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Overcoming Cultural Constraints in Translating English Series: A Case Study of Subtitling Family Guy into Arabic

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ABSTRACT

Subtitling and dubbing foreign animation in Arabic have been growing since TV screens reached Arab homes. This imposes stricter control and ethical supervision of the used language. This study examines the cultural constraints in subtitling the American animated sitcom Family Guy into Arabic. Family Guy addresses sensitive matters, such as sex, alcohol, religion, and politics, and so it is viewed with concern and caution in the Arab world. The researchers classified the cultural constraints in translation into three main categories: religious remarks, jokes & humour that revolve around proper nouns, and taboos. The analysis shows that the strategies used in translating religious remarks were scene deletion, words omission, and words omission with justifications. For jokes and humour, the translator opted for three strategies, namely, retain unchanged, retain unchanged with added guidance and retain unchanged with detailed explanation. Euphemistic expressions and word omission were the two strategies followed in translating taboos. The study concludes that the target audience has a vital role in determining the appropriate constraints on translation that go in line with their ideology and culture.

Keywords: Audio-visual Translation; English-Arabic; Ideology; Subtitling; Family Guy

INTRODUCTION

Today's world is strongly influenced by Media with the emergence of new technology, new forms of global and intercultural communication have also arisen, leading to new forms of translation. Audio-visual translation (AVT) is "a discipline that is much more than mere transfer of pictures, music, sounds and other non- verbal elements are also involved in the process, making it a kind of multi-semiotic transfer" (Au, 2009, p. vii). Dubbing and subtitling are the most common types of AVT. Dubbing is a form of interlingual audio-visual translation that presumes a transformation of the soundtrack of the source language into the soundtrack of the target language with the intention of having it distributed in countries where the original language is not their native tongue (Cintas, 2009) while subtitling is the presentation of a translation dialogue in a film in the form of caption usually placed at the bottom of the picture or on the screen (Szarkowska, 2005).

Since the 1990s, the presence of television channels in the Arab world, and the significant increase in communication, in addition to the amount of time spent in front of screens have led to the purchase of a huge number of foreign programs in an attempt to attract viewers. Not understanding a foreign language is the major obstacle that prevents audiences from enjoying these television programs and films. Subtitling and dubbing are the mechanisms which facilitate the interpretation of international programs and films. In the field of AVT, one of the most challenging tasks is translating animated cartoons, which can play a vital role in children's emotional and social development and education, and have a direct influence on their cognition and behaviour (Ghilzai, Alam, Ahmad, Shaukat, & Noor, 2017). Additionally, religious beliefs have been also outlined to be influenced to a large degree. Dubbing and subtitling are the major forms of animated cartoons translation. Each one of them interferes to

a certain degree with the original version to make it sound real, interesting and enjoyable to the target audience.

Translators usually show great concern when they render a certain work for the Arab audience to protect their identity and culture. It is often believed that national identity is culturally diverse, connected to issues related to race and ethnicity and manifested in a particular language and culture (Venuti, 2005). Throughout the course of translation, as different new areas are drawn into sharp focus, identities are lost, allowing ways for new ones. This is why translators take strong caution when approaching subjects that are considered unacceptable like religion, humour, and taboos that often constitute a major challenge for translators. Those subjects are discussed thoroughly in this paper. In this study, the researchers have classified cultural constraints into three categories, namely, *religious remarks*, *jokes and humour of proper nouns*, and *taboos*. Religious remarks in this paper refer to any unacceptable offensive religious reference that has been included in *Family Guy*. Jokes and humour of proper nouns refer to cross-cultural names that have been used in a humorous context. This paper also investigates taboos, which can be defined as immoral or explicit content that is deemed inappropriate by the target audience. According to Allan (2001, p. 148), “tabooed words are those considered offensive, shocking, or indecent when used in certain contexts”

The reason behind this classification is that religion might be the number one red zone for almost all societies and cultures. The followers of a particular religion do not tolerate mockery or disdain of their beliefs nor invading the sacredness of their religion. Therefore, when a popular television show provokes the audience by offending their religion for creating controversy, the translator shall avoid rendering such provocative utterances by resorting to one of the translation strategies. Jankowska (2009) examined how comedy elements are translated in animated films and found that the target text contains fewer humorous elements than the source texts. This is due to the translators’ lack of knowledge of how cultural humorous references could be rendered. The second category, *jokes and humour of proper nouns*, shows how a translator can deliver an item that is well known to the source culture but not the target culture, without losing the humorous effect. The third category, *taboos*, is included owing to the fact that the explicit rendition of taboos often comes as shocking and unpleasant, let alone that conveying an idea that is acceptable by a particular society to a more conservative one might taint the identity and customs of it.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and identify the strategies translators opted for while subtitling cultural constraints in an American animated sitcom, *Family Guy*, into Arabic. This objective is examined via the following research question.

-What are the strategies used by the subtitlists of *Family Guy* to:

A: translate unacceptable religious remarks?

B: reflect the humorous effect that revolves around proper nouns on the target audience?

C: render taboos into Arabic?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Different scholars have conducted several studies on translation in general (see Al-Adwan & Abuorabaledwan, 2019; Al-Harashseh & Al-Omari, 2019; Hijjo & Kaur, 2017; Yuan, 2018), while some others paid attention to the translation of Audio-visual materials (see Jankowska, 2009; Tian & Xiong, 2013; Yahiaoui, 2016). Dubbing and subtitling are by far the most widespread techniques used to make foreign-language TV programs accessible to the international market. The originality of the voice in subtitles keeps the raw feeling of the culture intact. It also helps in learning foreign languages and those with hearing impairment. In addition, subtitles can add clarity to the text that contains technical terms, industry jargon or

company/individual names, especially when the viewer is not experienced with the intended industry. Subtitling seems to be more preferable for factors related to credibility, cheaper cost and the enjoyment of experiencing original sounds, etc. These factors are sufficient to urge translation businesses to prefer subtitling to dubbing which seems to be less appealing for artistic and financial reasons.

