



Cultural Manipulation of Children's Literature Dubbing: A Translation Quality Assessment of Extralinguistic Cultural References in The Simpsons

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Keywords

1. Cultural Manipulation
2. Dubbing
3. Children's Literature
4. Pedersen's (2017) FAR Model
5. Extralinguistic Cultural References
6. Errors

Abstract:

The audiovisual translation of animated content involves a complex interplay between linguistic accuracy and cultural acceptability, especially when the source text is rich with cultural items and the target audience includes children. This study therefore aimed to investigate the cultural manipulation of the Arabic dubbing of the animated cartoon *The Simpsons* to create a dubbed version that suits Arab children. Using Pedersen's (2017) FAR model of Translation Quality Assessment, the study aimed to assess how the extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) are transferred, adapted, or obscured in the Arabic dubbed version of the series. To achieve these objectives, a mixed-methods approach is followed combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The study sample included 11 examples selected purposefully from the first and second seasons of *The Simpsons*. A high frequency of dubbing errors was found in the Arabic dubbed version, particularly in terms of the functional equivalence parameter, with a rate of 63.63%. Regarding the acceptability parameter, grammar and idiomaticity errors were observed, with a rate of 42.42%. Given the nature of the medium of communication (i.e. spoken discourse) to be evaluated, the two parameters of spelling errors and readability were excluded from the analysis due to their irrelevancy. This study then concluded with a recommendation for a quality assurance mechanism designed to safeguard target Arab children from harmful foreign cultural elements by effectively domesticating such elements into an appropriate local narrative.

المعالجة الثقافية في دبلجة أدب الأطفال: تقييم جودة ترجمة المدلولات الثقافية في المسلسل الكرتوني عائلة سيمبسون

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الكلمات المفتاحية

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| 1. المعالجة الثقافية | 2. الدبلجة |
| 3. أدب الأطفال | 4. نموذج بيدرسن (2017) |
| 5. المدلولات الثقافية | 6. الأخطاء |

الملخص:

تتضمن الترجمة السمعية البصرية لمحتوى المسلسلات المتحركة تفاعلاً معقداً بين الدقة اللغوية والمقبولية الثقافية، لا سيما عندما يكون النص الأصلي غنياً بالعناصر الثقافية، والجمهور المستهدف يشمل الأطفال. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث المعالجة الثقافية في دبلجة الرسوم المتحركة العربية لتناسب الأطفال العرب، من خلال تحليل وتقييم جودة دبلجة المسلسل الإنجليزي "عائلة سيمبسون" إلى اللغة العربية باستخدام نموذج بيدرسن 2017 (FAR) لتقييم جودة الترجمة، وسعت الدراسة إلى تقييم كيفية نقل المدلولات الثقافية الأجنبية أو تكييفها أو إخفائها في النسخة المدبلجة العربية من المسلسل. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم اتباع منهجية مختلطة تجمع بين الأساليب النوعية والكمية، وشملت عينة الدراسة 11 مثالاً تم اختيارها من الجزء الأول والثاني من مسلسل "عائلة سيمبسون"، وكشفت النتائج عن ارتفاع في نسبة أخطاء الدبلجة في النسخة العربية، لا سيما في معايير التكافؤ الوظيفي، بنسبة 63.63%. تم تحليل أخطاء القواعد والعبارات الاصطلاحية ضمن معيار القبول، بنسبة 42.42%، مع استبعاد الأخطاء الإملائية لعدم ملاءمتها لطبيعة النقل في الدبلجة. أما المعيار الثالث، وهو سهولة القراءة، فهو غير قابل للتطبيق على تقييم النسخة العربية المدبلجة نظراً لتصميمها المخصص للكتابة لا للنطق. وتختتم هذه الورقة البحثية بتوصيات للمترجمين ومؤسسات إنتاج المسلسلات الكرتونية لاتباع آلية مناسبة لضمان جودة الدبلجة تهدف إلى حماية الأطفال العرب المستهدفين من المدلولات الثقافية الأجنبية الضارة، وذلك من خلال دمج هذه العناصر بفعالية في سرد محلي مقبول.

