cater for the target culture and its audience. Certain societies' ideological and socio-cultural norms dictate the filtering of any material considered at odds with the principles and agendas of these societies. In this regard, Hosny domesticated *The Simpsons* by substituting the source culture's references with ones that conform to his society's norms. In the process, he applied linguistic and stylistic shifts to the source text in order to achieve a level of creativity that surpassed that of the original script. However, his intervention did not end there. As we can see in the next section, the translator's inner motives become clearer (cf. Section 6.3.1.2).

7.3.3.2 Strategies to manipulate and subvert the source text message

Translators are generally expected to be objective and faithful in rendering the source text by staying within the boundaries of the *formal and dynamic* equivalence paradigm, as advocated by many translation scholars from Horace and Cicero to Nida. However, bearing in mind that translation is a channel for cultural exchange and ideological *manipulation*, it should be carried out with a purpose, *skopos*[53], in mind: this necessitates taking the target audience and their *polysystem* into consideration. This, in turn, will undoubtedly impose its own limitations to any effort to produce a *faithful* translation. It is evident, as demonstrated in Chapter Six, that deliberate interventions were often made to subvert quite a substantial part of *The Simpsons* for an array of reasons. The politicised Hosny seems politically and ideologically at odds with America and what it stands for; consequently, he seized the chance to manipulate anything that was not politically acceptable to him.

It is striking that, contrary to the Arab governments' endorsed domesticating strategy, especially when dealing with sensitive material related to religion or children, as discussed in 4.7.2, the translator resorted to foreignising many passages, as in 6.3.1.3, 6.5.7.1, 6.5.7.2 and 6.5.7.3, to serve a personal agenda, as he blatantly declared in the interview.

Hosny demonstrated a high level of partisanship by challenging the *status quo* in the Arab society, as well making obvious his loathing of American ideals, in deciding to 'depart from cultural stereotypes in the source text so as to invest a product with a distinctively domestic charisma', as Venuti put it (1992, p. 240).

To achieve his goal, Hosny resorted to the techniques of retention, omission and substitution in instances of vilifying America and glorifying Egypt and its history and cultural heritage as discussed in Section 7.3.2.

Hosny seems to be aware of the powerful message cartoons like *The Simpsons* are set to deliver globally. Although, being a writer and poet and appreciating the creativity, humour and satire of the show, he proved to be a self-proclaimed and designated *quality controller* of culturally and ideologically laden messages embedded in *The*

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[53] For more details on skopos theory, see: Vermeer, Hans J. 1996.

Simpsons. Consequently, he subverted the intended message at many levels. First, by foregrounding references which serve to portray a negative image of Western society and expose its flaws and second, by eliminating any passages deemed damaging to Egypt's image.

Interestingly, Hosny at times opted to substitute certain Western references with other foreign ones, for example:

> What is this, the *Spanish Inquisition?* (Y1 7G10)
>
> ايه، جرى ايه؟ المباحث الفيدرالية؟
>
> (What is this, *The FBI*).
>
> He brings to mind the later work of *Diane Arbus* (Y1 7G10) = *(Zurba the Greek)*.
>
> بيفكرنى بطريقة رقص زوربا اليونانى
>
> (He brings to mind the later work of *Zurba the Greek*).

It is clear that the translator opted for such choice for two main reasons: to preserve the foreignness of the theme; and to make it easier for the target audience to understand the context by using foreign references they are familiar with; the majority of Arabs would know the FBI but not the Spanish Inquisition, for instance.

Manipulating and subverting the source text is as old a practice as translation itself. Texts are domesticated according to the target culture's norms that range from linguistic/literary to socio-cultural and ideological norms, reflecting religious beliefs and social values and ethics. However, in the process of translation, under the pretext of observing these norms, the translator may resort to distortion and subversion of the source text and exercise their agency in service of ulterior ideological motives to produce rewritten, representational and subverted versions. Bassnett and Lefèvere argue fittingly that manipulation 'in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another'; however, on the downside, 'rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain' (Bassnett and Lefèvere, 1992, p. vii). In this regard, Carbonell (1996) argues that the element of untranslatability of the source text leaves the door wide open for modification according to the target language/culture constraints, which implies rewriting and

reconstructing a subverted text at many levels. Consequently, it could safely be assumed that *The Simpsons* translator's inclination to manipulate and subvert the source text message stemmed from both inner motives and externally imposed constraints; such an interventionist approach constitutes a clear shift from the classic prescribed model of the *invisible* translator.

