

# Rendering Satire in Dubbing vs. Subtitling: A Case Study of the Arabic Translation of the American Sitcom *The Simpsons*

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## Abstract

This study investigates translation strategies used to render satire of the American animated sitcom *The Simpsons* from American English into Modern Standard Arabic (Subtitling) and Egyptian vernacular (Dubbing). Besides, it attempts to unveil the contribution of language variety and translation modality in rendering satire. The study draws on Simpson's (2003) stylistic model of satirical humour for understanding and analyzing satire. Furthermore, it adopts Mateo's (1995) taxonomy to highlight the strategies used in dubbing and subtitling satire. Applying these two models helps in examining the issues posed by the nature of satire and the shifts in the configuration of satire when rendered from English into Arabic and the effectiveness of these shifts.

The findings of the study show that the socio-cultural nature of satire poses a serious challenge for translators. Furthermore, it has proved that subtitling tends to use the literal translation strategy to render satire in instances that share the same background of the source text and has failed in dealing with sociocultural based ones. Conversely, it was observed that dubbing tends to utilize the equivalent effect strategy, which proved to be sufficient when adapting sociocultural elements of satire. Finally, language variety and translation modality seemed to govern the efficiency of rendering satire in translation into Arabic.

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Keywords: AVT, Subtitling, Dubbing, Humour, Satire, Simpson's model of satire

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## Resumen

*Interpretación de la sátira en doblaje versus subtítulo: un estudio de caso de la traducción al árabe de la comedia estadounidense Los Simpson*

Este estudio investiga las estrategias de traducción utilizadas para convertir la sátira de la comedia animada estadounidense *Los Simpson* del inglés estadounidense al árabe estándar moderno (subtitulado) y al idioma vernáculo egipcio (doblaje). Además, intenta desvelar la contribución de la variedad lingüística y la modalidad de traducción en la interpretación de la sátira. El estudio se basa en el modelo estilístico de humor satírico de Simpson (2003) para comprender y analizar la sátira. Además, adopta la taxonomía de Mateo (1995) para destacar las estrategias utilizadas en el doblaje y subtítulo de la sátira. La aplicación de estos dos modelos ayuda a examinar los problemas planteados por la naturaleza de la sátira y los cambios en la configuración de la sátira cuando se traduce del inglés al árabe, así como la efectividad de estos cambios.

Los hallazgos del estudio muestran que la naturaleza sociocultural de la sátira plantea un serio desafío para los traductores. Además, se ha demostrado que la subtitulación tiende a utilizar la estrategia de traducción literal para representar una sátira en instancias que comparten el mismo trasfondo del texto original y excluye las basadas en aspectos socioculturales. Por el contrario, se observa que el doblaje tiende a utilizar la estrategia de efecto equivalente, que resultó ser suficiente a la hora de adaptar elementos socioculturales de la sátira. Por último, la variedad de idiomas y la modalidad de traducción parecen regir la eficacia de la traducción al árabe de la sátira.

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Palabras Clave: AVT, subtitulado, doblaje, humor, sátira, modelo de sátira de los Simpson

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## 1. Introduction

Satire is one of the most prominent forms of social criticism that aims to bring change and reform to a certain society or individual. As defined by Applebee, “Satire is a literary technique in which behaviours or institutions are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society” (1997: 584). Sitcoms, as a television genre that mostly functions to reflect the real-life of a group of characters in a comic way, have long used humour to introduce its satirical perspective of society in a brighter way (Gray 2009, 148). Therefore, satire can be politically and socially loaded due to its association with different aspects of life, which makes it hard to render from one culture to another. Satirical elements in sitcoms represent a significant part, and failure to render the satirical effect can cause a major loss in the intended overall message (O’Neal 1988).

The translation of satire is considered a complex and difficult task, as it can pose several problems to the translators (Luyken 1991). The transmission of satire using a multi-semiotic medium like audiovisual (AV) materials could be even more cumbersome, since audiovisual materials rely on several channels to convey messages. Therefore, elements such as sounds and visuals can have a great influence on any message to be delivered. Contrary to the translation of written texts, AV translators have to deal with multi-semiotic texts, which are conveyed through several channels including the verbal and non-verbal elements that form the whole message (Delabastita 1989). Messages can be conveyed through different modalities of AVT, either in a written form (subtitles) or in a spoken form (dubbing). Therefore, translators might follow different translation strategies to render satire from one language to another.

## 2. Research aims

The present study investigates the strategies used to render satire in the American animated sitcom, *The Simpsons*, from American English into a dubbed version in Egyptian vernacular and a subtitled version in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The study also aims to uncover the effect of language variety and translation modality on rendering satire. The study contributes to the understanding of the required changes in the configuration of satirical texts when translated from English into Arabic.

### 3. On audiovisual translation

Today, AV materials are here to inform, educate, and entertain. Consequently, the blowout of these materials has increased the need for audiovisual language transfer in most countries around the world for consumption via the screen. The relationship between audiovisual translation and various media products has developed diverse modalities of AVT to overcome the language barrier. Consequently, these modalities have allowed different AV productions to reach audiences all over the world. Scholars distinguish between an array of AVT modalities (Chaume 2012, Danan 1991, Díaz Cintas 2012, Gottlieb 1994, Luyken 1991, Whitman-Linsen 1992); however, this study is only concerned with subtitling and dubbing.

#### 3.1. Subtitling

Subtitling is known as the incorporation of a written text (subtitles) in a target language (TL) on an original film in a source language (SL) presented via a screen, where the subtitles are synchronized with the screened dialogue (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2007). It is also worth noting that in the Arab world, the common practice in subtitling is to use MSA. Therefore, the nature of subtitling in transferring oral scripts into writing as well as its use of the formal variety of the Arabic language, MSA, affects the translation quality and could diminish the sociolinguistic and pragmatic markers that characterize the spoken language making it more formal (Nemani 2013). Dubbing, on the other hand, is not restricted to the use of MSA, as certain genres like sitcoms and teen animation are consumed in a local vernacular.

#### 3.2. Dubbing

Dubbing is the replacement of the original dialogue of the SL soundtrack with a completely new soundtrack of the TL for broadcasting the original audiovisual material for audiences whose SL is not their mother tongue (Chaume 2012: 1). One important characterisation of dubbing is the importance of achieving an equivalent effect similar to that of the source text (ST) audience on the target text (TT) audience. Accordingly, dubbing is target-audience biased, which requires the translator to adapt the ST and make it suitable for the TL culture and standards (Díaz-Cintas 2009). This “freehand” to adapt allows for manipulation, as the original voice is completely omitted (Chaume 2012).

### 4. AVT as inter-semiotic translation

González (2014) argues that the growth of AVT has been encouraged by the fact that the perception and the pattern of engagement of the audience with the AVT material has been enhanced by the huge exposure to the visual semiotics and the interaction

between verbal and non-verbal elements contributing in the meaning-making of the AVT material, and the mutual relationship between audiovisual translation and digital evolution. Diaz-Cintas (2009) presents three different possibilities of transferring the intended messages in AV materials:

- The intended message is transferred through the acoustic channel (i.e. radio programs)
- The intended message is transferred through the visual channel (i.e. comic strips)
- The intended message is transferred through both channels acoustic and visual (i.e. films and videos).

Delabastita identifies some main characterizations of AVT and highlights that “film establishes a multi-channel and multi-code type of communication” (1989: 196). According to him, these codes or channels are verbal, literary and theatrical codes, proxemic, kinesic, and the cinematic. The co-existence of these codes and channels and the non-verbal elements of AV materials, which distinguish the field of AVT, can pose serious challenges for the translators and influence their translation decisions. The task is made even more difficult when dealing with two or more variants of the same language as is the case with Arabic.