In subtitling, it is not only the language that the translator should be concerned about, but also the pictures, sound effects, and accents that might be even more challenging for the translator. A subtitlist usually explains what the target audience cannot understand. He also has an obligation to convey cultural aspects from the source and target cultures. Culture is defined as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1873, p. 1). Human beings developed cultures in peculiar moments, parts and races, making reference to all variants of a society based on cultural views, customs, systems and beliefs. People from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds need to communicate in order to share knowledge and experience. Translation plays a role in facilitating the communication process across cultures. Thus, it can be argued that cultural diversity is the source of translation, and translation is the outcome of cultural interchange. To put it differently, translation and culture cannot be separated. Considering cultural aspects while subtitling can be very challenging and sometimes impossible due to the massive gap between the source culture and the target culture.

This study adopts the cultural approach to translation which is a theoretical and methodological transition in translation studies. This approach earned lots of attention in the nineties (Bassnett, 1990; Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998; Lefevere, 2002; Venuti, 1994). This approach emphasizes the cultural influence of translation in the receptor-language, considering translation as independent literature, but not as a sheer replica of the source texts. Unlike the traditional approaches that mainly focus on delivering a message or a function, the cultural approach pushes translation towards a broad cultural context, drawing on cultural backgrounds, history and norms (Yan & Huang, 2014).

The cultural approach to translation created a new insight for translation studies, in particular the work of 'Manipulation School' (Hermans, 2014). The cultural approach to translation played a major role in the establishment of the manipulation theory. According to this theory, translation denotes a level of manipulation of the ST to obtain social acceptance in the target culture (Hermans, 2014). The theory highlighted the cultural context as a whole to determine the appropriate strategy and method for translating and suggested translation strategies that help in securing cultural acceptance. Xie (2012) argued that translated literature held a part of the social-cultural system and pointed out that the translation approaches should not be dictated by the source texts but rather by the function of the translated texts in the social-cultural frameworks. Based on this, cultural constraints can be defined as a set of ideologies that a certain society deems unacceptable, indecent or prohibited. These constraints include for example but not limited to attire, acts, laws, norms, religion, and taboos.

There are differences among ideologies such as the Middle Eastern and Western ideologies. This explains the constraints that the Arab translators should consider while translating from English into Arabic. The translator must accordingly have a broader view of ideological clashes in order to attain a reasonable and efficient translation of the text. Chungling (2010) also suggests that ideologies play a vital role in the translation process, emphasizing that translators shall think and act in accordance with the ideological values of the target audience. This implies that translation strategies should be employed to accommodate the target audience's norms and values. A translation strategy can be defined as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it" (Lörscher, 1991, p. 8).

In subtitling, maintaining the same effect on the target audience is not an easy task. This dilemma is not new in the field of translation and has attracted the attention of many studies over the years. Alkadi (2010) examined the challenges that translators face in subtitling and dubbing three feature films; one television sitcom and an animated series from English into Arabic. The findings suggested that translators implement a practical translation approach that could assist them effectively resolve the challenges found in this form of translation and allow a similar impact on the target audience as the source text has on the audience. Altahri (2013) investigated the elements and techniques that played a key role in subtitling children's Harry Potter movies in the Middle East. The study showed that there is a system of cultural, political and technical aspects that have a direct influence on subtitling children movies from English to Arabic. The study concludes that Arab subtitles seem to use more techniques than others to cope with cultural references.

Tardzenyuy (2016) examined the different terminology used to describe translation strategies, such as 'method' or 'technique'. The author argues that the term 'translation strategy' should be used solely to refer to a global or general decision made by the translator before any text is translated. Such a general decision may relate to whether the translation would be literal, foreignized or source-oriented; or if it would be free, localized or target-oriented. Fernández Guerra (2012) investigated the primary translation strategies and methods that can be used to tackle some issues associated with translating gaps between cultures. The researcher found that translators might use a wide range of strategies to address the issues and complications that cultural aspects present, and these include compensation, addition, deletion, and equivalence. Al-Adwan (2015) investigated the use of euphemism as a strategy of politeness in subtitling English audio-visual content to Arabic. The researcher explored the degree to which euphemism can be implemented efficiently as an output of politeness in subtitling from English to Arabic. The study found that Arab subtitlists employ the strategy of euphemism when facing a variety of face-threatening acts, in particular sexual ones and statements linked to disturbing subjects such as death, illness, and bodily function.

Jankowska (2009) examined how comedy elements from an animated American film, namely *Shrek*, move through languages, cultures and various translation processes, and aimed to identify patterns in humour transfer with regard to the target language and various types of audio-visual translation. The study found that the target texts tend to contain fewer humorous elements than the source texts. Likewise, Mahdjoubi and Djafour (2015) examined the degree to which the linguistic and cultural aspects of the joke can be produced in the target text when shifting from one linguistic system to another and analysing the various challenges that translators encounter. The researchers stated that one of the possible strategies to translate jokes is to explain it in footnotes in the target text, which implies adding details about a vague culture-specific item.

Koponen (2018) investigates the strategies used in the translation of swear words in subtitles. The researcher found that swear words are often euphemized by turning the swear word into weaker expressions, stronger expressions, similar strength expressions, or completely omitted. The results also showed that the most common strategies were leaving the swear word out using omission, and toning down the swear words using different forms of euphemism. Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019) analysed the Arabic connotative equivalence of taboo words in American hip-hop musical movies. The results revealed the euphemisms and omissions were the main used strategies to translate taboo words in order to maintain cultural constraints.

