Domestication or Foreignization: Strategies Adopted in the Amateur Subtitling of Swearwords in American Crime Drama Movies into Arabic

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ABSTRACT

The stigmatized nature of swearwords renders their intercultural transference a problematic issue in film subtitling. This is because cultures differ in their tolerance of swearwords specially when displayed in the media. Accordingly, subtitling translators need to carefully handle the sensitive issue of swearwords. However, although the choice of a particular strategy is influenced by different ideological, cultural and contextual factors, there is consensus that swearwords are either toned down or completely deleted. In light of this, this study attempts to identify the strategies adopted by Arab amateur subtitlers when rendering swearwords in American crime drama movies into Arabic. To achieve this objective, a corpus consisting of the scripts of two of these movies with high occurrence of swearwords and their subtitles in Arabic is collated. Moreover, in the analysis of the translation strategies adopted, Vermeer's (1978/2000) Skopos theorie is utilized and Venuti's (1995) model of 'domestication' and 'foreignization' is adopted to determine the overall subtitlers' translation behavior whether oriented to the source text/culture or target text/culture. The findings of the study indicate that certain domestication translation strategies were adopted to abide by cultural norms in the target culture and certain foreignization strategies were adopted to preserve the spirit of the source text. However, the overall translation behavior was target culture oriented.

Keywords: swearwords; amateur subtitling; translation behaviour; domestication; foreignization.

1. Introduction

Swearwords represent 'translation crisis points' as they come under the umbrella of culture specific items that cause the most difficult problems to translators (Pedersen, 2005, p.1). However, swearwords are differentiated from other cultural specific items on the basis of the offense they cause to language users. The offense the use of swearwords invokes stems from the contamination and filth of the objects swearwords refer to. Consequently, for many people, the use of swearwords is considered as an act of impoliteness which threatens the face of interlocutors and should be avoided (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Hence, different cultures put sanctions on verbal references to the objects which are conceived as taboo and their violation stimulates moral scorn if not (social or legal) punishment (Fershtman, Gneezy, and Hoffman, 2011). With this in mind, there is a consensus that what is taboo in one culture might not be taboo in another, a fact which indicates that cultures differ in the degree of tolerating the use of swearwords particularly when used in the subtitling of audio-visual productions.

It is argued that the offense of swearwords increases in the process of subtitling foreign movies to other speech communities. This hypothesis is based on two main factors. The first is that these words "seem to have a stronger effect in writing than in speech, especially if they are translated literally." (Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998, p. 126). This is true because of the greater cognitive processing of reading and hearing these words and the reinforcement from the image and facial expressions and body movements of the actors. The second is the fact that cultures differ in their tolerance of offensive language. That is to say, what might be considered a normal use of the emotion laden words in the source culture may cause offense to the recipients in the target culture. This relates to the active norms and traditions which

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may be different amongst cultures.

However, swearwords are intentionally employed by movie directors for accurate portrayal of the characters to reflect their sociocultural and educational background, to depict the type of relationship between these characters and as a reflection of the inner feelings of each character. In the subtitling of movies, such elements need to be conveyed to target recipients who depend on subtitles to understand the development of the plot in the movies they watch. The conveyance of these elements requires linguistic and cultural knowledge of the involved languages to carefully handle swearwords in such a way that does not do harm to viewers' expectancy norms (Chesterman, 1997). It requires, furthermore, translation expertise and formal translation training which enable the subtitler to make suitable translation decisions within the limited space and time characteristic of subtitling.

However, when applying these measures on the amateur subtitling phenomenon, it is normally argued that amateur subtitlers are criticized for lacking formal translation training and experience necessary when facing difficult translation situations beside lacking censorship and editing on their subtitling (Perez-Gonzalez, 2012). Furthermore, they are said to be of low linguistic and pragmatic competence since amateur subtitlers are not specialists in linguistics or translation. (Bogucki, 2009; La Forge and Tonin, 2014). More importantly, amateur subtitlers are usually seen as representing a revolt against conventional subtitling and cultural norms in the recipient community.

