



Perlustrating *Otherness* in Cartoons Dubbing: *Masha and the Bear* as a Case Study

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Abstract

Children's cartoons and films are often dubbed for obvious reasons that children find reading subtitles a challenging process in a film. This study investigated the issue of Otherness and the strategies of its audiovisual translation in the Arabic dubbed version of *Masha and the Bear*, a Russian cartoon film. The study examined the orientation of three elements of Audiovisual Translation (AVT): the verbal, the para-verbal and the non-verbal. In the context of *Masha and the Bear*, the comparative analysis of selected dubbed episodes confirmed the three orientations and showed that the strategies most often used by the translator are paraphrase, substitution, and generalization. The results of the study suggest that the challenge mainly lies in the dilemma of meeting the audience's expectations without altering deeply the specificity of the Source Text (ST). They also show that in most cases the translator domesticated the SL product to meet the cultural values of the audience. This study also uncovered a few challenges posed by the rendering of otherness represented in cartoons, and accordingly understood how the translator coped with this aspect in the given multiple semiotic systems interacting in the cartoons. As cartoons play a major role in children's life and education, this study would develop increasing interests in translation of cartoons through dubbing and promote the local culture and ensure a higher degree of acceptability by the target viewer.

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Keywords: Otherness, Arabic audiovisual translation, dubbing, *Masha and the Bear* cartoons, translation strategies.

Introduction

Cartoons belong to audiovisual art forms and are viewed as some of the most influential and powerful tools that help shape children's personality, behavior and education, thanks to the explicit and implicit social and cultural contents embedded within them (Jenkins, 2007; Stamou, Maroniti, & Griva, 2015; Zabalbeascoa, 2008). Globalization of world economy has encouraged the circulation and exchange of this kind of artistic and cultural goods by means of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), which enables youth programs produced in different countries to gain popularity and to make their way into peoples' homes. By crossing geographical and cultural borders, those products carry out with them markers of identity, embedded in distinctive objects,

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ideas, values, customs, practices and belief systems, that materialize the source culture, but which are perceived as representing the Other's culture by the target audiences. The perception of the foreignness of the foreign, however, is often a source of potential conflict, because people tend to consider all that is unknown and unfamiliar to be a threat. The intrusion in one's culture (represented by one's sense of patriotism, of faith, of the familiar and/or the personal) of otherness destabilizes one's sense of identity, worldview, and the place of Self in the world. It often triggers an unsettling sentiment represented by a defense mechanism that causes the rejection of and the conflict with the other (Kline, 2011; Pedersen, 2005).

Studying and understanding elements of otherness are, therefore, vital in today's globalized world, as they help minimize the conflicts and misunderstandings resulting from the anxiety towards it (Kline, 2011). This need is more particularly felt in the audiovisual field, because audiovisual products are vehicles of massive symbolic exchange thanks to which languages and cultures cross borders and meet foreign audiences. A type of those products of particular interest in this research are cartoons for children, which are intended as forms of entertainment but which, nonetheless, carry a heavy load of the source culture that makes it look like a threatening artform. The two aspects of cartoons, entertainment and cultural embeddedness, mean that they represent both an opportunity and a challenge to the translator: opportunity because the only means to ensure their circulation outside their countries of origin is AVT, more exactly dubbing; challenge because AVT for children is one of the most difficult translation tasks to perform (Chaume, 2012, 2020).

What makes AVT a challenging task is that in audiovisual texts, the message is conveyed through three channels: the verbal, the para-verbal and the non-verbal (visual). The latter makes the translation process even harder, as the cultural references often materialize in visual cues and may oppose the verbal message in the target language (TL). This possibility happens most often in cartoons, because audiovisual programs for young audiences convey their message by the image as much as, or even more than, they do by language. *Masha and the Bear* takes the shape of transmedia which is defined as "a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience." (Jenkins, 2007)

The Russian cartoon, *Masha, and the Bear*, selected for this study, is a case in point. The cartoon film as the corpus contains numerous cultural references because of the large public popularity it gained among children across the globe. In this film, dialogues are kept to the minimum, but this does not mean that the cartoon is culture-free. In fact, various audiovisual cultural aspects, such as traditional clothes, songs, and dances, ensure the transmission of meaning, and might create potential problems in the translation of the verbal message conveyed by the dialogue. To study otherness and its representations in selected dubbed episodes of *Masha and the Bear*, the following questions were asked about the Arab audience:

1. What are the verbal cultural elements in the source text that might shock Arab audiences?
2. What are their types?
3. What are the strategies used by the translator to convey them in Arabic?
4. How do the translator's verbal choices correlate with the non-verbal and the visual elements?

