Strategies of Subtitling Satire: A Case Study of the American Sitcom *Seinfeld*, with Particular Reference to English and Arabic

Adel Alharthi

University of Salford, Manchester UK

Abstract

Subtitling humor is a challenging task for the translators. The complexity in translating humor lies in the fact that humor is bound to the culture it is produced in, and in some cases, it is attached to the syntactical and semantic aspects of the source language. One of the most frequently used type of humor is satire; this form of humor is common in political context. However, satire is also used in TV shows, especially situational comedies. This paper present a detailed analysis of the subtitling strategies used by the Arab subtitle to transfer satire in the American sitcom, *Seinfeld*, into Arabic. The study also uncovers the factors that might govern the subtitle's decisions and choices. The study draws on the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH); Attardo & Raskin 1991), Attardo's (2002) model of analyzing and translating humor, and Pedersen's (2005) model of subtitling extra-linguistic culture-bound references. The analysis reveals that the subtitle managed to transfer language-based satire, using some interventional techniques. However, culture-based satire was a problematic issue, forcing the subtitler to retain all cultural references in the target text (TT) without any modifications, resulting in humourless subtitles. This study is motivated by the fact that research on the subtitling of humor in television comedy programmes is a relatively new field, especially in the Arab world where there is a huge shortage of research in the field of subtitling humour.

Keywords: culture-based satire, humorous effects, language-based satire, satire, subtitling, GTVH

Introduction
Satire is one of the most frequently used types of humour in audiovisual production, such as sitcoms and stand up comedy. This form of humour pose some difficulties to the translators, especially when it contains some cultural references that are bound to a specific culture, or even to a specific group of people within this culture. This paper discusses the translation of two main types of satire from English into Arabic. It mainly focuses on the strategies used by Arab subtitler's to render these types. Furthermore, the study uncovers the technical, linguistic, and cultural parameter that might affect subtitler's decisions.

1. Satire
The word satire takes its name from the Latin word *satira*, which means 'medley' (Dictionary.com). Satire can be described as a literary art that involves ridiculing individuals, social groups, institutions etc. with the purpose of provoking or stopping change. Hutcheon (2000) defines satire as follows:

> A critical representation, always comic and often caricatural, of "non-modelled reality," i.e. of the real objects (their reality may be mythical or hypothetical) which the receiver reconstructs as the referents of the message. The satirised original "reality" may include mores, attitudes, types, social structures, prejudices, and the like (2000:49).

Satire is categorised into two forms: Direct satire, which is directly stated, i.e. the satiric voice speaks directly to the audience/reader in the first person "or else [the] character in the work itself" (Khori 2010: 14); and indirect satire, in which characters are ridiculed by their behavior and thoughts or by the author's commentary or narrative style (Abrams 1981: 167). In addition, Satire has different techniques including exaggeration, reduction, invective, irony, caricature, travesty, sarcasm and burlesque.

Hodgart (2010) presents an in-depth analysis of satire, its techniques and forms in his book titled *Satire: Origin and Principles*. He provides various examples of satire from different literary genres, one of which is the most famous example of political satire in which Rochester wrote a poem targeting Charles II and pinned it to his bedroom:

Examples
> Here lies our sovereign lord the king,
> Whose word no man relies on.
> Who never said a foolish thing,
> Nor ever did a wise

The form of primitive lampoon-satire used in the above poem is called *epigram*, which involves pinning up and advertising the work of satire to the public. This type of satire, which is said to be cruel, aims to destroy the victim using brief expressions, though this sort of brevity is "a sign of politeness" (Hodgart 2010: 160).