Introduction:

Translation plays a significant role in disseminating knowledge across nations by rendering texts from one language into another while preserving their intended meanings, tones and contexts. In the increasingly globalized media landscape of today, audiovisual translation has become of paramount importance. International distribution of audiovisual content is easier than ever due to the widespread availability of satellite TV services and over-the-top (OTT) services (Saranya & Jisha, 2024). Children show great interest in following audio-visual representations (e.g. cartoon shows and movies) via TV sets or the Internet.

Young generations are the kernel of any society from which nations grow and by which their futures can be shaped. They learn from what they see, hear, and read. Therefore, people must give much care and attention to the type and quality of the content that their children may use as a source of learning and knowledge, especially the audio-visual content, because it often attracts children's attention. Such content emphasizes the integration of both auditory and visual elements to create a comprehensive and immersive experience for children.

Mehassouel and Benlakder (2019) argue that the most challenging part in dubbing children's literature is the translation of extra-linguistic cultural references (ECRs). These are cultural elements that cannot be directly rendered into the target language without some loss in their original meaning or cultural significance.

Study Problem:

Spending much time watching animations on TV or cellphone, our children are exposed to foreign cultures that can shape their identities and cultural values. That is, cartoon shows made for a non-Arab audience often contain some values, messages, and culture-specific aspects that may contradict the Arab and Islamic values. Therefore, most of the audiovisual materials that are watched by

children in the Arab world need a special kind of translation to be made suitable for the target culture. Any content that is improper according to the established socio-cultural and religious values must be modified, softened, or left out altogether (Saed et al, 2024).

Children's literature-based cartoons include critical issues such as religion, ethics, violence, racism, ethnicity, and sex. Accordingly, dubbing translators of such shows face challenges as they need to manipulate and adapt them to the Arab-Islamic culture to maintain the Arab children's identities. Consequently, dubbing translators need to be creative and talented to handle such sensitive issues by using the appropriate translation strategies, such as domestication of the source text (Rishah, 2013).

To ensure a socio-culturally and religiously proper dubbing of animations made for non-Arab audience, the dubbing of these cartoons needs to be subjected to assessment. The present study therefore seeks to assess the Arabic dubbing of the English cartoon series *The Simpsons*, drawing on Pedersen's (2017) FAR model and showing how this model can be adopted in children's literature to create appropriate audiovisual materials for Arab children.

Study Questions:

The study intends to answer the following question: To what extent does the Arabic dubbing of the English series *The Simpsons* conform to the standards of Pedersen's (2017) FAR model of quality assessment?

Study Objectives:

The study aims to assess the quality of the Arabic dubbing of the English series *The Simpsons*, using Pedersen's (2017) FAR model of translation quality assessment.

Study Significance:

The importance of the study lies in the crucial influence of animated cartoon shows on

the development and shaping of Arab children's thoughts and ideology. The study provides insights for dubbing translators in handling such shows. It seeks to explain the influence of the translation of animated series on the beliefs and conduct of Arab children. These shows have a significant influence on children's views, morals, and understanding of the world around them. Grasping this role is vital for both educators and parents to effectively steer and impact children's growth.

Translators can make sure that animated content conforms to the cultural, social, and educational standards suitable for Arab children by carefully modifying dialogue, cultural allusions, and underlying messages. The beneficial effect of cartoon shows on children's beliefs and value formation can be strengthened by such knowledgeable translation techniques. To maximize the educational and cultural impact of children's animated shows, this study offers valuable information that can direct their development and translation.

Furthermore, the study is methodologically distinctive since it is among the first to apply Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, which was originally created for evaluating subtitling quality, to the analysis of dubbing, despite the fundamental distinctions between these two audiovisual translation approaches. This creative application offers new directions for dubbing quality assessment studies and examines the model's analytical capabilities beyond its original scope.

Study Limitations:

Like any research endeavor, the present study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it primarily concentrates on audiovisual translation within the specific context of animated shows, potentially limiting the generalizability of its findings to other forms of audiovisual translation, such as films or documentaries. The scope of the research is limited to a specific set of excerpts from the series *The Simpsons*. The choice of this series in particular stems from its ability to transcend

mere entertainment and education by boldly tackling sensitive topics such as sex, violence, religion, politics, and ethics.

Moreover, there are many Arabic versions translated by various channels. This study deals with some extracts from the dubbed version of the MBC channel only, translated as آل شمشون. Furthermore, the study primarily assesses the quality of the dubbed extracts in light of Pedersen's (2017) FAR model of translation quality assessment, excluding the technical aspects.

