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**Translating Humor: Strategies and Challenges in Audiovisual
Translation from English to Arabic.**

Case Study: Scenes from the American Sitcom “The Office”

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master in Linguistics

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Abstract

One significant impact of globalization is the unparalleled ease with which television series and movies, regardless of their country of origin, can reach a vast and virtually limitless audience. This global connectivity, combined with the ever-growing appetite for visual entertainment, has made audiovisual translation and subtitling increasingly essential. However, the process is not without its challenges, as cultural barriers continue to pose significant obstacles. Humor, in particular, presents unique difficulties in translation despite its seemingly universal appeal. This study will dig into these complexities by examining the American sitcom "The Office" as a case study. It will explore various facets of humor translation, paying special attention to the details involved in conveying cultural references across different languages and cultures. Through this analysis, the project aims to highlight the nuanced challenges and considerations that translators must navigate to effectively bridge cultural gaps and maintain the essence of humor in audiovisual content.

Keywords: Translation, Audiovisual translation, Subtitling, Humor, Cultural references, The Office.

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Dedication

In sincere gratitude to those whose unwavering support and encouragement have illuminated my academic journey, this dissertation is dedicated. To my mentors, whose guidance has shaped my intellect and instilled in me a passion for inquiry, I owe a debt of gratitude beyond measure. To my family, especially my parents whose boundless love and unwavering belief in my potential have been my constant pillars of strength, I dedicate this work with profound appreciation. To my friends, whose camaraderie and understanding have lightened the burdens of scholarly pursuit, I extend my heartfelt thanks. May this dissertation stand as a testament to the collective efforts of all who have contributed to my growth and learning.

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Dedication

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List of Acronyms

- **AVT:** Audio-visual Translation
- **SL:** Source Language
- **TL:** Target Language
- **ST:** Source Text
- **TT:** Target Text
- **ECR:** Extralinguistic cultural reference

General Introduction

In today's interconnected world, audiovisual translation (AVT) has become a vital field, facilitating the exchange of ideas, entertainment, and information across cultures. AVT encompasses the translation of spoken and written elements in audiovisual materials such as films, television shows, video games, and online content. With the rapid growth of digital media and streaming platforms, the demand for high-quality translation has increased, making AVT a crucial tool for fostering international communication and understanding. Within AVT, dubbing and subtitling are the primary methods used to translate audiovisual content. Dubbing involves replacing the original dialogue with a translated version synchronized with the characters' lip movements, creating the illusion that the characters are speaking the target language. This method is often preferred in regions where audiences prefer to watch content in their native language without the distraction of reading subtitles. Subtitling, on the other hand, involves displaying translated text at the bottom of the screen, allowing viewers to read the dialogue while listening to the original audio. This method preserves the original performance and is less intrusive, often preferred in regions where audiences are accustomed to reading subtitles. Both methods present unique challenges and require a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as the cultural nuances embedded in the dialogue. To explore the complexities of humor translation in audiovisual material, this thesis focuses on the popular American sitcom "The Office." "The Office," created by Greg Daniels, is a mockumentary-style series that portrays the everyday lives of office employees working at Dunder Mifflin, a fictional paper company in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Known for its dry humor, satirical take on office culture, and rich character development, "The Office" has

garnered a massive global following since its debut in 2005. "The Office" is deeply rooted in American culture, with its humor often relying on cultural references, wordplay, and situational comedy. Translating such a culturally rich show from English to Arabic poses significant challenges. The humor in "The Office" is context-dependent, requiring translators to capture the essence of jokes, idioms, and cultural references that may not have direct equivalents in Arabic. This process demands not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of both American and Arab cultures to ensure that the humor resonates with the target audience.

This thesis employs descriptive and qualitative approaches to analyse selected scenes from "The Office" and explore the translation strategies used to convey humor in Arabic subtitles. By adding our own subtitles, we aim to illustrate the creative decisions and adaptations necessary to maintain the comedic impact of the original content. The practical part of this research involves a meticulous examination of the dialogue, cultural references, and situational context, followed by the creation of subtitles that reflect the intended humor in Arabic. The primary aim of this study is to bridge the cultural gap between English-speaking and Arabic-speaking audiences by showcasing the intricacies and creativity involved in humor translation. By analysing the translation process and the challenges faced in adapting "The Office" for an Arabic-speaking audience, this thesis highlights the importance of culturally sensitive translation and its potential to enhance cross-cultural understanding. Ultimately, this research underscores the value of AVT in making global content accessible and enjoyable for diverse audiences, thereby enriching their viewing experience.

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1/ What are the main challenges faced by translators when translating humor in audiovisual content?

2/ How can translators balance fidelity to the source material with the need for cultural adaptation in humor translation?

3/ How do audience reception and cultural context influence the decisions made for humor translation?

The suggested hypotheses for the previous research questions are:

1/ Translators face significant challenges when translating humor in audiovisual content due to linguistic nuances, cultural differences, and the need to preserve comedic timing and intent, often resulting in a need for creative adaptation rather than direct translation.

2/ Effective humor translation requires a balance between fidelity to the source material and cultural adaptation, where translators must prioritize the preservation of the humor's intent and impact over literal accuracy to ensure the content resonates with the target audience.

3/ Audience reception and cultural context significantly influence humor translation decisions, with translators tailoring their approach to align with the cultural norms, values, and comedic preferences of the target audience to maximize engagement and comprehension.

1. Chapter I: Presenting Audiovisual Translation

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is focused on the concept of Translation, which is characterized by the various techniques and methods that translators employ to overcome linguistic obstacles. It emphasizes the importance of audio-visual translation, a crucial form that bridges the gap between imagery and audio through methods like subtitling or dubbing, making it possible to comprehend multiple languages. The primary emphasis will be on the subtitling process, exploring the key tactics involved as well as the challenges and complications that translators encounter.

1.2 Translation

1.2.1 Definition

Catford (1995, p. 20) defines translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) “

He based his theory on the idea that languages have different levels and ranks of structure, such as phonology, grammar, and lexicon. That translation involves finding equivalents between these structures in different languages. He also introduced the concept of translation shifts, which are changes in the source text's form or meaning when translated into the target text. Catford's theory is one of the earliest attempts to describe translation from a linguistic perspective.

Newmark (1988:28) “Translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.”

Newmark's definition emphasizes the importance of preserving the author's intention and the meaning of the text in translation. He also distinguishes between two types of translation: semantic translation and communicative translation. Semantic

translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original, while communicative translation attempts to produce the same effect on the target readers as the original.

Nida (1981: 2) added: “Translation means communication because it has three essential elements to form a process of communication. The three essential elements are source, message, and receptor, and these elements must be found in all communication activities”.

Based on all of the definitions, it can be concluded that translation is the process of transferring a message from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL). To perform this process, a translator needs to have linguistic competence in both the SL and the TL, as well as an awareness of the stylistic conventions of the TL. The translator’s goal is to convey the meaning and the tone of the original text as accurately and naturally as possible

1.2.2 Types of Translation

According to Roman Jakobson (2012, p. 114), translation can be categorized into three distinct types.:

1/ Intralingual Translation

is the rewording of a message within the same language, often to clarify or convey the message in a different style.

2/ Interlingual Translation

commonly known as translation proper, involves transferring the meaning of the source language into the target language. This is the most recognized form of translation, where translators interpret semantic and syntactic elements from one language to another.

3/ Intersemiotic Translation

The interpretation of verbal signs through non-verbal sign systems involves transforming a message into an alternative mode of communication, like music or art. Jakobson's framework offers a thorough and well-detailed perspective on the translation process, emphasizing the intricate nature of conveying meaning across diverse languages and modes

1.2.3 Techniques of Translation

The act of translating a written text from its original language into another primarily involves conveying its intended meaning. While various approaches exist for translating specific words and phrases, a translator typically selects one method to translate the entire text. By choosing the appropriate technique thoughtfully, the translator can effectively capture all nuances of the language.

According to J. -P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet there are 2 focal translation strategies – direct and oblique translation, involving 7 translation strategies

1/ Direct Translation Techniques

Various translation techniques are utilized when the theoretical framework and grammatical structure of the source language can be applied to the target language.

2/ Borrowing

Borrowing is a translation technique that involves directly transferring words or phrases from the source text into the target language without any modification. This strategy can be useful in preserving the cultural context of the original material, particularly when there is no equivalent term in the target language, such as for certain types of food or clothing. In modern times, the English language has incorporated a significant number of foreign words that are now commonly used. When a borrowed term is not yet widely recognized, it is often italicized to distinguish it from the rest of the text.