#### 4.1. Arabic as a diglossic language

The Arabic language is a diglossic language, which Ferguson defines as:

A relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation. (1959: 336).

This definition best applies to the case of the Arabic language, in which the formal language, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), co-exists with other variants of the language (dialect/vernacular). MSA is used for formal communication including education, formal institutions literature, and written media, whereas the informal variants are used for everyday-communication. Ferguson (1959: 330) argues that when a native speaker of Arabic claims that he does not know Arabic, this typically means that he does not know MSA, which he considers the High variant (H) of the language, assuming that he might be fluent in an informal/colloquial Arabic, what he refers to as the Low-variant (L).

The Egyptian vernacular is the *lingua franca* of the Arabic Low-variants. This status could be attributed to the domination of the Egyptian film industry, which was the first film industry in the Arab world. Many foreign audiovisual productions are dubbed in either MSA or the Egyptian vernacular, including animations and Disney movies; although comedy is mostly dubbed in the latter.

## 5. Humour

One of the most commonly used tools of communication is humour, in which different elements of language, culture and society are of great importance. However, defining humour is even more intricate than defining satire. Attardo posits that “linguists, psychologists and anthropologists have taken humour to be all encompassing category covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses or is felt to be funny” (1994: 4). In the same vein, Bremmer and Roodenburg argue that humour is transmitted through a multi-semiotic medium that includes images, speech, writing, and actions to serve its purpose of stimulating laughter (1997: 1). Dvořáková (2012) suggests that although we could have mental representation or understandings of what humour is, it is still difficult to define. Due to this complexity of finding a precise definition of *humour*, many theorists have discussed humour both as a term and as a phenomenon. In this respect, Abrams stipulates that “in the normal use, the term ‘humour’ refers to what is purely comic: it evokes, as it is sometimes said, sympathetic laughter, or else laughter which is an end in itself.” (1993: 220). However, there must be a significant divergence in the definition of humour from one community and/or country to another, due to certain linguistic and/or socio-cultural backgrounds. Attardo (1994) concludes that humour can be defined by its function, which, in his opinion, is evoking laughter among the audience. Therefore, one of the most important things to bear in mind in translating humour is being able to locate the elements that contribute to the humorous effect, and being able to preserve the humorous effect of the ST in the TT (O’Neal 1988).

### 5.1. Satire, irony, and parody

Kreuz and Roberts in their discussion of the distinctions and relationship between satire, parody, and irony, consider both satire and parody as genres, whereas irony is defined as “a complex rhetorical device used by these genres” (1993: 97). Simpson states that irony is “the space between what is meant and what is asserted” (2003: 90). Conversely, Griffin argues that irony is more than a statement that suggests two readings, one literal and one opposite. He argues that “irony should be understood not simply as a binary switch, either ‘on’ or ‘off,’ but more like a rheostat, a rhetorical dimmer switch that allows for a continuous range of effect between ‘I almost meant what I say’ and ‘I mean the opposite of what I say’” (1994: 65-66). Similarly, Critch-



ley (2002) argues that irony is produced by a collision between expectations and actuality, in other words, a humorous event is established by a disjunction between the recipient general/universal knowledge assumptions of a particular event and the textual structure of the joke, which invokes the recipient expectations by producing unexpected representation of things. Likewise, Simpson (2003) postulates that irony is a crucial component for the creation of satire and that the recognition of a satirical piece is ultimately dependent on realizing its ironic configuration.

As for the overlap between satire and parody, the latter is often considered as interconnected with the former. According to Kangas, “a work of parody exists in relationship to an earlier work (or body of works) that it ridicules by exaggerating some of its features” (2018: 16) which differs from satire in that it does not necessarily imply a social criticism. In the same vein, Kreuz and argue that “both parody and satire require the reader to construct multiple mental representations”; however, “in parody, the audience does not need to go beyond the boundaries of the original work to consider social implications as they do in satire” Roberts (1993: 103).

#### 5.1.1. Satire

Satire, as a literary technique, has been in use since ancient times. According to Gray, Jones and Thompson, “Roman satirist Horace favoured satire because it deals with important issues in a simple, approachable manner, thereby bridging the divide between philosophy and the general public” (2009: 11). This suggests that satire is a form of humour that aims to reach the public rather than those in charge. However, the definition of satire is quite elusive. This is because satire can be formed in many ways and can reach other texts (Florberger 2014). Dictionaries and scholars touch upon satire from various angles. *The Oxford Dictionary*, for example, tackles satire from its structural configuration and function, and defines it as “the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people’s stupidity or vices, particularly in the contemporary politics and other political issues.” To expand on the discussion of the function of satire, Applebee states that satire is “a literary technique in which behaviours or institutions are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society” (1997: 584), a claim which suggests the purpose of satire is not only restricted to mockery but also includes seeking reform.

However, as noted above, there is a disparity in the understanding of satire between those who consider satire as a genre of literature and those who consider it as a general attitude. Simpson (2003) defines satire as a discursive practice that, as he believes, is higher than what is known as a literary genre. He argues that satire can echo and merge multiple discourses in one satirical piece and at the same time could reach a divorced discourse from the text, because satirical texts do not only rely on culture but also are contextually dependent.

## 5.2. Challenges in translating humour

The translation of humour between distant language pairs is unlikely to happen (Han 2011). This “un-translatability” of humour is attributed to the fact that languages involved in the process of translation tend to belong to different families such as English being an Indo-European language, whereas Arabic is a northern Semitic language. Therefore, overcoming the linguistic and cultural differences between these languages poses a serious challenge for translators (Han 2011). For instance, jokes containing sexual connotations are not welcome in films and TV channels aired and watched in the Arab region, in contrast to some Western TV productions, which often rely on sexual innuendos (Al-Quinai 2005). Al-Adwan and Yahiaoui posit that humour is often lost or subject to shifts, pointing out that “there is often a clash between the Arabic subtitles displayed on-screen and canned laughter in the background, as well as the facial expressions of the characters that are usually used to trigger and signal humorous instances” (2018: 98).

The challenge in translating humour, especially in AV products, stems from the difficulty of spotting the humorous element as it requires a deep understanding of the text, show, characters, relationships, and the plot (Florberg and Lundborg 2014). Moreover, humour and satire rely on the use of cultural and language-based references; hence, they require deep knowledge of the socio-cultural and political grounding, historical events and figures, and, especially in the case of satire, the common flaws of the target culture/society. Therefore, finding an equivalent meaning, which conveys the same humorous and satirical effect from one language to another, is rather difficult. Furthermore, Ageli (2014) suggests that humour is motivated by, and highly depends on, the complex structure of the language and on semantic and pragmatic ambiguity. In this regard, Schmitz (2002) stipulates that translating humour is challenging in the sense that it requires deep understanding for both source and target texts’ language and culture, and the translator, as a mediator, must create an equivalent effect similar to that of the original.

## 6. Theoretical underpinnings

Habermas (1979) focuses on communication as a means to arrive at a shared understanding between participants in communicative events. For this to happen, he postulates that the participants must agree on, what he calls, “universal validity claims” which raise in a communicative event. That is to say that, there are specified conditions for each claim raised in any communicative event, which need to be fulfilled in order to be validated.