Let me shed some light on the impact these constraints bear on the transfer of the source text message.

7.4 Impact of ideological and socio-cultural constraints on source text message transfer

Leonardi (2008, p.164) rightly warns that 'language should not be regarded as being merely a tool for communication, but it carries with it moral, religious and socio-political values which could reflect or manipulate particular ideologies'. It follows therefore that translation has a great impact on intercultural communication and transfer of ideas, notions, and means of influence (cultural, political and ideological). Hatim and Mason (1990, p. 237) see translation as 'a communicative process which takes place in a social context' and translators as mediators, mediating 'between cultures (ideologies, moral systems and socio-political structures), seeking to overcome those incompatibilities which stand in the way of transfer of meaning'. The misuse of language to promote certain ideas and ideologies through the translation lenses will likely result in a breakdown of communication:

> When words become the tools, not of clarity and precision but of confusion and
> obfuscation in order to promote a particular ideology or social program or some
> very intimate personal or private agenda, genuine communication between
> opposing parties becomes impossible (Stockert, 1996, p. 1, cited in Kramina,
> 2004).

The question that begs an answer is: to what extent could a translator's mediation, under these ideological and socio-cultural constraints, really faithfully convey the intended message of the source-text author?

Since translators assume the role of mediating between heterogeneous cultures, the act of translation turns into a process marred by choices conditioned by ideological

and socio-cultural norms. Consequently, the decisions and choices translators make have serious consequences on the communicative process.

The dubbing of *The Simpsons* into Arabic should, in principle, have presented the audience with a chance to have a deeper understanding of the Other through seeing and hearing items that act as a vehicle for transmitting source culture's *entity*. It was also a chance to change misconceptions and perceptions, which are not always neutral or innocent as they portray society's perception and representation of the Other vis-à-vis its socio-cultural identity. However, it is evident from the analysis carried out in this study that it was, by and large, a missed chance. The sheer level of manipulation and subversion of the original, on the part of both the translator and the patrons, resulted in anything but a *cultural rapprochement* between the West and the Arab World. Additionally, the totally localised Egyptian version of *The Simpsons* disregarded the Arab heterogeneous cultures and their diversity, not only in terms of local dialects but also in socio-cultural norms and sensitivities, given the vast geography of the Arab World, which extends from Morocco in North-western Africa to Qatar in Asia. The loss incurred in the Arabic version of *The Simpsons* could be identified at two important levels.

- At the *entertainment level* it is clear that the Arabic text was not able to maintain the satirical and humorous depth of the original. This could be attributed partly to the translator, who, in my opinion, needs further grounding in Western culture, as *The Simpsons* is a highly inter-textualised show, and to his patron's interference, as discussed in 6.1.3.

- At the awareness-raising level, the original show's critique and strong condemnation of many aspects of the political, government, and social institutions' miserable failure in serving the public and combating corruption was softened and withered down to a wilted equivalence. This is understandable given the political situation in the Arab World and governments' stance on these issues.

On the positive side, however, Hosny managed to convey his message of challenging the perpetuation of the *status quo* in the Arab society to a large extent. He succeeded in raising a valid question about the *covert side* of the socio-cultural system which preaches what it does not practise. I refer to gambling, smoking, and women's rights

issues in particular. His *subversion*, if endorsed by others, will certainly result in a long-awaited new construct in AVT in the Arab World.

Given the above picture, it is no surprise that the translation and dubbing of *The Simpsons* has been largely conditioned by the dominant Arab/Islamic ideological, aesthetic and moral values, and their filtered representation of Western culture. The patron's close watch of the activity of both the translator and the producer is nothing short of blatant interference in an intercultural process, which in principle is supposed to build bridges between different nations and cultures. The translator's political and ideological position on certain issues raised by *The Simpsons* also considerably hampered the transmission of the intended message.