Moreover, this study seeks to examine the translation strategies resorted to by the translator to overcome the hurdles posed by this cultural transfer. To this end, this study carried out a comparative analysis of some samples extracted from the corpus illustrating otherness and see how the translator coped with this dimension.

Literature Review

- *The concept of otherness*

Given the major role played by culture in media, many scholars took interest in the transfer of the cultural dimension in audiovisual products by defining its categories, challenges, and strategies. This is the case of Kline (2011), who addressed the issue of *otherness* in multimedia translation and focused her analysis on some of its types and specificities. In her view, multimedia translation encompasses film translation, theatre, comics, web pages, computer games and all products using verbal and non-verbal channels. The challenge posed by this mode of translation relates to the interplay between the semiotic systems of the source text and how best to ensure coherence during the shift from the spoken mode (dialogue) to the written one (subtitles). Kline (2011) also discussed *otherness* in pedagogical contexts and indicated that it might materialize in all the parties involved in the learning and teaching processes.

The concept of "otherness" has also been studied from a sociolinguistic point of view. In their research study, "Young children talk about their popular cartoon and TV heroes' speech styles: media reception and language attitudes," Stamou et al. (2015) studied Greek children's views on sociolinguistic diversity in popular cartoons and TV series. The TV programs included: *Cars 2* (animated film dubbed in Greek), *Constantine and Helen* (Greek TV series), *Winx Club: The Secret of the Lost Kingdom* (animated film dubbed in Greek), and *The Hara's Cafe* (Greek TV series).

In a similar study, “Revoicing Otherness and Stereotypes via Dialects and Accents in Disney’s “Zootopia” and its Italian Dubbed Version,” Dore (2020) examined “otherness” through the lens of different dialects and accents. In the specific context of children’s animated programs, Basalamah (2014), too, discussed the concepts of translation and *otherness* from a comparative cultural perspective, involving the Muslim and the Western worlds and underscored the importance of mutual understanding to bridge the cultural gap between them. He also stressed the importance of knowledge, recognition and respect when dealing with otherness. In his view, to overcome cultural misunderstandings, or what he calls ‘the clash of ignorance’, the translator should know the cultural representations of the other, and demonstrate tolerance and understanding. Despite the significance of Basalamah’s study (2014), however, it does not provide practical examples to illustrate the challenges and strategies of translating otherness.

Likewise, Bošković and Jokanović (2018), in ‘Cartoon Translation: Representation for the Other’, investigated the translation of verbal and visual representations of otherness in cartoons. They stressed the importance of this art form in conveying the moral and cultural values of the source country and how the cultural load may trigger various responses from the target audience. The two researchers concluded that the verbal and visual cultural elements must be adapted to the target audience to be properly understood by children. Leonardi (2008), in another study, examined the influence of dubbing on society and how reducing or increasing the “sense of otherness” contributed to intercultural communication. She explained that dubbing, which is considered as a domesticating mode of translation, played a positive role in social integration and in promoting the cultural values of the target audience. This is not the case, however, of the other modes of AVT which maintained the foreignness of the SL audiovisual products.

Sun (2017) conducted a similar study concerning the role of otherness in the Chinese context and reached the conclusion that translation fosters tolerance and acceptance of the Other: “Mainly as a result of Translation, ethnocentric beliefs and feelings have gradually given way to a more open and liberal way to explore and appropriate foreign otherness.” (p 1) In another study, Sun (2014), reported that many concepts, ideas, ideologies and currents had been imported to China through translation without triggering any form of rejection or shock among the country’s audiences. On the contrary, the translation activity contributed to the flourishing of Chinese economy (Ning & Yifeng, 2008; Yifeng, 2008, 2012) and hence it was concluded that, “it is little exaggeration to say that foreign otherness has fostered the development of modern China whose discursive transformation results from various contacts and interactions with foreign ideologies and cultures.” (Sun, 2017)

- *Audiovisual texts in translations and their reciprocal relationship with culture*

The complex nature of audiovisual texts and their reciprocal relationship with different aspects of culture justifies the rising interest in studying cultural references in relation to AVT (Sun, 2020; Sun & Li, 2023). This interest has been addressed in many academic works and has found its way to the Arab world as well. For example, a doctoral dissertation completed by El Mhassani (2018) differentiated between domestication and foreignization in dubbing cartoons from English into Arabic. Likewise, Al Abwaini and Hussein (2013) of Middle East University studied the problems that translators face when they subtitle culturally bound expressions. This study investigated different problems encountered by both professional and non-professional translators in dealing with cultural references in subtitling and the different strategies they adopt to render them. The study relied on interviews and a translation test distributed to graduate and undergraduate students. The findings, though they cannot be generalized, show that the translators suffered in providing the appropriate equivalents of the cultural references, and that those difficulties were reflected in the strategies they had adopted. Thus, most translators made several mistranslations, and showed little awareness of the appropriate translation strategies that could help render the source terms.

