

## Censorship in the dubbing of cartoon directed for children from foreign languages into Arabic

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### **Abstract:**

Audiovisual translation in its various fields of cinema, theater and television is one of the most important and most recent translation disciplines, the most unique, complex and problematic. Censorship has always covered all audiovisual fields, especially film materials destined to be shown on cinema or television screens, such as cartoons. Censorship is related to the nature of the target culture and its social, political and religious references.

What concerns us in this article is the dubbing of animation with all the characteristics, methods and techniques that this translation type possesses that combine the translational dimension that carries linguistic and cultural characteristics and the cinematic dimension based on censorship of cinematic, technical and aesthetic dimensions.

**Keywords:** translation; dubbing; cartoons; censorship; language.

## INTRODUCTION

The scientific translation community has always neglected this translation practice despite the linguistic, cultural, economic and even political importance of this translation phenomenon, which has become very popular as one of the new and fertile fields of translation. Especially those related to translating children's works such as cartoons, which opened the door for studies and research with the aim of investigating the reality of this unusual translation practice and determining the methods and rules on which it is based. In general, oral simultaneous dubbing is classified as a branch of audiovisual translation to indicate and signify the process of preparation and sound recording in the target language.<sup>1</sup>

We are not here to stand on specific examples of translated local stories to study and discuss in form and content, or to enter into the writers' lives with all their details and events; Because exposure to that requires a lengthy, self-contained research, which this work cannot do at length. Rather, it is a starting point that leads us to enter into the presentation and discussion of the topic. That is why we will investigate and analyze all the problems posed by dubbing, its cultural considerations, and the constraints that control this process, by dedicating spaces to research about each element of the problem, which is dubbing on the one hand - as the material carrier of translation - and censorship: its manifestations and implications for the quality of translational output, On the other hand.

The issue stems from a set of questions that we would like to answer:

- How can dubbing maintain its primary function as a cultural mediator, in light of its subjection to censorship that works to obliterate all cultural features and components of the original language?
- How can we achieve compatibility between the dubbing and the original text with all the distortion of facts in dubbing?
- Can we talk about openness about the other in the era of globalization, in light of censorship that besieges the viewer and keeps him imprisoned by one culture under the slogan of preserving social, moral and religious systems?

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- Does the translator have the right to dispose of the original text and subject it to self-censorship, which works to obliterate its cultural features and artistic identity in submission to its subjective tendency, orientations and personal inclinations?
- Does recognizing the need to preserve all the cultural features of the dubbed text mean an obligation to shock the viewer, and shake his moral beliefs?
- What are the means and procedures for translation to achieve this difficult equation?

Since the goal of dubbing in this field is to introduce the culture and civilization of the other in order to expand the recipient's circle of knowledge and provide him with knowledge that opens outlets for him to view the experiences and expertise of other societies, this type of translation practice is now entrusted with achieving a difficult equation in synthesis between a set of different dimensions of translation, including: cultural, technical, and others. Because it is a translation that combines different semiotic systems. Perhaps the common factor between the translation practice and the cinematographic work is the cultural dimension, as each of them aims to transfer the experiences and expertise of peoples and their cultures to the other, and each of them is based on a set of techniques and methods that enable him to address and dialogue with the other. Especially if the cinematic translation of the animation depends on the dubbing technique as the technical factor for the translation and the means of its presentation on the one hand, such as the synchronization factor between time and movement, that is, between the tone of the linguistic discourse and the output value of the film clips, and between the limited temporal and spatial spaces allocated for presentation, on the other hand.

From here, we can sense the importance and sensitivity of dubbing and its effective role in building that cultural bridge between peoples and societies. In the dubbing process, the translator is entrusted with the role of a cultural

mediator, and this is evident in his work to facilitate the process of understanding, communication and interaction by transmitting expressions, purposes, visions, ideas and expectations of each culture. Therefore, he must be bilingual; fully familiar with the cultural reference of both languages.