The effect of such deficiencies on the performance of amateur subtitlers is expected to be apparent mostly in their treatment of problematic translation issues particularly culture specific elements including swearwords.

In light of this, the significance of the present study comes from its attempt to identify the translation strategies Arab amateur subtitlers adopt when rendering swearwords in American crime drama movies into Arabic. It attempts to identify whether the translation behaviour of such novice subtitlers opted for domestication or foreignization.

2. Literature Review

The rapid proliferation of the amateur subtitling which utilizes the huge development in means of communication and the digital revolution has attracted the attention of scholars as a recent phenomenon in the field of Translation Studies (Orrego-Carmona, 2015). Much scholarly work has been directed to the quality of the work done by amateur subtitlers, the problems they encounter, their working conditions and comparing the performance of professional and amateur subtitlers (Sajna 2013; Wilock 2013; Bogucki 2009; Diaz-Cintas and Sanchez 2006). An increasing number of studies focused on the translation behavior of amateur subtitlers when addressing cultural specific issues and the strategies they adopt in the intercultural transference of these issues (García-Manchón 2013; Massidda 2012; Renwick 2012; Tian 2011). One of the extensively researched culture specific issues addressed by amateur subtitling is the treatment of swearwords in the translation of movies. The finding of most of the studies on this issue was that subtitling swearwords poses a problem to amateur subtitlers, this is why such words were either deleted or toned down. The reason for this tendency can be attributed to the offense such words cause to viewers and the variation in the degree of tolerating swearwords between cultures.

For instance, when handling the sensitive issue of swearwords in American TV shows into Chinese, Tian (2011) found that the main translation strategies used by Chinese amateur subtitlers were deletion and replacement of swearwords with random symbols or non-swearing phrases such as 'stop word'. Hence, the English swearword 'son of a bitch' was replaced by phrase 'stop word' and references to sexual activities were replaced by the phrase 'bedroom life'.

In a rather different setting, Renwick (2012) carried out a corpus-based study on the amateur treatment of cultural bound obscenities in two English movies subtitled into Spanish and two Spanish movies subtitled into English. The findings of the study showed that omission was the main translation strategy adopted by both groups of amateur subtitlers when handling swearwords. Hence, these subtitlers adopted domestication to abide by cultural norms in the target culture.

Among the existing studies completely devoted to the analysis of the translation patterns of swearwords in the DVD

subtitling and amateur subtitling was that carried out by García-Manchón (2013). An ad hoc corpus consisting of a number of English movies with a high occurrence of swearwords and their subtitles in Spanish represented the corpus of the study. The study adopted the quantitative analysis approach to identify the subtitling strategies adopted when dealing with swearwords in the movies. The findings of the study indicated omission as the main translation strategy used by the subtitlers. However, the reduction in the number of swearwords in the DVD subtitling was higher than that in the amateur subtitling, indicating a domestication orientation.

Similarly, Ameri and Ghazizadeh (2015) compared the translation behavior of professional dubbers and nonprofessional subtitlers in their treatment of swearwords in the English movie *Pulp Fiction* 1994 into Persian. The aim was to identify the translation strategies of each of these groups of translators when handling swearwords in two different audiovisual translation mediums. The analysis of the data revealed four basic translation strategies adopted by both translation groups namely; direct translation with strong force of swearwords, direct translation with weak force of swearwords, deletion and foreignization. The findings of the study indicated that deletion was the most frequently used strategy by both translation groups. However, while the degree of the offense of swearwords was euphemized more by the dubbing translators, the nonprofessional subtitlers directly translated swearwords with strong force. The authors concluded that whilst professional dubbing translators tended to adopt domestication to meet the expectancy norms in the Iranian society, the amateur subtitlers adopted foreignization. This behavior was attributed to the lack of censorship and editing on amateur subtitling in Iran.

