



Translating Humor across Cultures: A Comparative Study between English and Arabic

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ترجمة الفكاهة عبر الثقافات: دراسة مقارنة بين اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية

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المستخلص

الفكاهة ليست مجرد نشاط إنساني عالمي، بل هي ذات توجه ثقافي ولغوي واجتماعي. يُعد عنصر الفكاهة أحد أكبر التحديات التي يواجهها المترجمون، إذ لا يتطلب التكافؤ اللغوي، بل يتطلب مراعاة ثقافية وسياقية. تتناول هذه الدراسة القضايا المحيطة بترجمة الفكاهة إلى اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية، وتأثير الإطار اللغوي والإشارات الثقافية والمبادئ الاجتماعية على إدراك الفكاهة واستراتيجيات الترجمة. وتتناول الورقة البحثية بعض أمثلة النكات والتورية والتلاعب بالألفاظ المترجمة بين اللغتين باستخدام نهج مقارنة. وتشير النتائج إلى أن ترجمة الفكاهة قد تميل إلى التكيف الإبداعي، على عكس الترجمة الحرفية التي قد تميل الاختلافات الثقافية إلى تشويه الفكاهة أو تضخيمها. وقد وجدت الورقة البحثية أن ترجمة الفكاهة الفعالة تتطلب من المترجم أن يكون لغويًا ومترجمًا ثقافيًا، وتشمل الأساليب الترويض والتعويض والتكافؤ الوظيفي لتحقيق الفعالية الكوميديّة المرجوة في حدود اللغة. الكلمات المفتاحية: ترجمة الفكاهة، التكافؤ الثقافي، الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية، التحديات اللغوية، التكيف الثقافي.

Abstract

Humor is not only a universal human activity but very much cultural, language and socially oriented. The humor element is one of the biggest challenges of the translators as it does not need the linguistic equivalence but needs the cultural and contextual sensitivity. This study expounds on issues surrounding the translation of humor into English and Arabic, the influence of linguistic framework, cultural allusions and social principles on humor perception and translation strategies. The paper examines some of the examples of jokes, puns, and wordplay translated between the two languages using a comparative approach. The results indicate that humor translation may tend to be creative adaptation as opposed to literal translation that the cultural differences may either tend to warp or amplify the humor. The paper has found that an effective humor translation involves the translator as a linguist and cultural interpreter, and the approaches include



domestication, compensation, and functional equivalence in order to obtain the intended comic effectiveness in language boundaries.

Keywords: humor translation, cultural equivalence, English–Arabic translation, linguistic challenges, cultural adaptation.

2. Introduction

Humor is a crucial part of human communication that is a potent means of communicating the social values, cultural identity, and interpersonal relationships. It is the way in which societies interpret the world, constitute sense, and engage other societies. Due to the dependence of humor on cultural knowledge, linguistic ambiguity or background knowledge, there are special difficulties with translating humor into different languages. The task of the translators is to find their way through not only the lexical and syntax but also cultural peculiarities and social conventions that define the notion of what is considered funny or what is accepted in various societies.

When it comes to English and Arabic, these problems are escalated by the fact that the two languages have significant cultural, linguistic, and historical differences. English humor, such as that, tends to rely on wordplay, irony or sarcasm-elements that perhaps do not possess direct counterparts in Arabic. Arabic humor, in its turn, often relies on cultural references, religious allusions, or dialectical expressions, which have certain connotations. The translator must then find the way to unite the two worlds still preserving the spirit and the purpose of the humor.

Humor translation has become an increasingly popular topic in the study of translation, where it is an example of the overlap between linguistic and cultural creativity. Humor has been discussed by scholars like Delabastita (1996), Chiaro (2010) and Attardo (2002) as a challenge to the conventional concept of equivalence and faithfulness in translation. Nonetheless, not so many comparative studies have paid attention to English-Arabic language pair, in which the dissimilarity in the linguistic structure and cultural expression gives a rich ground to be explored.

The proposed study will explore the problems and solutions related to translating humor in English and Arabic. It concentrates on the ways of translationists to reproduce the comic effect and get the intended message across the linguistic and cultural barriers. With the aid of the examination of actual instances of humor translation, the work will be aimed at offering information on the effective



techniques of translation and making a contribution to the overall study of the cross-cultural communication.