As for understanding the problem of censorship in the dubbing of animation, we have to trace its historical path: its emergence, its development and its fields of practice. Censorship is different and multiple types, with the diversity and multiplicity of its practice areas and the different topics treated, even if their premises are the same, they are political, social or religious. Yves Gambier divides censorship into three types<sup>2</sup>:

As for its sources, they are either the higher authorities - a control protected by law and approved by the applicable legislation - or the translator himself, which is called "self-censorship"<sup>3</sup>, and it is the most dangerous type of control because it does not work within a specific and specific scope and does not have fixed standards, but rather it is according to the translator's personality and inclinations and his own orientation.

Self-censorship is a new type of censorship related mainly to audio-visual translation, where the translator exercises selective censorship at times and preventive at other times, but in all cases it is governed by his personal whims and his political, cultural and religious convictions. Gabriella Scandura considered that the omission is not a defect, but sometimes a necessity<sup>4</sup>, and so is the addition of contents that do not exist in the text in the first place as a matter of compatibility of the story with the social and religious thinking prevailing in society, and I think that this affects the literary text because the literary text is supposed to be a piece of literature, and if it contains something that does not fit our traditional societies, it is better not to be translated, and this is what falls under self-censorship. As for financial censorship; Dubbing requires a lot of money and effort<sup>5</sup>.

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The issue of censorship in audio-visual translation - in particular that practice through dubbed animation - is one of the most important and controversial modern translation studies, due to the difficult and intractable problems it generates.

Censorship in our society is still a vague, confused and often mistaken concept due to its conditional link to the idea of prevention imposed by the highest authorities in the state. Sometimes it is synonymous with prohibition and restriction, and at other times it is a social, political or religious bridle, sometimes intended to preserve cultural identity, and at other times it is repression, blackout, confiscation of freedom of expression and obliteration of facts and facts.

Animation dubbing is the process of converting an anime script from one language to another, by superimposing an audio performance in place of the original text. It is a method of translating and dubbing films, animations and television programs, in which the original language is replaced by another language that is completely superimposed on the video<sup>6</sup>. The reason for this process is the lack of mastery of all the peoples of the world in a foreign language, which prompted the dubbing of works into other languages such as Arabic, English and others.

The dubbing process also passes through several stages<sup>7</sup> in order to become legal, away from theft and display rights. The first and most important of these stages is to purchase the rights to work from the producing company, then rely on famous studios in the field of dubbing, to start the process, and finally sell and market the work to the shops of the rights holder's company.

Dubbing is the most difficult type of voice acting. The audience must have the impression that the actors playing the roles are saying the same thing, in order to get a good result, the following people are involved in the work: translators, dubbing director, assistant director, simultaneous script author (stack), and recording engineer, dubbing actors<sup>8</sup>.

- When selecting actors for dubbing, the age of their voice, their personal temperament, their original voice, and the sound of their voice on the ears are taken into consideration.

- During dubbing, the vocal conditions must be taken into account, for example, if an actor is speaking in the bathroom, the alternate voice must be with echo, and other vocal and dubbing noises (narrator's voice) are also recorded separately.

The dubbing of the actors is recorded, this is done in order to be able to create a multi-channel audio recording and to be able to correct some errors, in addition, for voice acting, sometimes scenes with off-screen noise from the airport, train station and school are needed and the hospital and even the market many dubbing actors are attracted to this. Therefore, these works have come under the eyes of censorship, whether artistic or political, with justifications and considerations related to social values such as the three taboos (Religion, sex, and politics). This is to avoid cultural repression and distract people and divert their attention from a reality and this means that all animation is packed, to some extent, with ideology ,political, social or religious directions, in short, there is no innocent anime and devoid of those direct or indirect messages.

Translating the masterpieces of cartoons directed to children in the world from foreign languages into Arabic is an urgent necessity at the present moment<sup>9</sup>, especially since this age stage is the stage of awareness formation, and this requires great efforts, in addition to training a team of translators specialized in this field to do this task that requires special abilities to translate this type of work. Not everyone who is fluent in two languages, no matter how proficient in them, is able to convey the spirit and sense of literary and artistic work to the reader of the language into which the creative work is translated. The translation of these works for children requires a translator with talent and experience in translating children, in order to be able to re-create this work in the language in which the creative work is transmitted. It requires deep reading in order to understand and deal with exclamation forms and audio simulators because they are the basis of animation<sup>10</sup>.