As for the studies conducted on the treatment of swearwords in foreign movies into Arabic, the majority of these studies focused mainly on the professional subtitling whereas the Arab amateur subtitling phenomenon escaped Arab scholars' attention although it is gaining momentum nowadays (Khuddro, 2000; Mazid, 2006; Gamal, 2008; Alkadi, 2010). Hence, the only study to date addressing amateur subtitling of foreign movies into Arabic is that carried out by Izwaini (2014). Izwaini focused on issues related to this phenomenon including the quality of translation, motivation behind carrying out the voluntary translation, the extent of intervention of translators and its competition with professional translators. When it comes to the treatment of swearwords, the finding of this study shows that Arab amateur subtitlers adopted a literal approach when addressing swearwords in films they subtitled into Arabic. Hence, they did not mitigate or delete the swearwords in these movies and they used a colloquial form in the Arabic subtitles similar to that in the movies. However, this study did not attempt a thorough analysis of the translation strategies adopted by the Arab amateur subtitlers when rendering swearwords in foreign movies into Arabic.

Therefore the value of the present study lies in its contribution to fill up this gap in the literature by focusing on the Arab amateur subtitlers' translation behavior with respect to identifying the translation strategies they adopted to render swearwords from the more open English culture to the more conservative Arabic culture. By identifying these strategies, the translation behavior of Arab amateur subtitlers as being source text or target text oriented can be decided.

3.   Approach and Data of the Study

This study is qualitative in nature. It adopts a corpus-based analysis approach to identify the strategies adopted by the Arab amateur subtitlers when handling swearwords in American crime drama movies into Arabic. The data of the study comprise swearwords extracted from a corpus consisting of the dialogue scripts of two of these movies, namely, *Alpha Dog* (2006) (AD) and *Harsh Times* (2005) (HT) and their amateur subtitles in Arabic with a total number of 73,328 words. In this study, the definition of swearword is that provided by Andersson and Trudgill's (1990), which states that a swearword:

1.   Refers to something that is taboo and/or stigmatized in the culture;
2.   Should not be interpreted literally;
3.   Can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes (p. 53).

4. Selection criteria

The selection from the crime drama genre is justified on the basis that this genre depicts the deployment of language by low class people, such as criminals, gangs and drug dealers. In their daily interactions either with other gangs or with the police, these people resort to frequent uses of swearwords for certain purposes such as venting anger, frustration or showing solidarity, power or as a reflection of the sociocultural and educational background. This hypothesis is supported by Parini (2013, p. 154), who argues that the use of swearwords of has become "more common in a recent stream of American films, such as spy, mafia and gangsters films, films starring drug addicts and dealers, prostitutes, homeless people, soldiers, convicts, warders, and policemen." Moreover, the deployment of swearing, violence and sexual explicitness has become "part of the DNA" of American audiovisual products (Bucaria 2009, p. 16). In addition, Rodríguez-Medina (2015, p.2) believes that "there is a high frequency of dysphemisms in American crime films." This excessive use of swearwords represents a translation problem particularly for amateur subtitlers with less linguistic and pragmatic competence and less formal translation training. The language used by characters in such movies should be carefully handled since people are central elements in crime dramas. Hence, all features of the language characters use "from vocabulary to accent, are fundamental to the construction of the characters." (Guardini 1998, p. 97). This viewpoint is shared by Casarini (2014, p. 10), who argues that such a type of literary genre focuses on character types and their sociolects whose transference in the target text represents a challenge to the translators "who need to deal with the genre's intrinsic self-referential dynamics and with a mercurial language that can rarely have perfect interlinguistic equivalents".

In relation to this, the selected movies have the highest number of swearwords within this genre for a period between 2000 to 2010. The high occurrence of swearwords in the selected movies was confirmed by consulting sources such as Moad (2011) list of movies with the most audible uses of the word 'fuck'. (http://www.listology.com/quinton-moad/list/list-movies-most-audible-uses-word-fuck). The list ranks the most offensive movies on the basis of the instances of the word 'fuck' in each of them.