Literature Review:

Studies on translating and localizing children's literature and audiovisual materials into Arabic (e.g. Epstein, 2010; Gamal, 2014; Rishah, 2013) show that children's media serves as a discourse that shapes culture rather than solely acting as an entertainment product. Gamal (2007) asserts that in the Arab world, audiovisual translation is affected by socio-cultural and ideological factors that influence decision-making concerns in translations, especially when children are the target audience, as their own moral and cultural growth appears to be at stake. Within these parameters, translators tend to value cultural appropriateness over literal fidelity. Rishah (2013) reinforces this idea by showing how translators use omission, adaptation, and substitution strategies to bring Arab children's programs in line with Arab Islamic values. Thus, they remove or adjust references to issues such as alcohol consumption, romantic intimacy, religious symbolism, and supernatural elements.

Gamal (2014) also points out that institutional translation strategies control the extent of localization applied to audiovisual products, several times reflecting larger anxieties about preserving identity and culture. Regarding educational and edutainment-type contents, Saed et al. (2024) state that "the dubbing of English series for Arab children is a delicate equilibrium between denominational ideas and idiolectal comprehension. Based on their analysis, oversimplification and cultural

tampering can bring translation loss and minimize the informational depth, which results in a decrease in entertainment for the target audience. While Rishah (2013) views extensive cultural adaptation as a necessary strategy to safeguard the religious and moral framework of the Arab Muslim child, Saed et al. (2024) warn that over-domestication risks distorting the pedagogical and narrative integrity of the source material. Collectively, these studies indicate an ongoing tension between cultural protection and textual fidelity in the translation of children's media into Arabic, highlighting cultural sensitivity as a central yet contested principle in addressing the needs of Arab Muslim child audiences.

Jin and Yuan (2023) introduced the FAS model as an adaptation of Pedersen's (2017) FAR model to assess the quality of machine-translated dubbing. While the FAR model includes functional equivalence, acceptability, and readability, the study replaced readability with synchrony, considering it a more relevant parameter for dubbing. Synchrony in this model encompasses lip, kinesics, and isochronic alignment between audio and visual elements to ensure natural and coherent dubbing. The study applied this framework to evaluate the performance of China's YSJ platform, which integrates AI-driven automatic dubbing and synchronization technologies. According to Yu Zhou and Yingfan Hou (2025), the FAR model (functional equivalence, acceptability, readability), originally developed by Jan Pedersen for evaluating subtitling, is also widely applicable to assessing dubbing quality. However, when evaluating dubbing, the critical factor of synchrony (S) must be added. While previous scholarship mainly emphasizes visual synchrony (isochrony, lip sync, and kinesics), Yu Zhou and Yingfan Hou contend that the synchronization of acoustic elements, specifically voice characteristics and tempo, is equally essential for creating an optimal audiovisual experience. By analyzing the raw machine-translated output, Jin and Yuan (2023) aimed to determine how effectively YSJ

maintains alignment between translated speech and visual performance.

Methodology and Procedures:

This study followed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. This approach was used to add objectivity to the study by applying Pedersen's (2017) FAR model of quality assessment. A checklist was developed as a data collection tool to evaluate extralinguistic cultural references in dubbing children's literature. To verify the validity and reliability of each item, four translation specialists assessed the relevance and clarity of each item. The study corpus is non-human, which is the textual corpus of *The Simpsons*. This study employed a purposive sampling approach to collect data from the first and second seasons of the series. The study sample includes 11 examples selected purposefully to represent various themes in the series. For data analysis, Pedersen's (2017) FAR model was applied to investigate the extent to which the Arabic dubbing of the English series *The Simpsons* conforms to the standards of the model. This model assesses the series based on the parameters of functional equivalence, acceptability, and readability.

Results and Discussion:

To answer the study question, "to what extent does the Arabic dubbing of the English series *The Simpsons* conform to the standards of Pedersen's (2017) FAR model of quality assessment?", the study applied Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, which evaluates translation quality through the parameters of functional equivalence, acceptability, and readability. The study identified several challenges in rendering ECRs in the series. Based on the FAR model's severity scale, these issues ranged from error-free, minor, standard, and serious, reflecting the impact of cultural and linguistic gaps between English and Arabic on the accuracy and naturalness of the Arabic dubbed version.