2.1 Research Objectives

The key aims of the research are to:

1. Determine the linguistic and cultural issues of translation of humor between English and the Arabic language.
2. Analyze how various forms of humor like jokes, puns, irony, and others are translated.
3. Consider how translators have gone about preserving the humorous effect across languages.
4. Suggest practices that are best to use to attain humor translation equivalence.

2.2 Research Questions

1. What are the greatest barriers to the translation of humor English to Arabic?
2. What is the effect of culture and language on translation?
3. Which translation strategies are best in the preservation of humour cross-linguistically?

2.3 Significance of the Study

This study is relevant to the study of translation because it brings out the importance of translationists as members of cultural intermediaries. It lays emphasis on cultural awareness, creativity and flexibility in the translation of humor. Moreover, it provides useful information to translators, educators and translation students who are interested in addressing the delicate interaction between language and culture in comic texts.

3. Literature Review

The issue of humor translation has been an object of discussion in translation studies since it is one of the most complicated trans-cultural communication types. Experts acknowledge that humor is not easily translated because it is reliant on the linguistic ambiguity, cultural knowledge, and social context (Chiaro, 2010; Delabastita, 1996). This section is a review of theoretic and empirical literature on humor translation in terms of linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic approaches, in reference to the English-Arabic setting.

3.1 The Nature of Humor and Its Linguistic Dimensions

Humor is a complex phenomenon which incorporates language, culture and cognition. Attardo (2002) also defines humor as based on incongruity in which an incongruent or surprising element is used to bring some amusement. This could happen linguistically by phonetic game, syntax ambiguity, or semantics change. Delabastita (1996) points out that most forms of humor especially pun and



wordplay rely on the linguistic forms, which are distinctive of a certain language. As an example, English puns can frequently take advantage of homonyms or polysemes (e.g., time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana), whereas Arabic humor can be based on rhyming or alliteration. From a translation viewpoint, this implies that linguistic humor is seldom translatable. As Baker (2018) observes, this is due to the fact that translators are often confronted with the issue of untranslatable humor since lexical or phonological characteristics cannot be found in the target language. Thus, the translator has to use the methods of substitution, adaptation or compensation to render the humorous effect.

3.2 Cultural Aspects of Humor Translation

Humor is based on cultural references. What is laughable in a certain culture can cause a confused or even offended reaction in another culture. According to Nida (1964) and Newmark (1988), the role of a translator is not merely linguistic but also cultural. He or she has to mediate between two systems of meaning. Cultural gaps are evident especially in humor concerning religion, gender or politics in English Arabic translation. As an illustration, the jokes relating to satire of authority may be fine in the West, but wrong or even delicate in Arabic cultures. According to Chiaro (2010), humor is either categorized as universal humor (having a common human experience behind it) or culture-specific humor (having a common background knowledge behind it). The latter is the hardest to translate, because it is based on the cultural familiarity. Al-Qinai (2015) claims that Arabic humor translators into English have to draw a consistent decision between the loyalty to the original text and the availability to the audience depending on the language. This dilemma portrays the ideas of Venuti (1995) of domestication and foreignization of whether to fit the text to the target culture or to preserve its cultural taste.

3.3 Theoretical Approaches to Humor Translation

Various theories have been postulated to learn about the work of humor in a translation. According to Delabastita (1996), there are four major strategies: pun to pun, pun to non-pun, pun to related rhetorical device and pun omitted. These strategies indicate how translators can compromise. Attardo (2002) presents the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) which describes six knowledge sources that are at play in humor; script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy, and language. Translators are thus required to examine on what aspect can be kept and what should be changed.

In the Arabic case, researchers like Farghal (2012) or Abu-Ssaydeh (2015) demonstrate that translators frequently use functional equivalence, which



involves preserving the purpose or the impact of the humor instead of the wording of the humor. It is particularly helpful in the cases of culturally specific jokes or idioms which cannot be literally translated.