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The translation here is not just a transfer to another language, but rather is closer to “artistic creation”. Translating anime directed to children from foreign languages into Arabic requires a writer with a refined artistic talent and high linguistic knowledge, as well as a deep understanding of the “temporal and spatial” environment that the original artwork grew up in it, as not everyone who is bilingual is able to convey the spirit of the literary work, which includes the cultural dimension and the aesthetic taste of images and meanings that remain in the child’s mental abilities. Many of the children's dubbing are inaccurate, and there is no specific and clear map for attention to this area in Arab culture. Therefore, the role of cultural institutions in translating this type of literature should be characterized by cooperation in the economic and political fields between the peoples of the world and getting to know and respect the cultures of the other.

Among the basic conditions that must be met by a translator who deals with dubbing for a child are:

the first of which is the selection of the masterpieces of the novel in world literature.

the second of which is the fidelity of transmission with great care, and the third of which is the elevation or quality of the Arabic phrase, so that the dubbing enters the framework of literature, just as the text entered the framework of literature in its original language.

Anime dubbing plays an important role, as it is a cultural link to gain insight into the world in a diverse way. Specifically, it differs greatly from other translation methods in that it depends on the patience of the translator who will deal with the original text. One of the challenges is getting words that have the same effect on the original source text. Translating anime is a challenge because every word translated is the writer's idea, so these words should be dealt with individually, and the translator should try to preserve the essence of the original culture, as well as focus on the language.

However, translating a language means that the translator deals with two different cultural groups and one of the problems that the translator may face is finding the correct terms that best suit the level of fidelity to the text, it means that the translator must be able to translate cultural meaning, emotions and other meanings and terms. Among the difficulties that a translator may face is the process of translating cultural elements, and what may appear natural in one culture may be provocative or inappropriate in another. It is important for the translator to be familiar with the culture and customs of the civilization to which he will translate, especially since customs and traditions differ. Between East and West, the translator must convey the message of the story without mentioning the norms that do not fit the Arab or Islamic society.

The translator also has to choose between using the original word or using equivalent words to preserve the cultural feeling. If an equivalent is not available, the translator sometimes needs to use the same word strategy to fill in the lexical gaps, and if the word is too foreign to the reader, the translator can resort to using an explanatory lexicon at the bottom of the screen. In addition to the existence of cultural gaps that result from different characteristics of societies, which leads to the existence of linguistic gaps, and therefore finding the correct translation of cultural meanings needs to meet the expectations of the reader by bridging the cultural and linguistic gaps<sup>11</sup>.

The dubbing of anime for a child requires special abilities and a special skill from the translator, as it depends primarily on the written dialogue, whose translation differs in terms of linguistic structures from other translations, and the age of the child determines these abilities, it means that the first stages are very simple in translation, including easy vocabulary that is close to the child's taste and where the child gets to know the vocabulary of daily life that he sees despite the imaginative dimension that he has when looking for things. Despite the availability of anime composed for a child of this stage in his original language, the meeting of cultures will enrich, and make him open to the world, aware of the importance of intellectual pluralism and

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cultural and social differences between peoples, even if he is not directly aware of this.

This article is based in its entirety on the fact that children's literature is words and drawings of art like other arts. It is natural that we deal with texts and drawings from this point of view, taking into account a series of functions, the most important of which are the consolidation of moral, aesthetic, educational, social, linguistic, psychological, and cultural values of the cartoons presented and directed to children From 0-18 years old.