1- Functional Equivalence Errors

According to Pedersen's (2017) FAR framework, a functional equivalence error occurs when the target text (TT) fails to achieve the same communicative function as the source text (ST). Such errors are primarily categorized into two types: semantic errors and stylistic errors. Semantic errors are defined as a failure to convey the ST's intended meaning, leading to a loss, distortion, or inaccuracy of information. This includes issues with lexical, propositional, or illocutionary meaning. Stylistic errors, conversely, involve not aligning with the ST's register, tone, or pragmatic impact. Although these errors may not distort the essential meaning, they can greatly affect the natural flow of the TT and its effect on the intended audience.

- Semantic Errors

Semantic errors are errors that change the intended meaning or interpretation of the content, which makes the audience lose the contract of illusion (Pedersen, 2017). This is the essential part of the assessment process, as it is concerned with pragmatic meaning. The penalty scores for semantic errors are 0 for error-free, 0.5 for minor errors, 1 for standard errors, and 2 for serious errors. The following table presents the frequency of different types of semantic errors.

Table 1 The Frequency of Semantic Errors

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (Rounded)
Error-free	4	36.4%
Minor error	2	18.2%
Standard Error	2	18.2%
Serious Error	3	27.3%
Total	11	100%

Table (1) indicates a notable quality control issue, with 63.6% of the reviewed content featuring some errors, amounting to 7 out of 11 cases. Despite error-free content being the largest category at 36.36% (4 instances), the total error rate is significantly elevated. A particularly concerning finding is the equal frequency of Minor Errors and Standard Errors, with both occurring 2 times

and accounting for 18.18% each. The remaining Serious Errors were 27.27% (3 instances).

- Discussion of Semantic Errors

The results revealed a considerable number of semantic errors and misinterpretations that seriously impact the viewer's understanding. These errors compromise the integrity and true meaning of the original content. To ensure high-quality dubbed extracts go forward, the study discusses the reasons behind such errors. The following sections cover the specific types of semantic errors identified and examine the critical reasons behind their high prevalence.

- Error-free

Some translations convey the same meaning and emotional impact without any alteration. Some error-free items used literal translations to maintain the meaning. The following table shows an example of error-free translations with a suggestion for a better version.

Table 2

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Boys will like you and happiness will follow.	الصبيان هيجبوكي وهتعيشي سعيدة.	ستتالين حب ورضا الجميع.

In this scene, Marge Simpson talks to her daughter, "If you smile at boys, they will like you, and happiness will follow." The provided translation is linguistically correct and faithfully conveys the tone and meaning of the original line to the daughter. However, it presents a significant sociocultural mismatch for an audience of Arab Muslim children. It could be translated in another way to match the children's culture and protect their values.

Some cases should be classified as serious errors because the dubbing translator deletes or changes individual words. However, based on the cultural background, it is considered an excellent job of filtering the content while preserving the scenes. Hence, the

evaluation of "0" (error-free) is correct, because it judges success in conveying the core message, not the individual words. The following table will show one of these items.

Table 3

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Your wife's butt is bigger than my wife's butt.	مرايك أطف من مراتي.	زوجتك أجمل من زوجتي.

A direct translation that compares the buttocks of wives would be disturbing and inappropriate in a conservative cultural setting, particularly for Arab children. The translator shifted from an inappropriate physical comparison in size to a comparison in quality, euphemistically preserving the core idea of the competitive banter between the two men, which is the central point of the scene.

- Minor error

Minor errors may pass unnoticed and only disrupt the illusion for attentive viewers (Pedersen, 2017). Minor errors were found in 2 out of 11 items analyzed, resulting in a severity score of 0.5, which represents 18.18% of all errors coded with a severity score. Quantitatively, these errors did not significantly affect the translation's overall quality or coherence. Their impact remained largely negligible, as the errors were subtle and would only be detected by attentive viewers or those actively scrutinizing the translation, rather than the general audience consuming the dialogue.

Table 4

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Ultimate Behemoth	-----	السيارة الوحش

In this scene, the seller tries to describe the car to Homer Simpson to encourage him to buy it. The example translation shows a minor error. The dubbing translator deletes the source text because the word "Behemoth" comes from a Christian religious text, which may be inappropriate to be exposed to Muslim children. However, deleting the name is not a

good solution. A much better option to render the intended meaning can be by calling it "السيارة الوحش". The deletion is a minor error because it goes unnoticed by the viewers, but they would still understand that the car is huge and powerful.