METHODOLOGY

The subtitling and dubbing of different animated TV shows and films such as *The Simpsons*, *Shrek*, and *Mulan* were thoroughly investigated by different scholars (see Jankowska, 2009; Tian & Xiong, 2013; Yahiaoui, 2016). For the purpose of this study, a corpus of the animated cartoon *Family Guy* was selected as little or no attention, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, has been paid to the Arabic subtitled version of the show. It is an American animated sitcom created by Seth MacFarlane for the Fox Broadcasting Company. A Sitcom is short for "situation comedy" which is a type of comedy based on a specific number of characters that change from episode to another. *Family Guy* has been nominated for both Emmy and Annie Awards and has won three awards for Outstanding Comedy Series since 1961. It was also ranked in 2013 as the ninth Greatest all-time TV Cartoon by TV Guide (Imdb, 2019).

Family Guy aims to attract adults and it contains humorous expressions to serve the purpose of entertaining the viewers. In addition, the show employs cultural remarks to reflect cutaways, i.e. the interruption of a scene by adding a visual shot of something else. These jokes, apply mostly to today's events, film stars, famous politicians, advertisements, music, etc. Gags In *Family Guy* are typically based on cultural remarks, and their characters address the event by breaking the fourth wall, i.e. the imaginary wall that separates the characters from the audience and makes a direct interaction with the viewer.

Family Guy revolves around the Griffin family that consists of six members. The father (Peter) who's contently characterized as selfish and stupid while the mother (Lois) is a smart woman who tries to keep her family in order but fails measurably each time. their children Meg and Chris who are the teens in the family, together they portray teen problems and daily life, in addition to their baby brother Stewie whose goal is to control the world. Along with their human-like talking dog Brian, the family go through different humorous adventures each episode (Tvtropes, 2019).

Family Guy was aired in English with Arabic subtitles on channels like Dubai's One TV and MBC as well as OSN networks. It can be also watched via DVDs, the Internet, and satellite TV. The subtitles, examined in this study, are based on the translation and was taken from OSN network channels in particular since all seasons and episodes were available and accessible. Back translation was also provided for each mentioned example since it is a very effective method to use while paying special attention to critical translation difficulties across cultures, and it helps in keeping a close eye on the conceptual and cultural correspondence of the source and target texts.

The procedures and steps the researchers follow in this research are:

1. Selecting the most-watched and rated episodes of *Family Guy* from websites like IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes which are the largest online database of information on movies, television shows, including casts, production staff, and personal writings, plot summaries, trivia, fan, and critical reviews, and ratings. Most of these episodes have caused controversy in the US society, so it was only natural to find even bigger cultural constraints related to the Middle Eastern society.
2. Comparing the Arabic subtitled version of *Family Guy* with the original version screened on Fox channels in order to spot any deleted or cut scenes.
3. Classifying the cultural constraints that are not compatible with the culture of the target audience and often constitute a challenge for translators.
4. Examining and analysing the methods and strategies that the translators followed to avoid cultural inconveniences for the audience.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural aspects are not easily transferred from one language to another. In the study, the focus is given to three main categories, namely, religious remarks, jokes & humour that revolve around proper nouns and taboos that seem to create a challenge for translators when they try to render their meaning in an appropriate way to the Arab audience. Each of the three categories is examined and analysed in the following sections.

TRANSLATING RELIGIOUS REMARKS

Mockery and disdain of God are among the most dominant powers in pushing people's hearts and minds away from their religion. If God can be freely belittled, then surely the blasphemer does not hold in awe the message of the Holy Books. Webster's 1913 dictionary defines *blasphemy* as an indignity offered to God in words, writing, or signs; impiously irreverent words or signs addressed to or used in reference to God; speaking evil of God; also, the act of claiming the attributes or prerogatives of deity.

In Islamic societies, religion is a very sensitive issue, and translators must be completely aware of the target audience's beliefs and religious views to render meanings appropriately.

There is an episode on Family Guy in which Stewie has a crush on his babysitter once he sees her and attempts multiple times to make her fall for him, regardless of the fact he is only one year old and she is a young adult. See Table 1:

TABLE 1. *Season 4; Episode 8; "8 Simple Rules for Buying My Teenage Daughter"*

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Stewie: -Well, this here? It's just my package. Just my package. -God delivered it, I signed for it. -World keeps on spinning.	ستويي: - هذا؟ إنه طردي فحسب. - تم التحفظ على الترجمة لأن هناك تعدي على الله - العالم يستمر بالدوران.	Stewie: This? It's just my package. -This was not translated because it shows disrespect to God. -The world keeps on spinning.

In this scene, Stewie talks to himself in front of a mirror to practice what he is going to say to his babysitter to make her like him. He picks up a powder bottle and shoves it into his underwear pretending that it is a part of his private parts. He then goes out to say "*God delivered it, I signed for it*" as if human beings can customize how they want their bodies to look like and God simply obeys.

Television, cinema and other media tend to legitimize what they reflect, making it acceptable and perhaps appealing to the audience. This is particularly the case for youngsters who are still learning and developing. Film and television serve as models for youngsters, determining what is natural and acceptable for them. It could have been possible for one to avoid the unwanted effect of media imagery by just changing the channel, but currently, the media is widely available, and its impact is inescapable. The Arab culture has significant respect towards God and the means of addressing him. Following the cultural approach to translation, it is evident that the image that the creators of this episode tried to represent is not acceptable for the target audience and the translator took that into consideration. As a result, and as the back translation of the afore-mentioned example demonstrates, the translator gave a brief explanation of why he decided not to translate such disrespectful utterance towards god. The use of word omission with justification as a translation method might be even more problematic as it could draw the audience attention towards what has been said and provoke them to replay the scene to discover why a translator would directly address the audience instead of translating the utterance.