More importantly, the selected movies are popular movies and can be downloaded from the Internet; hence, viewers' accessibility to these movies is most likely. The movies' dialogue scripts and their subtitles can be downloaded from Internet Websites such as www.subscenes.com and www.opensubtitles.com to ascertain that the subtitling was done by amateur subtitlers.

5. Data Identification and Analysis

Data were collected by watching the movies and highlighting swearwords characters used. This is followed by checking these swearwords in the scripts for accurate identification and comparing the swearwords in the movies with their equivalent counterparts in the subtitles in Arabic.

As for the model adopted to examine the translation patterns of amateur subtitlers, it was that of Vermeer (1978/2000) known as *Skopostheorie*. The main focus of this model is on preserving the function of the source text in the target text regardless of the translation strategy adopted. Hence, the translation behavior within this theory can be understood as moving through a continuum with two extremes; foreignization is opted for on one extreme and on the other, for domestication (Venuti's, 1995). The translator may work along this continuum as long as the purpose of the translation strategy is justified in transferring the function of the translation to the recipients.

The *Skopostheorie* comes within the functionalist approach which represents a shift from the linguistic to the functionalist and sociocultural approach. It defines translation as a purposeful activity and emphasizes the function of the target text in the hosting culture rather than equivalence between source and the target texts. This approach is supported by Vermeer (2000, p. 221) who views translation as an "action" based on a source text with an aim or purpose that leads to a target text or what he calls '*translatum*'. The translator should figure out the purpose of the translation s/he is commissioned to undertake, and the recipients' needs and expectations within their cultural framework should come to the fore when selecting the translation strategy, hence each strategy is purposefully selected

(Nord, 1997). For this end, the translator needs to analyze the sociocultural and contextual factors that help identify the function of the source text and that of the *translatum* in the target culture.

For many scholars, the *Skopostheorie* gives the translator more freedom in opting for the translation strategy felt suitable in conveying the message to the target recipients. For example, Gentzler (2001, p. 71) argues that by adopting the *Skopostheorie*, "translators may choose to be faithful to the source text's spirit, or they may choose a word-for-word strategy, or they may add, delete, or change information as they see it fit, depending upon the cultural conditions and the needs of the audience/consumer." As for the suitability of *Skopostheorie* for subtitling swearwords in movies, Fawcett (2003, p. 158) argues that subtitlers need to free themselves from 'fidelity' to the source text and concentrate instead on the audience circumstances to achieve adequacy. As an appropriate approach in such situations, Fawcett affirms that "Skopostheorie comes into its own.

6. Results and Discussion

Applying Vermeer's (1978/2000) *Skopostheorie* on the present corpus helped arrange the emerging strategies on a continuum of two extremes, as in Figure 1. The right side extreme on the continuum was given the designation 'domestication' and the one on the left was given the designation 'foreignization' (Venuti, 1995). If the pendulum swings more towards the domestication pole, the translation pattern was target culture-oriented. If, on the other hand, it swings towards the foreignization pole, the pattern was source text-oriented. (Ramière, 2006). Following this presentation, a detailed discussion of each strategy is given with illustrative examples.