According to some theorists (e.g., Ben-Porat 1979, Hutcheon 1985, 2000), there is a thin line between satire and parody. Parody involves imitating a specific work or author's style, i.e. it relies heavily on using the original work or parts of it. Also, the purpose of parody is to comment, not necessarily humorously, on the targeted work or its author (Bonnstetter 2008: 32-31). On the other hand, satire entails commenting on the vices and follies of an individual, social groups, institutions etc. using irony, sarcasm or ridicule. Also, satire does not require the use of or copying of the original work

2. Data

The corpus for the study is the American sitcom *Seinfeld* that aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) from July 5, 1989, to May 14, 1998 and lasted nine seasons (see table 3). The show was created by Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld and was shot in Los Angeles. It was produced by Castle Rock Entertainment and distributed by Columbia Pictures Television (now Sony Pictures Television). The series revolves around Jerry Seinfeld's Manhattan life in which he interacts with his three closest friends: his best friend George Costanza, his ex- girlfriend Elaine Benes, and his neighbour Cosmo Kramer. He also interacts with some acquaintances. Jerry plays a "fictionalized version of himself" in which he, as a stand-up comedian, critiques and makes fun of peoples' behaviour, attitudes and reactions (Devendorf 2009: 199).

3. Methodology

This section presents the research design, research approach and theoretical framework adopted in this study.

3.1 Research design

The instances of humour that contains satire and their Arabic translations were recorded. In addition, the English transcripts and the Arabic subtitles were presented in tables in two columns. The left column presents the source text (ST) and the right column shows the target text (TT) (Arabic subtitles) and their back translations.

3.2 Research Approach and theoretical background

This study draws on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH; Attardo & Raskin 1991, Attardo 1994, Attardo 2001, Attardo 2002). The theory views each joke as a "6-tuple":

Joke: (Language (LA), Narrative Strategy (NS), Target (TA), Situation (SI), Logical Mechanism (LM), Script Opposition (SO))

A qualitative approach was followed in this study, in which each joke was analysed according to its Knowledge Resources (KRs); the KRs of each instance of humour were listed according to their hierarchical order in a table. Once the KRs were presented, the Source text joke and its Arabic translation were compared in terms of the number of KRs they share.

The study also draws on Pedersen's (2005) model of rendering culture in subtitling. The model consists of the taxonomy of subtitling strategies (e.g., direct translation, official equivalent, retention, generalisation, and substitution) and seven parameters that affect the translator's choices. These factors include transculturality, extratextuality, centrality of reference, intersemiotic redundancy, co-text, media-specific constraints, and paratextual consideration. Although the model is mainly concerned with the subtitling of culture, some examples of humour are presented in Pedersen's analysis. In addition, the subtitling and translation strategies presented in the model are similar to the ones used for the translation of humour (see Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 216).

4. Analysis

The analysis presented in this paper will focus on two main types of satire: language-based satire and culture-based satire. The following subsections will present a detailed analysis of the techniques used by Arab subtitler to render the two types of satire and the parameters that might affect the subtitler's choices.

4.1 Satire

As a common type of humour, satire involves ridiculing individuals with no intention to harm or hurt their feelings. Instead, victims are criticized in order to correct their behaviour. Satire is also utilised in some situations to correct inappropriate social practices and promote change. This is the case with satire in *Seinfeld*, which is used often among characters that interact with each other on a daily basis and, in many cases, try to change each other's follies.

What is difficult in translating satire, especially in audiovisual productions, is that some satirical elements are difficult to spot unless the translator has a thorough understanding of the show, the characters, their conflicts, and their relationships. In addition, s/he must have excellent knowledge of the SL culture, including the social set up, historical events, public figures, and common flaws. This knowledge is required because of the excessive use of culturally-based and language-based satire.

Table 1. *Frequency of types of satire and subtitling strategies in Seinfeld*

Strategies / Types of Satire	Official equivalent	Paraphrase	Explicitation	Substitution	Addition	Generalisation	Retention	Transliteration
Language-based satire (7 examples)	3	4	1	1	2	2		
Culture-based satire (10 examples)							10	8

Table 1 shows that there were two general types of satire, namely language-based satire and culturally-based satire. It is worth mentioning that there was a variety in terms of applying strategies and techniques when dealing with language-based humour. This is evident in the utilisation of some useful interventional strategies, such as official equivalent, paraphrase, explicitation, substitution, addition, and generalisation. As can be seen from the table above, the strategies of paraphrase and official equivalent were used more frequently than were the other techniques. Paraphrasing involves reformulating the ST joke so that it can be understood and appreciated by TT viewers, as in Example 2. In addition, some instances of humour included some degree of exaggeration, which was conveyed successfully into Arabic by applying the strategies of paraphrase and addition, as in Example 1.