Another excerpt that includes religious remarks is taken from episode 15 of season 11. In that episode, Chris’ parents discover that Chris is struggling in school and his only hope is to pass his history class to complete 9th grade successfully. Accordingly, Stewie decides to show Chris historical events using the time machine he designed. See Table 2:

TABLE 2. Season 13; Episode 7; “Stewie, Chris & Brian's Excellent Adventure”

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Stewie: did you know that Jesus didn't really die on the cross?	-----	<i>This whole scene was not translated.</i>
Doctor: So, what was the cause of death?	-----	
Nurse: <i>Cocaine and severe trauma to the colon.</i>		

According to Christianity and the Bible, Jesus died on a cross. When Stewie claimed that Jesus died out of cocaine, the translator ignored subtitled the scene into Arabic, mainly because Islam respects all religions, including Christianity and laid down a clear set of rules for not abusing their sacredness.

With religion being a very sensitive matter, the translator chose to follow the omission technique, which is defined by Ivacovoni (2009, para. 1) as:

Translation by omission. Omission means dropping a word or words from the SLT while translating. This procedure can be the outcome of the cultural clashes that exist between the SL and the TL. In fact, it is in subtitled translations where omission attains its peak in use. The translator omits words that do not have equivalents in the TT, or that may raise the hostility of the receptor. (Ivacovoni, 2009 , para. 1)

Such a joke about Jesus raises denunciation from the Arab receptors whether they are Muslims or not, as they do not tolerate degrading religions or prophets. The third example on this category is retrieved from episode 6 of Season 13. After meeting Jesus at the Quahog Mall by coincident, Peter shockingly discovers that the Son of God is still a virgin. Therefore, he asks his friends, Quagmire and Cleveland, to help him throw Jesus a birthday party in means to help him become a man and lose his virginity. See Table 3:

TABLE 3. Season 13; Episode 6; "The 2000-Year-Old Virgin"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Jesus: I want my first time to be with...Lois. Peter: Lois, my partner in the law firm? Jesus: No, Peter. It's your Lois. Lois Griffin. Peter: What? I am outraged! But probably not as outraged as the ten million Christians watching. Please write to this address. Quickly. Maybe we can both stop these Hollywood Jew writers from wreckin' my marriage and your religion.	-----	<i>This episode was not aired in the Arabic subtitled version of Family Guy.</i>

In this episode, Peter and his friends promise to help Jesus lose his virginity. During the events of the episode, Jesus chooses to sleep with Lois (Peter’s Wife). At first, Peter is stunned by his choice but agrees when Jesus offers him a luxurious massage chair as an exchange for sleeping with his wife Lois. Peter informs Lois that Jesus’s wants to lose his virginity to her and she hesitantly agrees. This episode is not included in the Arabic subtitled version of season 13 of Family Guy, not only due to its explicit violation and abuse to the sacredness of Jesus and Christianity but also to the unacceptable moral decay of making the idea of sleeping with someone else’s wife, an acceptable act. This episode is believed to create a controversy and was subject to a lot of criticism by the US audience. As a result, it was not aired in order not to

provoke the same reactions from the Arab audience. The show’s creator, Seth MacFarlane is a steadfast atheist, who frequently uses his hit animated show to poke fun at religion. MacFarlane considers himself a critical thinker and points out in an interview that he does not believe in God, and is an atheist.

The fourth example on this category is retrieved from episode 2 of Season 8. In this episode, Lois learns that she has Jewish origins, so Peter decides that their family should convert to Judaism. See Table 4:

TABLE 4. Season 8; Episode 2; “Family Goy”

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Peter: But then Jesus, what religion should our family be? <i>Jesus: Ah, six of one, they're all complete crap.</i>	بيتر: ولكن يا سيدنا المسيح، ما الدين الذي علينا اتباعه؟ -----	Peter: But Jesus, which religion should we follow? -----

Throughout the episode, the family keep having conflicts due to the sudden change of faith. A charterer of Jesus pays the family a visit, so Peter uses the opportunity to ask Jesus which religion they should follow, and Jesus replies that all religions are fake. This degrades the believers of all faiths around the world. The producers of the show chose a religious figure to abuse all religions, and claim they are fake.

The translator chose to take a cultural approach to translation and omitted the offensive religious remarks to respect their sacredness. It is not only the Arab audience who consider these remarks to be unacceptable but also the western viewers condemn these kinds of remarks. This ties in well with Alkadi (2010) who argued that the fact that Western societies are more open-minded towards their television productions than Arab societies does not imply that all westerners approve much liberty given to people on TV.

In the investigated materials, religious references have been dealt with in three ways, namely scene deletion, words omission, and words omission with justifications. In the case of deletion, the whole scene of the religious joke was deleted. This removal created an important gap between the target audience and the source audience. Although this loss of effect had to be compensated for at another point in the episode, the translator did not do so. In words omission (with or without justification), the translator avoids the delivery of disturbing words and references to the target audience causing a loss in effect again. The translator should have been more aware of the necessity of compensation to convey a similar effect. Despite the loss of effect, these strategies are considered to be sufficient according to the cultural approach to translation. This is driven by the fact that jokes about god, prophets, and Holy Books are not present in Islamic societies the way they are in Western societies. That is why the jokes and expressions mentioned in the translation lost part of the intended meaning. Such loss is justified since the presence of these mockery comments can create a cultural inconvenience for the audience. The findings here are in accordance with findings reported by Alkadi (2010) who pointed out that adopting an approach that will serve the target audience is more effective since the source text is going to likely experience manipulations because it is mainly translated for an audience that has its own ideological cultural, social and religious beliefs.

TRANSLATING JOKES AND HUMOUR OF PROPER NAMES

Humour is a common human activity that plays a crucial role in daily interaction. Scholars have examined humour in a vast range of fields including linguistics, literature, sociology,

psychology and psychology. Translating humour is among the most difficult challenges that translators face. Vandaele (2002) argues that:

The dearth of serious work on humour translation in translation studies suggests that humour translation is qualitatively different from other types of translation and, consequently, one cannot write about humour translation in the same way one writes about other types of translation.
 (Vandaele, 2002, p. 150)

What makes the task even more complicated is when the jokes revolve around a proper name that is known only by certain societies. Making fun of a certain person, brand, or city that is familiar to a specific culture and audience might not create the same humorous effect for other audiences. It is often viewed by some scholars as an untranslatable act.