Figure 1. Subtitling strategies adopted in transferring swearwords into Arabic
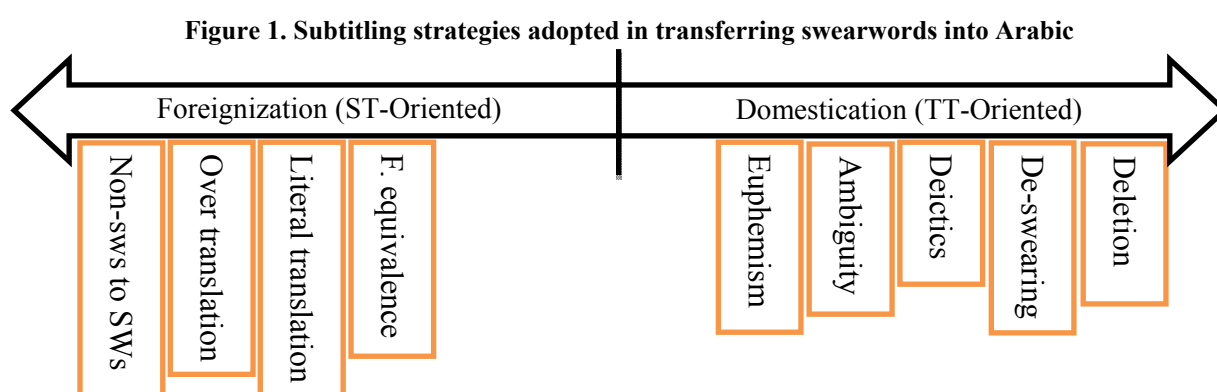
As shown in Figure 1 above, the analysis revealed that 5 target culture-oriented translation strategies (deletion, de-swearing, the use of deictic and other linguistic particles, ambiguity and euphemisms) and 4 source text-oriented translation strategies (changing non-swearwords to swearwords, over-translation, literal translation and functional equivalence) were adopted by the amateur subtitlers. In the next subsections, each of these strategies is discussed with typical examples starting with the most dominant strategy.

6.1 Deletion

By accounting for 42.79% of the total number of SWs in the corpus, deletion was the most dominant translation strategy. Deletion refers to the omission of SWs in the English movies when subtitling into Arabic. According to Dimitriu (2004, p. 165), this domestication strategy is used "in order to adjust - linguistically, pragmatically, culturally, or ideologically - the translated texts for their target audiences." As a result of this strategy, the total number of SWs in the Arabic subtitles was significantly decreased. Deletion represents the most vivid domestication translation strategy whereby the subtitler did not leave any traces of swearing overtones in the TT. However, according to the functionalist approach, it is considered an eligible translation strategy insofar as it is in line with the dominant cultural norms and recipients' expectations. Consider examples 1 and 2.

Example 1 (HT):

| What the <u>fuck</u> does that mean? | ما معنى هذا ؟ |
| | (Lit. What...... does this mean?) |

Example 1 above illustrates the deletion of the SW 'fuck' in the Arabic subtitles. In many other swearing instances such as this, the amateur subtitlers tended to replace the English swearwords from the sex related themes by words from other fields particularly the religious one. However, this tendency was not opted for this example. Rather, the swearword was deleted altogether; signaling a domestication orientation whereby the audiences were freed from the extra processing effort, hence readability is enhanced (Sperber and Wilson, 1986). In example 1, the subtitler might have thought that this was a mere question whereby the swearword 'fuck' had no role to play. Moreover, inserting a swearword in a question like this would sound unnatural to the Arab audiences, which is possibly why s/he opted for deletion. However, by deleting the swearword 'fuck' a great deal of the character's astonishment and annoyance was disguised from the target audiences. These were overtones the movie director wanted to portray about the character's reactions in this instance (Ljung, 2009).

It is important to state that the closest equivalent in Arabic for the English swearword 'fuck' is the word 'nǐk' [to copulate], yet it is a slang word that can never be used in writing because of the societal mores that prohibit slang expressions due to their strong connotations. Nevertheless, although the word 'nǐk' is from the sex activities semantic field, by itself it cannot be used as an interjection/expletive swearword unless it is merged into other grammatical constructions. For example, speakers might say 'x nakana', [x copulated with us], 'x nak um x', [x copulated with x's mother], among other constructions. However, it needs to be emphasized that in most of such instances of swearing in Arabic, the intention is abusive; to insult the addressee and can rarely be cathartic as is usually the case when using 'fuck' or 'fucking'. Besides, they are solely directed at a human addressee, whereas a great deal of swearing with 'fuck' can be directed to nonhuman or inanimate objects. Example 2 is taken from another semantic field to substantiate this point.