In another master’s thesis, Khelifa and Sofian (2016) investigated the strategies of rendering cultural references in one of the most popular American films: *The Smurfs*. The two authors concluded that the translator had opted for several strategies with a special emphasis on preservation. They also drew a link between the success of the translation task and that of dubbing especially when it comes to lip synchronization. Other studies tried to focus on both subtitling and dubbing at the same time. For example, another doctoral dissertation (Alkadi, 2010) found that little research has been done to investigate the translation of English language audiovisuals into Arabic. This gap in the scholarship pushed him to target some relevant critical issues, such as the nature of models or theories adopted by Arab translators in dealing with English audiovisuals, the problems of rendering humor from English into Arabic, and the effective use of subtitling or dubbing when it comes to certain cultural aspects, such as dialects, and the translation of swear words.

Besides analyzing the subtitling and dubbing of certain American films and series, Alkadi (2010) advocates the incorporation of the functional approach to translation in order to “bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps within certain technical and linguistic conditions and yet reach large audiences, enhancing translation quality and engaging in a more sophisticated way with the expectations and responses of target audiences”. In other words, he underscores the roles that translation theories and models play in facilitating the job of the translator and in providing the quality of the product to satisfy audience needs and expectations.

In the same context of subtitling and dubbing, Al-Jabri (2017) investigates the challenges posed by the transfer of cultural references, mainly personal names in cartoons, from English into Arabic. She first presented the intricacies, constraints, and underlying principles of the two AVT modes. Her results suggest that the strategy applied in dubbing was domesticating, whereas the one adopted in subtitling was rather foreignizing. A more focused study is that of Di Giovanni (2017) using the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) to redub some Disney cartoons previously dubbed into Egyptian Arabic. Di Giovanni (2020) found that redubbing entailed a rewriting of the dialogue to satisfy the cultural, political, and religious requirements of the larger audience covered by MSA. In the rewritten dialogue, the word 'love,' for example, was replaced by 'respect' or 'ethics', a translation choice that pushed the author to conclude that dubbing often involved the manipulation of the language as part of its process. At times, this can cause significant alterations in meaning and may even lead to loss of context.

In the same vein, Melies, Salem, and Kareh (2021) investigated the ways through which the source text (ST) is altered to satisfy the needs, cultural values, and expectations of the target audience. In their study, they stressed the importance of considering all the verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal cues interacting in the AV product during the translation process. They also demonstrated how instrumental translation methods and strategies were instrumental in ensuring a correct rendering of the ST message. As dubbing is one of the most widespread AV modes in translating cartoons, the study also highlighted some of its principles and constraints and stressed that most of the Disney cartoons were dubbed into Egyptian dialect and domesticated to meet the cultural norms of the target audience.

- *Dubbing in audiovisual translation*

As an emerging field in Translation Studies, audiovisual translation (AVT) encompasses a wide range of practices involving the translation of the interplay between the different semiotic channels, such as subtitling, voice-over, audio description, live subtitling, and simultaneous interpreting. The most prevailing modes of AVT, however, are subtitling and dubbing. Depending on several criteria, such as the economic context, cultural concerns and funding, audiovisual translators favor one of the two modes over the other. Like the rest of the world, in the Arab world, dubbing remains by far the most common form of cartoon translation.

One of the underlying principles of dubbing is synchrony, comprising lip-synchrony, time synchrony and kinetic synchrony (Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014). However, even if Chaume (2012, 2020) argued that "kinetic synchrony is important to children's cartoon programs, as the cartoon characters tend to gesticulate in an exaggerated way to capture the attention of their young viewers," synchrony is central in dubbing. In fact, compliance with the principle of synchrony depends on the text type to be dubbed and the identity of the target audience. Thus, kinetic synchrony is optional for all informative texts, and it is instrumental whenever the text is expressive enough, or involves close-ups that depict facial expressions, such as the movement of the eyes or of the lips.