- Standard Error

According to Pedersen (2017), a standard error occurs when the translated text contains inaccuracies in meaning or word choice that alter the original message for most viewers, yet the overall scene or dialogue remains broadly understandable to the viewer. In the analyzed data, the frequency of Standard Errors was 2 out of a total of 11 documented errors, constituting 18.18% of the overall error distribution.

The following table shows an example of semantic standard errors.

Table 5

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
I feel like I violated Matthew 19:19	حاسس إني ما عملتش بنصائحك الإنسانية.	أشعر بتأنيب الضمير لأنني لم أفعل الصواب.

This is a standard error. The translator absolutely changes the meaning to avoid the audience's focus on the biblical reference, solemn biblical commandment ("Love thy neighbor"), by generalizing the text to "نصائح إنسانية". The translation could be improved by conveying the implicit meaning of compunctions of conscience.

- Serious Errors

Serious semantic errors represent the most critical type of meaning-related errors in translation, as they significantly disrupt comprehension and distort the intended message of the source text (Pedersen, 2017). These errors go beyond minor inaccuracies or stylistic deviations, often resulting in misinformation, lack of coherence, or a complete change in meaning. It affects viewers' understanding and brings questions to their minds. In audiovisual translation, such as dubbing, serious semantic errors can disrupt the

narrative flow, confuse the audience, and weaken the credibility of the translation. This section examines the instances and impact of serious semantic errors identified in the corpus, analyzing their frequency, nature, and potential effects on viewers' comprehension and engagement. In the data analyzed, the frequency of Standard Errors was 2 out of a total of 11 documented errors, constituting 18.18% of the overall errors.

Table 6

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Since Mountbatten gave India back to Punjab	منذ انسحاب بريطانيا العظمى من الهند	منذ أن أعاد مونتباتن الهند إلى بنجاب

The target text for "Since Mountbatten gave India back to Punjab" as "منذ انسحاب بريطانيا" "منذ انسحاب بريطانيا العظمى من الهند" is coded as a serious error because it fundamentally destroys the source text's primary function and deletes some crucial terms like Mountbatten and Punjab. By translating the same vocabulary and scenes, it could arouse children's curiosity to know more about such information.

- Stylistic Errors

According to Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, stylistic errors are translation decisions that deviate from expected subtitling practices or the linguistic or stylistic norms of the source language. Stylistic errors represent a smaller but still significant portion of the total errors, comprising approximately 63.6%. These errors pertain to the translator's failure to maintain the stylistic register, tone, and cultural nuance of the source text, leading to a target text that feels unnatural or inconsistent with the original's intent. The most common stylistic error is a failure to replicate the idiomatic and colloquial language of the source text. The penalty scores for semantic errors are 0 for error-free, 0.25 for minor errors, 0.5 for standard errors, and 1 for serious errors.

Table 7 The Frequency of Stylistic Errors

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (Rounded)
Error-free	4	36.4%
Minor error	1	9.1%
Standard Error	3	27.3%

Serious Error	3	27.3%
Total	11	100%

The following is an example of a serious stylistic error with a penalty score of 1, which shows the complete breakdown of the original tone and communicative intent due to an inappropriate shift in style that disrupts both the register and the pragmatic function of the source expression.

Table 8

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
What's the matter, sir?	اللهم اجعله خير	ما الأمر، يا سيدي؟

The rendering of "What's the matter, sir?" into "اللهم اجعله خير" constitutes a significant stylistic error due to a fundamental shift in the illocutionary force and register of the utterance. The source text is a direct, polite, and neutral question asked within a customer service or formal context, characterized by the deferential use of "sir." The target text, conversely, is not a question but a pious, religious invocation (a prayer). This substitution replaces a functional inquiry with a statement of faith and concern. This stylistic change disrupts the character's persona (often Apu, the convenience store clerk) and the scene's dynamic, transforming a transactional dialogue into a culturally specific expression of hope. The TT thus fails the Stylistic/Acceptability parameter of Pedersen's (2017) FAR model by imposing a religious register that is absent from the original, thereby distorting the sociolinguistic function of the dialogue. The suggested correction, i.e. "ما الأمر، يا سيدي؟", restores the ST's communicative directness and formal register, which carries a rhetorical weight closer to the suggested translation.