This category attempts to explore the translation strategies used for translating jokes and humour related to mentioning proper names as a funny element within the joke in accordance with the translation strategies proposed by Leppihalme (1997, p. 79). Examples are collected with regard to the kind of jokes that are challenging in creating a humorous translation effect. The analysis below examines how some difficulties have been dealt with in translating the humorous impact of the source text to the target audience. Strategies used to translate humorous proper names (PN) include:

- 1) *Retain unchanged, or in conventional target language form*: It is used based on the familiarity of the mentioned name with regard to its properness. Proper names in jokes are kept in the target text without giving mind to the fact that it is a trans-cultural name or a name that might be unfamiliar to the target audience.
- 2) *Retain unchanged with added guidance*: This strategy uses additions or changes that are meant to provide implicit background knowledge of the audience in order to help them understand the context.
- 3) *Retain unchanged with detailed explanation*: The detailed explanation would help the audience gain a better humorous sensation so that the utterance would reflect the same feel on the target audience as it does for the source audience.

For example, in episode 8 of season 10, Peter feels hungry after a long journey, so he suggests places to eat at to his friends Glen Quagmire and Rob Swanson. See Table 5:

TABLE 5. Season 10; Episode 8; "Cool Hand Peter"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Peter: Boy, I feel like I haven't eaten in a week. Hey, if we pass a <i>McDaniel's</i> or a <i>Burger Queen</i> , let's hop out.	بيتر: أشعر بأنني لم أكل منذ أسبوع. إن مررنا بـ <i>ماكدانيلز</i> أو <i>برغر كوين</i> ، لننخله.	Peter: I feel like I haven't eaten in a week. If we pass <i>McDaniels</i> or <i>Burger Queen</i> , let's go in.
Quagmire: Oh, that's right, we're on television.	كواغماير: صحيح، نحن على التلفاز.	Quagmire: right, we're on television.

As Table 5 shows, Peter suggests *McDaniel's* and *Burger Queen's* to ease their hunger, while referring in reality to the worldwide known restaurants *McDonalds* and *Burger King*. The reason behind choosing to refer to them as *McDaniel's* and *Burger Queen* rather than explicitly mentioning the real names is that advertising any brand, restaurant, and such during TV shows is unlawful. The search for similar names presents a challenge for the translator. Mahdjoubi and Djafour (2015) have also found that seeking a direct equivalent that makes the joke understandable and funny is quite complicated due to the variations between nations and cultures, such as English and Arabic. The translator's main job is to attempt to produce an

equivalence in a way that would allow minimum cognitive processing effort by the audience. Thus, in example 4 (Table 4), the translator chooses to use the “Retain Unchanged” strategy to render the phrase.

However, in this case, the Arab audience who is well acquainted with McDonald's and Burger King could understand the wordplays in the remarks without investing too much effort on processing. This is attributed to the popularity of the venues and the notice given by Quagmire, "Ah, that's right, we're on TV," which show that Peter's remarks relate to places that are banned to be cited on Television. Over this context, it can be argued that opting for the “Retain Unchanged” strategy does not cause any major understanding issues in this case. Therefore, the target audience could easily come to the same conclusions with the source language audience. Altahri (2013) have reached similar conclusions stating that the most beneficial way for translators to deal with proper names is to preserve the name as it is without any alteration.

Another example of translating humour is taken from episode 8 of season 10 where Peter was discussing President Obama with his friend Cleveland. See Table 6:

TABLE 6. Season 10; Episode 8; "Cool Hand Peter"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Peter: you remember how a lot of people said, like, "Oh, Obama's not gonna be able to do it," but he's-he's hanging in there.	بيتر: تتذكر كيف كان الكثير من الناس يقولون "لن يكون بمقدور يوباما فعلها" لكنه، يقاوم لحد الآن	Peter: You remember how many people were saying "Obama won't be able to do it" but he has so far resisted.
Cleveland: Peter, it's "Obama".	كليفلاند: بيتر، إنها "أوباما".	Cleveland: Peter, it's "Obama".
Peter: Eh, <i>You-bama, Me-bama, We-bama</i> , who cares? It's a black guy in a suit, let's just marvel at that.	بيتر: يوباما "بمعنى أنت"، ميباما "بمعنى أنا"، ويياما "بمعنى نحن"، من يهتم؟ إنه رجل أسود يرتدي خلة دعونا نتعجب لذلك.	Peter: <i>You-bama "meaning you", Me-bama "meaning me", and we-bama "meaning us"</i> , who cares? He is a black man in a suit Let's marvel at that.

The translator aimed at an appropriate relevance, with the intention of producing any additional results that cannot be accomplished with the “Retain Unchanged” strategy. Keeping unchanged with the added guidance will ease the cultural gap by keeping the source text joke with some guidance. The translator chose to apply the “Retain unchanged with added guidance” strategy and rendered "Obama" as "يوباما بمعنى أنت" "Obama means you". This strategy is a compelling example of the manipulation theory introduced by Hermans (2014). The theory states that the translator can manipulate and alter the source text in a way that serves the purpose of the translation. By adding "means you", the cultural gap is eased, and the humorous utterance is maintained. Therefore, applying this strategy in the subtitles helps the target audience experience a similar humorous effect.

Since communication is regarded to be a statistical process in subtitling, and any cultural reference can be brought into existence as a stimulus for further presumptions about the utterance, the translator has successfully made the "Obama" stimulus clearer in this case. In short, the “Retain unchanged with added guidance” strategy does not only provide insight into the perception of the message but also maintains the cultural aspect of the source text by enhancing the interpretation process of the context that is most probably to be meant by the author.