Dubbing stands as one of the most common modes of AVT, noted for the domestication of the source text and the elimination of all cues representing *Otherness* to reduce the sense of foreignness and to ensure a higher degree of acceptability by the target viewer. Those strategies contribute to domesticating most of the elements of otherness in the cartoon in order to meet the expectations of Arab Muslim audiences. However, some verbal cultural contents are still retained because they are supported by para-verbal and non-verbal elements in the source text. Therefore, in dubbing, the viewer and the image constitute the most important factors to decide on the translation's orientation and choices.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

A large number of theorists, including but not limited to Newmark (1987) and Lawrence (1995) in cultural translation, and Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) in AVT, have honed a set of strategies to help ensure intercultural communication. In a later development, Pedersen (2005) draws on previous studies, such as those by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) and Leppihalme (1997) to suggest a number of strategies ranging from the most foreignizing to the most domesticating ones. Those strategies include official equivalent, retention, specification (that comprises explicitation and addition), direct translation (that covers calque and shifted translation), generalization, substitution (which is divided into cultural substitution and paraphrase) and omission. They are defined as follows:

- Official equivalent: it involves translating the SL cultural concept by an equivalent that is officially adopted in the TL.
- Retention: in this strategy, the SL cultural item is maintained as it is in the TL, but with some necessary spelling changes to comply with the TL conventions. It is usually used when there is no equivalent in the TL, or to bring some 'cultural flavor' to the TL.
- Specification: it implies retaining the SL cultural concept untranslated in the TL and adding some information to clarify the idea to the target audience. According to Pedersen (2005), the clarification is carried out through explicitation or addition.

- Direct translation: applied in the transfer of the names of companies, institutions and techniques, it involves the literal transfer of the SL phrase.
- Generalization: it is used whenever there is a lexical gap in the TL to replace SL specific concept by a TL generic term (Pedersen, 2005). An example of generalization could be translating a specific name of a cactus plant by a generic term in Arabic.
- Substitution: it is divided into two strategies: substitution and paraphrase. The first replaces a SL cultural concept by a different TL concept, whereas the second rewrites it without binding it to culture (Pedersen, 2005).
- Omission: translators have recourse to this strategy when there is no equivalent in the TL, or when the SL concept does not have a specific function in the text. They also apply it in subtitling for technical reasons, or because of semiotic redundancy, as in the case the verbal and non-verbal channels convey the same meaning.

Pedersen's (2005) overall strategies are either source-oriented or target-oriented. The two orientations are labelled differently by theorists and are often assimilated to domestication and foreignization respectively. In more practical terms, translators either minimize the foreignness/otherness of the ST to make it accessible to the target audience, in which case the translation is said to be domestication, or they keep the elements of otherness and bring them to the target audience, in which case the translation is said to be a case of foreignization. In the case of domesticated translation, violence is done to the ST in order to produce a fluent, idiomatic and natural Target Text (TT). In the case of foreignization, violence is inflicted to the reader who feels estranged amidst the foreign codes of the ST (Judickaitė, 2009; Mansour, 2014).

Not surprisingly, within the domain of children's cartoons in the Arab world, translators frequently use the omission strategy to eliminate swear words deemed unacceptable in the Arab-Muslim culture. The omissions are part of the translator's task to ensure the social and cultural acceptability of the ST and its adaptability to the marketing aspects of the target audience. Athamneh and Zitawi (1999) tell us that there are numerous examples of omissions, especially when dealing with swearwords in cartoons and animated films, as this is a typical practice in the Arab culture.

Masha and the Bear, our selected corpus, is a Russian animated cartoon series falling under the fairy tale genre. It was produced by Animaccord studio, a company established in 2008 to produce and distribute animation series. *Masha and the Bear* was first launched in 2009 and distributed in over 150 countries (www.animaccord.com). It was dubbed for the Arab world by the Syrian dubbing studio Venus Centre and was broadcast on Spacetoon in April, 2015. It was also broadcast on MBC3 as well as on Shahid kids, as MBC Group has made a partnership with Animaccord studio, producer of the animation series, to televise *Masha and the Bear* and its other children series in the MENA region (broadcastprome.com)

According to Antoniazzi (2016), the story of *Masha and the Bear* is inspired by a Russian folk tale in which a smart and brave little girl is lost in the woods and ends up in a Bear's house where she lives for a while before returning home. According to Lyanda-Geller (2015), there are many versions of the folk tale *Masha and the Bear* and each version contravenes the traditional conventions of the fairy tale, as the Bear and the woods are no longer represented as cruel and dangerous, but rather welcoming and benevolent. In *Masha and the Bear*, the child is free to express herself as well as her needs, curiosity and authenticity. Antoniazzi (2016) writes in this regard: "Masha is a metaphor for contemporary childhood, or better, for the educational needs and necessities of contemporary childhood."