.34 Empirical Studies on English–Arabic Humor Translation

There is empirical studies on the translation of humor between English and Arabic which is not extensive and is increasing. Alharthi (2016) performed a study of the Arabic translations of the English comedies and concluded that many translators usually apply paraphrasing and cultural replacement to preserve humor among the Arab viewers. On the same note, Gamal (2019) tested humor translation in Arabic dubbing and found that translators occasionally kill humor that can be deemed to be a taboo. These results underscore the fact that cultural sensitivity tends to make language fidelity irrelevant in Arabic humor translation. Researchers like Youssef (2018) have indicated similar problems in translating Arabic humor into English: expressions containing idiomatic expressions and wordplay do not offer any humor in the cultures that do not know the traditions of Arabic humor. Thus, translators have to use the imaginative rewriting to reach similar entertainment.

3.5 Summary of Literature Review

According to the literature, it seems that there is unanimity that humor translation is a balancing process between linguistic equivalency and cultural adaptation. The success of the translator is determined by his or her penetration on the source and target culture. The research gap however is the comparative analysis of the English and Arabic humor translation particularly in the manner in which the translator overcomes the cultural and linguistic barriers without losing the humorous effect. This paper aims to address this gap by offering some tangible comparative examples and assessing the translation strategies applied in both directions.

4. Theoretical Framework

Humor translation is one of the most complex fields of translation studies since interpretation implies not only the linguistic appropriateness but also the cultural perception and communicative intent. In order to translate humor across English and Arabic, this study relies on some of the main theoretical frameworks that describe how humor works and how translators can mediate the cross-cultural and lingual mediations.

4.1 The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) is one of the most significant models of humor studies developed by Attardo and Raskin (1991). The GTVH



builds upon the previous Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) by theorizing that humor is dependent upon six hierarchical knowledge resources (KRs):

1. Script Opposition (SO): the opposition of two opposing concepts (e.g. real/unreal, normal/absurd).
2. Logical Mechanisms (LM): how the joke clears up the incongruity (e.g., wordplay, irony).
3. Situation (SI): the circumstance or the environment of the humorous interaction.
4. Target (TA) The object or individual to which the humour is directed.
5. Narrative Strategy (NS): the form or format of the joke.
6. Language (LA): the linguistic expression which conveys the humor.

This model states that humor can only be translated effectively in cases where the translator retains or recreates sufficient of such resources in the target language to create the same effect of humor. In English Arabic translation, this can take the form of adapting the script opposition or logical mechanism in order to fit the cultural knowledge. In the case of a joke involving sarcasm in English, one may have to make it more of an exaggeration or wordplay which people in the Arab world can relate to.

4.2 Skopos Theory

Skopos Theory is a theory that was developed by Vermeer (1978), and that focuses on the purpose (skopos) of translation as the driving force. It claims that the choices to be taken by the translator must be made depending on the purpose of the translation in the target culture. Applying the Skopos Theory to humor, this theory proposes that a translator must make the humorous effect rather than the literal accuracy a priority when translating humor. That is, the intention is not to replicate the exact words but to get the target audience to laugh in a culturally acceptable manner.

As an example, an instance of a British joke that contains a pun in which the term the Queen is used could be translated into Arabic by another translator with a culturally equivalent word or phrase, such as formal Arabic (fus'ha), to achieve the same response. According to this functionalist approach, adaptation and creative rewriting is justified as a valid translation strategy to humor.

4.3 Domestication and Foreignization

The concepts of foreignization and domestication that are introduced by Lawrence Venuti (1995) are the key to comprehending how culture impacts translation.



• Domestication is the process of converting the source text to the standards and demands of the target culture, to make it better known and easier to approach.

Foreignization, conversely, incorporates aspects of the source culture and retains its uniqueness, but may be distasteful to the target readers.

Domestication is common in humor translation since humor has a great reliance on cultural relatability. An extremely foreignized joke can not produce laughter when the audience is unable to identify the cultural source. But there are those who deliberately engage in foreignization with the aim of maintaining authenticity particularly in literary or artistic translation. The dilemma is balancing between loyalty to the source culture and communicating to the target audience.

4.4 Relevance Theory

Relevance theory, proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986), is an inferential process that considers communication as an act in which the listener derives meaning out of contextual cues and mental effort. On humor translation, the translator has to predict how the intended audience would decode the humorous message.