However, he proposes three validity claims, which he believes are “universal” claims of truth, truthfulness and appropriateness. It is important to note that Habermas has never provided a precise definition for any of these claims. Nevertheless, each of these universal claims is associated with both a function of language and a domain

of reality. The truth claims of universal validity are associated with the cognitive function of language, which represents the objective domain of reality or as he puts it, the world of external nature. This world represents the “objectivated segment of reality that the adult subject is able (even if only mediately) to preserve and manipulate (Habermas 1997: 67-68). In other words, it represents the relation between the external world and language; how a speaker’s utterance forms a sentence about the exterior world.

The validity claim, also referred to as “sincerity,” is associated with the expressive function of language and represents the subjective world of the addressee/hearer. This validity claim is centred on “a particular inner world (of the speaker) as the totality of his intentional experience” (Habermas 1997: 67). It is, thus, a reflection of the internal reality of the speaker; his/her expressed intentions which could be either truthful (sincere) or untruthful (insincere).

Appropriateness claims, which are associated with the interactive function of language and the social domain of reality or what is referred to as “the normative reality.” It is the shared values and norms of a particular community or society which determine the validity of an interpersonal relationship in a communicative event and if this relationship is legitimated or illegitimated. A given society has its regulated interpersonal relationships that determine whether a speech act is accepted or unaccepted in a communicative event. The claims of appropriateness are associated with the interactive function of language and plays a significant role in achieving a satirical resolution; therefore, it will be an important focus in the discussion of the examples under scrutiny.

### **6.1. Simpson’s (2003) stylistic model of satirical humour**

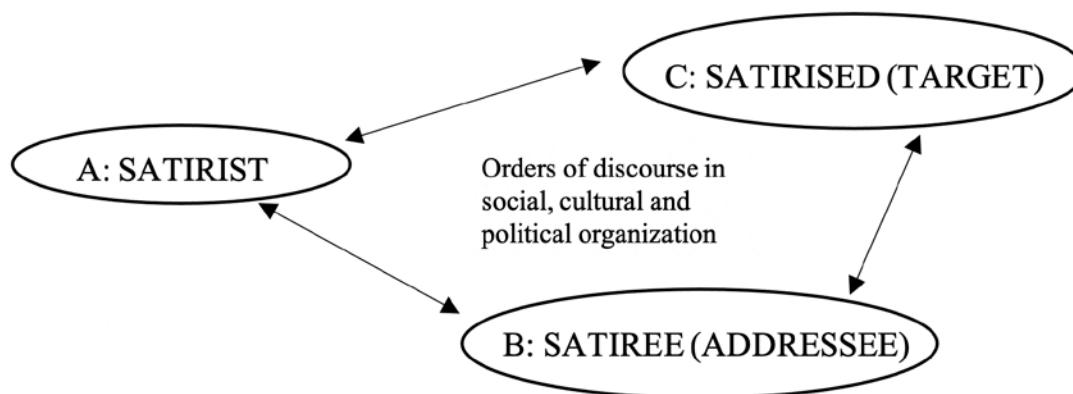
Satire was first described as a discursive practice and not as a genre of discourse, which “does things to and with genres of discourse” (Simpson 2003: 76). This is the premise under which this analytical model operates. Simpson claims that satire occupies a higher place than any previous linguistic classification of the concepts: register and genre, and higher than what is believed to be “literary genres” by literary-critics. According to Simpson, satire requires two main elements: a genus, which he defines as “a derivation in a particular culture, in a system of institutions and in the frameworks of belief and knowledge which envelop and embrace these institutions,” and an impetus, “which emanates from a perceived disapprobation, by the satirist, of some aspect of a potential satirical target” (2003: 8).

Furthermore, Simpson develops a triad for the configuration of satire, represented in Figure 1, that includes what he calls “three discursive subject positions” embodying the satirist (the producer), the satiree (the recipient) and the satirised (the target) (2003: 86). Simpson clarifies that the satirist and the satiree are the two participants who are “ratified”, whereas the satirised is not normally, welcome in the satirical discourse. This target might be an individual, event, experience, or even another dis-



course. It is important to mention that he highlights that the subject positions in this triad are “subject to constant shift and (re)negotiation”.

Figure 1. Triadic Structure of Satire as a Discursive Practice (Simpson 2003: 86)



Additionally, Simpson posits that a successful satire that is “keeping with the general principle of humour delivery and reception” (2003: 87), has the ability to shorten the distance between position A and B, thereby bonding the relationship between these two discursive positions and lengthening their connection with the third subject position C. However, the unsuccessful or “misfired” satire might lengthen the connection between A and B, while simultaneously shortening the connection between subject B and C.

Simpson suggests that the creation of a satirical discourse involves three ironic phases: the prime, the dialectic, and the irony of conferral. Accordingly, the prime is symmetric to the intended subject of satire, in which it echoes an authentic real-life event of discourse such as a situation or phenomena that are being addressed. This element of structure marks the first ironic phase of satire, preparing the ground for a supplementary crucial upcoming element. That is the dialectic which imposes a collision of thoughts or ideas, presenting, what Simpson calls, a contra-expectation of the line of reasoning of the prime, which produces a collision of ideas with the prime, and it is this that constitutes the second ironic phase. This dissonance between the two elements of the structure creating an oppositional relationship between the prime and the dialectic is what marks the third ironic phase of satire. This places the satiree on what Simpson calls a “satirical footing”, realizing injected irony in the satirical text. The interpretation of the relationship between prime and dialectic relies on the satiree’s access to a variety of knowledge resources, e.g. general/universal knowledge and knowledge of a specific event or area, which result in satirical uptake. This uptake, according to Simpson (2003), relies heavily on Habermas’s (1979) universal validity claims. Simpson argues that a satirical realisation or uptake necessitates “a special configuration of the three principle claims of sincerity, appropriateness and truth” (2003: 10). He illustrates that the satiree’s recognition of the disjunction be-

tween the two elements of the structure serves to rescind or invoke the validity claim of sincerity, which affects the other two universal claims. He explains the relationship between Habermas' claims and satirical subject positions through what he calls the three "Rs": rise, recognise and redeem. He affirms that the satiree goes through three steps to achieve a satirical uptake, whereas the satirist raises a certain claim, the satiree recognizes it (the insincerity between the prime and the dialectic); thus, the satiree redeems this recognition across the other two subject positions, in which irony needs to be ratified or "conferred" upon the text. In this respect and in relation to the universal validity claims, the model postulates that satire fails or "misfires" in three cases: the satirist does not raise a claim, the satiree does not recognise the claim, or the claim is not redeemed across the two subject positions. The humorous side of a satirical text is achieved upon the realisation of the rescission of the three validity claims and therefore delivers its implied criticism or ridicule against the satirised (the target).

## 6.2. Mateo's model

Table 1. Mateo's translation strategies of irony (Mateo, 1995:175-177)

|   |
|---|
| ST irony becomes TT irony with literal translation  |
| ST irony becomes TT irony with 'equivalent effect' translation  |
| ST irony becomes TT irony by means of different effects from those used in ST (including the replacement of paralinguistic elements by other ironic cues) |
| ST irony is enhanced in TT with some word / expression  |
| ST ironic innuendo becomes more restricted and explicit in TT   |
| ST irony becomes TT sarcasm (i.e. more overt criticism)   |
| The hidden meaning of ST irony comes to the surface in TT (no irony in TT)  |
| ST ironic ambiguity has only one of the two meanings translated in TT (there is no double-entendre or ambiguity in TT therefore)                          |
| ST irony is replaced by a 'synonym' in TT with no two possible interpretations  |
| ST irony is explained in footnote in TT   |
| ST irony has literal translation with no irony in TT  |
| Ironic ST is completely deleted in TT   |
| No irony in ST becomes irony in TT  |

Mateo (1995) proposed a model of translation strategies for rendering irony. She presents the strategies as follow

Even though it does not specifically deal with satire, Mateo's (1995) model of translating irony was adopted because of irony's contribution in the configuration of satire. The unique composition of satirical discourses necessitates identifying its crucial parts to select the appropriate strategies to render its complex elements, which raised our research questions.