Table 9

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
There are no good wars, with the following expectations: The American revolution, World	ما فيش خناقات مجدية باستثناء الاتي: أخوك بيضرب وأبوك بيضرب أو أختك	الحروب دائماً سيئة، ما عدا الثورة الأمريكية والحرب العالمية الثانية وحرب ثلاثية النجوم.

War 2 and Star Wars trilogy.	بيتأخذ منها الكيك.	
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This translation demonstrates a significant stylistic error. In the source text, the sentence conveys a political irony, offering a reflective and critical commentary on the nature of conflict. In the target text, however, the tone has been completely shifted to slapstick family humor, depicting exaggerated domestic quarrels instead of the broader, ironic critique of wars. This shift results in an incoherent and inconsistent style, as the playful depiction of minor family disputes clashes sharply with the ST's sophisticated, ironic tone. According to Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, such a deviation is considered a serious stylistic error because it undermines the original rhetorical effect and diminishes the translation's acceptability. Furthermore, from an educational perspective, presenting wars only as trivial conflicts for humor misses an opportunity to engage children's curiosity and encourage them to develop a deeper understanding of historical or social conflicts. A more balanced translation would preserve the ironic commentary, sparking thoughtful reflection while remaining age-appropriate, thereby enhancing both comprehension and cultural awareness among Arab-Muslim children.

2- Acceptability

This analysis provides a formal assessment of the notion of 'Acceptability' of the provided Arabic TT, with a specific focus on errors in grammar, spelling, and idiomaticity. The evaluation is conducted within the framework of Pedersen's (2017), which posits that a successful translation must function equivalently for its target audience as the ST did for its original readers. Within this model, acceptability is a cornerstone of functional equivalence, demanding that the TT adhere to the grammatical, spelling, and idiomatic norms of the target language and culture. A failure in this domain constitutes a Stylistic Error, which undermines the text's naturalness, coherence, and ultimately, its

communicative efficacy. The following analysis delineates the pervasive patterns of unacceptability in the TT, categorizing them and discussing their impact on the overall quality and function of the translation.

- Grammar Errors

According to Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, grammar is one of the acceptability parameters. It governs word forms, parts of speech, tense, mood, aspect, agreement, word order, and function words. While analysis of grammar errors is essential for evaluating text accuracy, such analysis cannot be fully applied to the Arabic translation of the series *The Simpsons* used as data for the present study. This is because the series has been dubbed using the Egyptian Arabic, a dialect that often diverges from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in terms of verb forms, sentence structure, and function words. Therefore, grammatical analysis of Egyptian dialect requires balancing standard rules with an understanding of colloquial usage, highlighting only deviations that affect clarity and comprehensibility.

Table 10 The Frequency of Grammar Errors

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (Rounded)
Error-free	6	54.6%
Minor error	3	27.3%
Standard Error	1	9.0%
Serious Error	1	9.1%
Total	11	100%

Analysis of the data translation using the grammatical dimension of Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, which comprises approximately 45.45%, revealed several issues regarding the parameter of Acceptability. In other words, the model emphasizes that grammatical errors affect the structural acceptability of the target text, including problems in syntax, agreement, tense, and word order that may disrupt comprehension or stylistic flow. In the examined translation, instances such as inconsistent verb conjugations, awkward sentence constructions, or misplaced modifiers can be identified, which either distort the intended meaning or reduce fluency. While

some of these errors may be minor and do not hinder understanding, others are more serious, particularly when they alter the original sentence structure or create unnatural phrasing in Arabic. According to Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, such deviations constitute a reduction in grammatical acceptability and highlight the need for careful attention to target-language norms, ensuring that translations remain both accurate and stylistically coherent.

Table 11

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Look what I have? Schnapps.	بصي شوفي أنا جيت إيه بصي عصير	انظر ماذا لدي؟ أحضرت عصيراً

In this example, the main grammatical issue lies in the tense and aspect. The English present tense in "I have" is rendered in Arabic as "جيت" ("I brought"), which shifts the aspect from present to perfective past. Obviously, there is a semantic mismatch between the original English utterance and its Arabic dubbed version, and this is because the English utterance expresses current possession, whereas its Arabic version implies a completed action. The Arabic translation also has a minor redundancy, with the use of the two synonymous verbs *شوفي* and *بصي* occurring one after the other. Although this redundancy is grammatically acceptable in colloquial Egyptian Arabic, it is stylistically unnecessary. Regarding word order, the utterance "بصي شوفي إيه أنا جيت إيه" follows the standard colloquial sequencing of imperative, pronoun, verb, object, and thus can be viewed as acceptable. Gender agreement is also accurate, as the feminine imperative *بصي* aligns appropriately with the addressee. Overall, the example demonstrates a significant tense/aspect mismatch as the main grammatical error, while redundancy in using two synonymous imperatives is an issue, with word order and agreement being correct.