7.5 Implications of the study

What the findings of this study illustrate is that dubbing into Arabic for a younger audience is subject to many forms of manipulation. A certain pattern emerged which indicates that deliberate interference took place at many levels: by the translator and patrons alike. I argue that these findings add scholarly value to the existing research in general, and to the AVT scene in the Arab World in particular, especially in light of the meagre studies carried out in this field. I hope that this study will pave the way for further relevant studies to better understand the value of AVT as a means to entertain and educate, and the systems within which it operates.

The implications that could be drawn from the analysis of the theoretical and empirical aspects of this study are threefold and can be summarised as follows.

- There is a need to raise awareness among both translation students and translators in terms of what the process of translation entails. There is more to being a successful translator than mere language mastery. In the words of Hosny, a good translator needs 'a good ear, imagination and a creative mind': I further add the requirement for
    - strong immersion in the both source and target cultures
    - awareness of the extrinsic factors which affect the process and product of translation
    - acknowledgement of both the power and the limits of the translator's agency.

- The development of translation studies curricula in the Arab World, taking into consideration DTS and the manipulation school ideas and theories, as supported by the findings of this study and similar studies such as those of Zitawi (2004) and Yacoub (2010), would enhance and optimise translator training approaches and methods. The introduction of new trends in undergraduate curricula as well as specialised AVT programmes specifically tailored to address the needs of the audience in the Arab World should focus not only on linguistic development, but, even more importantly, on raising awareness of the importance of social, cultural, ideological and religious aspects considered the backbone of the Arab society's make-up.

- The issue of the lack of specialised translator training programmes for AVT in the Arab World and the effect this has on the quality of the end product could be addressed by a conscientious alliance and collaboration between different parties, such as specialised institutions, the dubbing industry, broadcasters, and educationalists. Such programmes could incorporate certain important aspects like script writing skills, as suggested by Cattrysse (1996) and echoed by Hosny and the rest of the professionals interviewed in this study.

7.6 Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

The data for this study was gathered from a combination of interviews and textual data analysis of a single case (*The Simpsons*); making the findings difficult to generalise. This paves the way for a more comprehensive study, with larger samples of participants, which could investigate the constraints across a wide range of animations in order to ascertain validity and generalisability.

Another limitation of the study is that the patron's (MBC) point of view on, and justification of, the manipulation was sought but was not granted, therefore claims made by both the translator and producer could not be verified.

While this study's attempt to identify and analyse cases of manipulation in dubbing into Arabic has yielded interesting results, which, it is hoped, will trigger interest and further research into the effect of various agents on dubbing into Arabic, it is far from being a comprehensive investigation. Other studies could be carried out to enrich and complement the findings of this research. Areas in need of further exploration could include a contrastive study of the same translated corpus by

different translators to analyse the different strategies used to overcome ideological and cultural constraints; such a study could investigate a North African French version and Middle Eastern English one for instance.

A final suggestion is investigating text genre and how it affects the translation for dubbing; are the shifts and manipulation greater in the animation genre than other genres like comedy or fiction for example?

7.7 Conclusion

Far from the political slant of the concept of ideology encompassing 'the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups', as Hatim and Mason (1997, p. 144) suggest, if every action a person takes is ideologically motivated, then the act of translation is bound to be subject to those assumptions, values and beliefs of the translator and their surroundings (i.e. under patronage and ideology). By *ideology of translation* I mean the direction chosen by the translator, under the influence of social, cultural and ideological elements in the production of the target text, as is the case in Venuti's (1998) approach of domestication and foreignisation for instance. *Translation of ideology*, on the other hand, is more about the influence translators exert on the text itself by way of 'feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into processing the text' (Venuti, 1998). In this respect, any rewriting reflects a certain aspect of a given ideology on the linguistic and cultural levels. For instance, by adhering to the poetics of a dominant or more prestigious language and/or culture, the translator could gravely manipulate the source text in order to comply with their ideology and conform to the requirements of the target language and culture.

Ideology in translation is far from being limited to language and culture, but rather it is encompassed in almost every aspect of our life. Politicians, religious people, feminists and human rights activists all tend to use the act of translation as a potent tool to distort, manipulate and contain facts, views and the Other.