## 6.3. Methodological approach

The data of the present study was derived from the American animated sitcom, *The Simpsons*. It is considered one of the longest running-shows on TV, consisting of more than two hundred episodes, since it was first aired on Fox network in 1990. According to Turner (2005), *The Simpsons* has defined a generation with being an

animation masterpiece. The popularity of *The Simpsons* and the core cause of its accomplishments are ascribed to its heavy social and cultural criticism; its satire. In each episode of this show, the viewer might catch several allusions and satirical elements. *The Simpsons* provides the study with ample examples for the study of satire; therefore, it was selected for the investigation of the translation strategies of satire. The study analyzes satire instances in the first three seasons of *The Simpsons*, which are 52 episodes and their Egyptian vernacular dubbed and MSA subtitled versions. The dubbed version was aired in 2005 on the Arabic television channel MBC. The process first involved watching the episodes to ensure the accuracy of the scripts, and then instances of satire were located by identifying humorous/satirical markers exhibited using word-play, sarcasm, or puns. As for the subtitled version, several subtitled companies and fansubbers provided subtitles of *The Simpsons* into Arabic. For this study, subtitles were downloaded from [www.OpenSubtitles.org](http://www.OpenSubtitles.org), and every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the subtitles through watching the original videos and matching the timed subtitles' script with the original English ones.

As for the selection of satire instances from the original version, the method was first to highlight each humorous example based on Simpson's framework discussed earlier. 74 humorous instances of satire were identified in the original version. Simpson's model stipulates that satirical instances should involve two ironic phases: the prime and the dialectic. This model was applied to the humorous instances collected, and instances in which the ironic phrases are ambiguous, due to double meanings for instance, were eliminated. The final working data were 38 (51%) instances of satire from only 17 episodes; not to say other episodes did not contain any satirical instances, but these were selected for their richness in satire instances which clear address social or political engagement. Then, the instances were tabulated along with their translations from both the dubbed and subtitled versions. A back-translation was also provided for both Arabic translations.

A mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative) was followed in this study. This approach involves drawing on Simpson's (2003) model of the analysis of satire and Mateo's (1995) model of translating irony for the investigation of the translation strategies used by the translators. The classification of instances was based on the patterns observed in the analysis of the data. Once the patterns were established, the contribution of language variety and translation modality was assessed.

## 7. Analysis and findings

Before tackling the analysis of the examples, we will discuss the findings regarding the translation strategies utilised in the dubbing and subtitling versions. The analysis has revealed a variety of translation strategies utilized by the translators to render the satirical instances from English into Arabic and fulfil the function of the satirical discourse event in each instance in both dubbing and subtitling, as can be observed in Table 2. Interestingly, in the subtitled version, literal translation was used to render

30 instances (79%) whereas other strategies were rarely used (equivalent effect for 2 instances (5%)). Also, the most significant observation is that 6 instances (15%) had no irony, and thus “misfired” in Simpson’s term. As for the dubbed version, only one instance, which contains an acronym, “misfired”, albeit misfired in the subtitled one as well.

Furthermore, the equivalent effect strategy was heavily utilised in the dubbed version in 22 instances (58%). In contrast to subtitling, the dubbed version only used a literal translation for 10 instances (26%). Another observed strategy in the dubbed version is explicating and making the innuendo of ST more restricted in the TT, in the sense that the translation only explains one of the intended meanings.

Table 2. Frequency of translation strategies according to the translation modality

| Translation Modality | Translation Strategy | ST irony – TT irony with literal translation | ST irony enhanced with some word/expression | ST irony –TT irony with ‘equivalent effect translation | ST irony becomes TT irony by means of different effects from those used in ST. | ST ironic innuendo becomes more restricted and explicit in TT | ST irony has literal translation with no irony in TT |
|----------------------|----------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|
|                      |                      | <b>Subtitling</b>                            | 30  | 0  | 2  | 0   | 0  |
| <b>Dubbing</b>       | 10                   | 1  | 22  | 1  | 3  | 1   |  |

Due to spatial constraints, only six representative examples were analysed here. The contribution of language variety and translation modality to the translation of satire from English into Arabic is also discussed below.

### 7.1. Rescinding universal validity claims

As discussed earlier, Simpson (2003) believes that the realisation of a satirical text involves the recognition of the disjunction between the “prime” and the “dialectic” elements of a structure. In addition, it is argued that the three universal validity claims of sincerity, truth and appropriateness proposed by Habermas (1979) play a significant role in this realisation. The satirist’s realization of the non-isotopic relationship between the two elements of structure results in revoking, first, the sincerity claims, which consequently results in revoking the other two universal claims.

The textual configuration of the following example is a key rationale for selecting it for this analysis. The text in question offers an opportunity to discuss the role of the three proposed universal claims and how they affect the translation of satire. Bart gets a job for the sake of buying an expensive comic book. Despite his hard work, he only earns fifty cents, which is hardly enough to buy anything. He turns to his father, proclaiming “working is for chumps”. Paradoxically, his father, Homer, concurs with his judgement. Before considering the importance of this example in term of its relation to the universal validity claims, it is important to briefly note its discursive features as a satirical piece, bearing in mind that Simpson’s model is analysing satire as a discursive practice; in other words, it relies on the instantiation of a discursive prime and the ability of the recipient/reader to invoke an anterior discourse event. Otherwise, the satire would “misfire”.

Table 3. Example 1: Three men and a comic book [7F21] (00:13:34 - 00:13:44)

| ST   | TT – EV  | TT – MSA   |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Bart:</b><br/>                     I did everything I could and I've only got 35 bucks. I'm done working.<br/> <u>Working's for chumps.</u></p> <p><b>Homer:</b><br/> <u>I'm proud of you.</u> I was twice your age before I figured that out.</p> | <p>بابا، أنا عملت اللي مايتعملش ومالمتش إلا نص دولار . أنا تعبت من الشغل الشغل دا فشل.</p> <p>أنا فخور بيك يا بنى. أنا ما فهمتش كدا إلا لما بقيت كبير.</p> <p><b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     - Dad, I have done what couldn't be done and I didn't collect except half a dollar. I am tired from work, work is a failure.<br/><br/>                     - I am proud of you son, I didn't understand that until I became big.</p> | <p>فعلت كل ما بوسعى وليس معى سوى 35 دولار فقط. لن أعمل، العمل للحمقى.</p> <p>أنا فخور بك يا بنى. كنت بضعف عمرك عندما أدركت ذلك.</p> <p><b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     - I did everything I could and I have only 35 dollars. I will not work, work is for fools.<br/><br/>                     - I am proud of you son, I was twice your age when I figured that out.</p> |

In this example, the anterior discourse, which must be invocable or retrievable by the reader, is the one where a typical father, Homer, would be exhorting his son, Bart, to seek work as an honourable worthwhile pursuit. However, the dialectic element is mediated through the fact that Homer is flouting the reader's expectation of fatherly advice to his son. He is totally flouting the traditional dogma expected to be emphasized by a father (that working is a good worthwhile thing) not simply by telling Bart that he is right, but by going so far as to praise him for his "precocious" wisdom: "I'm proud of you," and ridiculing himself in the process for failing to discover this truth: "I was twice your age before I figured that out." It can be observed that in this example, the clash between the anterior discourse and the dialectic element invoked the validity claim of sincerity. This action is resonated across the text, invoking the validity claims of appropriateness by flouting the recipient's existential presumptions about fatherly advice, and claims of truth by flouting the traditional dogma.