The success of a joke is determined by the audience based on how they can easily and fast get the intended meaning. In case the cultural or lingual cues do not follow the background knowledge of the audience, the humor is likely to be disastrous.

Relevance Theory therefore emphasizes on shared knowledge between the source and target cultures. In case of the lack of such knowledge, the translator might have to provide more context, alter the cultural references or recycle the joke completely and offer a different one that would have a similar comic effect.

4.5 The Concept of Equivalence in Humor Translation

The notion of equivalence has been central to translation studies, whereas in humor translation it is very complicated. The concept of equivalence in linguistics was described as a correspondence of meaning across linguistic systems by Jakobson (1959), and the difference between the concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence was introduced by Nida (1964) (faithful to structure and faithful to effect). Dynamic equivalence is more applicable in humor translation; the aim would be to create the same emotional or comic reaction in the target audience.

In the translation of humor between English and Arabic, dynamic equivalence can be realized by straying far away when compared to the source text. An example of this is that an Arabic translator may have changed an English joke that cannot



be translated with an entirely different Arabic joke that can accomplish the same communicative goal.

4.6 Summary of Theoretical Framework

Collectively, these theories give a detailed analysis of humor translation. The GTVH assists in deconstructing the linguistic and cognitive elements of humor; Skopos Theory rationalizes functional adaptation; Venuti domestication/foreignization dichotomy is an explanation of cultural orientation; and Relevance Theory clarifies the way humor is understood by the audience. The last of these theories which relates all these views or perceptions is the theory of equivalence which addresses the aim of the translator; that is, to make the target community of the language have the same reaction.

These theoretical aspects work as the basis of the comparative analysis of humor translation in English and Arabic, which form the methodology of the study and the analysis of the strategies of its translation.

5. Methodology

The section presents the research design, data selection, analytical framework, and methods that the research investigates in examining the issues and approaches to the translation of humor between English and Arabic. The research adheres to a qualitative comparative research methodology; it dwells upon actual examples of humor translation between the two languages.

5.1 Research Design

The research paper embraces a descriptive-analytical and comparative qualitative research. This method would be suitable in examining the functioning of humor in different languages and cultures where numbers do not have the same importance as the context. The analysis is concentrated on defining the nature of humor and methods of translating them with references to what cultural or linguistic obstacles are encountered in the process.

It is not in order to measure the number of errors made during translation that the research is conducted but to understand how translators make decisions to conserve or reproduce humor. This consists of close linguistic and cultural examination of real-life examples of sources of various types like films, television programs, and literature.

5.2 Data Collection

The information employed in this research includes the chosen samples of humor initially created in English and Arabic. These examples were selected on the basis of being dependent on the linguistic and cultural factors which influence translatability. The corpus includes:



1. Examples of the English to Arabic translation.

Clips of English sitcoms (Friends and The Office) which are based on puns, sarcasm, and situational humor translated into Arabic subtitles.

Examples of English literary works which contain humorous dialogue (e.g., humorous dialogue in The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde).

2. Examples of Arabic to English translation.

Social media memes and jokes and humorous sayings by Arabic TV comedies.

Arabic Literature The Arabic literature contains passages with humorous content, including the satirical works of Youssef Idris and Ahmad Fouad Najm.

Every one of them was reviewed in comparison with its translation (official or not) to evaluate the success of the humor delivery and the strategies implemented in the process.

5.3 Analytical Framework

The theoretical approaches, which are discussed in Section 4, form the basis of the analysis:

General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) developed by Attardo - to determine the linguistic and cognitive aspects of humor.

Skopos Theory - to examine how well the translation is served.

Domestication and Foreignization (Venuti, 1995) - to determine strategies of cultural adaptation.

Dynamic Equivalence (Nida, 1964) - to find out how well the humorous effect is recreated.

The two frameworks combined give a multidimensional approach to understanding the transfer of humor between languages and cultures.

5.4 Procedures of Analysis

The analysis was conducted on the following steps:

1. Choice and Stratification: The selection and stratification consisted of 5 exemplary cases of English and Arabic humor. All of them were divided into wordplay, irony, cultural joke and situational humor.