Most of the adventures in the cartoon happen outdoors in the total absence of adults' control and protection. However, this protection is reflected in the Bear's benevolence, as it is always ready to guide and protect the child and intervene whenever necessary. Undoubtedly, the Russian cartoon series *Masha and the Bear* bears the traces of Russian culture and ideology, as ICTs have become some of the most efficient means of spreading a nation's culture, values, and ideology. According to Mumpuni and Kaprisma (2019), *Masha and the Bear* is used to spread a soft image of Russia and Russian nationalism. The two objectives are made manifest in Masha's Russian traditional clothes and the Bear's kind, loving and benevolent attitude toward the little girl.

To the present study, we focus our analysis on the first season of *Masha and the Bear*, by selecting the most representative episodes in terms of the representation of otherness. The selected samples are subject to a contextual and translational analysis to identify the strategies adopted by the translator. It is worth noting that our analysis will focus on the English version, as the animation series is originally broadcast in Russian, and we have no evidence that the Arabic translation was carried out from English.

Results and Discussion

This study made a contrastive analysis of selected episodes dubbed into Arabic. To this end, some verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal representations of otherness were selected from the *Masha and the*

Bear and compared with the Arabic dubbed version in order to identify the strategies used by the translator to render them. Furthermore, the ambiguities resulting from the non-coincidence of the verbal element with the non-verbal and para-verbal ones were identified and underlined. Finally, drawing on the approaches and strategies of translating otherness exposed in the theoretical part, some alternative strategies were suggested for the cases that were deemed poorly translated and presented as samples below.

• **Sample one:** *One, Two, Three! Light the Christmas Tree!* (Season 1, episode 3)

In this episode, the Bear prepares for Christmas; it decorates the house and the Christmas tree and waits for Santa’s visit. However, Masha pops in, and turns everything into a mess, burning the Christmas tree and ruining the house. As she goes with Bear to the forest looking for another tree, she provokes an accident and hurts Santa. The latter’s injury leaves the animals in the forest without presents. As a result, Masha decides to deliver herself the presents with the help of the Bear. This Episode 3 is full of religious (Christian) references which may unsettle an Arab audience, as presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Elements of religious otherness in season 1, episode 3

| Source text | Timing | Dubbed version | Back translation |
|--|---------------|---|---|
| One, Two, Three! Light the Christmas Tree! (title of the episode) | 0 :06-0 :09 | | هدايا رم Gifts day |
| Merry Christmas! | 0 :55-0 :58 | عيدنا سعيد يا دب | Happy feast Bear |
| Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle bells all the way! | 3 :12- 3 :28 | يا سارالم، يا سارالم، ما أجرى الأرحالم، جيت أهدني يوم العيد هدايا الأرحالم يا سارالم، يا | Hello, hello, how sweet dreams are, I have come this |
| O what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh | | سارالم، ما أطفى الأرحالم | happy day to offer gifts |
| Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle bells all the way! | | | Hello, hello, how sweet dreams are |
| That was Santa Claus! Oh, yeah! | 4 :12 – 4 :15 | تلك موزع الهدايا، صديقي | That is the distributor of gifts, believe me |

As can be noticed in Table 1, the ST illustrates many religious references to Christmas, the annual celebration of Christ’s birth in Christianity. Muslims do not celebrate this event because it does not pertain in their faith. This explains why the translator does not seek to convey this foreign religious reference to the target audience and resorts to direct translation in order to perform the song.

Therefore, in the first instance representing the title of the episode “*One, Two, Three! Light the Christmas Tree!*”, the translator used a different referent - هدايا (gifts) instead of the Christmas tree, which is one of the most conspicuous symbols of Christmas celebrations. Though giving gifts can be viewed as an important ritual in Christmas, it is not culturally bound as compared to the Christmas tree. Therefore, the translator can be said to have conveyed a part of the meaning of the ST without maintaining the foreign element. For this, paraphrase, which falls under the scope of substitution strategy, has been instrumental.

In the second part of the text, the translator deletes the foreign element by translating “Merry Christmas” by عيدنا سعيد instead of عيد ميلاد مسيحي. The TT uses the strategy of generalization by translating a religious reference to something specific (Christ’s birthday according to Christian belief) by a generic term: the Bear’s birthday.