Example 2, (AD):

| Sit the <u>fuck</u> down, you <u>crazy</u> <u>bitch</u>! | اجلس عليك <u>اللعنة</u> |
| | (Lit. Sit down you...... <u>damned</u>.) |

Example 2 illustrates the deletion of the swearword 'crazy'. In other instances of rendering swearwords, the subtitlers maintained swearwords from the disability, diseases and abuses field intact in the subtitles. However, in example 2 this was not the case. The explanation for the deletion of the swearword 'crazy' in this example may come from the words surrounding the one referring to mental disability. That is to say, when a word in the vicinity is stronger, particularly more obscene, than the one referring to disability, the Arabic text becomes quickly more saturated with offense compared to the English text. Consequently, the subtitler found it difficult to render all instances of swearing simultaneously. In example 2, the swearword 'crazy' premodified the stronger swearword 'bitch' immediately following it. Despite the loss this deletion tendency might cause to the target audiences regarding the portrayal of the relationship between characters and the reflection of the general atmosphere in the movie, the orientation towards domestication is clear. Hence, the purpose of the translation strategy of deletion is to conform to the target recipients' cultural norms.

6.2 De-swearing

The second domesticating subtitling strategy was the use of non- swearwords as equivalents for English swearwords in the Arabic subtitles. Adopting this strategy implies that the subtitlers did not delete the swearwords used in the source text, but they replaced them with non- swearwords in the target text. De-swearing represents another

technique that emphasizes the amateur subtitlers' orientation towards domestication. It was one of the translation strategies highlighted by Han and Wang (2014) in their study on the subtitling of swearwords in English movies into Chinese. Examples 3 and 4 are illustrative of the use of this strategy.

Example 3 (AD):

| You know, I know that this is a big <u>pain in the ass.</u> | أعرف بأن الأمر كان <u>مزعجا</u> |
| | (Lit. I know that the matter was <u>annoying</u>.) |

In example 3, the idiomatic swearing expression 'pain in the ass' in the source text was replaced by the non-swearing Arabic word 'muz'ij', [annoying]. This de-swearing strategy may be justified on the basis that there is no direct counterpart in Arabic for the English swearing expression 'pain in the ass'. Moreover, literal translation would sound unnatural to the Arab audiences in addition to being highly offensive. Therefore, the subtitler opted for the use of a non-swearword although much of the emotive overtone was lost in the subtitles.

Example 4 (HT):

| You risked <u>my ass</u> without telling me? | لقد <u>عرضتني</u> للخطر بدون إخبارى ؟ |
| | (Lit. You exposed <u>me</u> to danger without telling me.) |

In example 4, the swearword 'ass' in the English text was replaced by the non-swearing phrase 'a'raḍtani', [exposed me], in the Arabic version. Here, the speaker did not simply say 'my life', rather s/he chose the swearing expression 'my ass' assuming it was the most suitable tool in conveying his/her inner feelings of anger. Opting for a non- swearword in the target text represents a domestication strategy that conforms to the target culture norms although the implied expressions of anger and dismay intended by the director were lost.

A closer look at examples 3 and 4 reveals that the subtitlers might have assumed that the skopos of the translation could better be conveyed in the translatum via adopting de-swearing as a translation strategy. In selecting a word in the subtitles that is devoid of any traces of offense, the subtitlers have brought the source text closer to the dominating norms in the Arab culture and Arab viewers' expectations. However, ameliorating the swearing force in the target text might mislead or confuse the viewers due to the passive effect stemming from the other channels in the movie (Rodríguez-Medina, 2015). Moreover, it does not reflect the character's psychological state to the viewers (Kovacic, 1995).