For instance, kimono (Japanese), kimchi (Korean), and hamburger (German).

3/ Calque

Calque occurs when a phrase is translated directly from one language to another, creating a fresh expression in the target language. In essence, it represents a precise translation of a borrowed term into the target language. For example, the French term “par cœur” is a direct translation of the English word “by heart”

4/ Literal Translation

In a literal translation, every word is translated exactly as it is. The resulting text should be natural in the target language while maintaining the original text’s word selection, significance, and tone. This approach works best for languages and cultures that are very alike, but it may miss nuances present in the source material.

For example:

Original Spanish sentence: “El gato está en la mesa.”

The literal translation in English: “The cat is on the table.”

Indirect Translation Techniques

1/ Transposition

replacing one-word class with another without changing the meaning of the message.

For example:

“El carro rojo” literally is “the car red” as opposed to the correct translation “the red car”

2/ Modulation

a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in

the point of view; for example, German uses Lebensgefahr [literally, ‘danger to life’] whereas English uses ‘danger of death’ or a French speaker will refer to the dernier étage of a building where an English speaker will refer to the ‘top floor’).

3/ Equivalence

Describe the same situation using radically different stylistic or structural strategies to produce equal documents.

For example:

English: “It’s raining cats and dogs.”

Arabic: “إنها تمطر بغزارة.”

4/ Adaptation

Adaptation encompasses reproducing a text to convey the same effect attached to a word or concept in another culture where an exact correspondent is missing.

It is a form of intersemiotic translation, emphasizing cultural context and sociocultural terms

Example: Imagine translating a text related to a wedding from British English to Azeri Turkish. In British culture, the groom is accompanied by a “best man.” However, in Turkish culture, there is no direct equivalent. Instead, two men called “sağdüş” and “soldüş” stand on either side of the groom. Here, adaptation allows for conveying the equivalent sociocultural meaning.

5/ Further Techniques

As to Newmark’s (1988) theoretical framework, there are 17 distinct procedures and strategies designed for the translation of cultural substances. Of these, the most frequently employed ones are:

6/ Compensation

it takes place when the meaning, sound effect, image, or pragmatic effect is lost in one part of a sentence and is made up and compensated in another part, per example This is particularly evident in languages like French, which has multiple ways to express politeness, such as "s'il te plaît" (informal) and "s'il vous plaît" (formal), unlike English which has a single way to say "please".

The translator can mitigate the loss of nuance in one part of the text by selecting specific words or phrases in other parts of the translation, thereby compensating for the lack of subtlety or precision in the original.

7/ Reduction

When using reduction, the translator deliberately omits certain words from the original text that are not essential in the target language, thereby restructuring the translation to convey the same meaning with greater efficiency.

8/ Expansion

This is the complete opposite of reduction, adding words to ensure the intended meaning is retained may be necessary due to differences in terminology, language, or phrase structure, highlighting the complexity of audio-visual translation.

1.3 Audio-visual Translation

The field of audio-visual translation is a distinct discipline that focuses on the adaptation of movies, television shows, and other audio-visual content for diverse linguistic and cultural markets. This specialized form of translation adheres to unique rules and conventions, which were first identified by Gregory and Carroll as a distinct linguistic register. They characterized this register as a mode of speech that is written to be read as if it were not written, highlighting the unique challenges and considerations involved in translating audio-visual texts.

“Written to be spoken as if not written” (Gregory, Carroll, 1978:114).

Nevertheless, numerous researches conducted subsequent to the works of Whitman (1992) and Gambier (1994) have revealed that audio-visual texts possess unique characteristics stemming from both written and oral origins, with language intricately intertwined with cultural constraints. Each culture harbours norms that directly or indirectly influence the audio-visual text from a linguistic perspective, as elucidated by Cronin in his publication “Translation Goes to the Movies” (Cronin, 2009: 145). Notably,

concepts like culture and identity hold significance for filmmakers and their translators in this context.

Audio-visual Translation Is the Translation of the media category is a broad and diverse field that encompasses various formats, including adaptations, versions, and editions tailored for specific platforms such as newspapers, magazines, and press agencies. This category also includes multimedia products and services that are accessible both online through the Internet and offline through CD-ROMs, offering a range of content delivery methods. Furthermore, the database also includes theatrical performances, opera, and illustrated books that combine different semiotic systems, such as text, images, and music, to create a rich and engaging experience for the audience.

Gambier (1996) asserts that the main difficulties encountered in the field of Audio-visual Translation (AVT) revolve around the intricate connections between visual and auditory elements, the interaction between the target language (TL) and source language (SL), and the interplay between verbal and written codes. These intricacies highlight the multifaceted nature of AVT, where linguistic and cultural factors are crucial in the translation process. The intricacies of AVT go beyond mere linguistic transfer, delving into the realm of semiotics and cultural conventions that have a significant impact on the final translated product.

1.3.1 Audio-visual Translation Methods

According to GAMBIER (1996), the AVT methods can be categorized as follows:

1/ Subtitling

involves the inclusion of written text on the screen to provide translation for spoken dialogue or other audio components.

2/ Synchronous dubbing

Replacing the original audio with a new recording in the target language, synchronized with the actors' lip movements.

3/ Consecutive interpretation

Translating spoken content in segments, with the interpretation following after the speaker has paused. This can occur in different forms:

4/ Live

Interpretation happens in real time during a live event.

5/ Duplex

A two-way interpretation that allows for interaction, is often used in teleconferencing.

6/ Pre-recorded

Interpretation is recorded separately and added to the audio-visual content.

7/ Voice-over or half-dubbing

The original audio is lowered, and a translated voice-over is played over it.

8/ The Narration

A narrator provides a translation of the audio content, often used in documentaries.

9/ The Comment

Similar to narration, the translator may add additional comments or context.

10/ Simultaneous translation

The translator interprets the content in real-time as it is being spoken, without pauses.

11/ Audio Description

Providing a verbal description of visual elements for visually impaired audiences. This can be interlinguistic (between different languages) or intralinguistic (within the same language).

These methods reflect the complexity and variety of techniques used in AVT to make audio-visual content accessible to a wider range of audiences, taking into account linguistic and cultural differences. Each method has its own set of challenges and requires specific skills from the translator.

1.3.2 Types of Audio-Visual Translation

Audio-visual translation primarily consists of two forms: dubbing and subtitling. However, other widely used methods include voice-over and live event simultaneous interpretation.

1/ Dubbing

Dubbing involves the skilful practice of substituting the original dialogue in a film with localized recordings, in simpler terms. Furthermore, multiple actors may be voiced by the same individuals to maintain consistency and prevent viewer disorientation.

In response to the linguistic challenges posed by the introduction of sound in cinema, Hollywood pioneered the technique of dubbing in 1930. Initially, multiple simultaneous recordings were required by the same team. Subsequently, Hollywood made strategic investments in refining techniques that enabled the efficient production of standardized yet distinct films. This approach minimized risks and maximized audience reach both domestically and internationally (Staiger J, 1992).

Nevertheless, this method continues to be favoured by a vast audience who, seeking entertainment, may struggle with reading subtitles due to their speed or placement on the screen. Consequently, there arose a need to tailor the product to meet consumer demands and preferences, where the preservation of the original work now hinges primarily on personal and commercial considerations.

Types of Dubbing

Selecting the right dubbing approach is essential for the successful international release of media content. Different dubbing methods may be more compatible with specific types of works. The three fundamental categories are:

Lip-Sync Dubbing

Lip-sync dubbing is a technique used in audio-visual translation where the dialogue is recorded in a different language and then synchronized with the actors' lip movements in the original video. This method aims to match the spoken words to the lip movements as closely as possible, creating the illusion that the actors are speaking in the target language. It's a meticulous process that requires careful timing and voice acting to ensure the dubbing is seamless and the audience remains immersed in the content. Agost (1999) states that "The articulatory speech movement and the sounds are synced while being presented to viewers in an appropriate manner".

Time-Synced Dubbing

Time-synced dubbing shares similarities with lip-sync dubbing in its focus on timing. However, rather than aligning with the exact mouth movements of the speaker, it only needs to coincide with the length of the original spoken segment. This might slightly reduce the level of engagement since the dubbing is noticeable, but it offers more

flexibility in translation for the scriptwriter, which is a subtle yet significant adjustment. For example, in dubbing a segment of dialogue that lasts 10 seconds, the requirement isn't to match the mouth movements perfectly but to ensure the dubbed speech fits within the 10-second window.