Another example is taken from episode 1 of season 15. In this episode, Stewie and Brian form a children's band, which later disbands after Stewie's ex-girlfriend gets in the way. See Table 7:

TABLE 7. Season 15; Episode 1; "The Boys in the Band"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Stewie: I'm gonna be a singer.	بيتر: سوف أكون مغنياً	Peter: I will be a singer
Girl: <i>Bublé over here says he's gonna be a singer.</i>	الفتاة: بوليه هنا يقول أنه سيكون مغنياً. (مايكل بوليه مغني كندي).	Girl: <i>Bublé over here says he's going to be a singer</i> (<i>Michael Bublé, a Canadian singer</i>).

As Table 7 shows, the translator adds an explanatory detail to the text in order to provide information that does not exist in the original text but rather needs pragmatic inference. The scriptwriter relies on the common cultural familiarity with his target audience. However, the subtitles are intended for a larger group of audience that does not hold a similar cultural background. Thus, the translator is supposed to interfere by explaining the part of the text that might be ambiguous or a cause of confusion for the receiver. The “*retain unchanged with detailed explanation*” strategy is a tool that is available to translators whenever they encounter cultural or religious entities that withstand translation

Since “*retain unchanged*” might not be sufficient in every context to convey the meaning intended in the source text, the translator should elaborate by adding explanatory detail to clarify the intended meaning. Otherwise, the receiver will not be able to grasp the meaning behind the translated utterance. This is closely similar to the findings of Fernández Guerra (2012) who argued that translators should convey what they find to be implied in the source text by explaining it in added details in the target text.

In example 7 (Table 7), the translator chose the “*retain unchanged with detailed explanation*” strategy to render the joke in a better context for the Arab audience who may not have cultural knowledge about the singer “Bublé”. Therefore, the translator added *مايكل بوليه مغني كندي* “*Michael Bublé, a Canadian singer*” to explain the sarcastic simile.

The last example in this category is retrieved from episode 7 of season 5, where Stewie uses a proper name from the Star Wars movie as reference. See Table 8:

TABLE 8. Season 5; Episode 7; “Chick Cancer”

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Stewie: Brian, we have to go down there this weekend and heckle her roundly. <i>I'll humiliate her worse than Luke Skywalker did to that Rebel pilot</i>	ستيوبي : براين، علينا أن نذهب هناك في نهاية الأسبوع ونضايقها بشدة. سأذلها أسوأ من إذلال لوك سكاي والكر لذلك الطيار المتمرد. (إحدى شخصيات فيلم ستار وارز)	Stewie: Brian, we have to go there this weekend and bother her a lot. I'll humiliate her worse than Luke Skywalker did to that rebel pilot. (<i>One of the characters from the Star Wars movie</i>)

In this episode, Stewie was watching television and he saw an announcement that the film career of his old school friend and actress, Olivia, is coming to an end. He learns that she will be making a final appearance at the Quahog Mall. He plans to go to the Mall and humiliate her because he used to hate her at school. He then jokes about it saying that he will cause more harm than what a movie character did to another. In the US, the Star Wars movies are very popular, but that might not be the case with regard to the Arab Audience. The translator also followed the “*retain unchanged with detailed explanation*” strategy as he added extra information to explain the joke, stating that Stewie means one of the characters from the Star Wars movie. It is important to note that this strategy goes in line with Mahdjoubi and Djafour (2015) who suggested that translators may explain jokes in ‘footnotes’ in the target text, which entails adding details about an ambiguous culture-specific item.

TRANSLATING TABOO LANGUAGE

Taboos can be examined in terms of its verbal, social, political, theological and psychological consequences. It varies from one language community to another. Language users in almost all worlds' languages use terminologies that are not often used in public because they are seen as insulting or disturbing to the social, religious or ethical norms of society. Taboos are universally agreed on offensive issues that are ostracized and prohibited. People's beliefs and values are different and taboos for them vary according to lots of factors. It is therefore difficult to agree on universal taboos. Genocide, cannibalism, and incest are maybe only taboos that could be universal. Yet, taboos are found in almost every subject, and they differ from one culture to another. Taboo is usually regarded by society as immoral or abominable. Karamitroglou (1996) argues that film translation, in specific, has great potential to navigate people's beliefs and opinions, possibly more than any other type of translation. This is one of the main motives why censorship has been less involved with political or ideological matters and has concentrated on the subject of "obscenity" usually referred to as the explicit representation of sex and the use of "dirty" or "taboo" phrases (Hughes, 1991, p. 191).

There are many challenges facing translators in general and audio-visual translators in particular when translating taboos in the animated American comedy *Family Guy*. According to Allan (2001, p. 148), "tabooed words are those considered offensive, shocking, or indecent when used in certain contexts". This is a critical problem where many Arab translators and even audience wonder what kind of protocols need to be taken into account when dealing with such an issue.

As stated by Deng (1989), words relating to sex and even slightly implying bodily or sexual subjects, have peculiar connotations, particularly in American society. For example, ladies of the 19th century could not really allow themselves to mention breasts or legs, not even of an animal. It was considered unpleasant to talk about heading to bed, and to retire was used instead. In the United States, the sexual revolution of the 1960s started to make drastic changes. In recent decades, English-speaking countries have tended to be freer and more open-minded of such matter.