6.3 The Use of Deictic and other Linguistic Particles

The third domestication strategy adopted by the subtitlers was the use of any available deictic or linguistic particles in the target language system to replace swearwords in the subtitles. The result of this domestication strategy was that a great deal of the offensiveness resulting from the use of swearwords in the source text was ameliorated in the target. By opting for this strategy, the subtitlers were adhering to the dominating norms in the target culture. It is worth to note that the use of deictics was one of the subtitling strategies proposed by Tomaszkiewicz (1993), (as cited in Pettit 2009, p. 45) when dealing with swearwords. Consider the following examples:

Example 5 (HT):

| I knew this <u>shit</u> would happen. | كان عليَ أن أعرف <u>ذلك</u> .. |
| | (Lit. I should have known <u>that</u>.) |

In example 5, the English swearword 'shit' was replaced by the demonstrative 'dhalik', [that]. The swearword 'shit' and other words referring to faeces, wastes or excrements gain their swearing power from the filth and dirtiness of such

subjects. The swearing power of 'shit' is manifested in the wide array of meanings it can express such as unpleasantness, worthlessness, or as a response to anger, frustration, disgust, anguish or dismay (Montagu, 1967). It can be used for the expression of misfortune and even a problem or difficulty may be called a 'shit'. In this example, some of these meanings and uses of 'shit' were reflected in the context of the movie, whereby the speaker got annoyed because of the long time they were waiting for their friend. Thus, the word 'shit' was used by the speaker to express dismay and anger. In the subtitles, however, the use of the deictic 'dhalikah' does not fully reflect the speaker's psychological state. In other words, replacing the emotion laden swearword 'shit' in the source text by the emotion free demonstrative 'dhalikah' in the subtitles conveyed an inaccurate message to the target recipients of the speaker's reaction towards his friend's indifference (Stapleton, 2003). It should be stated that slang Arabic has the colloquial swearword 'khara' [faces] as exact equivalent for the word 'shit' (Ljung, 2011). However, it cannot be used in the media as it would cause offense to the viewers. Hence, the subtitler opted for the use of whatever deictic particles available in the context to avoid adding more offense to the subtitles. This is an evidence of the amateur subtitlers' domestication orientation when handling swearwords in Arabic subtitles.

Example 6 (HT):

| I ain't ever going back to that <u>motherfucker</u>. | لن أعود إلى هناك مرة أخرى |
| | (Lit. I will never come back <u>there</u> again.) |

In example 6, a more offensive swearword in the original text namely 'motherfucker' was used by the speaker to express his hatred and resentment of his annoying experience in prison. The speaker's degree of resentment of this experience was so high that he personalized the prison and addressed it as 'motherfucker'. In the Arabic subtitles, however, the English swearword 'motherfucker' was replaced by a place expletive 'hunakah', [there]. This was done because Arab viewers are highly sensitive of any reference to incest. As a result, all instances of swearing with the use of the word 'motherfucker' and its variants usually undergo a shift to other semantic fields to avoid objection on subtitling. In example 6, the subtitler found another solution by using a deictic particle namely 'hunakah', [there] to domesticate the swearing expression for Arab viewers via removing the sexual overtone embodied in the swearword 'motherfucker'. On this basis, the subtitler opted for replacing this English emotive swearword with the place deictic particle assuming that it would convey the function of the translation. Hence, from a functionalist perspective, the subtitler has succeeded in maintaining the skopos of the translation particularly in abiding by the target recipients' expectations although at the expense of removing emotive overtones of the use of a highly charged swearword in the source text.

6.4 Ambiguity

The use of ambiguous renditions is another domesticating strategy adopted by the amateur subtitlers when translating English swearwords into Arabic. Ambiguity in this context means that the translation was highly equivocal to the Arab viewers. Thus, accuracy was sacrificed for the sake of observing the viewers' expectations and cultural norms. This is illustrated in examples 7 and 8.

Example 7 (AD):

- Yeah. Maybe you can <u>blow me</u>.	حسنا بإمكانك اللحاق بي
- Fuck you, dick. I wanna come.	(Lit. Well, you can <u>follow me</u>)
	تبا لك أريد القدوم
	(My evil be fallen on, I <u>want to come</u>.)