This can affect the script depending on the language, as a quicker speaker may fit more words into the same time frame, necessitating sophisticated script alterations. Additionally, due to the reduced time required in recording and a faster dubbing process, time-sync dubbing is likely to be more cost-effective than lip-sync dubbing

Non-Synced Dubbing

Non-synced dubbing stands out from other forms of dubbing because it is not bound by timing. Whitman Linsen (1992, p. 21) notes that although lip-sync was considered the norm until the 1960s, subsequent research indicated that audiences were more concerned with isochrony—the alignment of the start and end of a sentence with the corresponding sounds—than matching the lip movements to the spoken words. according to Chaume (2004, p.44) “open vowels, bilabial, and labio-dental consonants are some of the more difficult and obvious synchronization issues, they need to be treated with significant care to ensure a naturalized and less foreign outcome”. While preserving the original language's quality in translation is essential, the dubbing process may vary in duration based on the target language. In such dubbing scenarios, aligning a “speaker” with the voice-over isn't crucial because narrators are seldom visible on screen, and the voice-over doesn't require exact synchronization with the original. The primary concern is to ensure the dubbing accurately conveys the key messages.

1.4 Subtitling

Translation studies often discuss the use of subtitles in movies. Subtitles are made to help the audience understand what is happening on screen. However, in order to fit the subtitles on the screen, some details from the original text may be left out. Each subtitle usually has two lines of text, with about 35 to 40 characters per line. The subtitles are only visible for a short amount of time, usually no more than six seconds, depending on how long the scene is. According to Luyken et al. (1991), subtitling is the process of translating spoken language from a movie into written text that appears on the screen at the bottom.

Subtitling is a type of translation used in movies and TV shows. It started in 1903 when printed words were shown on screen to help the audience understand what the actors were saying. Over time, these words were printed directly onto the film. Subtitling is a specific type of translation that is added to the visual media and shown at the same time as the spoken dialogue. Subtitles have to work within certain limits, like only having two lines of text and a limited amount of time for each subtitle. They also have to make sure the subtitles match up with the spoken words and are easy to read. Despite these challenges, subtitlers try to make sure the subtitles make sense and help viewers understand and enjoy the movie or show.

1.4.1 Subtitling Strategies

1/ Expansion

It refers to the inclusion of additional contextual information in the target language. This approach is employed when the intended audience may not fully comprehend specific cultural subtleties present in the source language.

For instance, 911 is recognized as the emergency service number in USA but in Arabic, this could be translated as “رقم طوارئ” to keep the same meaning.

2/ Paraphrase

In this approach, the translator adds additional explanations to the text, drawing from their personal interpretation. Paraphrasing becomes necessary when a phrase from the source language doesn't have a direct syntactical equivalent in the target language. This means that even though the structure of the translation may differ from the original, the intended message remains comprehensible to the audience.

3/ Transfer

Transfer strategies involve fully and accurately converting speech from the source language into the target language.

4/ Imitation

The target text emerged through the adaptation of the original material, a common approach when translating names of individuals or locations.

5/ Transcription

This method entails altering certain words to suit their intended written form. For example, subtitles will demonstrate the way a phrase is articulated in the original text.

6/ Condensation

In the condensation technique, the translator omits superfluous words to shorten the source text. However, this method often leads to the omission of important pragmatic elements that should be communicated in the target language.

7/ Decimation

Decimation represents a severe form of condensation. It is often used in translation to succinctly convey the speech or dialogue of a contentious character, especially when delivered in a loud and rapid manner.

8/ Deletion

The deletion strategy involves the translator omitting parts of the source text deemed non-essential. Unlike condensation, where no text is actually removed or summarized, deletion specifically involves the removal of certain elements by the translator.

9/ Taming

The taming strategy involves adapting offensive or taboo expressions in the source language into more acceptable terms in the target language during translation.

10/ Resignation

Resignation occurs when it's impossible to convey the message from the source language to the target language. In this process, the original meaning is often lost, rendering the text "untranslatable."

1.4.2 Subtitling Difficulties

Sugeng Haryanto (2005) highlighted that movie translators often face challenges with language and cultural nuances. These language challenges can include issues with pragmatics, idioms, word choice, humour, and cultural allusions. When a translator doesn't know much about the customs of the language they are translating from, it can be difficult to understand and translate subtle jokes or culturally specific humor. It can also be challenging to find the right words to accurately translate dialogue, especially if the

original uses a specific dialect. The timing of movies and the formatting of subtitles also make translation more complex. Subtitles have to follow certain rules, like being placed at the bottom of the screen, having a limit of two lines and 35 characters per line, and using specific fonts. Translating idioms is also a problem because there may not be equivalent words in both languages, and the translator has to understand the nuances of humour and their practical implications.

1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter looked at translation and audio-visual concepts, specifically subtitling and dubbing. It analysed the different tactics used by translators when subtitling, showing how complex it can be. The chapter also explored the difficulties of subtitling, like balancing accuracy with time and space limitations and considering cultural and contextual factors. By studying the strategies and challenges of subtitling, this chapter aimed to help people understand the complexities of audio-visual translation better.

2. Chapter Two: Humor and Culture in Audio-Visual Material

2.1 Introduction

Humor is a universal language that conveys delight and laughter across boundaries and cultures. It is a motor response activated by numerous stimuli that take various shapes, each with its unique mechanism for tickling the funny bone. Translating humor is a delicate balance between linguistic challenges, cultural differences, and the original author's desire to produce humor that resonates with the intended audience. Humor translation strategies span from literal translation to adaptation, and they all require a thorough awareness of the source and destination cultures, as well as a sense of humor in both cultures. This chapter investigates translators' strategies, the role of subtitling, and the significance of cultural understanding in the translation process. In translating humor for audiovisual texts, subtitling plays a crucial role in ensuring that the comedic elements are accurately conveyed to the audience, often requiring creative adaptation to preserve the humor's intent and timing within the constraints of the screen.

2.2 Defining Humor

Many academic fields, including medicine, anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, education, and linguistics, have explored humor in great detail. With the help of this multidisciplinary approach, our understanding of humor's function in human communication and its impact on people and society as a whole has deepened and expanded.

Humor can manifest itself in many ways, including both verbal and nonverbal displays, as I. Ermida (2008:2) notes. It can be a socially useful instrument for communication as well as a subjective experience that makes people laugh or smile. Humor can draw inspiration from common everyday reality or consist of fictional and imaginative foundations and elements. It can be used to appeal, entertain, or even attack,

and can be impulsively produced or wisely crafted as a technique for personal and professional interaction.

In the realm of translation, there exists a diverse collection of theories that fuel nonstop discussions on the essence and methodologies of translation. It is generally accepted that translation is a multifaceted and interdisciplinary endeavour. Among the various genres within translation studies, humor translation emerges as notably complex due to its deep connections to language and culture, further complicated by the inherent challenge of defining humor. Despite its prevalence in human communication, scholars, such as Attardo (1994), have not arrived at a singular definition of humor, leading to numerous efforts to grasp its fundamental nature.

2.2.1 Types of Humor

Scholars investigating the essence of humor have concentrated on various aspects to categorize it. Typically, these classifications consider diverse factors like the themes and structures of humor. Alharthi (2016) suggests thirteen (13) categories influenced by Norrick's (1993 & 1994) and Dynel's (2009) classifications. Which types of humor are predominantly determined by their comedic style rather than other factors.

1/ Jokes

Jokes are a prevalent type of voiced humor and are commonly encountered across various forms of mass media. They are typically brief and intended to evoke amusement. (Alharthi, 2016, p. 16). For example: a parent is teaching his kids and asks one of them to mention two pronouns, then the kid says stressfully: “Who... me?” the parent comments: excellent.

2/ Wordplay

According to Delabastita (1993) in Alharthi (2016), wordplay is described as a linguistic technique that exploits the dual nature of words, where one denotation is literal

and the other one is figurative or symbolic. The humor in wordplay originates from the shift between the literal and figurative interpretations of language. For example: Why did the scarecrow win an award?

Because he was outstanding in his field! (The joke relies on the pun “outstanding”)

3/ Irony

According to Alharthi (2016), irony involves a disparity between various elements such as a person's statements and their actual intentions, their words and actions, their intended meaning and others' interpretations, as well as the anticipated outcome and the actual events (p. 19).