The most interesting finding is that strategy of addition was used effectively in some examples in which the translator used an Egyptian expression: "بالمرة" (together with) in order to make the TT text humorous. The creativity of the subtitler can also be seen in the use of the strategy of generalisation, especially with regard to taboo words in an attempt to euphemise them, as in Examples 5 and 6.

With regard to culturally-based satire, the analysis showed, as presented in Table (1), that there was consistent use of two main strategies, namely retention and transliteration. There were many

possible reasons for the deliberate use of these two particular strategies, one of which is the degree of the transculturality of the cultural reference; some references were transcultural and could be understood by the TT viewers, as in Example 8. Other references were monocultural and seemed difficult to comprehend without further guidance, as in Examples 7 and 59.

The other reason for opting for the strategies of retention and transliteration is the centrality of the cultural reference in the joke; central references are difficult to replace, since the replacement may cause confusion amongst viewers, as in Examples 8 and 9. Moreover, the intersemiotic redundancy, in which there was an overlap between the image on the screen and the dialogue, can be seen also in Examples 8 and 9.

In the process of rendering humour, there are certain factors that were believed to govern the subtitlers' choices and decisions. Table 2 presents some of the main parameters that might affect the process of translating satire in the selected episodes. Some of these factors tie well to parameters discussed in Pedersen's model, especially those dealing with cultural references and the restrictions of subtitling.

Table 2. *Factors that might affect the subtitler's decisions when translating each type of satire.*

Types of satire / Factors	Language-based satire	Culture-based satire
Media-specific constraints	✔	✔
Viewer's knowledge of the sitcom (Seinfeld) and of the characters	✔	✔
Achieving humorous effects	✔	✔
Priority of humour	✔	✔
Satire contains wordplay	✔	
Transculturality of the cultural reference		✔
Intersemiotic redundancy		✔
ST contains taboo words	✔	
Centrality of the ECR		✔

The thorough analysis of the data containing satire revealed that, as presented in Table 2, the temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling stifled the task of the subtitler and did not give him or her much freedom to guide the TT audience, especially when further explanation was needed

in order to comprehend the satirical elements in a particular scene. Another important factor is the knowledge of the TL viewers in terms of the plotlines of the sitcom and of the complicated relationships amongst the characters. This knowledge is essential, since some instances of humour contain references to the characters' personality traits, as in Example 2.

In addition, taboo words that were used in some scenes and which were central to the joke, forced the subtitler to find alternative expressions that do not offend Arab-speaking viewers, but which can still convey the sense of humour. This procedure became difficult to consider, especially when the dialogue and the image on the screen overlapped (intersemiotic redundancy). Dealing with ECRs in satire was a difficult task for the subtitler, since some cultural references were monocultural and could not be understood by the intended viewers. The subtitler's mission became even more complicated when certain monocultural ECRs were central to the joke i.e. replacing them was likely to create confusion amongst the target text audience.

The following subsections discuss two types of satire: Language-based satire and culturally-based satire. The discussion will include the main strategies used in the process of subtitling the two types of satire, and the different factors that are believed to control and determine the subtitler's decisions.

4.1.1 Language-based satire.

Humour occurs on various levels of a language, including semantic level (meanings of words), the phonological level (sound similarities), the syntactic level (ambiguity of sentence structure), register (inappropriate style) and so on. Thus, language-based satire is not an exception, since it relies on the language components of the source language without reference to any specific cultural elements. This type of satire is easy to translate and does not pose difficulties for the target language audience. This is evident in Example 1, in which Elaine tells Jerry that she once broke up with a man just because his bathroom was always grimy. In Example 1, Elaine describes satirically how dirty and full of germs her ex-boyfriend's bathroom was. She uses exaggeration in comparing the germs in the man's toilet to people, stating that these microbes were constructing their own buildings close to the drain and that the house prices became expensive due to the volume of construction taking place.

Example 1

ST	TT
Elaine: .....germs were building a town in there - they were constructing offices. Houses near the drain were going for $150,000.	كانت الجراثيم تبني مدينة سكنية، بل ومكاتب أيضا. وارتفعت الأسعار في الأماكن القريبة من البالوعة

	لتصل إلى 150000دولاراً. **Back translation:** The germs were constructing a residential city, and also offices. Prices rose in places near the sink for up to 150,000 dollars.