The third instance illustrating the Jingle Bells song, too, is also associated with Christmas celebration. In this case, too, the translator did not have recourse to direct translation; he rather substituted the SL lyrics by different ones in the TL, which nonetheless retained Santa’s gifts. In doing so, the translator applied the substitution strategy with a form of paraphrase. The same can be said of the last chunk of the song in which Santa Claus is called as موزع الهدايا. As widely known, Santa Claus refers to a man in red who brings gifts for children on Christmas Eve. This figure, foreign to Muslim children, cannot be erased from the screen because it is represented by so many visual signs. However, the translator erases its English name and refers to it by the means of paraphrase.

• **Sample two:** *Jam Day* (Season 1, episode 6)

In this episode, the Bear picks fruits from the bush in order to make jam. As it puts the preparation on fire, Masha comes along, eats all the fruit and turns everything into disaster. Consequently, the Bear decides to go to the forest again to pick up some other fruits. Meanwhile, Masha resumes her preparation and sings the jam song (Table 2).

Table 2: Elements of Otherness, Season 1, Episode 6

| Source text | Timing | Dubbed version | Back translation |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Got to get the "pandemonium," | 3 :34- 4 : | أحضروا لكل الوواني من مقالي وحال | Bring all utensils and pans |
| And that means all pans and pots. | 01 | أبرحو لي المجل | Let me make my way |
| Clear the way! I need to make room | | هل لموصة محل لل | Is talent important |
| To make jam and to make lots. | | ما نطال الأيدي من | All fruits and vegetables we can have on hand |
| What was on the garden patches, | | نواكه وخضر اجموه | Put them in one pot |
| What grew on the tree I got, | | ني نذر واحد | And cook them right away |
| Made from it some mix-and-matches, | | واطبخوها على | I will add some sweet carrots to the jam |
| Put it all in one big pot. | | ابور براضيف جزرا | mixture |
| I'll add carrots for some nice zest | | احوا خلطة الجرباك | Some pinecones from the smells of the forest |
| To the Portobello jams. | | الفواز الصندوبير | Stir them well until boiling |
| But the juiciest and sweetest | | من راحة الغابات | This is the secret of skilled cooking |
| Will be pinecones and the yams! | | مع البحرك الجيد | I take advice |
| I peek in, and as I'm looking | | لي حين الغبان | |
| At the weird brew, I yell, | | ر الطبخ الماهر | |
| "Now I know what's really cooking! | | نيل البشارات | |
| I am in a jam, as well! | | | |
| Look, I'm moonwalking ! | 6 :24 | رايدة انضراء ماشا نرئص على القمر | Masha the astronaut dances on the moon |

The first element of otherness in season 1, episode 6 is a song entitled *the jam song* in which Masha recounts how she managed to make jam out of vegetables and fruits. The cultural dimension in this instance may be perceived in the phrase *Portobello jams*. Portobello is defined in the *Merriam Webster* dictionary as "a large dark mature cultivated mushroom noted for its meaty texture that is of the same variety of button mushroom as the cremini." (Portobello Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster). As one may notice, this definition provides an element of otherness, perceived in the jam's Italian name that refers to a specific variety of mushrooms that does not exist in the hot climate of the Arab Gulf countries.

As can be noticed, the translation of the said phrase by *خلطة الجرباك* does not meet the definition above. Indeed, the translator uses the phrase *خلطة الجرباك* that is neither an equivalent nor a correspondent of the SL term, but rather some sort of substitution. The same can be said about the other excerpts of the song such as "*What was on the garden patches; What grew on the tree I got; Made from it some mix-and-matches*" rendered by *وخضر من نواكه* , as the translator does not proceed by direct translation, and resorts to the substitution strategy instead. His translation may be justified by the fact that what matters in a song is the overall meaning along with rhyme and rhythm.

The most striking example of otherness in this episode lies undoubtedly in Masha's utterance: "*Look! I'm moonwalking!*". The verb *moonwalk* means « *to dance by gliding backwards while appearing to make forward walking motions* » (Moonwalk Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster). Moonwalk dance is mostly associated with Michael Jackson who performed it in 'Billie Jean' song. It also illustrates the American pop culture and can be classified under the category of artistic concepts according to Newmark's cultural categories (1987), which makes the « moonwalk dance » then culture-bound. During the transfer of Masha's utterance, the translator opts for direct translation without rendering the utterance's cultural specificity: *رايدة انضراء ماشا نرئص على القمر*. However, the translation *نرئص على القمر* is somehow odd and does not render the intended meaning. Alternative translations could have been *أبظر، أودي حركة ما يكل جالسون* or *أبظر، أودي حركة مشية القمر* if source-oriented approach is adopted.