For example: A fire station burns down while the firefighters are out on a call. This scenario is ironic because the very place and people who are supposed to prevent fires end up experiencing a fire themselves. The unexpected twist of the firefighters' workplace burning down adds a layer of irony to the situation, creating a humorous and ironic outcome.

4/ Parody

Korkut (2005), as cited in Alharthi (2016), defines parody as the deliberate mimicry of a text, style, genre, or discourse that incorporates humor and seeks to interpret its subject in a specific manner (p. 20).

5/ Satire

Satire can be distinguished from parody by their differing purposes. Parody aims to provide commentary on the work or creator being targeted, without the strict requirement of humor. In contrast, satire focuses on highlighting the comical or nonsensical elements of people, societal groups, institutions, etc., and does not necessarily rely on the original work for its foundation, unlike parody. (Alharthi, 2016, p. 21)

Example: An example of parody in humor is the book "Bored of the Rings," which is a parody of J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings." This parody book humorously imitates and satirizes the style and themes of Tolkien's epic fantasy novel, providing a comical twist on the original work.

6/ Sarcasm

“A sharp, bitter, or cutting expression or remark; a bitter gibe or taunt.” (The Oxford English Dictionary). It is often viewed as a type of humor that employs clever language that aims to target its topic with a specific level of decisiveness. (Alharthi, 2016, p. 22)

For example: "Oh, I'm practically a master chef—my specialty is burning toast." This statement is sarcastic because it humorously exaggerates the speaker's cooking skills by claiming expertise in burning toast, which is not a sign of culinary mastery.

7/ Spoonerisms

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2017), Spoonerism is defined as “a verbal error in which a speaker accidentally transposes the initial letters of two or more words, often to humorous effect”.

For example: Someone says, ‘tasted worm’ when meaning to say, ‘wasted term’

8/ Self-Denigrating Humor (Putdowns)

“A putdown (also putdown humor) is an abusive remark that is directed to a particular person to put him down.” (Alharthi, 2016, p. 23)

This type of humor involves playfully teasing or poking fun at someone's or a group's perceived flaws, quirks, or physical characteristics, often with a light hearted and non-malicious intent.

For example: A man walks into a cafe. The bartender says, "Hey, if you're going to sit here all day, you'd better order something." The man replies, "I'm not sitting, I'm just really, really short."

9/ Retorts

A retort is a type of conversational humor where the second speaker pretends to misunderstand

the first speaker's previous utterance, and then intentionally alters the intended meaning to create

a humorous interpretation.

For example, A: I'm going to work on my abs this summer.

B: I didn't know you could subtract any more from them.

10/ Teasing

Teasing includes light heartedly imitating and magnifying someone's actions in a manner that

It might first appear negative. The playful intent is distinguished through signals from the teaser,

I am suggesting that the comment is meant in a light-hearted and jesting way.

11/ Banter

Rather than being a serious conversation on certain themes, the major objective is mutual entertainment through a brief and enjoyable exchange of witty remarks centred around a common theme.

Per example A: I'm thinking of taking up meditation.

B: Good idea, you could use some peace... and so could we!

12/ Register Clash

The search results indicate that the clash or change of register is a widely utilized comedic device in a variety of genres. This entails using conversational or casual language in official settings, or vice versa, resulting in an incongruity that may be amusing.

Example A: Hey, want to grab some grub?

B: I would be most inclined to partake in the consumption of sustenance at this juncture.

13/ Catchphrases

Catchphrases are well-known expressions closely linked to a specific individual. These memorable phrases are frequently reiterated by politicians, entertainers, or writers to engage audiences and cause amusement.

Example “I have a bad feeling about this” from the Star Wars movies.

2.2.2 Humor Translation

Translation of humor is a complex task that involves recontextualizing and understanding the subjective nature of humor. Factors like background, age, and cultural context can influence how people find humor. Translators must grasp the essence and intent of the original humor, rather than relying solely on word-for-word translation. Zabalbeascoa (1996) classifies puns and wordplays into different categories based on their forms, such as paralinguistic, auditory, and visual types, as well as their content, like cultural references and verbal humor (p. 251). Delabastita's suggested translation strategies for humor and wordplays, as noted in 1996, highlight the necessity of adapting these strategies to suit the limitations and specific requirements of the audiovisual medium (p. 130). Mobaraki (2017:2) highlights the challenges of effectively translating humor, as it often conveys humor indirectly. To ensure a precise transfer into

the target text, skilled translators must assess the audience's capacity to understand humor and recognize the source text's purpose to prevent socio-cultural alignment.

Peter Zolczer discusses the complexities that arise due to differences in language and culture between the original and translated versions, emphasizing that humor serves as a universal aspect of language that reflects social, cultural, and political realities. This makes humor a critical tool for effective communication and building interpersonal relationships (2016, p. 78) Sadeghpour (2015:1997) and Mobaraki (2017.p.2-3) emphasize the sociocultural phenomenon of humor and its role in the historical examination of culture and society. Humor can challenge human flaws, societal corruptions, and philosophical notions, providing a unique lens through which to understand the past. Translating linguistic jokes presents significant challenges due to their nuanced nature and clever wordplay. Translators often struggle to capture the essence of jokes, requiring expertise, multiple revisions, and innovative approaches to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps while preserving the comedic essence. Common schemas and stereotypes within a culture often contribute to humor, but audiences from diverse backgrounds may interpret it differently or struggle to understand the intended elements.

2.2.3 Humor Translation Strategies

Newmark's (1988) translation techniques are source language-focused and target language-focused. Subtitling techniques can be categorized into two groups: word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic, which preserve the original language's meaning; and adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative, which adapt the translation to the target language's cultural context, making communication more effective.

1/ Word-for-Word translation

This strategy involves translating words based on their most prevalent meanings, without considering contextual circumstances.

2/ Literal Translation

This method preserves word independence and disregards context by translating the source language's grammatical structure into the target language's closest equivalent.

3/ Faithful Translation

This method follows the target language's grammatical structure while attempting to preserve the exact contextual meaning of the source text.

4/ Semantic Translation

This approach takes into account the aesthetic elements of the original text, much like faithful translation does.

5/ Adaptation

This method involves translating the cultural characteristics of a source text into comparable information in the target language.

6/ Free Translation

This process could produce a text that doesn't exactly follow the original's format, style, or content.

7/ Idiomatic Translation

with the use of idioms and colloquial terms that might not be present in the original language, this strategy conveys the original message.

8/ Communicative Translation

To ensure that the information is clear and acceptable to the intended audience, this technique entails properly translating the contextual meaning of the original language.

Subtitling Humor

Unlike translating other types of text, humor has its own set of difficulties when it comes to subtitles. Subtitling is a highly specialized task that requires careful adherence to a set of technical norms and practices, in contrast to traditional translation. Among them are:

Temporal Considerations

Timed to appear and disappear in perfect timing with the soundtrack, subtitles must follow exact length specifications, usually lasting between one and six seconds.

Spatial Constraints

Generally, a subtitle can only be as long as two lines, and each line can only have 35 to 42 characters in total, including spaces. In addition to ensuring legibility, this spatial restriction keeps the subtitles from hiding significant visual components.

Synchronization

When a speaker speaks, the subtitles should emerge and vanish at precisely the right moment to match the language. Preserving the content's flow and comprehension requires this exact synchronization.

Visual Formatting

Choices regarding punctuation, line breaks, italics, and the use of brackets for

Sound effects must be carefully considered to enhance the readability and seamless visual integration of the subtitles.

Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) research on humor subtitling in audiovisual content highlights the importance of adhering to technical specifications and conventions to create subtitles that seamlessly integrate with the content. However, the complexity of conveying humor in movies and comedic content is further complicated by space constraints and

time-based and altitudinal limitations. They identify multiple common forms of humor found in audiovisual material, including international cross-cultural jokes, linguistic-specific jokes, and visual, auditory, and complex jokes. Subtitling approaches, such as substitution, addition, and explicit explanation, aim to maintain humor in the target subtitles, ensuring audience comprehension and achieving an amusing outcome.

Veiga's (2009) research on subtitling humor in audiovisual translation emphasizes the importance of considering linguistic elements and paralinguistic factors. She suggests cultivating a sense of "humorous complicity" to achieve proficiency. Subtitling humor involves considering audiovisual narrative structure, cultural and linguistic context, and perlocutionary effect. Researchers have explored challenges in technical, linguistic, and cultural dimensions, emphasizing the need for innovative approaches to overcome extralinguistic culture-bound references and language-specific humor (Veiga, 2009).