Table 12

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
How ya doing, Apdo?	إنتي عامل إيه يا عبده؟	كيف حالك يا عبده؟

In the translation "إنتي عامل إيه يا عبده", there is clearly a gender agreement error as a result of the mismatch between the feminine pronoun "أنتي" and the masculine vocative "يا عبده". In Arabic grammar, pronouns must agree in gender, number, and person with the noun or referent they modify. The masculine form *إنت* should have been used instead of *إنتي* to ensure grammatical consistency. A correct colloquial form would therefore be *كيف حالك يا عبده؟*

- Spelling Errors

As far as the parameter of spelling errors – as outlined in Pedersen's (2017) model – is concerned, it is evident that this parameter is inapplicable to the assessment of the acceptability of the translation under scrutiny. This inapplicability arises from the fundamental difference between dubbing and subtitling. Spelling errors, by definition, pertain to the written form of language, misspelt words, typographical errors, or orthographic inconsistencies, which are directly observable in subtitles or textual translations. In dubbing, however, the translation exists in auditory modality, where viewers receive the message solely through spoken language and thus spelling errors are inherently absent in this medium, rendering this parameter irrelevant for evaluation. Attempting to assess spelling errors in a dubbed text would not only be impractical but could also introduce misleading conclusions about the translation's overall acceptability. Therefore, while Pedersen's (2017) FAR model offers a robust framework for subtitling assessment, its application to dubbing requires careful adaptation, and certain parameters, most notably spelling errors, must be acknowledged as inapplicable.

- Idiomaticity Errors

The most pervasive and damaging category of error is idiomaticity, where the translation consistently fails to produce natural, conventional phrases in the target language, relying instead on literal calques, semantically inappropriate lexical choices, or incoherent cultural substitutions (Pedersen 2017). The analysis of the data translation has revealed

some idiomaticity errors; these errors account for approximately 81.81 of the total number of errors in the data translation, which is a relatively high proportion. The dubbing translators appear to have done their best to adapt the source text, but in some cases they seem to have failed to provide idiomatically acceptable renderings.

Table 13 The Frequency of Idiomaticity Error

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (Rounded)
Error-free	2	18.1%
Minor error	4	36.4%
Standard Error	2	18.2%
Serious Error	3	27.3%
Total	11	100%

The following table shows how idiomaticity affects the hidden meaning and looks odd to the target audience.

Table 14

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Springfield Retirement Home	بيت العجزة	دار سبرينغفيلد لرعاية المسنين

The translation of the above item illustrates a clear idiomaticity issue in the target text. While the phrase is semantically understandable and conveys the general idea of a residence for elderly people, it carries a negative connotation for the native speakers of Arabic. That is, the term “العجزة” literally emphasizes frailty and incapacity, which can be perceived as impolite, disrespectful, or even offensive when referring to the elderly. Furthermore, the act of sending elderly family members to a retirement home is culturally unacceptable in many Arab-Moslem nations, where it is traditionally and religiously incumbent on children to care for and live with their ageing parents. In contrast, the expression “دار المسنين” has a positive connotation, framing the institution as a dignified place for seniors without evoking their physical frailty and incapacity. This mismatch between literal meaning and cultural nuance exemplifies an idiomaticity error,

where the translation’s surface accuracy fails to align with the social and stylistic norms of the target language, potentially affecting the audience’s reception and engagement.

Table 15

Source Text	Target Text	Suggested Translation
Stupid Homer. I am going to show him. He thinks he is so big.	تافه راجل مخبول مش فاهم حاجة هو فاكر نفسه إيه؟ فاكر نفسه مهم؟. دا راجل عبيط إما وريتك يا عمر. أذكى إخوانه، ياريت جابت منه مائة، هيشوف هيشوف	أبي عمر لا يتصرف بشكل جيد. سأوضح له أن تصرفه غير صحيح. يظن أنه الأقوى دائماً!