In today's globalised world, where English is becoming the *Esperanto* that eluded human communication for millennia, translation begs to remain an active and important element in our lives more than ever before. Despite manipulation, distortion and coercion, it remains 'the factor that shapes the way in which a given

society receives a work, an author, a literature, or a culture', as Álvarez and Vidal (1996, p. 7) propose. To this effect, translation has been effectively deployed throughout the ages as an ideological weapon to include all that serves the interests of the powerful and exclude what is likely to hinder their *ideology*.

The process of translation is an activity which takes place within a given polysystem governed by many linguistic, socio-cultural, political and ideological norms. Subsequently, this complex system poses considerable limitations on the translator who functions within this constrained environment.

This study, based on a retrospective and descriptive analysis of the dubbing of *The Simpsons* into Arabic, endeavoured to explore, unveil and critically assess the manipulation and subversion of the original script at micro and macro levels; although the emphasis was heavily laid on the macro level, since the aim was to uncover factors other than the linguistic ones. The study also aimed to determine the strategies employed by the translator in order to manipulate and subvert the source text and the effect such action had on the transfer of the intended message. The study was based on the DTS model pioneered by Toury (cf. Section 2.7) and manipulation theory advocated by many scholars, such as Lefèvere (cf. Section 2.6). The analysis of the corpus revealed that the process of dubbing *The Simpsons* was indeed heavily marred by socio-cultural and ideological frameworks in which the translation was produced.

As mentioned earlier, the government policies in the Arab World are in favour of applying censorship to any issue deemed religiously, socially or politically emotive. However, the translator, in the case of *The Simpsons*, cannot be fully exonerated from the subversive role he played in the process; the ample examples cited in this study clearly demonstrate his ideologically motivated interventionist approach.

As House (2008, p. 16) argues, ideologically motivated intervention, however innocent it may appear, is a risky task. She asks a valid question: 'How can we justify well-meant changes to a text made under the auspices of say feminist or post-colonialist thinking from chauvinistic imperialist interventions? We cannot.'

Bearing in mind the intercultural status of the audiovisual material, its translation is carefully monitored by the gatekeepers of the broadcasting industry in the Arab World; this in turn represents a challenging task for any translator.

Certainly, it was not the aim of this study to critique the quality of the translation of *The Simpsons* or to propose how it should have been better carried out. However, one of the objectives of the study was to evaluate the extent the translator's intervention affected the delivery of the source text message. Given the outcome of Hosny's translation, I could only concur with House's view that:

> [...] as a translator, one must be aware of one's responsibility to the original author and his or her text, and one must use the power one has been given to re-textualise and re-contextualise a given text with discretion. In many—if not most—cases it might be wiser to not intervene at all (2008, p. 16).

It is evident that 'translations are not made in a vacuum', as Lefèvere (1992, p. 14) remarks, but rather under the influence of an array of factors, mainly the ulterior motives of translators and the external pressures they are faced with. The challenging question is: to what extent could translators prove wrong the derogatory remark: *les belles infidèles* and the infamous stigmatic epitaph: *Traduttore, traditore* in light of the ideological and socio-cultural constraints they have no choice but adhere to? In light of what has been explored in this study, discussed and concluded, such a question may never have a complete and meaningful answer.

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ALJAZEERA GUIDELINES FOR TRANSLATORS

- ضرورة قراءة عناوين حلقات أعمال الصغار لعمر ما دون المدرسة إضافة إلى كتابتها.

- استخدام الوحدات القياسية المعتمدة في الدول العربية (كاستخدام المتر بدل القدم) أو(الكيلومتر بدل الميل) أو (الكيلوغرام بدل الباوند) بعد إجراء التحويلات المناسبة للحفاظ على مصداقية المعلومة.

- تجنب استخدام أسماء العملات الأجنبية والاستعاضة عنها كلمة قطعة نقدية أو مالية أو غيرها .

- عدم استخدام العبارات العامية الشائعة مهما كانت (يا خبر، عمو، وافد ، يا سلام...)

- السماح باستخدام أسماء الآلات الموسيقية الغربية كما هي لعدم وجود مقابل لها في اللغة العربية مثل (الفلوت، الأوبوا، الترومبيت...)

- عدم الإشارة إلى العلاقات الجنسية عند الحيوان أو الإنسان . وخاصة عندما لا تخدم النص العلمي .