Script Opposition (SO)	Normal/Abnormal
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Exaggeration; metaphor
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Elaine's X boyfriend is the butt of the joke.
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue/hyperbole

Translation strategy	Paraphrase/addition
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	The degree of importance of humour; achieving a humorous effect

In example 1, in relation to the GTVH model, the source text and the target text share the same KRs, except for Language. In other words, the two jokes are similar, and the five KRs in the source joke (SO, LM, SI, TA, and NS) are respected. For the Language parameter, the subtitler used the strategy of paraphrase since the literal translation of Elaine's character would not sound funny in Arabic. This is evident in the use of 'مدينة سكنية' (a residential city) as an equivalent for *town*, which reflects the subtitler's attempt to make the joke humorous to the target audience. In addition, the subtitler opted for the strategy of addition, in which s/he added the word 'بل' (but

also) to convey the degree of exaggeration in the joke and the metaphoric meaning. By applying the two strategies - paraphrase and addition - the subtitler allowed some freedom in the translation, without changing the overall meaning of the humorous source text. According to Pedersen (2005), some paratextual considerations may cause the translator to adopt some "interventional strategies" to produce a good translation, one of which is the degree of importance of humour in a particular text (2005: 15).

In some cases, the strategies employed by the subtitler do not achieve the desired humorous effect, so the viewer must have the knowledge to understand the humour in a particular scene. In fact, some texts, such as situation comedies, require a thorough understanding of the whole context of a specific scene and the background of each character. Example 2 is an illustration. Jerry and George are at the store to buy a Christmas gift for Elaine. George, who wants to buy the present, sees a sweater that is cheap and in good condition. He calls the saleswoman and asks her about the price of the sweater, and she tells him that there is a small red dot on it, which meant that its price was reduced from 600 to 85. George seems determined to buy the sweater and he insists on Jerry's opinion. Jerry's response is humorous as he satirizes George's miserliness, although Jerry does not say that explicitly. Because of the implicit meaning of Jerry's utterance, 'trying to get away with something', it seems difficult for the audience to perceive humour in the scene, based on the Arabic subtitles, unless they have prior knowledge of the dark side of George's character as stingy and cheap.

Example 2

ST	TT
George: Well just take an overview. Can't you just take an overview?	حسنا الق نظرة سريعة. ألا تستطيع أن تفعل ذلك؟ هل تريد أن ألقي نظرة؟ نعم من فضلك **أرى رجلاً بخيلاً يمسك سترةً...** **...محاولاً الإفلات من ذنب ما،** **تلك هي نظرتي العامة.**
Jerry: You want me to take an overview?	**Back translation** I see a stingy man holding a sweater trying to escape from his guilt. That's my general opinion.
George: Please.	
Jerry: *I see a very cheap man holding a sweater trying to get away with something. That's my overview.*	

Script	Opposition	Stinginess/Generosity

(SO)	
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Ignoring the obvious. Instead of describing the sweater and giving his opinion about it, Jerry starts describing George and his cheapness.
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	George is the target of the joke.
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

Because of the difficulty involved in guiding the viewers to the instance of humour in the previous example, the subtitler used the strategy of substitution in which the word *something* is translated into Arabic as 'ذنب' (guilt), which is not the official equivalent. The equivalent of *something* in Arabic is 'شيء'. However, despite the substitution, the overall meaning of Jerry's utterance is unchanged because the subtitler made a noticeable effort to guide the viewers toward Jerry's meaning: George stinginess. In addition, the implementation of the strategy of substitution did not affect the degree of similarity between the English joke and its Arabic translation because the five KRs (SO, LM, SI, TA, and NS) are maintained. It can be argued that the subtitler's choice of this strategy was affected by the implicitness in Jerry's speech, given that its comprehension relies crucially on the viewer's knowledge of the context and the characters involved. In addition, the temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling did not allow further explanation of Jerry's meaning.