Another important thing to remember is that Simpson views satire as a "triad embodying three discursive subject positions which are subject to constant shift and (re)negotiation" (2013: 8). These are: satirist, satiree, and satirised. Note that the satirist, satiree, and, presumably, satirized share the same universe of discourse in this example, which is a crucial element to reach a satirical uptake. Interestingly, when Considering both dubbed and subtitled translations into Arabic, both translations have captured the same satirical configuration and rendered the satirical piece successfully, even though different strategies were utilised. While subtitling has opted for literal translation for the prime element *لن أعمل العمل للحمقى*, which translates into 'I will not work, working is for fools', dubbing provided an equivalent effect translation *أنا تعبت من الشغل، الشغل دا فشل* which translates to 'I am tired from work, working is a failure'. Despite the different strategies utilized, the successful rendering of satire in this example could be attributed to the fact that the three subject positions share the same validity claims; the presumption of a fatherly advice that emphasizes that working is a worthwhile pursuit. Since this "universal" validity claim is present in the new recipi-



ent/viewer’s universe, the Arab audience universe of discourse, the configuration of the satirical piece could be captured regardless of the language variety or translation modality.

Another case in point concerning universal validity claims and similar universe of discourse is the following example. Lisa participates in an essay-writing competition and wins a free trip to Washington, D.C with her family. Other than noting that this instance relates to Homer’s perverted conception of education, no further contextualization would seem needed here.

Table 4. Example 2: Mrs Lisa goes to Washington [8F01] (00:07:44 - 00:07:50)

| ST  | TT – Dubbing – MSA  | TT- Subtitling – MSA  |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Homer:</b><br/>                     Wa-hoo! <u>Who would have guessed...reading and writing would pay off</u></p> | <p>مين كان يصدق ان الفراهه والكتابة ممكن يكون ليهم تمن.<br/> <b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     - Who would have believed that reading and writing might have a price?</p> | <p>...من كان يتوقع أن القراءة والكتابة ستعودان...علينا بالنتف<br/> <b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     - Who would have guessed that reading and writing will benefit us?</p> |

Dealing with the anatomy of this satirical piece, within the terms of Simpson’s model, the prime is instantiated through echoing, inter-semiotically, real discourses of the salient benefit of essay competitions for children. This anterior discourse is fractured via Homer’s perception of education which constitutes the dialectic phase; framing a completely satirical dimension. The non-isochronous of the dialectic element with the prime is embodied by the oppositional relationship, forming a collision brought by invoking the anterior discourse. This takes us back to the three universal validity claims, to the function of satire to violate these claims. In this regard, this instance follows much the pattern of the previous example. Here, the anterior discourse, which must be invocable, is the worthiness of education. Again, Homer here is flouting the viewers’ expectations, which are based on the three universal validity claims, by showing his surprise that his confidence that “reading and writing” are worthless has been proved wrong. The satirist here is stressing his assumption that the target audience is aware that the educational system is broken, which is the target of this instance by emphasising that no one “would have guessed.”

Analysing the subtitled and dubbed versions, it can be observed that the subtitled version has provided a literal translation ستعودان علينا بالنتف which translates to ‘will benefit us’ whereas the dubbed version utilized an equivalent effect يكون لها ثمن which translates ‘have a price’ for this instance, yet both were able to capture the satirical discourse. The general thesis of the meaningless and futility of educational schema is a universal issue; either in America, as is the case in this instance, or in the Arab world. Accordingly, this could elucidate the reason behind the capability of both translation modalities with their different language variety to capture the satirical discourse while, at the same time, preserving the same satirical configuration.

It is important to stress that in translation, either dubbing or subtitling, the new intended satiree might not share the same universe of discourse, which would neces-

sitate some change in the satirical configuration and methods used by the satirist. Taking for example, the previous cases, if prime happens to be absent (for example in a society where nobody is expected to work) or the educational system is working perfectly, then the satire would not work in the translation.

## 7.2. Shifting the universe of discourse

Consider now the following example, which is taken from a purely political episode of *The Simpsons*. This episode is played off against the corrupted members of the American Congress and American politics. The only intelligent member of The Simpsons family, Lisa, wins a writing contest about “what makes America great.” Consequently, she is nominated to enter the national finals in Washington D.C. Nevertheless, during her trip she overhears a congressman receiving bribery to allow demolishing Springfield Forest. Lisa loses faith in democracy and writes a new essay condemning the government system of greed and corruption and mentions the name of those involved, including the congressman. Accordingly, her essay did not win due to its content, yet the congressman is fired and sentenced to imprisonment, which made her satisfied and restored her faith in the legal system.

Table 5. Mrs Lisa goes to Washington [8F01] (00:20:3 - 00:20:39)

| ST  | TT – EV – Dubbing  | TT – MSA – Subtitling  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Marge:</b><br/> <u>Imprisoned congressman becomes born-again Christian.</u></p> <p><b>Lisa:</b><br/>                     I can't believe it. <u>The system works.</u></p> | <p>النائب المقبوض عليه يعلن عن ندمه<br/>                     مش مصدقه نفسى. العدل أنتصر</p> <p><b>Back Translation:</b><br/>                     The arrested deputy announces his regret.<br/>                     I can't believe myself, the justice prevailed.</p> | <p>"الكونغرسمان السجنين<br/>                     يولد من جديد كمسيحي"<br/>                     لا أصدق، النظام سليم</p> <p><b>Back Translation:</b><br/>                     Imprisoned congressman becomes born-again Christian.<br/>                     I can't believe, the system is sound.</p> |

The impetus of the satirical instance is situated in the attestable practices of American politicians and specifically the members of the congress. This instance relies mainly on a particular socio-political American orientation of the satirist instantiating the genus of the satirical discourse in the guise of a children's writing contest. Therefore, the translation is centrally concerned with placing the present satirical discourse against its context of production, and within a universe of discourse that is equivalent or similar to the one involved in the source text. It is assumed that the satirical target constitutes a particular thesis, which is here the assumption that the government system of America serves its purpose of keeping public order and achieving justice. That is served in the text by the headline of the newspaper “imprisoned congressman becomes born-again Christian.” A part of the text is mediated as an antithesis establishing an oppositional discourse, which covertly portrays in this example that the tackled audience of this universe of discourse is confident that the targeted system of America barely works. This is embodied in Lisa's unexpected proclaim that

“the system works!,” colliding with the general knowledge assumptions about the thesis raising the humorous side. Following the adapted transmission across to satire, the viewer/receiver is left with no choice but to look for a synthesis out of these irreconcilable aspects of the text that touches upon a divorced subject matter from the linguistic composition of this satirical humour event, to reach a satirical uptake.