• Sample three: Tracks of unknown animals (Season 1, episode 4)

In this episode, Masha plays with snow and makes a huge snowball that ends up covering the whole Bear's house. While the two characters try to remove the snow, Masha starts playing with Bear until they find themselves in the forest. At some point, she notices the tracks of some animals and starts asking Bear about the different animals behind them (Table 3).

Table 3: Elements of otherness in season 1, episode 4

| Source text | Timing | Dubbed version | Back translation |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|---|
| A guinea pig. A longhorn cow | 4 :45-5:00 | ساررت، أو طير | Maybe the tracks of a cat or a bird that flew |
| A crowly bug. A nightingale | | طار | A thousand ideas |
| | | ألف نظرة ونظرة | More than one possibility |
| | | أفتر من اجتمال | |
| Who is running all about? | 5 :07 – 5:14 | من نرى نذر مر | Who might have passed through here I will |
| Billy bear with Grizzly goat! | | سأعزته ني الحال | know it right away |

Based on Newmark's cultural categories (1987), animal names, such as those mentioned in Table 3, fall under ecology, more specifically, under fauna. As such, they are culturally-bound, since they are specific to some countries and may not be known in others. This is the case of the guinea pig, which is a "a domesticated species of South American rodent belonging to the cavy family (Caviidae)." (Guinea pig | Definition, Diet, Life

Span, & Facts | Britannica,). The Arabic script of the episode shows that the translator does not translate the 'exotic animals' mentioned by Masha, and substitutes their names by other names that are totally irrelevant. He could have resorted to paraphrasing because these cultural references may have an instructive function for children in this episode, helping them discover new species. Therefore, *guinea pig* is better rendered literally by الخنزير الغزيري or by its scientific name كالباء خزيري.

As for longhorn cow, also known as Texas longhorn, it refers to "a hybrid breed resulting from a random mixing of Spanish *retinto (criollo)* stock and English cattle that Anglo-American frontiersmen brought to Texas from southern and midwestern states in the 1820s and 1830s." (<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/longhorn-cattle>). Therefore, *longhorn cow* translates literally as البقرة ذات الزنون الطويلة or by بقرة تكساس ذات الزنون الطويلة, two translations that are accessible to children. Regarding the second instance, *Billy bear*, it refers to a bear puppet that plays in the *Muppet Show*. It can be transferred by addition: دميمة الدب بيلي.

- **Sample four: Hokus-Pokus (Season 1, episode 25)**

On a rainy evening, while Bear is reading a suspense book, Masha bursts into the house frightening him. To have some peace, the Bear hands her a book on hat tricks. Masha is absorbed by the book content and starts performing some magic tricks saying each time *hocus-pocus*.

Table 04: Elements of otherness in season 1, episode 25

| Source text | Timing | Dubbed version | Back translation |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Ok, Ok. Which hocus-pocus should I try first! | 1 :27-1:31 | ألعاب خيطة؟ إذا هي سهلة ولم تكن صعبة | Magic tricks? So, they're easy, they weren't difficult |
| Ok. Hocus-pocus, one-two-three! | 1:54 – 1:56 | هيا أيها المجرى العجيب | Come on, wonderful wand. |

In this episode, the element of otherness is represented in *hocus-pocus*, a phrase that refers to "a supposed magical charm previously uttered by magicians. More recently it has been used as a general term for trickery or magic." (<https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/hocus-pocus.html#>). This phrase is a ritual formula uttered by magicians before performing magic tricks to conjure up forces.

As is apparent in Table 4, the translator transfers *hocus-pocus* by various phrases. In the first instance, he applies the paraphrase strategy and conveys its referential meaning by ألعاب خيطة, which fits the co-text. In the second instance, however, he renders the function of the magic word and transfers the sense of the phrase. It is noteworthy to mention that *hocus-pocus* can also be rendered through cultural substitution by using the Arabic expression شيبك لبيك. Indeed, the phrase شيبك لبيك is used in informal Arabic to express wishes, because it is mostly associated with the story of Aladdin and the genie, and is usually pronounced before performing a magic trick.