Translation strategy	Substitution/Explicitation
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	- Media-specific constraints: temporal and spatial restrictions - Paratextual consideration: audience-related issues; the degree of knowledge of the Arabic-speaking audience about the sitcom and the characters' background. The subtitler left the viewers to perceive the

	humour in the scene, based on their understanding.

Surprisingly, a rare use of two types of humour in one example was found in one of the episodes, in which satire and wordplay were utilised to provoke laughter. In one of the scenes, Elaine was woken up by a wake-up service person, James, with whom Elaine decided to go out despite the fact that she had not seen him. Satirically, Jerry ridicules Elaine in a satirical manner since she wants to "go out on a blind date". Elaine replies to Jerry's utterance by stressing that ''it sounds like'' James is good looking. Jerry humorously replies to Elaine's line, saying that human beings do not communicate by sound as whales do.

Example 3

ST	TT
Jerry: I still can't believe, you're going out on a blind date. **Elaine:** I'm not worried. It sounds like he's really good looking. **Jerry:** You're going by sound? What are we? Whales?	لا أصدق أنك ستخرجين في موعد أعمى لست قلقةً صوته يوحي بأنه حسن المظهر تحكمين بواسطة الصوت؟ هل نحن حيتان؟ **Back translation** **Elaine:** I'm not worried. His voice suggests that he's good looking.

Script Opposition (SO)	Sound (verb) vs sound (noun); human beings vs whales
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Homonymy; false analogy
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Elaine
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

In the previous example, satire results from the humorous utilisation of the two different meanings of the word 'sound', namely "vibrations that travel through the air or another medium" and "to present or convey a particular impression". This homonymic meaning, in addition to the amusing comparison between people and whales in terms of communication, provokes laughter in the scene. To convey the same satirical content, the subtitler translated Elaine's utterance "it sounds like" into Arabic as "صوته يوحي" (his voice suggests) using the strategy of paraphrase. This is not the official equivalent of this phrase, which is normally translated into Arabic as " يبدو أنه" (it seems that). "Sound" was rendered in Jerry's line as "الصوت", using the official equivalent. This procedure suggests that the translator understood the wordplay in the ST and put sufficient effort into retaining the homonymic meaning in the TT.

In addition, the satirical elements in the ST, "What are we? Whales?" was translated as " هل نحن حيتان", which sounds humorous in Arabic. In GTVH-terms, all KRs (excluding Language) could be seen as being shared by the ST and the Arabic translation thereof, which suggests that they have very similar humorous effects.

Translation strategy	Paraphrase/ official equivalent
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	- Retaining the wordplay in the TT. - Achieving a humorous effect

As stated previously, satire can occur among the characters in *Seinfeld* because they interact on a daily basis, and have different backgrounds and experiences. In other words, the main characters in the show are used to satirically criticise the flaws and follies of each other, whether this be in the workplace, or in their private lives. Needless to say, this criticism aims to make a change rather than to offend. By way of illustration, in one of the scenes, George is considering rock climbing with his new friend Tony. When Elaine learns of his plan, she satirically tries to make George change his plan by indirectly stressing that he is not tall enough for this adventure:

Example 4

ST	TT
Elaine: Rock climbing? hehe…Where do you come off going rock climbing.. Rock climbing? you need a boost to climb into your bed (Elaine and Jerry laugh)	تسلق الجبال؟ منذ متى وأنت تتسلق الجبال؟ تسلق الجبال؟ تحتاج إلى دفعة لكي تتسلق فراشك

Script Opposition (SO)	Tall/Short, Normal/Abnormal
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Exaggeration
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Elaine
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

The exaggeration in Elaine's utterance entails ridiculing George who is, according to Elaine, "going rock climbing" despite the fact that he is short and needs help to "climb" into his bed. This exaggeration was successfully transferred into Arabic, since the ST can be translated using the strategy of official equivalent, as well as the strategy of paraphrase. Thus, it can be stated that the ST and TT translation share the same humorous force because they share the same KRs, with the exception of the Language parameter. It is also worth mentioning that the satirical elements in Example 4 are easy to comprehend, and therefore required the application of customary strategies rather than interventional ones.