2.2.4 Challenges in Humor Subtitling

Humor can be challenging to translate in literary and audiovisual contexts. Humor translation research examines the issues of conveying humor across languages, including feasibility and complexity. Despite the inherent difficulties, it has been confirmed that comedic content can be effectively tailored to diverse cultural settings. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) assert the idea that humor, whether found within written works, live performances, or visual media, can be effectively conveyed across languages. The challenges in humor translation stem from distinct cultural and linguistic hurdles (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007).

2.3 The Translation of Wordplays

Wordplays are linguistic constructions that carry distinct meanings on different semantic levels. Wordplays in audiovisual works can go beyond language since sounds and pictures are the primary means of communication in the film industry. Wordplay

translation in audiovisual translation necessitates taking both spoken and nonverbal elements into account. Schmitz (2002) stressed how difficult it is to translate humor, especially in audiovisual formats. Delabastita (1996) brought attention to how common wordplays are in television situation comedies, especially sitcoms, which are a great place for wordplays that have to work within certain visual constraints because of the prominence of pictures in these kinds of shows.

Delabastita (1996:129) highlights the importance of visually restricted wordplay, which relies on images to trigger meanings and potentially elicit laughter. This type of wordplay presents a significant challenge for translation, as the image cannot be altered, making it more complex to convey the intended meaning.

Audiovisual texts combine verbal, visual, and auditory elements to convey messages. Translating humor presents a challenge as it may not resonate universally due to cultural contexts. Even with linguistic precision, non-verbal components like sounds, images, or even gestures may be interpreted differently. Paralinguistic jokes, which combine verbal and non-verbal elements, require audience comprehension based on their ability to recall the exact word or expression associated with the visual depiction. This connection between sound and visual can hinder the audience's ability to fully appreciate the intended comedic effect.

2.3.1 Translation Techniques for Wordplays

Martínez Tejerina (2016: 143) suggests that when linguistic structures are feasible, a literal approach should be prioritized for translating wordplays into another language. However, if direct translation is not possible, translators should progressively depart from literalness while maintaining humor. She advocates for substitution and recreation techniques to preserve the original comedic impact. Tejerina's work involves substitution and recreation, both aiming to maintain the semantic essence of a joke. Substitution is

more effective for translating visually constrained wordplays, while recreation does not. Neutralization, on the other hand, aims to mitigate the loss of humor to avoid alienating the target audience. While neutralization may be a viable solution, it can sometimes evoke a sense of unfamiliarity among viewers, potentially disrupting their experience.

Neutralization masks humor loss in audiovisual productions, but may not be effective for visually restricted wordplays. Omission, on the other hand, avoids humor loss, causing audience confusion and unfamiliarity.

2.3.2 Conveying Culture in Humor Translation

Robinson's (1992) work on audiovisual translation emphasizes the complexities of keeping the original sense of humor across varied audiences and languages. She emphasizes the significance of initial culture acquisition, which entails navigating a new society while acknowledging the subjective aspect of understanding another culture. This can lead to the formation of stereotypes and an emphasis on obvious differences, such as opinions, behaviours, or clothing. Robinson suggests three solutions: actively seeking parallels between two cultures, empathizing with the second culture, and using ethnography. Translators can generate successful humor that connects with multiple audiences and languages by emphasizing the distinctive traits of the first culture, resolving problematic disparities, and empathizing with the second culture.

2.3.3 Subtitling Culturally- Bound Humor

In subtitling, the translator must develop concise and efficient ways to express cultural references while remaining within the medium's technical and geographical limits. This is particularly challenging in audiovisual productions like films and sitcoms, where cultural references are rich and may be difficult to translate due to certain limitations. Effective subtitling requires cultural awareness and sensitivity, as translators must navigate cultural variances to express the intended humor. Translators must ensure that a text's

humor is understandable and resonates with the target language audience. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 200) emphasize the importance of effective cultural transfer, particularly when the destination culture lacks equivalent characteristics. Translators must adopt various ways to transmit humor and bridge cultural divides, including exact translation and a more elaborate process of “complete recreation”. Assessing the level of humor and its significance in sustaining the overall coherence of the audiovisual text is crucial. Therefore, translators must carefully consider their priorities to achieve successful engagement and pleasure for the intended audience.

2.3.4 Strategies for Translating Cultural References in Humor

Leppihalme (1996: 203) emphasizes the importance of metacultural competence in translating cultural elements to the target culture. Translators must be bicultural to function as competent readers and text producers within the source language community. Nedergaard-Larsen (1993: 238) highlights the need for translators to consider key factors when dealing with extralinguistic culture-bound references (ECRs) in subtitling. These factors include differences in background knowledge, cultural and moral values, customs, traditions, and conventional joke-telling techniques. The translator’s professional context, timing, lip-synchronization, and reliance on verbal humor are also crucial considerations.

Various translation techniques tackle the challenges brought by cultural variations, such as the preservation approach and pragmatic translation. The preservation approach involves translating cultural components without making any changes but may ignore cultural differences, making the source text difficult for the intended audience. The creation technique provides context to help the target audience comprehend culturally relevant details, heightening the comic effect. These techniques are similar to those employed in interpreting humor.

The strategies discussed include:

1/ Official Equivalent

the official comparable technique involves using the established target language version of cultural elements. Translating “Santa” into Arabic as “بابا نويل” demonstrates cultural integration. (Pedersen, 2005: 115).

2/ Retention

This method involves preserving the extralinguistic cultural reference (ECR) in its original form, allowing it to seamlessly blend into the target text without modification. By using this strategy, a translator demonstrates devotion to the source text (ST) while refraining from providing instruction or clarification to the intended audience. When it comes to translating names or proper nouns, retention is common.

3/ Specification

The specification technique preserves the cultural reference in its original, untranslated form but supplements it with additional data to provide greater clarity or specificity.

4/ Explication

The translator seeks to expound on or clarify any implicit components in the source text (ST) by giving additional information or context.

5/ Addition

It is a strategy used to adapt cultural references for a new audience by adding extra information or context that makes the joke understandable. When a cultural reference in a joke might not be familiar to the target audience, the translator includes additional details to explain the reference or provide necessary context. This helps preserve the humor by making sure the joke is accessible and relatable to people from a different cultural background.

6/ Direct Translation

There are two types of approaches: calque and shifting. It is used to extract extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) from a source text without introducing any changes or new information. Direct translation is rarely used to translate proper names, but it can be used to translate the names of corporations and organizations.

7/ Generalization

This entails developing a target text (TT) element that is broader in scope than the source text's specific cultural reference.

8/ Substitution

The Substitution approach involves either replacing or paraphrasing the source text's extralinguistic cultural reference (ECR).

9/ Cultural Substitution

The Substitution approach is substituting the source text's extralinguistic cultural reference (ECR) with another ECR that is more recognizable to the target culture (TC) audience.

10/ Paraphrase

Using the paraphrase strategy, the translator either replaces the significance of the extralinguistic cultural reference (ECR) with something that fulfils a similar function (situational paraphrase) or keeps the essence of the ECR while removing it (sense transfer).

11/ Omission

Remove the extralinguistic cultural reference (ECR) from the source text as part of this method. According to Leppihalme, employing this method can suggest a lack of commitment or diligence on the translator's behalf.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter discussed the complexities of humor translation, emphasizing the delicate balance required to preserve the original comedic intent across cultural and linguistic boundaries. It highlighted the importance of understanding the cultural context and the translator's role in bridging the gap between source and target audiences. The chapter also addressed the challenges of subtitling culturally bound humor, where space and time constraints require concise yet effective translations. Techniques such as substitution, addition, and explicit explanation are employed to preserve the comedic essence despite these limitations.

The chapter further explored the complexities of translating wordplays and paralinguistic jokes in audiovisual media. It underscored the necessity of maintaining both verbal and non-verbal elements while adapting humor to fit different cultural contexts, showcasing the skill and creativity required of translators.

Ultimately, the chapter concluded that successful humor translation relies on a deep cultural understanding and the ability to creatively navigate linguistic nuances, ensuring that the humor remains impactful and engaging for diverse audiences.