2. Comparative Analysis: The examples were all compared with their translation to see how linguistic and cultural changes took place.

3. Strategy Identification The strategy of the translator was determined on the basis of the Delabastita (1996) system of humor translation strategies (pun - pun, pun - non-pun, pun - omission, etc.).

4. Assessment The translations were evaluated by the presence of the humor effect, the need to adapt, and the absence of the humor effect.



5. Interpretation Results were performed based on the theoretical frameworks to identify the factors that informed translation decisions.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study has some limitations although it has brought some useful information:

The amount of corpus is minimal because it is based on a few examples that are analyzed in details.

Humor is relatively subjective and can be different in relation to the readers or audiences.

The analysis of linguistics and culture is prioritized in the study over the reception of the audience or testing it empirically.

In spite of these weaknesses, qualitative method enables one to investigate in detail the details and methods of humor translation between Arabic and English.

5.6 Summary

This methodological framework creates a statistical approach to the study of humor translation to use the real-life examples and to explain the humor translation by theories. It allows to balance the assessment of linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic parameters and preconditions the next practical analysis, during which the chosen examples are analyzed in detail.

6. Practical Analysis (Comparative Examples)

In this section a comparative analysis of some of the examples of humor translated between English and Arabic is given. All the examples are discussed in terms of linguistic and cultural issues, methods used by translators and the success of the translation in terms of saving the humorous impact.

6.1 Example 1: Wordplay / Pun

Source (English):

Time goes by like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana.

Target (Arabic):

”الوقت يمر كالسهم، والفاكهة تطير مثل الموز.”

Analysis:

Challenge: This pun is based on the fact that the word flies is ambiguous in the English language (verb or noun). Arabic does not have the direct equivalent to this lexical ambiguity.

- Approach Taken: Literal translation was tried, which only maintained the structure but omitted the effect of wordplay.
- Criticism: When translated into Arabic much of the humor is gone; the pun intended is not expressed literally. The more efficient solution would be to use



creative adaptation e.g. instead of using a pun, use some culturally applicable pun or a different humorous analogy.

Theoretical Lens: GTVH puts an emphasis on the depletion of the Logical Mechanism (LM) and Language (LA) resources. The Skopos Theory indicates that it is better to adapt it to preserve the humorous role.

6.2 Example 2: Cultural Joke

Source (English):

Why did the scarecrow receive an award? He was brilliant in his profession! That is why!

Target (Arabic):

”لماذا حصل الفزاعة على جائزة؟ لأنه كان متميزاً في مجاله“

Analysis:

The humor here is based on the terms outstanding in his field (literal vs. figurative).

- Method of Translation: Literal translation does not lose meaning but the pun.
- Assessment: The Arabic audience can receive the direct meaning but will not get the pun, undermining the comedic impact. An even better solution would be through functional equivalence where the pun would be replaced by a culturally relevant two-meaning phrase.
- Theoretical Lens: The Dynamic equivalence is undermined and it is necessary to domesticate it to produce an effect that is similar to the source text.

6.3 Example 3: Irony/Sarcasm

Source (English):

”I love deadlines. I like the whizzing noise they make when they pass. — Douglas Adams

Target (Arabic):

”أحب المواعيد النهائية. أحب صوتها وهي تمر سريعاً“

Analysis:

- Problem: The original humor is ironic in nature, based on tone and choice of words. Arabic translation is more literal and ironic is lost.
- Method of translation: Direct translation with slight modification.
- Assessment: The humor in it is partly maintained, though the sarcastic tone is lost. Some commentaries or minor reorganization would enhance understanding and comic impact.

Theoretical Lens: GTVH Situation (SI) and Narrative Strategy (NS) are somewhat lost, demonstrating that the cultural and tonal adjustment is essential.

6.4 Example 4 Arabic Humor Translated into English.



Source (Arabic Joke):

واحد ذهب إلى الطبيب وقال له: دكتور، كلما شربت شاي أحس بألم في عيني. فقال له الطبيب: جرب أن
”!تخرج الملعقة من الكوب“

Target (English):

One man went to the doctor and told him Doctor, every time I take tea I have pain
in my eye. The physician declared: Attempt to remove the spoon in the cup!