Translation strategy	Official equivalent/ paraphrase
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	Satirical elements in the ST can be easily transferred into Arabic with no need to apply interventional strategies

Another example in which satire is used by the main characters can be seen in the *Seinfeld Chronicles*. In one of the scenes, Jerry is hosting a girl called Laura, who is going to spend two days at Jerry's apartment. Jerry brings an extra bed for Laura and puts it in the living room. George, who is helping Jerry lift a heavy mattress, is criticising Jerry for bringing an extra bed for Laura, since he thinks that the girl is in love with Jerry. The satirical elements in George utterances "you're bringin' in an extra bed for a woman" and "why don't you bring in an extra guy too?" have one purpose, which is to change Jerry's way of thinking and behaviour.

George satirical utterance "why don't you bring in an extra guy too?" was successfully translated into Arabic as " لم لا تحضر رجلاً إضافيا بالمرة", because the utterance sounds humorous in Arabic. What makes George's line humorous in Arabic is the creative use of "بالمرة" (together with) as an equivalent for "too" The ST and TT share similar humorous force as well as the intended meaning, which suggests that they also share the same KRs.

Criticism in satire does not only occur among characters in *Seinfeld*, but also targets certain flaws of American society in order to rectify them. This is evident in one of the scenes in which

George criticises the way in which "good-looking women" walk. He satirically states that they walk fast, as if they have "a motor on their ass".

Example 5

ST	TT
George: Hey, is it my imagination, or do really good-looking women walk a lot faster than everybody else? **Elaine:** We don't walk that fast... George: No seriously... Elaine: Seriously, we don't. **George:** The better looking they are, the faster they go! I mean, I see they out there on the street, they're zooming around, like a blur. **Like they have a motor on their ass.**	هل أنا أتخيل أم أن النساء الجميلات... ...يمشين أسرع من الجميع؟ لا نمشي بسرعة شديدة. - كلاً، أنا جاد. - لانسرع في المشي. كلما ازداد جمالهن، ازدادت سرعتهن. أراهن يركضن في الشارع يستدرن، **كأن ثمة محركاً بأجسادهن** **Back translation:** As if there is a motor on their bodies.

Script Opposition (SO)	Normal/Abnormal
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Exaggeration
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Good-looking women
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

The humour in the previous example arises from the funny response by Elaine to George's question and from the exaggeration in George's utterance "Like they have a motor on their ass". The humorous force in the two utterances has been transferred successfully into Arabic. Elaine's line, "We don't walk that fast", which suggests that Elaine indirectly describes herself as a "good-looking woman", was translated using the strategy of official equivalent as " لا نمشي بسرعة شديدة". As for George's line, the subtitler used the strategy of paraphrase to translate the utterance

into Arabic. In addition, s/he used the technique of generalisation to render the word "ass" into Arabic as "أجْسادهن" (their bodies), instead of the specific meaning and official equivalent "مؤَخراتهن" (their ass). This procedure was adopted because George's statement includes a taboo word. However, despite the utilisation of the general meaning "أجْسادهن" (their bodies) instead of the specific meaning "مؤَخراتهن" (their asses), the ST and TT share similar a humorous effect as well as the same KRs, excluding the Language parameter.

Translation strategy	Official equivalent/ Paraphrase/ Generalisation
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	- The ST contains a taboo word.

The strategy of generalisation is the most frequently used technique, especially when the ST contains taboo words. In many cases, the subtitler succeeded in conveying the intended meaning of the characters' utterances as well as the humorous effect, despite the fact that the words or expressions were replaced by different ones. This is evident in the Example 6.

Example 6

ST	TT
Jerry: Well, maybe the test was gender biased, you know a lot of questions about hunting and testicles.	ربما كان الاختبار متحيزاً للرجال معظم الأسئلة عن الصيد والذكورة **Back translation:** Most questions are about hunting and masculinity.

Script Opposition (SO)	Feminine vs. Masculine
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Faulty reasoning
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Elaine
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

In the previous example, Jerry is ridiculing Elaine because she took the IQ test for George and obtained a low score. Jerry satirically told Elaine that the reason she failed in the test is that there is a "gender bias". The taboo term "testicles", which is specific, was replaced by a general term "الذُّكورة" (masculinity). This substitution did not affect the understanding of the satirical content in the source text, since the source and target jokes share the same KRs and, therefore, they are expected to have the same satirical force. Of course, the source text joke would have been more humorous if the subtitler had used the official equivalent of "testicles": "خِصيان".