3. Chapter III: Data Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This study explores the intricate techniques and strategies employed in subtitling scenes the renowned American sitcom "The Office" for an Arabic-speaking audience. The selected scenes for analysis were chosen based on their widespread popularity and significant impact. The subtitling approach adopted focuses on preserving cultural nuances and ensuring a seamless adaptation to resonate with the target Arab viewers. By comparing the English original version without subtitles to the Arabic subtitled version, we then shed light on the cultural disparities between the Western and Arab worlds. This research underscores the critical importance of considering the target culture to enhance the acceptability and relatability of the translated content for the Arab audience. The meticulous and thorough examination of these subtitled scenes provides valuable insights into the complexities of cross-cultural communication and the art of effective subtitling in the realm of humor in television and media.

3.2 The Office

"The Office" is an iconic American sitcom that has gathered widespread praise for its unique combination of humor and satire. Set in the mundane environment of a newspaper company, the show follows the daily lives of the employees at Dunder Mifflin, seizing their exchanges, affairs, and workplace dynamics in a mockumentary style. Known for its dry wit, quirky characters, and cringe-worthy yet hilarious moments, "The Office" has become a cultural phenomenon, resonating with audiences worldwide. The show skillfully navigates through themes of office politics, romance, friendship, and the absurdity of corporate culture, creating a rich tapestry of comedic situations that range from subtle to outright absurd. With a stellar ensemble cast led by Steve Carell as the bumbling yet lovable boss Michael Scott, the show delves into the intricacies of human behavior and the

comedy that arises from everyday situations. Through its sharp writing, memorable one-liners, and relatable characters, "The Office" cemented a permanent mark on the landscape of television comedy, solidifying its place as a timeless masterpiece that continues to entertain and resonate with audiences around the globe.

3.3 Methodology

The primary stage of the practical research phase involved the thorough selection of episodes and clips from the sitcom "The Office", steered by specific criteria. These criteria included the episodes' richness in humor content, the variety of comedic elements, and their representativeness of various characters and situations throughout the series. To ensure an inclusive analysis, episodes from different seasons and with varying comedic styles were chosen.

We acquired unedited episodes and scenes directly from reliable sources, preserving the authenticity of the original content. The selected material was in its native English version, devoid of any pre-existing subtitles or translations.

The selected platform utilized for adding subtitles was Kapwing, a versatile online website /tool for video editing and subtitling. Kapwing's intuitive design and functionalities facilitated accurate timing and formatting of subtitles, guaranteeing alignment with the audiovisual elements of "The Office." Arabic subtitles were incorporated into the chosen episodes and clips following the established translation guidelines.

Prior to the subtitling process, a comprehensive translation framework was developed, taking into account the linguistic, cultural, and contextual nuances of both the source (English) and target (Arabic) language. This framework intended to offer strategies

for preserving the humor, tone, and cultural references existing in the original material during the translation process.

3.4 The Reason Behind Choosing “The Office” as Corpus

The television series "The Office" was chosen as the corpus for this study because of its exceptional richness in comedic elements, intricate character dynamics, and diverse humor styles. Recognized for its critical acclaim and widespread popularity, "The Office" presents a multifaceted exploration of workplace relationships, interpersonal dynamics, and everyday absurdities, all interwoven with humor that transcends cultural barriers. Its mockumentary style offers a distinctive perspective for analysing humor translation in audiovisual content, blending scripted dialogues, spontaneous moments, and subtle visual cues that contribute to its comedic brilliance. Additionally, the show's enduring relevance and extensive content provide a broad range of material for examination, spanning numerous seasons and episodes that exhibit various comedic techniques and cultural allusions. By utilizing "The Office" as the primary dataset, this study aims to dig deeply into the complexities of humor translation, leveraging a collection of comedic scenarios and character interactions to elucidate the obstacles and approaches involved in adapting humor across linguistic and cultural contexts.

3.4.1 Subtitling and Analysing Scenes from “The Office”

Scene 01: Season 03 Episode 17

01	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	Michael: Ready? Come on guys. Early worm gets the worm.	مايكل: جاهزون؟ هيا يا شباب. الدودة المبكرة تحصل على الدودة.	مايكل: جاهزون؟ هيا يا شباب. الدودة المبكرة تحصل على الدودة.
	Jim: Another worm? Like, are they friends?	جيم: دودة أخرى؟ يعني، هل هما صديقتان؟	جيم: دودة أخرى؟ يعني، هل هما صديقتان؟
	Dwight: It's early bird gets the worm.	دوايت: الطائر المبكر يحصل على الدودة.	دوايت: الشَّخص الذي يَسْتَيْقِظ باكراً فُرْص نَجَاحه. يَزِيد من

When subtitling this type of scene from English to Arabic, the subtitling technique used would involve a combination of strategies such as Adaptation and Literal translation, Dwight's line "It's early bird gets the worm" is culturally adapted to convey the intended meaning of the proverb in Arabic. The translation "الشَّخص الذي يَسْتَيْقِظ باكراً يَزِيد من فُرْص نَجَاحه" translated to "The person who wakes up early increases his chances of success," which communicates the essence of the original English proverb, making it understandable to the Arabic-speaking audience. In this example there is a mistakenly said idiom in the first line, corrected in the last line by another character. The idiom “early bird gets the worm” means

that the first one to arrive has a bigger chance of succeeding. In this context, the idiom "early worm gets the worm" implies that a diligent individual who starts his day early can achieve more than someone who wakes up late. In the episode, Ryan requests Michael to give a speech at his business school, prompting Michael to prepare diligently from the early morning to succeed in his task. This dual interpretation of the idiom aligns with Michael's proactive approach in the storyline. The translator, while maintaining the essence of the original message, should subtly adjust the translation in the target text to enhance its aesthetic appeal, ensuring it remains faithful to the intended meaning of the source text.

Regarding Jim's response, he humorously points out Michael's repetition of the word "worm" and playfully questions if these two worms are friends. Jim's sarcastic tone adds a light-hearted and comedic element to the dialogue, highlighting the playful banter between the characters in the scene.

Scene 02: (Season 01 Episode 01)

02	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: And yeah, Jim this is the time to stop putting Dwight's personal effects into Jell-O.</p> <p>Jim: OK. Dwight, I'm sorry, because I have</p>	<p>مايكل: نعم، يا جيم هذا هو الوقت المناسب لإيقاف وضع محتويات شخصية دوايت في الهلام.</p> <p>جيم: حسناً. دوايت، آسف، لأنني كنت دائماً أكبر مشجع لك.</p> <p>مايكل: جيد. هذا هو الوضع هنا.</p>	<p>مايكل: نعم، يا جيم حان الوقت لتتوقف عن وضع أغراض دوايت الشخصية في الهلام.</p> <p>جيم: حسناً. دوايت، آسف، لأنني كنت دائماً أكبر مشجع لك.</p> <p>مايكل: جيد. هذا هو الوضع هنا. إنه</p>

<p>always been your biggest flan.</p> <p>Michael: Nice. That's the way it is around here. It just kind of goes round and round.</p> <p>Ryan: You should've put him in custardy.</p> <p>Michael: Hey! Yes! New guy! He scores.</p> <p>Dwight: OK, that's great. I guess what I'm most concerned with is damage to company property. That's all.</p> <p>Michael: Pudding. Putting... I'm trying to think of another dessert to do.</p>	<p>إنه ينتقل من شخص لآخر. رايان: كان عليك وضعه في الكاسترد" مايكل: هاي! نعم! الموظف الجديد! لقد سجل نقطة دوايت: حسناً، هذا رائع. أعتقد أن أكبر ما يقلقني هو الضرر الذي قد يلحق بممتلكات الشركة. هذا فقط مايكل: بودنج. وضع... أحاول التفكير في حلوى أخرى.</p>	<p>ينتقل من شخص لآخر. رايان: كان عليك وضعه في الحبز مايكل: هاي! نعم! الموظف الجديد! لقد سجل نقطة. دوايت: حسناً، هذا رائع. أعتقد أن أكثر ما يقلقني هو الضرر الذي قد يلحق بممتلكات الشركة. هذا فقط. مايكل: بودنج. وضع... أحاول التفكير في حلوية أخرى لتحضيرها.</p>
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This example discusses a type of wordplay commonly found in jokes, where the characters of the show, have a play on words to create humorous effects, often with a theme of desserts. The example provided is the word "flan," which is a type of custard-

based dessert, used in place of the word "fan" to create a pun. Another example is "custardy," which is a combination of the words "custody" (meaning imprisonment) and "custard" (a dessert made from eggs, sugar, and milk). The translator, in this case, opted not to provide a literal translation, as that would render the joke meaningless. Instead, they adapted the words to be more familiar to the target audience while maintaining the dessert-themed pun. This type of translation strategy is known as "dynamic equivalence," where the focus is on conveying the intended meaning and effect of the original text rather than a word-for-word translation.