In episode 1 of season 2, when Lois' Aunt Marguerite dies, she leaves Lois her summer home, Cherrywood Manor, giving the Griffins a taste of a wealthy life. Peter struggles to fit in between all the high-class people so he begs Brian to teach him how to be a gentleman. See Table 9:

TABLE 9. Season 2; Episode 1; "Peter, Peter, Caviar Eater"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Peter: After <i>Hogan's Heroes</i> , Bob Crane got his skull crushed in by a friend who <i>videotaped him having rough sex</i> .	بيتر: بعد أبطال هوقان، بوب كران حطم جمجمته بواسطة زميل له التقط له صوراً في وضع مشين.	Peter: After <i>Hogan's Heroes</i> , Bob Crane got his skull crushed in by a friend who took <i>photos of him in an inappropriate position</i> .
Brian: Oh, perfect.	برايان: جميل.	Brian: Great

In this example, the translator's intention may have been to make the phrase "rough sex" sound more appropriate to the target audience as they may find it unpleasant especially in the presence of children. What the translator did was not translating the term "sex" literally to the Arab audience, but he rather used a euphemistic expression to render the general idea of the whole act as "وضع مشين" "inappropriate position".

Euphemism is the process of substituting a word or a phrase that people often use to refer to something unpleasant or offensive, to a less explicit expression to make it seem more appropriate than it really is. Newmark (1993) suggests that the aim of euphemism is to avoid offending and/or concealing the reality. Kao (1994) finds euphemisms to be part of the

language, raised by cultural background, the traditions and customs, the manners and practices of people, and unique to a specific time and place. Euphemism is an illustration for the manipulation theory as it grants the subtitlist the capacity to play and manipulate words he deems fit to accommodate the target language and culture.

What is worth mentioning is that in the Middle East, the term *sex* is not considered a taboo word itself as it is used in a number of fields, such as medicine and science. However, talking about the act is not acceptable.

Taboos may also include pornographic organs, activities or details of the body as Example 10 shows. Peter was trying so hard to be a gentleman and throughout the process, he changed and became someone else. Therefore, his wife, Lois, was doing everything she can in order to convince him to leave the luxury life and get back home. See Table 10:

TABLE 10. *Season 2; Episode 1; "Peter, Peter, Caviar Eater"*

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Lois: Peter, you're back! Let's go home!	لويس: بيتر ، لقدت عدت! لنذهب إلى البيت!	Lois: Peter, you're back! Let's go home!
Peter: We can't. I sold our home. Our beautiful home with the stolen cable and the little man with the penis for a light switch.	بيتر: لا نستطيع لقد بعنا المنزل. بيتنا الجميل مع كيبيل التلفاز المسروق، والرجل الصغير لمفتاح الإضاءة.	Peter: We can't. I sold our home. Our beautiful home with the stolen cable and the little man for a light switch.

Keith and Burrige (1991) state that euphemism can be performed by completely contrary means, such as verbosity and abbreviation, acronym or even total omission, and also by one-to-one substitution; by general-for-specific and partial-for-whole substitution. The translator twisted the source text by using omission as a part of euphemism to deliver less inappropriate vulgar language in the target text. In example 8 (Table 8), it appears that the Griffin family is using a light switch product that is shaped like a human with a penis for the light switch. The translator here omitted the word *penis* to mitigate the discomfort that might come with such an explicit description. This ties in well with the findings of Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019) who observed that translators opt for omission rather than directly delivering an equivalent when they encounter a taboo term that might create discomfort.

The omission process is necessary in certain scenes where the deletion of a taboo term does not change the actual meaning. For instance, a phrase like “*shut the fucking window*” could simply be translated into “*أغلق النافذة!*” “*shut the window!*” without struggling with the word *fucking* since this is supposed to be related to context and will not affect the intended meaning. The translator decreases the extent of face-threatening on the side of the target audience, as any Arabic direct translation for such explicit words seems to be inappropriate.

Some people are confused about why translators are attempting to translate taboo terms into a very pleasant euphemistic language. Questioning why translators do not translate English taboo terms explicitly into Arabic is just like asking why Arab movie channels cut off sex or kiss scenes in English films. Both have the same explanation, which has to do with the cultural constraints that translators tend to follow blindly.

In episode 1 of season 3, the one-year-old Stewie becomes fascinated with the cheerleaders at Buddy Cianci Junior High after a basketball game, because he thinks they have mind control abilities and decides to pursue them and listen to their conversations to learn about their strategies of how they hyper the audience during basketball games. See Table 11:

TABLE 11. Season 3; Episode 14; "Peter Griffin: Husband, Father...Brother?"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Stewie: My! So it's that easy to win you over. Consider yourselves lucky I'm not after your <i>gully holes</i> .	ستوي: يا إلهي! إذا من السهل جلب انتباهكم. اعتبرن أنفسكن محظوظات لأنني لا أسعى خلف أجسادكن.	Stewie: My God! So it's that easy to have your attention. Consider yourselves lucky I am not after <i>your bodies</i>

The show creator seems to think that it would be humorous to portray a child as a sexual being and a womanizer, as he constantly threw Stewie in situations that made him sound like an adult. When Stewie finally got in the cheerleaders' inner circles, he makes a joke about not being after their "gully holes" which is a slang expression to refer to a woman's private parts. The translator here opted for euphemism to deal with such dilemma as he toned down the vulgarity of that expression by replacing it with "bodies" not only because "gully holes" refers to an intimate part of the female body, but also because children are taken into consideration as a major cultural factor that should be approached with caution. It is not common for such explicit expressions to be heard in the Arab culture. Thus, the translator's choice of euphemism as a translation strategy is an example of overcoming a cultural constraint and maintaining the same effect on the target audience at the same time. The use of euphemism here has softened the obscenity of the used expression yet delivered a full idea of the intended joke. This supports Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019, p. 3) argument that "the Arab culture, in general, is well known to be a conservative one especially with the impact of religion on society. Therefore, it is unusual to hear a plain-spoken taboo word in the Arab media."