Translation strategy	Generalisation
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	The ST contains a taboo word.

4.1.2 Culturally-based satire.

As mentioned previously, satire is socio-cultural specific, and the purpose of this type of humour is to criticise the faults and negative aspects of an individuals or of a society. Therefore, it is a common practice that the writers of satire use some elements that are culturally bound. These elements may include references to specific events or public figures, which are normally irrelevant or unknown to other audiences from other cultures.

Dealing with these cultural references is a difficult task for the translator, especially if they are the source of humour in a particular scene. In this case, applying the interventional strategies is a must in order to achieve a humorous effect. In other words, using the literal translation may convey the meaning, but it would certainly kill the humour and would often put off the TL audience.

When examining the selected data, it is worth mentioning that the subtitler used the strategy of direct translation, in which the cultural reference was retained in the ST without making modifications, or even guiding the target audience. This is illustrated in Example 7.

Example 7

ST	TT
JERRY: Hello, … oh hi Elaine … what's going on … no he just left … you broke up with him? … ME TOO… what happened? … <u>oh smoking. You know you're like going out with C. Everett Coop</u> … me … nah … I couldn't go through with it … I just didn't feel ready … so what are you doing now? … Oh, great idea, I'll meet you there in like thirty minutes. Okay bye.	التدخين، الخروج معك يشبه الخروج مع س. إيفيريت كوب **Back translation:** Smoking, going out with you is like

	going out with C. Everett Coop.
Script Opposition (SO)	The two scripts are both represented in Jerry's utterance: Going on a date with Elaine/ going on a date with C. Everett Coop**.** Jerry is referring to Coop as the suitable man Elaine can go out with, because Coop and Elaine hate smokers.
Logical Mechanism (LM)	The LM used in this joke is analogy and exaggeration. Jerry compares dating Elaine, a rabid anti-smoker, with dating **C. Everett Coop.** Koop was the US Surgeon General under Reagan from 1982 through 1989, and was known for being very outspoken about health concerns, especially the dangers of smoking.
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Elaine is the butt of the joke. She is ridiculed by Jerry in this scene.
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue is the NS used in the scene

In Example 7, Elaine breaks up with *Keith Hernandez* (the baseball player) because he smokes, and she hates smokers. When Jerry finds out about the break-up, he compares dating Elaine to dating "C. Everett Coop". Coop was a public figure in the US known for being very outspoken about health concerns, including the dangers of smoking. The subtitler kept all Knowledge Resources (KRs) the same in the target language except Language (LA). The situation (SI) of the joke includes a culture-specific reference "C. Everett Coop," which is retained in the Arabic subtitles and translated as "س. إيفيريت كوب". The Arabic subtitle appears humourless because the monocultural ECR (C. Everett Coop), which constitutes humour in the scene, is completely unknown to most Arabic viewers. By adopting the strategy of retention, the translator translates the linguistic and pragmatic content of the ST at the expense of the humorous effect. In fact, his decision is affected by what Pedersen (2005: 10-11) calls the degree of "transculturality" of the cultural reference, which is "less identifiable to the majority of the relevant TT audience than it is to the relevant ST audience".

Translation strategy	Retention

Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	The degree of transculturality of the cultural reference. The cultural element in the subtitle is monocultural, i.e. it is unknown to the majority of Arab viewers.

In the previous example, the subtitler's task was difficult because, as explained previously in Chapters 2 and 5, subtitling is governed by rules and constraints that, in many instances, restrict the number of solutions a subtitler can utilise. In other words, working according to the fixed rules of subtitling does not give much freedom to use the required strategies to make the source text more comprehensible, especially if a particular text contains cultural references.

In some cases, the subtitler cannot replace or modify certain cultural references in the ST, since they are bound to visual elements in the scene or they are related to the character's appearances, facial expressions or voices, as in Example 8. Elaine is trying to convince her boyfriend Ned to wear nice clothes and, when he refuses to try on the shirt, she satirically tells him that he looks like Trotsky.