Scene 03: (Season 02 Episode 15)

03	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: Now you may look around and see two groups here. White collar. Blue collar. But I don't see it that way. And you know why not? Because I am collar-blind. (Color blind)</p>	<p>مايكل هنا قد ترى مجموعتين: الياقات البيضاء والياقات الزرقاء. لكن أنا لا أرى الأمر بهذه الطريقة. وتعرف لماذا؟ لأنني عندي عمى الياقات.</p>	<p>مايكل هنا قد ترى مجموعتين: الياقات البيضاء والياقات الزرقاء. لكن أنا لا أرى الأمر بهذه الطريقة. وتعرف لماذا؟ لأنني عندي عمى الألوان.</p>

Adaptation involves altering the reference in the original language to a new one in the target language that would be more relatable or understandable to the audience. In the English conversation, Michael refers to "collar blind " a play on words related to different worker classes (white collar and blue collar) while also alluding to "color blind." The translator translated this wordplay into Arabic as "عندي عمى الألوان" (which means "I have color blindness") maintaining the connection, between colors and types of workers. This adaptation ensures that both humor and intended meaning are conveyed effectively in the translated version.

Scene 04: (Season 01 Episode 02)

04	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: [...] Was there any emotion going on? No. Where was the heart? I didn't see any heart. Where was my Oprah moment? OK, get as much done as you can before lunch because, afterward, I'm going to have you all in tears.</p>	<p>مايكل: [...] هل كان هناك أي عاطفة؟ لا. أين كان القلب؟ لم أرَ أي قلب. أين كان لحظتي مع أوبرا؟ حسناً، أنجزوا أكبر قدر ممكن قبل الغداء لأنه بعد ذلك، سأجعلكم جميعاً تبكون.</p>	<p>مايكل: [...] هل كانت هناك أية عاطفة؟ لا. أين كان القلب؟ لم أرَ أي قلب. أين لحظة تصالحي وصدقي مع نفسي؟ حسناً، أنجزوا أكبر قدر ممكن قبل الغداء لأنه بعد ذلك، سأجعلكم جميعاً تبكون.</p>

The television presenter Oprah Winfrey, despite having almost worldwide fame, her program is only broadcasted in the United States, so it is very easy that part of the Arab (Algerian) audience does not understand the reference, we adapted culturally specific references to make them more understandable for the target audience. For instance, "my Oprah moment" was translated to "لحظة تصالحي و صدقي مع نفسي," which means "my moment of reconciliation and honesty with myself." This captures the essence of an "Oprah moment", a culturally specific reference to emotional and transformative moments often seen on Oprah Winfrey's shows by conveying the underlying meaning in a way that resonates with Arabic-speaking audiences.

Scene 05: (season 01, episode 02)

05	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Jim: Thanks, Dwight.</p> <p>Dwight: Retaliation. Tit for tit.</p> <p>Jim: That is not the expression.</p> <p>Dwight: Well, it should be.</p>	<p>جيم: شكرًا، دوايت.</p> <p>دوايت: انتقام. تدي بتدي.</p> <p>جيم: هذه ليست العبارة.</p> <p>دوايت: حسنًا، يجب أن تكون كذلك.</p>	<p>جيم: شكرًا، دوايت</p> <p>دوايت: إنه انتقام. العين بالعين.</p> <p>جيم: هذه ليست العبارة</p> <p>دوايت: حسنًا، يجب أن تكون كذلك</p>

In the subtitling process, it is often necessary to adapt phrases to ensure they resonate correctly with the target audience while maintaining the original intent and humor. In this example, the TV character named Dwight humorously misuses the English idiom "tit for tat" by saying "tit for tit." When translating this scene into Arabic for a Muslim audience, the decision was made to use the phrase "العين بالعين" (an eye for an eye), which is culturally and contextually familiar to the target audience and effectively conveys the idea of retaliation.

The original humor in this scene derives from Dwight's misuse of an idiom, which might not be translated well if the exact English phrases were used. By choosing "العين بالعين," the humor and the context of retaliation are preserved, making the scene relatable and funny for the Arabic-speaking audience.

This adaptation respects cultural nuances and ensures that the audience experiences the same comedic impact as the original viewers, even if the specific wording is different.

Scene 06: (Season 01 episode 05)

06	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: Attention all Dunder Mifflin employees, please. We have a meeting in the conference room, <i>ASAP</i>.</p>	<p>مايكل: انتباه لجميع موظفي داندر ميفلين، من فضلكم. لدينا اجتماع في غرفة المحاضرات.</p>	<p>مايكل: انتباه لجميع موظفي داندر ميفلين، من فضلكم. لدينا اجتماع في أسرع وقت ممكن في قاعة المحاضرات.</p>

When translating from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL), it is common for the TL to have a more limited range of vocabulary or expressions compared to the SL. In such cases, the translator may face challenges in finding an exact equivalent that captures the nuances and connotations of the original phrase.

For example, in the TV series "The Office," the character Michael Scott, despite being the boss, often tries to appear modern and humorous in his speech. When he uses the term "ASAP" (as soon as possible), it helps define his personality and communication style. However, when translating this into Arabic, there may not be an exact equivalent that carries the same level of informality and jocular tone.

In this situation, the translator may opt to simply translate the literal meaning of the expression, which can effectively convey the message but may result in a loss of the character's unique identity and personality traits. The translator's challenge lies in finding a balance between accurately conveying the meaning and preserving the character's voice and mannerisms.

While the primary objective of translation is to communicate the message effectively, the loss of certain cultural or linguistic nuances is an inherent challenge that translators often face. Adapting the translation to maintain the character's personality and the overall comedic impact requires creativity and a deep understanding of both the source and target languages and cultures.

Scene 07: (season 03 episode 10)

07	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: Hey! I would like a nice slice of Christmas Pam. Side of candied Pams. And perhaps, some Pam-chops.</p>	<p>مايكل: مرحباً! أود قطعة جميلة من بام عيد الميلاد. جانب من بام المكرمل. وربما، بعض شرائح البام.</p>	<p>مايكل: مرحباً! أود قطعة لذيذة من كبسة العيد. قطعة من البسبوسة المحلاة. وربما، بعض شرائح الكباب.</p>

The translator must exercise caution with two elements in this example. Firstly, there is a play on words involving the character name "Pam" combined with a word representing a cultural reference. This reference pertains to a Christmas setting, with the wordplay involving traditional American dishes commonly served during the Christmas season. It is

crucial for the translator to be mindful of these cultural nuances and wordplay intricacies when interpreting this context, we then changed these words and replaced them with ones that are more familiar to the Arab audience, namely foods that are served at Eid time to further ease the understanding process of the target audience.

Scene 08: (season 01 episode 01)

09	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: You can go mess with Josh’s people, but I’m the head of this family, and you ain’t gonna be messing with my chillun.</p>	<p>مايكل: يمكنك العبث مع رجال جوش، لكنني رئيس هذه العائلة، ولن تعبث معي.</p>	<p>مايكل: يمكنك العبث مع رجال جوش، لكنني رب هذه العائلة، ولن تعبث مع أطفالي.</p>

This example contains a slang word chillun. According to The Online Slang Dictionary it is the colloquial pronunciation of a plural form of a child (children). In the TT the word is not used at all and the message that Michael perceives the office workers like his family and his children is omitted.

Scene 09: (Season 02 episode 01)

09	The Original Text	The Literal Translation	The Suggested Translation
	<p>Michael: Everybody looks forward to it, because, you know, a lot of the people here don't get trophies, very often. Like Meredith or Kevin, I mean, who's gonna give Kevin an award? Dunkin' Donuts?</p>	<p>مايكل: الجميع يتطلعون إلى ذلك، لأنك تعرف، الكثير من الناس هنا لا يحصلون على جوائز في كثير من الأحيان. مثل ميريديث أو كيفن، أعني، من سيعطي كيفن جائزة؟ دانكن دونتس؟</p>	<p>مايكل: الجميع يتطلعون إلى ذلك، لأنك تعرف، الكثير هنا لا يحصلون على جوائز في أغلب الأحيان. مثل ميريديث أو كيفن، أعني، من سيعطي كيفن جائزة؟ لابريوش دوري؟</p>

Well-known brands in America do not necessarily exist in other countries, and that is what this example shows. Dunkin Donuts is a famous company that sells doughnuts but does not yet exist in the Arab world, The equivalent of "Dunkin' Donuts" in many Arab countries and more specifically in Algeria is "La Brioche Dorée." It's a popular chain of bakeries and pastry shops in Algeria known for its delicious pastries, cakes, and bread. It has several locations across major cities in Algeria, offering a wide range of French-inspired pastries and baked goods.