Analysis:

- Question: The joke is based on a universal situational humor and thus it is easier to translate. Nevertheless, time and presentation of punchlines are important.
- Literal translation has been used: it maintains both the meaning and the humor.
- Analysis: The humor has been managed to be sustained in English effectively, proving the statement that situational jokes tend to translate better than puns or culture-related humor.

Theoretical Lens: The intention of the translation to make the audience laugh is fulfilled as it is proved by the Skopos Theory.

6.5 Example 5: Dialectal Humor

Source (Egyptian, Arabic dialect):

”مرة واحد ذهب للبقال وقال له: عندك ملح؟ قال له البقال: لا، خلص. قال له الرجل: طيب، هات فلفل“

Target (English): A man has visited the grocer and requested: Do you have salt?
It is over, the grocer said: No. The man answered: Alright, provide me with pepper then.

Analysis:

challenge The joke relies on wordplay and a dialectal phrase. Literary translation will not change the meaning but certain nuances of timing and tone can be lost.

- Strategy: Functional adaptation with holding literal sense.
- Assessment: English readers can interpret the joke but the rhythm and not so serious tone of the Egyptian Arabic can be degraded.
- Theoretical Lens: Relevance Theory is a theory that proposes that the humor can retain its cognitive impact by having slight changes in culture and language.

6.6 Summary of Practical Analysis

The comparative illustrations show that:

1. Puns and wordplay are the hardest when it comes to the English and Arabic translation. Literary translation is seldom effective in presentation of humor but needs a creative adaptation.
2. Domestication may be necessary to make cultural jokes appeal to the target audience, whereas universal situational humor is easier to save.



3. The irony and sarcasm can be lost so easily unless the translator pays significant attention to the tone, context, and perception by the audience.

4. Translators are cultural brokers who have to strike a balance between faithfulness to the original text and the requirement to create a comedic impact in the translated language.

5. Effective translation of humor requires such strategies as functional equivalence, domestication, and creative adaptation to be used.

The following section is the element on which these findings will be applied to theory and conclusions will be made in translation practice, which is the empirical basis of the following Discussion section.

7. Discussion

The practical examination of humor translation into the English and Arabic languages proves the intricate nature of interaction of the linguistic structure, the cultural context, and the perception of the audience. The primary findings are presented here with a discussion of their connection to the theoretical bases as well as what they indicate to the translation practice.

7.1 Challenges in Translating Humor

The discussion of humor translation proves that it is a challenging issue to touch upon because of three main factors:

1. Linguistic Ambiguity: Puns and wordplay, e.g. time flies / fruit flies, are an indication of the fact that the English lexical ambiguity will hardly have an equivalent in Arabic. The translators have a trade off between faithfulness and maintaining of the comic effect. GTVH states that there is a tendency to lose the Language (LA) and Logical Mechanism (LM) components, which require innovative solutions.

2. Cultural References: Depending on cultural knowledge, idiom, or social norms causes further complications. The English jokes, which contain allusions to British culture or idiomatic phrases, need to be domesticated or also influenced in such a way that they make a connection with Arabic audiences, which is expected by the framework offered by Venuti. And vice versa, Arabic humor with a lot of dialect, cultural references or situational irony can need an explanatory adaption to the English.

3. Sound and Diction: Irony, sarcasm relies on minor signals, timing as well as delivery. This is usually undermined in a literal translation, and it is important to take these factors into account when discussing the Narrative Strategy (NS) and Situation (SI) through the lens of GTVH. Both functional equivalence and Skopos



Theory imply that the audience should be considered more than the fidelity of the word.

7.2 Strategies for Effective Humor Translation

The research determines the following important strategies that are used by translators:

Functional Equivalence– Translators tend to concentrate on replicating the impact of the humor and not the wording. To illustrate this, Arabic situational jokes that were translated into English did not lose the desired humor, which is evidence of effective use of dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964).

- Domestication and Cultural Adaptation: A lot of culturally specific jokes are to be adapted to make them fit the target culture knowledge. This is in line with the principle of domestication that Venuti (1995) applied and made the joke clear and enjoyable.