All in all, most of the strategies adopted by the translator are target-oriented, as they reduce the element of foreignness present in the source text, which approves Bošković and Jakanović's (2018) results which indicate that otherness has to be adapted to the target audience to ensure the readability of the audiovisual product by children. It is also in line with Di Giovanni's (2017) study that shows that dubbing tends to be domesticating, since the translator strives to comply with the target audience's cultural values. However, our results disapprove Yifeng's (2008) study which indicates that translation by its nature encourages openness to other cultures by introducing new concepts and ideas, which is likely to have a positive impact on the country's economic development.

Finally, the analysis of the selected samples suggests that the translator has considered the interplay between the three semiotic channels constituting the ST. Indeed, even though s/he reduced the sense of foreignness of the AV material through his / her domesticating strategies in order not to shock the Arab viewer and make them feel alienated, his translation was in line with what was shown on screen, as it can be noticed in the episode about *Christmas tree*, in which *Christmas* was translated by عيد الهدايا and *Santa Claus* was rendered by هوزع الهدايا, because children can really see that the episode was also about offering gifts.

Conclusion

This article has aimed to define and interpret the elements of otherness present in the translated and dubbed version of *Masha and the Bear* and identify the translation strategies applied by the translator to convey them. The results have shown that the selected corpus does not present a wide variety of cultural categories, what impacted the exhaustiveness of this study. This limitation may be attributed to the fact that the visual cues in *Masha and the Bear* are more significant than the verbal system.

Through a comparative analysis of a few samples from season 1 illustrating otherness, we come to the conclusion that the translator resorted mainly to paraphrase, substitution and generalization. Indeed, s/he applied paraphrase in the rendering of three samples, substitution in four instances and generalization in one case, because the cultural references portrayed in the source text do not conform to the religious beliefs of the target audience as it was the case in the episode entitled *One, Two, Three! Light the Christmas tree!* All

these strategies contribute to domesticate the foreignness of the ST. Another reason which justifies this translation orientation is the fact that some of the foreign elements included in the cartoon are unknown in the Arab culture. Another reason for the predominance of domestication is to be found in the cultural identity of the target audience, who might reject the religious representations and references that do not comply with their religious beliefs and cultural values.

Songs are the most conspicuously domesticated texts in the dubbed version of the cartoon. This is the case of two lyrics, performed in two different episodes, and containing enough elements of otherness to push the translator to domesticate the majority of their foreign cultural contents. Songs are cultural vehicles that strongly convey a given community's cultural values. As such, they always require a special attention from translators, who often choose to retain their melodies and to domesticate their contents.

Though domestication is the dominant strategy in the Arabic dubbing of *Masha and the Bear*, elements of otherness are not completely erased in the ST. This is the case of the first episode of the first season, which retains some verbal elements associated with Christmas, perceived in the transfer of 'Christmas' and 'Santa', transferred as *يوم الهدايا* and *موزع الهدايا*, two expressions which are explicit references to the Christian gift idea. However, the idea is not retained out of any sense of faithfulness to the ST; instead, it is more likely due to the presence of the visual image of the gift. This image left no alternative to the translator but to retain the gift in the Arabic script by aligning the verbal with the visual texts.

All in all, many factors come into play in the translation of an audiovisual text, mainly AVT cartoons, such as the function and importance of the item analyzed in the text, its connotations and the expectations and cultural values of the target audience (Cintas, 2009; Zabalbeascoa, 2008). 'Introduction). However, the most challenging aspect of AVT, whenever the translation is target oriented, i.e. in the case of domestication, is the alignment of the verbal with para- and non-verbal messages. The interplay between the three channels, in fact, make the source oriented, foreignizing orientation the more suitable form of transfer in AVT. However, this option carries with it the risks of rejection by the target audience and should therefore be balanced with domestication. In other words, to ensure the acceptability and readability of foreign cartoons by the target audience, the audiovisual translator needs to interpret the elements of otherness correctly and to define their functions in the text. During the re-expression stage, s/he has also to comply with the cultural values of the receiver and to tone down anything that is likely to be rejected by the target viewer.

As Disney cartoons have invaded our screens, it has become of paramount importance to investigate how the foreign values they convey are dealt with during the dubbing process. In this regard, relying on Pedersen's (2005) strategies of rendering culture, especially the domesticating ones, can be very instrumental as they constitute practical solutions for the references that may shock young viewers and provoke a feeling of estrangement among them. Therefore, filtering the otherness of the source AV product through substitution, paraphrase, generalization and even omission is likely to trigger acceptability by adults without preventing their children from enjoying and opening to foreign products.

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