The use of the adaptation method here in this example is to maintain the comedic effect and substitute a culturally specific reference with one that is more relevant to the target audience, ensuring a better comprehension and enjoyment of the content.

3.5 Discussion

After analysing the examples provided above, it is demonstrated how translating idiomatic phrases is a real challenge. Idioms are not always translatable word for word, and the translator needs to find an equivalent expression in the TL that conveys the same meaning. In some cases, we have used the idiomatic translation method preserving the idiom but changing it to a form suitable for the TL audience, resulting in a more natural text. Other times, we have omitted the idiom altogether while keeping the message of the ST in the TT.

Furthermore, to analyse the translation of subtitles containing puns in *The Office*, we have selected different examples that contain homophones and wordplay. So, we tried not to rely on literal translation and changed the words to be close to the reader. Humor also often relies on wordplay, which can be difficult to translate into another language without losing the intended meaning and humor. Translators must use their creativity and knowledge of the culture to adapt puns to the TL.

Finally, different examples selected from *The Office* containing different cultural expressions such as names of food, companies, or people. From these examples, it can be seen that translating cultural expressions requires careful consideration by the translator. What must be considered is whether a direct translation of the item is appropriate or if it needs to be adapted to fit the TL audience. The translator of the TT either omitted or adapted cultural elements in the text. These terms and names are often unfamiliar to the TL audience or there may be better equivalents. Therefore, when translating cultural

expressions, the translator needs to carefully consider the target audience's knowledge and preferences and adapt the translation accordingly to retain the context of the ST.

3.6 Recommendations

Concerning the cultural adaptation part in the audiovisual translation of comedic material, Humor often relies on cultural references, idioms, and societal norms that may not be directly translatable. Translators should identify culturally specific jokes and adapt them to the target culture while preserving the original intent and humor, and also use equivalent local references that produce a similar comedic effect from the target audience.

For the linguistic creativity part, Humor frequently plays on words, sounds, and linguistic nuances. To maintain comedic effect and effectively adapt culturally specific jokes to a target culture, employ wordplay that aligns with the linguistic characteristics of the target language. If a direct translation is not possible, create new jokes that fit the context and timing of the original material, ensuring the humor and intent are preserved.

Moreover, timing and synchronization is crucial in audiovisual material. Subtitles must match the timing of the original dialogue to deliver humor at the same moment as in the source language. Ensure the adaptation is concise and readable, allowing viewers to quickly grasp the joke without missing visual cues.

Characters in sitcoms often have distinctive ways of speaking that contribute to the humor. Translators should maintain character-specific speech patterns and personalities in the translation. Consider character backgrounds and personalities to ensure the adapted jokes remain true to the character.

Additionally Understanding the target audience is essential for effective humor translation. Translators should Research the preferences and sensitivities of the target audience to ensure humor translations are neither offensive nor unfunny.

Finally, the use of modern technology in the translation process, where translators should use translation and subtitling software and tools to ensure consistency and accuracy.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on numerous scenes that are rich in terms of cultural references and comedy, we used direct and indirect translation techniques in addition to the strategies of subtitling to convey and transmit the right message and to the target society's culture, due to the noticeable differences and disparities between our culture and beliefs and the ones present in the Tv show.

General Conclusion

The first part of this thesis was devoted to translation. The beginning addressed the question of what translation actually was, then the chapter continued with defining the methods of translation according to Newmark, and finally, the important topic of audio-visual translation and then specifically subtitling was described in this chapter. AVT and subtitling helped in making media (here specifically the series *The Office*) accessible to foreign audiences around the globe.

The second part dealt with humor and described in more detail the two previously mentioned strands of verbal humor, puns, and idioms. It also described the problems that might have arisen when translating them. The section on culture mainly described the problems associated with translating cultural elements into the target language. Cultural differences could have had a significant impact on the translation of humor and translators needed to be aware of these differences in order to accurately convey the intended meaning.

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the translation of humor in the subtitles of *The Office* and with the help of examples of idioms, puns, and cultural elements highlighted the problems associated with the translation of humor in different languages and cultures, as well as the strategies used to overcome these problems. *The Office*, as a sitcom, provided

many examples on which to conduct the analysis to demonstrate translation methods. There were many idiomatic expressions and cultural elements in the show, relating to celebrities, other TV shows and films, food, and brands, for example. As far as puns were concerned, there were some interesting examples that certainly could have given the translator a hard time. Translating humor required a deep understanding of both the source and target language, the different cultural references and terms that might have underlain them and knowing what humor the source language and target language audience preferred, whether there were major differences in their perception of humor or not.

Finally, this research was far from perfect due to the lack of sufficient material and content in this vast field. The choosing and picking of the scenes was challenging because of the number of episodes and seasons the show contained. Additionally, the fact that this topic had not been discussed before at our university made it really hard to find raw and non-subtitled/dubbed episodes of the sitcom, mainly because most platforms that provided this type of content were extremely expensive and hard to find as well as the programs and tools that were used for adding subtitles.

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الملخص

يستكشف هذا البحث التحديات التي يواجهها المترجم أثناء ترجمة الفكاهة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية في الوسائط السمعية والبصرية، حيث يفحص كيفية تكيف الفكاهة مع المرجعيات الثقافية للجمهور المتلقي الناطق بالعربية. و يهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على الصعوبات التي تحف عملية الترجمة في الحفاظ على الجوهر الكوميدي للمحتوى الأصلي مع سد الفجوات الثقافية، كما يقدم رؤى حول استراتيجيات الترجمة الفعالة. باستخدام أساليب بحث وصفية ونوعية، وتضمن البحث فحصاً دقيقاً لمشاهد مختارة من السلسلة الكوميدية *The Office* لتحديد عناصر الفكاهة والمراجع الثقافية، مع اقتراح ترجمة عربية لكل مشهد و الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الحوارات والسياقات الثقافية والفروق الدقيقة في المواقف لضمان الحفاظ على الفكاهة من جهة و احترام المرجعية الثقافية للمتلقي من جهة أخرى. وتظهر النتائج تحديات كبيرة في ترجمة الفكاهة، مما يستدعي تكيف النكت ثقافياً وخلق التوازن بين الأمانة اللغوية والتعديلات الضرورية. يعد فهم السياق الثقافي وتفضيلات الفكاهة للجمهور المستهدف أمراً بالغ الأهمية للترجمة الفعالة. وتؤكد الدراسة على أهمية ترجمة الفكاهة في الوسائط السمعية والبصرية مما يعزز الفهم بين الثقافات ويثري تجربة المشاهدة للجماهير المتنوعة.

Résumé

Cette recherche examine les défis de la traduction de l'humour anglais vers l'arabe dans les médias audiovisuels, en particulier l'adaptation aux références culturelles du public arabe. L'étude analyse des scènes de "The Office" pour identifier les éléments d'humour et les références culturelles, proposant des traductions arabes qui préservent l'humour tout en respectant la culture du public. Les résultats mettent en évidence les difficultés de la traduction d'humour, nécessitant une adaptation culturelle et un équilibre entre fidélité linguistique et ajustements. La compréhension du contexte culturel et des préférences humoristiques du public cible est essentielle pour une traduction efficace. L'étude souligne l'importance de la traduction pour la compréhension interculturelle et l'enrichissement de l'expérience de visionnage.

Summary

This research examines the challenges of translating English humor into Arabic in audiovisual media, specifically adapting it to the cultural references of the Arab audience. The study analyzes scenes from "The Office" to identify humor elements and cultural references, proposing Arabic translations that preserve humor while respecting the audience's culture. The results highlight the difficulties of translating humor, requiring cultural adaptation and a balance between linguistic fidelity and adjustments. Understanding the cultural context and humor preferences of the target audience is essential for effective translation. The study emphasizes the importance of translation for intercultural understanding and enriching the viewing experience.