It has been discussed that the essence of the discursive construction of this satirical humour instance is mediated through the collision between two elements a prime (thesis), which is delivered through the phrase “born-again Christian” echoing the validity of the American government system, and a dialectic (antithesis); oppositional phase mediated through the proclaiming “the system works.” Hence, a successful rendering requires echoing an equivalent comprehensible event of discourse that suits the TT recipient, and a dialectic that collides with the knowledge of the particular discourse of the echoed intertext. The subtitling version provided a literal translation for the prime element *يولد من جديد كمسيحي* which translated into ‘born-again Christian.’ In addition, it transliterated the term *كونغرسمان* ‘congressman’, which, to note, does not exist in the Arab world due to differences between political systems. Furthermore, the composition of the prime element is very much bound to the American western sociocultural orientation. The phrase “born-again Christian” has a religious connotation based on the Christian beliefs that the penalty of a person who admitted being a sinner is to die spiritually, and afterwards, is given the gift of salvation by Jesus. The TT satiree does not have access to the same knowledge resources as those of the ST; hence, the discourse has “misfired”, even in the subtitled version, leading to contextual nonsensicality, as the term ‘system’ was translated literally to *نظام*. This term has negative connotations in the Arab world since its sense in everyday usage is indicative of corrupted ousted government systems and is not often used to refer to the system of government in the Arab world. However, the dubbed version has provided an equivalent effect translation shifting the universe of discourse to suit the new satiree providing a localised discourse. The term ‘congressman’ was substituted with *النائب* which translate to ‘deputy’, which firstly, echoes an authentic position in the Arab world that entitles political influence, and secondly, is more comprehensible and mediates accessible knowledge resources for the Arab recipient. In addition, the phrase ‘born-again Christian’ was translated into *يعرب عن ندمه* which translates to ‘expresses his regret’. By so doing, the translator elucidated the covert meaning of the phrase to deliver an adequate and acceptable message to an audience with different sociocultural beliefs. Regarding the dialectic element, the translator opted to substitute ‘system’ with *الحق* ‘justice.’ Arguably, the rationale behind this shift is that the latter collocates more often in the Arab world with ‘the government’ while the former does not. Accordingly, the collision between the two discursive elements was established in the dubbed version and delivered the intended mockery of the government indicated in Lisa’s surprise that the “system works!”

The following example represents the universe of discourse from a slightly more complicated aspect. Here, Homer is reading “US of A Today” newspaper, when Lisa

notices the front-page headline that says, “America’s Favorite Pencil.” At this moment, Homer proclaims that there is good news that the “S.A.T scores are declining at a lower range,” which stimulates Lisa to criticise the futility of this newspaper. Homer disagrees, and claims that this is the only newspaper in America that is not afraid to say that everything is fine. Accordingly, the “impetus” that triggers this text is situated in the attestable practices of newspaper constitution, which will be shortly discussed below, and the traditional American journalism tendency to embellish and invent fake stories for the sake of retailing more copies or to suit the preference of those in power. After contextualizing the instance, we will discuss its satirical configuration, which is not as straightforward as the previous one.

Table 6. Example 4: Homer Defined [8F04] (00:01:14 - 00:01:18)

| ST   | TT – Dubbing – EV   | TT – Subtitling – MSA  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Homer:</b><br/>                     Here's good news. According to this article <u>S.A.T. scores are declining at a slower rate.</u></p> <p><b>Lisa:</b><br/>                     I think this paper is a flimsy hodgepodge of pie graphs, factoids and Larry King.</p> <p><b>Homer:</b><br/> <u>This is the only paper in America not afraid to tell the truth; that everything is just fine.</u></p> | <p>أدى خير حلو. فيه مقال هنا يقول، إن الأسعار كلها<br/>                     حتنخفض شويه شويه</p> <p>ببإ، يتهدىكى المجلة دى كتابه ومكتوب فيها كلام وراه<br/>                     غرض.</p> <p>حياك، دى المجلة الوحيدة ف بلدنا اللي دائماً تقول الحق.<br/>                     وان كل حلجة مائنيه تملام</p> <p><b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     - Here is good news, there is an article says that the all prices will decrease slowly slowly.<br/>                     - Dad, I think this magazine is a liar and that there is a purpose behind the things written in it.<br/>                     - Hang on, this is the only magazine in our country that always says the right, and that everything is going fine.</p> | <p>إليكم أنباء سارة طبقاً لهذه المقالة فقد انخفضت<br/>                     معدلات اختبار الكفاءة الدراسية إلى مستوى<br/>                     أقل.</p> <p>أبي أعتقد أن هذه الصحيفة، تنير الزوابعات<br/>                     الإعلامية والاحصائيات الدائرية، والأخبار<br/>                     التافهة و(لاري كينغ)</p> <p>هذه هي الصحيفة الوحيدة في (أمريكا)<br/>                     التي لا تخشى قول الحقيقة وأن كل شيء كما<br/>                     يرام</p> <p><b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     - Good news for you, according to this article the rate of Scholastic Aptitude Test decreased to a lower level.<br/>                     -Dad, I think this newspaper is triggers media freak-show and round statistics and silly news and Larry King<br/>                     - This is the only newspaper in America that is not afraid to tell the truth and that everything is fine.</p> |

Starting with the name of the newspaper “US of A Today,” it explicitly echoes the well-known American newspaper “USA Today.” As this newspaper is the core of the viewer’s attention, it instantiates a part of the text’s prime element and seems to be very much concerned with the discourse of this specific newspaper’s publication and constitution. Leaving for the moment the inter-semiotic element constituting this instance, the news reported, the “S.A.T scores,” constitutes the other part of the prime element echoing a real-life piece of news that, arguably, is useless and does not concern most of the readers/citizens. Furthermore, Lisa’s mockery represents an essential part of the prime; it reveals the content of the target newspaper, providing the satiree with a glance into the constitution of this newspaper. In addition, the discursive twist or “contra-expectation” is embodied in the collision between the spoof news and

Homer's claim that it is a truthful, brave newspaper. The perception made by this satirical discourse that the American newspapers are concerned with "flimsy" pieces of news, to mislead the audience, is mediated through Homer's claim. This claim turns the conceptual sphere of the event upside down representing a positive side of the discourse. Therefore, the satiree is invited to reach a satirical "uptake" by readjusting the dialectic element back to a sort of negative side or framework.

However, to tackle the translations, it is necessary to list the crucial elements of this instance, which contains some culture-specific references including S.A.T and Larry King. However, the most important element to be rendered is the futility of the spoof news and how it collides with Homer's claim that this newspaper is not afraid to tell the truth after Lisa's declaration. It can be observed that the subtitler selected literal translation to render this instance; however, the S.A.T acronym was explained and rendered as اختبار الكفاءة الدراسية 'Scholastic Aptitude Test.' In addition, the subtitler opted to preserve أمريكا 'America' in the dialectic element, which shows the translator's loyalty to the text. This translation could be considered as a "misfire," first because it tackles or reports an issue which is irrelevant to the target satire, and second because it requires access to the American "universe of discourse" which contains knowledge resources of the journalism tendencies in America. In other words, it has failed to render the satirical discourse because it has preserved the American "universe of discourse" represented by the SAT, which as discussed, is not familiar to the new satiree. Besides, it has preserved the contextualization of the satirical dimension by preserving the word "America" in the dialectic element.

Conversely, the dubbing translator opted for equivalent effect translation for this instance. It adapted the reported news into relatable and suitable news to the target satiree knowledge resources or local discourse, which is the issue of rising prices in the Arab world; translating 'S.A.T scores' to الأسعار which means 'prices.' In addition, it has rendered the satirical piece by shifting its 'universe of discourse' to fit the new satiree knowledge resources by substituting 'America' with a lexical under-specificity بلدنا which translates to 'our country' to generalize the context of discourse and relate it to the target viewer's universe; the Arab world, where freedom of speech is shackled.