The last example in this category is taken from episode 3 of season 18. In this episode, Stewie and Brian learn about a pie baking contest, the latter encourages him to join the contest to win. See Table 12:

TABLE 12. Season 18; Episode 3; "Absolutely Babulous"

Source Text	Arabic Translation	Back Translation
Stewie: Brian, are you ready for my grand creation? Brian: <i>Serve it up, bitch.</i>	ستوي: براين، هل أنت مستعد لترى ما صنعته؟ براين: نعم، أرنني!	Stewie: Brian, are you ready to see what I've created? Brian: <i>Yes, show me!</i>

In this scene, Stewie had baked the pie, and he asks Brian if he is ready to see it. The latter responds with "serve it up, bitch". McEnery (2006, p. 2) defines swear words or bad language as "any word or phrase which, when used in what one might call polite conversation, is likely to cause offense". Swear words are considered taboos in everyday life since the vulgarity in them does not go in line with social norms. Moreover, it is not common for swear words to be openly heard on TV in the Arab culture.

Swear words function differently based on the context where they are used. Koponen (2018) argued that swear words alone do not determine the meaning or intent of their use, but rather the key factors remain in the context in which the words are used. Swear words might be used to directly insult someone or to express different emotions. The function of the swear word 'bitch' that is shown in example 12 (Table 12) is to indicate enthusiasm. The translator left the swear word out completely and compensated for it using the exclamation mark to reflect the same emotion.

The translator's choice of strategies in Tables 9, 10, 11 and 12 supports Koponen (2018) argument that omission and euphemism are the most common strategies to deal with taboo words:

“The most common strategy was leaving the swear word out, as, on average, nearly half of the swear words found in the movie were left out in the subtitles. The second most common strategy was, indeed, toning down the swear word”. (Koponen, 2018, p. 1)

In brief, the analysis shows that the strategies used in translating religious remarks were scene deletion, words omission, and words omission with justifications. For jokes and humour, the translator opted for three strategies, namely, retain unchanged, retain unchanged with added guidance and retain unchanged with detailed explanation. Euphemistic expressions and word omission were the two strategies followed in translating taboos in Figure 1.

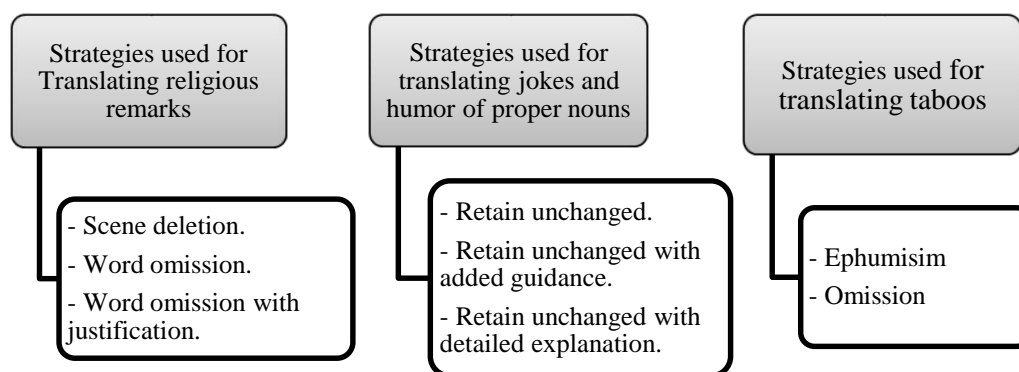


FIGURE 1. Summary of the strategies used in translating cultural constraints in *Family Guy*

CONCLUSION

This study shows how the ideology of the target audience could have a huge impact on the translation to create a new modified text with specific reference to the American animated sitcom *Family Guy*. Culture is the major constraint on translating English movies into Arabic. It is a big circle that contains other elements, such as ideologies, values, norms, religions, and traditions, which are also respected and should be taken into consideration. Cultures are different worldwide and therefore, the translator needs to acknowledge the target audience's culture to be able to recognize the constraints of translating religious remarks, jokes & humour that revolve around proper nouns, and taboos from English into Arabic.

Religion is discussed as an essential constraint since offensive terms are deemed unacceptable for all religions. It is vital to note that religion in the Middle East and in the Arab world is a sacred principle and most translators opted for word omission or scene deletion when encountering such terms. This study also examines the phenomenon of jokes and humour related to proper names as a thorny issue that requires the translator to come up with alternative ways to convey the humorous effect of the source language to the target language. The paper also addresses the strategies that are used in translating taboos. It sheds light on two main challenges that translators may encounter when they translate taboos that are mainly related to sexual connotations. First, the restrictions placed on the translation of such a language in order to achieve an acceptable, effective and decent Arabic translation. Second, the question of considering those words to be taboos for the Arab audience. Shortly, the translator needs to understand what, when and where the term should be considered a taboo. As a consequence, this will help to produce a smooth, accurate and effective translation for the target language audience. The findings of this study strongly agree with the manipulation theory that deems the translator to be a rewriter that can alter meanings to fit with the target culture's values. The study shows that translators have the capacity to manipulate parts of the source text when encountering a cultural barrier to render a translation in favour of the target culture.

This study is conducted with the broad goal of enhancing the efficiency of Arabic subtitles in English movies and highly opts for taking a cultural approach to translation. Subtitling is deemed to be among the main components of translating foreign language programs. Therefore, the quality of the subtitles is a crucial matter that needs to be investigated, assessed, and modified in order to boost the grasp of the message behind the translated text. It is recommended for subtitlists to keep a close eye on the target culture so as not to subject the target audience to inappropriate content and familiarize themselves with all forms of strategies that can be used to translate the three types of cultural constraints under study. In addition, subtitling agencies, translation training centres and university translation departments should develop an assessment system that could be adapted and implemented for English to Arabic subtitling. They are recommended to provide samples of successful subtitling work and making it available online so that translators all around the world can make use of translating strategies that help them overcome any cultural or linguistic issues pertaining to the source text to deliver it in an acceptable and clear way for the target audience.

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