- تجنب الأخطاء التي تلازم الترجمة الحرفية للنص الأجنبي . والتي يتواتر استعمالها في معظم الجمل (مثال كلمة حسناً مقابل well المستخدمة في الجمل الحوارية الإنكليزية .....)

- ترجمة أسماء الأعلام والمشاهير بشكل صحيح وكتابتها على الشاشة بما يتوافق مع النسخة الأجنبية.

- تجنب صيغة العاقل عند الحديث عن الحيوان في نصوص الأعمال الوثائقية.

- تجنب استخدام عبارات لها بعد عقائدي أو سياسي.

- الحرص على عدم تقديم أحكام ذاتية عند عرض معتقد أو نظرية.

- تجنب تسمية الحيوانات بأسماء البشر (الفيل نبيل، الكلب وائل، الخلد خالد ...)

- توخي الدقة والوضوح والاختصار في وضع عناوين البرامج والحلقات بما يتوافق مع المضمون مع الالتزام بشروط اللغة العربية والحرص على البعد الجمالي الانطباعي.

تسجيل الأستوديو:

- اختيار أصوات الشخصيات في أعمال الكارتون بما يتناسب مع طبيعة وسن الشخصية .

- أن يشابه صوت الشخصية الصوت المقابل في النسخة الأجنبية قدر الإمكان .

- مراعاة توافر أصوات شابة ومتجددة في التعليق على الأعمال الوثائقية .

- المحافظة على الخط العام للشخصية

- التأكيد على أداء الأدوار بشكل درامي (تمثيل إذاعي) مع الإحساس بالدور وطبيعة العمل .

- الأداء بلغة عربية فصحى مبسطة بعيدة عن أي لهجة محلية .

- تجنب تكرار نفس الأصوات في أعمال متتابعة.

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English Translation

ALJAZEERA GUIDLIENES FOR TRANSLATORS

Translation
- Translating into simple standard Arabic which can be easily understood by children in the entire Arab World.
- Translating for children by making the sentences simple, short and coherent.
- Respecting Arabic grammatical rules while contracting sentences as well as choosing appropriate words.

Preparation
- Avoiding the usage of prophets, companions or any other religious names for naming the characters of the work.
- Avoiding the usage of presidents and Arab kings' names as well as mythological gods.
- Checking the validity of any scientific information; specially numbers, dates, percentages and distances in order to add credibility and send a correct message to children.
- Matching mathematical and chemical symbols and equations with the way they are shown on the screen. (For example, a b c triangle can't be read ‫ج ب أ‬ unless what on the screen has been changed).
- Avoiding any reference to pig or showing it as food.
- Avoiding any reference to alcoholic beverages; instead they must be referred to as juice.
- Taking in consideration the etiquette and morals while preparing the work and avoiding any disrespect to our Arabian values (for example, a child talks about his mother's relationship with a strange man or about his sister and her boyfriend in the college). These relationships can be replaced with any other appropriate ones in from the Eastern culture.
- Avoiding any disrespect from a child to an elder person specially grandparents.
- Avoiding any disrespectful word, gesture, or violent action from a child to his parents.
- Respecting the personal relationships (boss and subordinate) (friends) (neighbors) (young and old). It is inappropriate for a child to call an old man by his first name without adding uncle or mister before his name.
- Selecting names that match the outlook of the characters, their characteristics and psychological state.
- Translating according to the visual act and not the dialogue (for example, the dialogue mentions a rhino while the picture shows hippo or someone talks about his right hand while pointing out his left hand)
- Paying attention to singularity, duality and plurality forms of sentences in the conversation as well as full consideration to the syntactic rules in the Arabic text.
- Building the dialogue in the form of conversation. The dialogue will be divided into sentences each of which conveys information. Participants play their roles and complete the conversation.