This utterance is made by Bart, the son, about his father, revealing his resentment toward his father’s attitude. The translation of this item presents a significant idiomaticity error. The target text expands the dialogue extensively, adding insults and evaluative comments that are not present in the ST, and this changes the tone from light frustration to personal mockery and scolding. Beyond stylistic issues, the translation is culturally problematic: in Arab-Muslim societies, it is generally considered unacceptable for children to speak disrespectfully about their parents or male authority figures. By framing Homer in such derogatory terms, the translation not only departs from the ST’s humorous brevity but also violates cultural norms of respect, potentially making the scene inappropriate or uncomfortable for Arab-Muslim children. The resulting effect is a serious idiomaticity error, as the translation fails to maintain both the linguistic balance and the cultural sensitivity inherent in the original text.

3- Readability

The third parameter of Pedersen’s (2017) FAR model, readability, is fundamentally inapplicable to the assessment of the Arabic dubbed version of *The Simpsons* due to its inherent design for the written rather than spoken discourse, as confirmed by Jin and Yuan (2023) and Yu Zhou and Yingfan Hou (2025). Readability is exclusively concerned with the technical and ergonomic presentation of text on screen, a set of constraints that vanish

entirely in the dubbing process. As stated by Jin and Yuan (2023), this parameter must be replaced with the critical factor of synchrony (S), or, as stated by Yu Zhou and Yingfan Hou (2025), be added to the parameters of Pedersen's FAR model to create the modified FARS model.

The constituent errors that define this parameter, such as Segmentation Errors (illogical line breaks), Spotting Errors (inconsistent in- and out-times), Punctuation Errors, and Graphics Errors (poor font or placement), are all problems that disrupt the viewer's act of reading subtitles. Similarly, issues of Reading Speed and Line Length are critical in subtitling, where the translator must calibrate text quantity and complexity against the audience's reading pace and the physical limits of the screen. In dubbing, however, the linguistic product is not read but heard; it is performed by voice actors and received aurally by the audience. The technical challenge shifts from legibility and synchronicity with the eye to isochrony (matching syllable length to lip flaps) and phonetic synchrony with the visuals.

Therefore, applying the readability metric to a dubbed dialogue track would be a categorical error, as it seeks to measure problems that simply cannot exist in a modality where there is no on-screen text to read, no line breaks to parse, and no reading speed to manage. The success of the Arabic dialogue in *The Simpsons* is thus judged not by its visual comprehensibility but by its auditory fluency and its synchronization with the animated characters' performances, concerns that are comprehensively captured under the adapted Functionality and Acceptability parameters.

Conclusion:

The analysis of the Arabic dubbing of *The Simpsons* through Pedersen's (2017) FAR model uncovered various difficulties in translating extralinguistic cultural references due to the difference between Arabic and English cultural backgrounds. Regarding functional equivalence, semantic and stylistic errors were prominent problems. Some cultural

references were either partially translated or substituted with comparable alternatives to be adapted to the target audience's culture. Such errors resulted in changing the intended meaning of some items and diminished the communicative effect. Regarding stylistic errors, the analysis revealed some challenges resulting from the functional and structural divergence between the formal style of Modern Standard Arabic and the vernacular style of Egyptian Arabic. As for the acceptability parameter, grammar and idiomaticity errors were analyzed, to the exclusion of spelling errors and readability, the parameters that are inapplicable to the assessment of the Arabic dubbed version due to their inherent design for the written form, which requires engagement with the technical and ergonomic presentation of text on screen.

The study concludes that Pedersen's (2017) FAR model can be applied to dubbing except for the two parameters of spelling errors and readability, for the reasons mentioned above. Moreover, cultural manipulation of extralinguistic cultural references embedded in children's literature is indispensable to avoid exposing Arab children to some harmful Western cultural elements that contradict their culture.

Recommendations:

The study recommends that parents, specialists, and publishing houses pay more attention to the content of animated cartoons that children are exposed to. Furthermore, channel dubbing translators need to apply cultural manipulation to all content presented to children to protect their Arabic and Islamic identity and values. The study also suggests that further studies be conducted to assess the quality of some other popular cartoon shows to ensure their appropriateness for Arab children's moral values and ethics.

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