Another important question in the present study is the contribution of the translation modalities and language variety used to render satirical humour. In the previous examples, the factors that might have led to a misfired or successful rendering is the translation modality. The satirical instances under scrutiny are based on a distinct universe of discourse from that of the new Arab satiree; hence, a shift in the universe of discourse is crucial. Adaptation in dubbing is injected more easily to the text than subtitling. This is because the ST in dubbing is omitted, and recipients have no access to the original text. On the contrary, recipients/viewers in subtitling have access to the ST, which might limit the subtitler's options, especially if the recipient possesses sufficient knowledge of the source language; a process known as the 'gossiping effect' (Törnqvist (1995: 49).



This section has tackled the issue of the universe of discourse and how it affects the translation of satire. However, the challenges in translating satire are not only restricted to the difference of the universe of discourse between the ST and the TT, but it also includes challenges posed by the lexico-grammatical devices of the satirical discourse, which Simpsons (2003) calls “stylistic hooks” including puns and wordplays.

### 7.3. Misfire

To understand the reasons behind unsuccessful rendering of satirical humour, consider the following example. The students of Springfield Elementary School are taking a test called Career Aptitude Normalizing Test to discover the job best suited for them. This test has met the expectations and dreams of some students, but it has also shattered the dreams of others. As a result, they became troublemakers and lost faith in the education system.

Table 7. Example 5: Separate Vocation [8F15] (00:01:14 - 00:01:18)

| ST   | TT- EV – Dubbing   | TT – MSA – Subtitling   |
|--|--|---|
| Teacher:<br>It's called the <u>Career Aptitude Normalizing Test Or "CAN'T"</u> . | في الحقيقة هو اسمه إختبار مهنة الشباب او امش<br><b>Back translation:</b><br>Actually, it is called Youth Career Test or walk away. | اسمه إختبار "تحديد الكفاءة المهنية"<br>أو "ت.ك.م"<br><b>Back translation:</b><br>It is called Career Aptitude Test or "T.K.M" |

It is important to note that the particularity of most of the satirical discourses, according to Simpson (2003), is that it can sustain a kind of text that is half-referential and half-fictional, and at the same time, has the capacity to broach authentic subject matters that are fully detached from the salient lexico-grammatical realization of the text itself. It is suggested that this example has a referential value that is dependent on the general knowledge resources of the satiree. This suggestion is based on the naming of the career personality test in the show (Career Aptitude Test), which situates referents directly to the widely spread career personality tests that some people tend to solely rely on their results when making career decisions. These tests instantiate the impetus of this satirical discourse. As this is the particular contextual frame of this satirical discourse, which is the focus of intention for the recipient, it embodies the satirical prime, triggering a certain echo of this kind of tests.

In comparison with authentic careers tests, the name of the test in the show has a flagrantly fictional element in the sense that none of these tests is ostensibly named a “Normalizing” test. From this foundation, it follows that the satirist has invented this name to prepare the ground for the forthcoming oppositional phase. The discursive twist of this text or, to adopt Simpson’s term, the “contra-expectation,” is injected into the text using the acronym, “CAN’T”, which clearly explains the rationale behind this naming. The acronym establishes the dialectic element, forcing the potential satiree

to search for a resolution that lies beyond the lexico-grammatical fabric of this text. This is to deliver the intentional interpretation that this test “cannot do” or, to be more explicit, that the text tries to ridicule the validity of this meaningless repeated rigma-role for the students. This realisation of the dialectic phase is based on text-internal knowledge that the acronym “CAN’T” stands for the echoed discourse of the prime. Before tackling this example in term of its translations in both dubbing and subtitling, it worth noting that the particular linguistic operation that instantiates the dialectic, the acronym, has functioned as a stylistic hook fastening two unrelated discourses together. Accordingly, preserving the relationship between the prime and dialectic is a crucial element in rendering this satirical instance.

The subtitling version, in this example, as well as most of the selected instances, opted to provide a literal translation of the ST; translating ‘Career Aptitude Text’ to اختبار الكفاءة المهنية. Although it is noted that the subtitled version omitted the word “normalizing” from the prime, it has been argued that the discursual construction of this satirical humour instance is expounded by the prime, echoing the widely spread aptitude tests, and overplayed by the dialectic phase which constitutes an acronym derived from the previously named test in the prime. The subtitler has eliminated the fictional part of the satirical discourse preserving the preferentiality of the text by echoing an authentic test “career aptitude test.” However, it may be argued that the subtitling version has echoed the intended particular discourse, even though it has lost its fictional part. Nevertheless, the dialectic element mediated by the acronym, which is an essential element in a particular satirical discourse, was lost. The translator opted to provide an abbreviation, not an acronym, for the test constituting from the first letter from each word ت.ك.م or “T.K.M” which has no etymological value. This resulted in an unsuccessful rendering of satire, or a “misfire.”

On the other hand, the dubbed version opted to provide an equivalent effect translation for this particular satirical instance. It can be observed that the dubbed version has preserved the discursual construction of the satirical instance. It is expounded by the prime, a referential fictional name of the test that is اختبار مهنة الشباب which translates to ‘Youth Career Test.’ This echoes the issue of the validity of these tests, which to be noted, is a shared issue between the two humour communities and a dialectic element that is overplayed by a similar linguistic operation. Interestingly, the acronym that instantiates the dialectic element is vigorously rendered here. The translator invented a new fictional name that is purposely changed to form an acronym from the test initials creating إمش that means ‘walk away,’ which in addition to its sense in everyday usage as ‘get lost,’ has a resonance in this particular context, suggesting the uselessness of these tests. This resulted in producing a similar effect that of “CAN’T” and rendering the discursive twist of the satirical discourse.

Another interesting example representing the issue of “misfire” due to the lack of target-audience knowledge resources is the following example. Lisa is upset with all her teachers after losing faith in education because of the aptitude test and wanted to prove their incompetence and reliance on “teacher’s edition.” Accordingly, in this

instance, the teacher wanted to rely on Lisa, as usual, to provide her with the answers. When Lisa claims that she does not know the answer, she reveals the teacher's ignorance and mocks not only her (the teacher) incompetence, but also her salary.

Table 8. Example 6: Separate Vocation [8F15] (00:17:03 - 00:17:24)

| ST   | TT – Dubbing - EV   | TT – Subtitling – MSA  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Teacher:</b><br/>                     Lisa, what 19th-century figure was nicknamed "Old Hickory"?</p> <p><b>Lisa:</b><br/>                     I don't know. You?</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b><br/>                     Lisa, if you'd bothered to do the assignment, you'd know the answer is</p> <p>(flipping teacher's edition)</p> <p>the Battle of New Orleans<br/>                     I mean...<br/>                     Andrew Jackson.</p> <p><b>Lisa:</b><br/> <u>Well, you're earning your 18 grand a year.</u></p> | <p>بيسه، أحد رموز القرن التسع عشر كانوا<br/>                     بيدلعوه هيكوري؟<br/>                     مش عارفة وانتي؟<br/>                     يسه، لو كنتي عملتي اللي عليكي كنتي عرفتي<br/>                     إن الاجابة..<br/>                     معركة نيو اورلينز<br/>                     قصدي<br/>                     اندرو جاكسون</p> <p><u>حلوقوي، على قد المرتب اللي بتاخذيه</u></p> <p><b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     Bisa, did they used to spoil one of the 19th century figures by the name 'Hickory'?"<br/>                     I don't know, you?<br/>                     Bisa, if you did what is on you, you would know that the answer is..... New Orleans battle I mean Andrew Jackson.<br/>                     Very nice, just as much the amount of salary you get.</p> | <p>ليسا، أية شخصية بالقرن التاسع عشر<br/>                     لقيت بـ(أولد هيكوري)؟<br/>                     لا أعرف، أنت؟</p> <p>ليسا، لو أنك كلفت نفسك، وقمت بالواجب المنزلي<br/>                     ...لعرفت أن الجواب هو</p> <p>أقصد... (أندرو جاكسون). "معركة نيو أورلينز"<br/> <u>تستحقين الـ18 ألف دولار بالسنة</u></p> <p><b>Back translation:</b><br/>                     Lisa, what 19th-century figure was nicknamed "Old Hickory"?"<br/>                     I don't know. You?<br/>                     Lisa, if you bothered yourself and did your homework, you would know that the answer is<br/>                     the Battle of New Orleans I mean<br/>                     Andrew Jackson.<br/>                     You deserve the 18 thousand dollars a year.</p> |