- Reading out and writing names of the episode is a must, especially for young children who did not join school yet.
- Using the standardized measuring unites in the Arab countries (for example, using meter instead of foot), (kilometer instead mile), (kilogram instead pound) after calculating the equivalent to keep the information credible.
- Avoiding the usage of foreign currency and replace it with the words (silver coin, gold coin) or any other equivalent.
- Avoiding the usage of common informal phrases. For example, (ياخبر, عمو, والله, ياسلام ...)
- Allowing the usage of foreign musical instruments' names without any change if there are no exact equivalents in Arabic (for example, flute, Oboe, trumpet).
- Avoiding any sexual reference for either animals or humans, especially if there is no scientific necessity.
- Avoiding literal translation errors commonly used in most sentences (for example, " حسنا" replacement for "well" in the English sentences etc.)
- Translating well-known names correctly and writing them on the screen in a way that matches the foreign version.
- Avoiding the use of personal subject when talking about animals in the dialogue or documentaries.
- Avoiding the use of any religious or poetic phrases.
- Avoiding the use of any personal judgment, belief etc.
- Avoiding the use of human names when naming animals (for example, the dog Wael, the elephant Nabil, the mole Khalid)
- Using precise, clear and brief titles for the episodes bearing in mind the content as well as the commitment to Arabic language rules to keep the aesthetic dimension of the work.

Studio recording
- Choosing the actor's voice for the characters that matches their nature and age.
- Trying to match the actor's voice of the character with the foreign version as much as possible.
- Taking into consideration the availability of young and new actors to comment on documentaries.
- Preserving the general characteristics of the character.
- Ensuring that the roles are played in a dramatic way and with full embodiment of the role and the nature of the work.
- Performing the acts with a simple standard Arabic without any local dialects.
- Avoiding the use of the same voice actors for successive works.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND CONSENT FORM

Interview Questions

Ethical Considerations

As per the <u>ethical committee</u> requirements, you are left, at any time, with the option to <u>refuse</u> to answer any question of your choice without providing any justification. You can also <u>withdraw</u> from the interview at any time.
I also need to ask you permission for <u>recording</u> the discussion and possibly <u>citing</u> your name and words in my research. As an alternative, you may ask for quotations to <u>remain</u> <u>anonymous</u>. You also have the option to <u>view</u> any findings of the research <u>prior to</u> <u>submission or publication</u>.

General Questions

1) What do you think 'ideology and culture' mean?
2) How is the audiovisual translator affected by culture-specific verbal and visual features?
3) What is the role played by non-verbal features in subtitled and dubbed versions and how does it affect the resulting translations?
4) For all the above, in what way is the audiovisual genre a significant factor in the resulting translation?
5) Does the dubbing/subtitling industry need interaction with the traditional translator-training institutions?
6) Who should fund the training programs?
7) Should all translator-training programmes include culture and ideology?

Constraints of AVT

1) What do you find the hardest thing about AVT?
2) What do you find particularly difficult to translate? *(Ex: humour, puns, etc)*
3) Which constraints are the most restrictive in your opinion? (By order of priority)
4) Do you take into account the visual/non-verbal elements? In which particular cases?
5) Do you consider the visual element as another constraint or as an advantage? (Ex: for the translation/comprehension of cultural/ideological references?)
6) Do you sometimes watch other subtitles previously made for the movie you are working on, or do you always start 'from scratch'? W*hy?*
7) Do you use a script of the original dialogues for your translation?
8) Are there any 'external' factors affecting your translation?
9) Do you 'consciously censor' while screen translating? Why?
10) Are you affected by 'external' censorship? Who/what is behind it?
11) What is your reaction to censorship?

Translation of Cultural/Ideological References

Cultural/ideological references are those items in a source text which refer to objects or concepts which do not exist in a specific target culture, or which have different connotations or associations from the equivalents available in the target culture.

1) What would you consider as a cultural/ideological reference?
2) Do you find cultural/ideological references difficult to translate? Would you consider them 'a translation problem'? Why?
3) What principles do you follow when you translate these references? What kind of strategies do you have at your disposal?
4) Do you follow specific guidelines for the translation of cultural/ideological references or do you work on a case-by-case basis?
5) In your view, can/should a screen translator 'explain' a cultural/ideological reference? Why/ Why not?
6) Are there any circumstances where you would *omit* a cultural/ideological reference?
7) How do you deal with a cultural/ideological reference that you do not know/understand?
8) Do you think Arabic screen translators have particular problems regarding the translation of cultural/ideological references? Why?
9) How challenging was dubbing *'The Simpsons'* and the Disney movies to you and your team?
10) What constraints did you encounter?