Most of the anime dubbed into Arabic, which our children watch at home, should be not only useful and appropriate to their culture, but also have positive social characteristics and values, such as friendship, love of work, helping people and respect them, and other values. Especially if its contents and images prominently express the pattern of our society, such as spreading goodness, justice, love, brotherhood and honoring parents. These behavioral and artistic values, some of which aim to promote, have fun and bring pleasure, and some that work to improve the morals and behavior of the child. In addition to instilling artistic values and positive morality within the framework of emotional education by raising the child's sensory and moral impressions, and by providing him with mental and intellectual images and explaining phenomena and meanings.

The children of each people should also watch what the children's writers wrote for the children of other nations, and this requires that the various institutions pay attention to the importance of the role played by informing the children of the peoples of the world about the dubbing of children's anime.

Perhaps one of the most important dangers facing the Arab child during his exposure to the culture of the West; is the problem of the obvious negative impact of foreign cartoons translated into Arabic, their characters and events that may make him alien to his society habits and behaviors, far from

its prevailing customs and traditions, and alien to his original identity that he is still sensing in the midst of undesirable cultural, social and political conditions, which makes him vulnerable to Western intellectual invasion, which has been intertwined with our eastern literature and culture in general, and our Arabic language in particular. As is the case in the cartoons, such as: **Les Sisters-Miraculous-Frozen**, and there are many works dubbed into Arabic that are not compatible with our culture and society, and some of them broadcast a destructive colonial culture, or take away values, or frighten the child.” Such as: **The Legend of Korra, Power rangers, Spiderman**. Contact with the West may cause separation between us and ourselves and between us and each other, and that the West's anime and programs have instilled in our children values that are alien to our countries. While we should deal with dubbing as a tool that helps in promoting human values that are not compatible with our Arabic civilization. Although these dubbed works directed to children are a type of literature in general, it has its origins and different directions in understanding and discovering the aesthetic, psychological, intellectual and social values in the original literary work that directly affects the audience of the target audience, and we mean the children's audience here. It is therefore not surprising that we find that the Arab child is affected by the stories of **Harry Potter, Cinderella and Alice in Wonderland** and other translated and dubbed stories more than he was influenced by the stories of the prophets and messengers such as: **Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, peace be upon them all**, or by the stories of heroic personalities from Arab Islamic history such as **Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, Tariq Ibn Ziyad, Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi** and others, or even personalities from the Arab heritage such as **Juha, Ali Baba** and others.

Undoubtedly, the animation dubbed into Arabic in our time has transcended these negatives to the aesthetic aspect of the original text, which often falls out of translation. The Arabic translator needs more professionalism in transmission and translation so that the approved text does not lose its artistic and aesthetic characteristic, and thus lose its credibility<sup>12</sup>.

What we would like to point out is that this artistic literary work directed at children is also in need of censorship in terms of strong linguistic formulation and fixed structural standards, which require the translator to follow the rules and laws of literary work imposed on him by this literary genre called “children’s literature”<sup>13</sup>. And then the call to invoke authentic and serious Arab standards that place children’s literature in a technical and artistic framework that responds to the nature and culture of the receiving audience, otherwise the translator will have caught himself in the problem of duality between what he wants to convey to Arab children and what he conveys of the values of foreign cultures.

We are not against communication with others, but there are many translated stories that publishing houses in the entire Arab world are still working on to communicate to children, subject to clear foreign influences, including what is inconsistent with the values, behaviors and morals of our Arab societies. Therefore, this communication must be based on good choice; repair these literary works of thought, correct what has deviated in them in terms of morals or behavior, and transform them in what is commensurate with our Arab and Islamic ideas.

### **CONCLUSION :**

We don’t find any objection to the Arab child watching the culture of the other and understanding his literature and human values, but we call for adopting an approach that creates a civilized thought opened to foreign culture, according to conditions that guarantee the existence of a true translation of the approved foreign text that is directed to critics and writers of the children’s story before it is directed to the child. All we need today is to re-translate foreign texts destined for Arabic-speaking children. We also need a good translator capable of taking into account the technical aspects in line with our authentic Arab culture.

In the end, translation is an art for those who can be creative in it. Everyone is capable of literal translation that loses the linguistic sense, the correct

translation is the translation that preserves the content of the idea and conveys ideas, taking into account the cultural difference between peoples.

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