Before considering the issue of “misfire” in this instance, it is important to note briefly the discursive features that frame this instance as a satirical piece. The prime element creates an anterior discourse event, which embodies the three universal validity claims of the assumed interpersonal relationship echoing the discourse of classroom situation. The dialectic is mediated inter-semiotically by setting up a collision with the anterior discourse and delivering the contra-expectation that revokes the validity claims forming the dialectic phase. This is delivered by highlighting the teacher's lack of knowledge and comparing her knowledge to her yearly income. The satirical target is instantiated by this comparison, attempting to ridicule teachers' efficiency, knowledge, and even their salary. Moreover, reaching a satirical uptake in this instance merely relies on the particular knowledge resources related to the teacher's average salary in America; to identify whether “18 grand” is a decent amount of money to earn a year or not. Accordingly, the absence of these knowledge resources among the audience could lead to satire “misfire.”

It is noted that the subtitler opted to provide a literal translation for this instance whereas in dubbing the translator opted to provide a more explicit translation; to preserve the satirical dimension and offer an equivalent effect translation. As it is noted above, this instance relies on the knowledge resources of salary rates in America. Thus, bearing in mind that these knowledge resources are mostly absent from the knowledge resources available in the target Arab audience, the subtitler's transla-

tion has created a satirical “misfire” due to the issue of contextual nonsensicality of ‘18 thousand a year.’ This was translated literally to 18 ألف بالسنة to the Arab average viewer which misled the satiree in the process of reaching a satirical uptake. On the other hand, the explication provided in the dubbed version seems to be necessary in this example. Substituting “you are earning your 18 grand a year” with على قد المرتب الي بتاخييه (which translates to ‘just as much the amount of salary you get,’ removing the absent knowledge resource), has offered a better chance for the target satiree to understand the satirical dimension of this instance; ridiculing the teachers’ knowledge and underpayment.

We will now examine the role language variety, and translation modality play in rendering satire in both dubbing and subtitling. In the previous examples, the task was challenging to render satire as it has either both or one of the two crucial elements; culture specific references and/or wordplay. As discussed in section 2, subtitling is restricted to the use of MSA, which is limited to formal communications while dubbing is not restricted and utilises colloquial varieties. Nevertheless, the unsuccessful rendering of the satirical discourse in subtitling might be mainly due to the acronym, as they have appeared recently in the Arabic language due to the extensive exposure to other languages especially English (Al-Takhaineh 2017) and are not borrowed to the morphological system of MSA. On the other hand, the Egyptian dialect, like any other colloquial or low variant, can adapt this linguistic operation and form a similar linguistic composition.

Furthermore, subtitling utilises a written medium to render oral message, thus making the language neat and formal and almost devoid the humorous text its pragmatic and socio-cultural markers. In contrast, dubbing has benefited from both the use of a low variety of the language, which is featured with a more flexible vowel system, phonologically, as it is mainly spoken and the space of manipulation provided by the modality since the original track is omitted. Unlike dubbing, subtitling provides the recipient with access to the ST and, arguably, that the recipient might have some knowledge about the ST, making it difficult for the translator not to be loyal to the ST.

## 8. Conclusions and final remarks

The study set out to explore the extent to which satirical instances are rendered from American English into Arabic. This has led to exploring the strategies involved in the dubbing and subtitling of satire in the American animated sitcom *The Simpsons* from English into Arabic (MSA and EV) that have revealed the applicable process for rendering the different elements of a satirical discourse from one language/culture to another. It also examined the crucial role of language variety and translation modality in the configuration of a new satirical text in the TT. Based on the analysis of data, applying Simpson’s (2003) proposed model of satirical humour clearly demonstrates that satire is a thorny and complicated issue for translators when rendered from one language to another, especially ones with distinct knowledge resources. This complex-

ity results from the sociocultural nature of satirical texts; satirical instances require knowledge resources of a certain universe of discourse which might be absent in the target language culture. In other cases, the sociolinguistic and pragmatic features of a particular satirical instance might necessitate some linguistic operations that may not exist in the target language resulting in a “misfire” or unsuccessful rendering, specifically cultural deixis.

The findings of the study revealed that subtitling mostly opts for providing a literal translation for satirical instances. This strategy might work and render the satirical instance in cases of the absence of any linguistic operation that does not exist in the Arabic language, or that the satirical instance relies on a shared universe of discourse between the two cultures and similar knowledge resources of the ST. On the other hand, the study shows that dubbing mostly tends to provide an equivalent effect translation for the satirical instance. This strategy managed, in many instances, to render the satirical instance through adapting an equivalent issue in the Arab world to the one tackled in the ST. However, it was observed that the strategies that leave the satirical instance in its original contextualization could render a satirical piece, but one that is irrelevant to the new target viewer such as utilising a literal translation strategy.

Strategies that are designed to overcome cultural references by bringing the satire to the target culture can constitute a similarly satirical piece such as equivalent effect. Arguably, even though these strategies were able to provide an equivalent issue in the target culture, yet the original aim of the ST satire that would make it worth translating at all would be lost in the translation. If it is suggested that the translator leave the satire in its original contextualization and attempt to bridge the sociocultural gap, forcing the new satiree to be an active explainer, then the original premise of the satire would be, in this case, successful. However, this assumption is by no means conclusive as certain culturally and linguistically bound satire is bound to misfire. Therefore, further studies are required in this field to explore and develop strategies that could render the function and aim of the original satirical piece.

The analysis also indicates that subtitling has been more loyal to the ST than dubbing. This might be attributed to the nature of the translation modality (dubbing/subtitling), which could play a crucial role in the translation of satire. Subtitling restricts the subtitler’s options since the viewer has access to the ST, and that would be an obstacle assuming that this viewer has sufficient knowledge of the ST. Therefore, subtitling necessities loyalty to the ST. Furthermore, the nature of subtitling as a translation modality; that transmit messages from its verbal form to a written form, could devoid verbal humour instances of satire from its sociolinguistic and pragmatic features. In terms of the form of language used in subtitling, the restriction of the use of a high variety of language (MSA), contributes as well in the loss of these markers.

It was also observed that the use of dubbing could facilitate rendering sociolinguistic and pragmatic markers, as messages are mediated through the same medium, and is more open to manipulation because the ST is absent from the target text. In addition, the use of the Egyptian vernacular seemed to contribute as well in the translation of



satire, since it is a low variant of the language and, as any colloquial language, has a more flexible and adaptable linguistic system. It is worth mentioning that these explanations were out of serious attempts to locate the rationale behind each translation decision based on collected literature in this concern, which could be a limitation for this study as interviewing translators would not be an option due to time constraints and translator's availability.

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