Example 8

ST	TT
Ned: I'm sorry Elaine. The shirt's too fancy. **Elaine:** Just because you're a communist, does that mean you can't wear anything nice? **You look like Trotsky.**	تشبه (تروتسكي).

Script Opposition (SO)	Ned's vs. Trotsky
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Analogy
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Ned
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

In the previous example, the translator could not replace the cultural reference "Trotsky" with a familiar name in Arabic; "Trotsky" is central to the joke because Ned is a communist, and communism is the source of humour in the scene. In other words, the cultural element is central on the macro level in that it is a central theme in the joke; therefore, it can be rendered only by the strategy of retention. Also, "Trotsky" is a transcultural reference in that it is expected to be recognised by both the ST and TT viewers with the help of their encyclopaedic knowledge.

Accordingly, "Trotsky" was translated into Arabic as "تُروتْسكي", and the satirical flavour was conveyed because the ST and the TT share the same KRs, with the exception of Language.

Translation strategy	Retention
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	- The joke contains an ECR. - The centrality of the ECR. - The ECR is transcultural.

In the previous example, the audience's encyclopaedic knowledge of the transcultural ECR is essential for the understanding and appreciation of the satirical elements in the joke. This is one of the reasons that the translator did not utilise any interventional strategies. In other examples, the ECR is monocultural in that it is bound to the American culture and, accordingly, it is unfamiliar to an Arabic-speaking audience. Let us consider Example 9, in which Jerry is making fun of Kramer's new pair of jeans that are too small for him, making him unable to bend his knees.

Example 9

ST	TT
Kramer: Uh, yeah, I bought Dungarees. **Elaine:** Kramer, they're painted on! **Kramer:** Well, they're slim-fit. **Jerry:** Slim-fit? **Kramer:** (Talking fast) Yeah, they're streamlined. **Jerry:** You're walkin' like **Frankenstein!**	أنت تسير كـ(فرانكستاين).

Script Opposition (SO)	Kramer's walk vs. Frankenstein's walk
Logical Mechanism (LM)	Analogy
Situation (SI)	Context
Target (TA)	Kramer
Narrative Strategy (NS)	Dialogue

In the previous example, the cultural reference "Frankenstein" is used to describe the way in which Kramer walks; therefore, it is bound to the physical appearance of the character. This intersemiotic redundancy, namely the overlap between the picture on the screen and the dialogue, makes it difficult for the translator to modify or replace the Source text ECR. As a result, "Frankenstein" was translated into Arabic as "فرانكستاين", using the strategy of transliteration.

It is worth mentioning that, although the ST and the TT share the same KRs with the exception of Language, the two texts do not share the same humorous force since the TT is expected to be humourless because, as stated previously, the target viewers are unfamiliar with the cultural reference "Frankenstein".

Translation strategy	Transliteration/Retention
Factors affecting the subtitler's decision	- The joke contains an ECR - The centrality of the ECR. - The ECR is monocultural - Intersemiotic redundancy

The analysis of the data, which includes culturally-based satire, revealed that all the cultural references were transferred directly into Arabic using the strategy of transliteration, with no attempt to replace, modify, or even guide the Arabic-speaking viewers; this includes transliterating references that are bound to the American culture, such as the comedians Abbott and Costello, President Dwight Eisenhower and his wife Mamie, characters in comic strips such as Brenda Starr and Dondi, and ski racer Stein Eriksen.

This retention of the cultural references in Arabic removes any sense of humour although, in some cases, the centrality of the cultural elements in the joke forced the translator to retain them in the TT.

5. Conclusion

This paper discussed satire and its two main types: language-based satire and culture-based satire. The study also presented an in-depth analysis of the subtitling strategies utilised by Arabic subtitlers to transfer satire into Arabic, including some interventional techniques, such as paraphrase, substitution, explicitation, generalisation, Explicitation, and addition. In addition, it uncovered the parameters that might affect the Arab subtitler's choices and decisions.

About the Author:
Adel Alharthi. holds master degree in Translation and Interpreting Studies from University of Manchester in 2011. He is currently a PhD student in translating and interpreting studies at the University of Salford, fourth year. His research interests are humour translation, subtitling, subtitling culture, translation and conflicts.

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