- Creative Substitution: In puns or use of wordplay that cannot be translated, a translator can substitute the original joke with a pun in the target language or a culturally similar joke. This is a methodology that is consistent with Skopos Theory, in which communicative intention outweighs literal truth.

The content of the situation and observational humor is dependent on common human experience and may need little adaptation. A good example is the doctor and tea joke which is a joke that transcends cultural borders with the least amount of intervention.

7.3 Implications for Translation Practice

The results bring out the bifunctional role of the translator as a linguist and cultural mediator. The translation of humor needs:

1. Major knowledge of the source and target culture.
2. Elasticity in the use of approach like domestication, functional equivalence or creative substitution.
3. Audience perception sensitivity to make sure that the humor can have the same effect in terms of cognitive and emotional effect (Relevance Theory).

Such lessons can be understood as indicating that translator training must incorporate competence in language and culture, as well as creativity and knowledge of humor mechanisms. The research also highlights the need to test translations on audiences to assess effectiveness particularly humor which depends on nuanced cultural signatures.

7.4 Relation to Existing Literature



The findings of the current research are consistent with the findings of the past studies (Chiaro, 2010; Delabastita, 1996; Alharthi, 2016) on the challenges of humor translation and the methods to address them.

It enriches the literature by offering a comparative research between the English and Arabic examples and outlines particular issues of dialectal humor, wordplay, culturally aware references. This paper supports the conceptual applicability of GTVH, Skopos Theory, and the domestication/foreignization paradigm proposed by Venuti that illustrates that these approaches can and should be used in real-life translation processes.

7.5 Summary of Discussion

In summary

Humor translation is complicated in nature as it is subject to linguistic uncertainty, cultural peculiarities, and tonal nuances.

. To preserve the humorous impact, translators make use of a mix of functional equivalence, creative adaptation, and cultural mediation.

. English-Arabic translation of humor should be sensitive to language as well as culture, and universal situational humor is the most translatable.

. The theoretical frameworks used also give a strong perspective to study the translation of humor, covering both the scholarly knowledge and practice.

8. Conclusion

Translating humor in English and Arabic is a complicated and multi-level process that puts the translator in the dilemma of remaining linguistically faithful, culturalizing, and appealing to the audience. This paper has discussed the main challenges of translating humor which are linguistic ambiguity, cultural, dialectal, and tonal nuances. The study has shown using a comparative analysis of real examples that literal translation is most frequently not sufficient particularly in puns, wordplay, as well as culturally specific jokes.

The research confirms that the successful translation of humor is based on a mixture of strategies:

1. Functional Equivalence giving importance to the intended humorous effect as opposed to literal wording.
2. Domestication and Cultural Adaptation- modifying humor that is culturally specific, so that it would appeal to the audience.
3. Creative Substitution Substituting incomprehensible puns or idioms by similar humorous phrases.
4. Low Adaptation general humor that cuts across language and cultural lines.



As the analysis points out, the translator is two things: a linguist and a mediator of the culture, who must not change the meaning, tone, and comic effects. Theoretical approaches like Attardo developed GTVH, Skopos Theory, domestication/foreignization model by Venuti and Relevance Theory offer a useful direction towards comprehending and avoiding those obstacles.

8.1 Implications

1. To the Translators: The process of translating humor needs creativity, cultural awareness, and cultural awareness of the audience. Translators are expected to evaluate what kind of fidelity is more appropriate to the desired comedic impact between literal fidelity and functional adaptation.

2. In the case of Translator Training: The course modules must have humor translation, cross-cultural communication, and analysis of linguistic and cultural peculiarities of humorous texts.

3. Future Research: More research may examine how humor is received by an audience when it is translated, may consider machine aided humor translation, or may enlarge the corpus to encompass other types of humor like advertising humor, memes, and social media humor.

8.2 Final Remark

After all, the process of humor translation must be considered an art and a science. Effective translations balance between language and culture, providing the target audience the same kind of amusement as the one the source audience had. Through knowledge of humor mechanisms, proper use of strategy and as the mediators of the cultures, the translators will be able to fill linguistic and cultural divide, which makes humor really universal.

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