Your Audience

1) Are you conscious of the type of audience you translate for? What assumptions do you make about them? *(Ex: level of education, knowledge of the source culture...)*
2) Does this depend on the genre and the content of the film?
3) Have these assumptions about the audience changed during the years you have been working as a screen translator?
4) Do you try to adapt your subtitles specifically to a Muslim audience? How?
5) Do you remember any informative examples/anecdotes regarding any of the issues touched on here?
6) Is there anything else you would like to say regarding the topic?

Background of Subtitler(s)/Dubber(s)

1) How have you been trained to become a subtitler/dubber? What is your professional/educational background and training in translation?
2) How long have you been working as a screen translator?
3) What qualities do you think are necessary to be a subtitler/dubber?

Appendix C

CORPUS & INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS ON CD

THE SIMPSONS EPISODE GUIDE

	Season 1			Season 2
No	Title	No	Title
7G01	Some Enchanted Evening	7F01	Two Cars In Every Garage
7G02	Bart The Genius	7F02	Simpson And Delilah
7G03	Homer's Odyssey	7F03	Bart Gets An F
7G04	There Is No Disgrace Like Homer	7F04	Tree House Of Horror
7G05	Bart the General	7F05	Dancin' Homer
7G06	Moaning Lisa	7F06	Bart The Daredevil
7G08	Simpson's Roasting On An Open Fire	7F07	Bart Vs. Thanksgiving
		7F08	Dead Putting Society
7G09	The Call Of The Simpsons	7F09	Itchy & Scratchy& Marge
7G10	Homer's Night Out	7F10	Bart Gets Hit By A Car
7G11	Bjorn To Be Wild (Life On The Fast Lane)	7F11	One Fish, Two Fish, Blowfish, Blue Fish
7G12	Krusty Gets Busted	7F12	The Way We Was
		7F14	Bart's Dog Gets An 'F'
		7F15	Principal Charming
		7F16	Oh, Brother, Where Art Thou
		7F17	Old Money
		7F18	Brush With Greatness
		7F19	Lisa's Substitute
		7F20	War Of The Simpsons
		7F21	Three Men And A Comic Book
		7F22	Blood Feud

	Season 3		
8F01	Mr. Lisa Goes To Washington	8F13	Homer At The Bat
8F02	Tree House Of Horror	8F14	Homer Alone
8F03	Bart The Murderer	8F15	Separate Vocation
8F04	Homer Defined	8F16	Bart The Lover
8F06	Lisa's Pony	8F17	Dog Of Death
8F07	Saturdays Of Thunder	8F19	Colonel Homer
8F08	Flaming Moe's	8F20	Black Windower
8F09	Burns Verkaufen Der Kraftwerk	8F21	The Otto Show
8F10	I Married Marge	8F22	Bart's Friend Falls In Love
8F11	Radio Bart	8F23	When Flanders Failed
8F12	Lisa The Greek	8F24	Stark Raving Dad

ICRs CODE TREE

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THE ARABIC-LANGUAGE ALPHABET AND TRANSLITERATION

Arabic alphabet (العربية الألفباء) ISO version of 1984

ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر
ألف	باء	تاء	ثاء	جيم	حاء	خاء	دال	ذال	راء
'alif	bā'	tā'	tā'	ğīm	ḥā'	ḫā'	dāl	ḏāl	rā'
'(a)	b	t	ṯ	ğ	ḥ	ḫ	d	ḏ	r
[ʔ]	[b]	[t]	[θ]	[ʤ]	[ħ]	[χ]	[d]	[ð]	[r]

ز	س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف
زاي	سين	شين	صاد	ضاد	طاء	ظاء	عين	غين	فاء
zāy	sīn	šīn	ṣād	ḍād	ṭā'	ẓā'	'ayn	ġayn	fā'
z	s	š	ṣ	ḍ	ṭ	ẓ	ʿ	ġ	f
[z]	[s]	[ʃ]	[sˤ]	[dˤ]	[tˤ]	[ðˤ]	[ʕ]	[ʁ]	[f]

ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي	ء
قاف	كاف	لام	ميم	نون	هاء	واو	ياء	همزة
qāf	kāf	lām	mīm	nūn	hā'	wāw	yā'	hamza
q	k	l	m	n	h	w	y	
[q]	[k]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[h]	[w]	[j]	