In example 7, the sex activity swearing expression 'blow me' was replaced by the phrase 'al-laḥaqu bi', [follow

me], in the subtitles. In this context in the movie, the swearing expression 'blow me' was used by the speaker to tease and instigate the addressee by asking him to do a sexual practice that humiliates him. According to Dalzell and Victor (2006, p. 193), the expression 'blow me' implies "to perform oral sex". The equivocation caused to the Arab viewers by this translation stems from the fact that the sentence containing the expression 'blow me' was directly followed by the addressee's reply "-Fuck you, dick. I wanna come" which was translated into 'taban lakah uridu alqudum', [Lit. May evil be fall on you, I want to come]. As a result, the ambiguous translation 'you can follow me' cohered with the following translation "May evil be fall on you, I want to come". The coherence rule was achieved because the phrase 'want to come' received a reply 'follow me' in the subtitles, both indicating movement to another place instead of indicating the sex activity in the expression 'blow me'. However, this was exploited by the subtitler to disguise offensive overtones from the Arab audiences. Indeed, the other surrounding swearwords 'fuck you' and 'dick' as well the facial expressions of the addressee stress the communication of the sexual overtone of the expression 'blow me'.

Example 8 (AD):

Don't <u>get your panties all in a wad</u>, Olivia.	لاتدع سروالك يسندل
	(Lit. Do not <u>let your panties shove on</u>.)

In example 8, the slang idiomatic expression 'get panties in a wad' in the source text was replaced by the phrase 'sirwalukah yusandel', [your panties shove on] in the subtitles. According to the online Urban Dictionary, the expression 'get panties in a wad' means "get all upset over something trivial, as if one's underwear has rolled up into an uncomfortable ball between one's butt cheeks." In this scene in the movie, this expression was used as a reply to a mother's impatience to have her little boy be sent back home before it gets late at night. The expression was used by the speaker to indicate to the mother that it is not a big issue to be so concerned about. This meaning was completely lost in the ambiguous rendition in the Arabic subtitles. In this case, by opting for the word 'yusandal', [shove on], the ambiguity was created by the subtitler maybe because s/he was unclear of the English idiomatic expression 'get your panties all in a wad'. The referred to ambiguity stems from the obscurity and vagueness of the classical word 'yusandel' which is completely alien to the majority of the Arab audiences. Indeed, reviewing classical Arabic dictionaries showed one entry for the verb 'sandalah' which means 'shoving on heavy socks to kill the monster' (Ibin Manzur, 1993, pp. 629-630). This indicates that the Arabic rendition of this expression does not make sense to the viewers in addition to being irrelevant in terms of equivalence to the source text swearword. Hence, ambiguity was meant to conceal much of the obscenity of the swearwords in the target text. It is interesting to note that the use of vague expressions was also identified by Parini (2012) as a censoring tactic for rendering objectionable words into Italian, though this strategy leads to lack of clarity.

6.5 Euphemisms

Another translation strategy adopted by the amateur subtitlers in rendering swearwords into Arabic is the use of euphemisms which are "milder words and phrases used to replace swearing." (Ljung, 2011, p. 11). In line with this definition, the use of euphemisms is meant to express certain offensive concepts while disguising their harshness which "may jeopardize the public image of Arab viewers." (Al-Adwan, 2015, p. 9). In subtitling, using euphemistic expressions instead of swearwords represents a domestication strategy. Examples 9 and 10 illustrate this use.

Example 9 (HT):

you wanted me to <u>blow in </u>you.	أنكِ تريدينى أن <u>أمارس الحب</u> معكِ
	(Lit. You (female) want me to <u>practice love</u> with you.)

In example 9, the use of the swearing expression 'blow in' in the source text was euphemized into 'umarisu al-ḥub',

[practice love] in the subtitles. According to Dalzell and Victor (2006), the expression 'blow in' indicates 'ejaculation'. In this scene in the movie, the speaker used this expression while he was in a brawl with a woman, a fact which aggravated the pejorative use of the expression. The use of this sexual expression was disparaging since the speaker's intent was to humiliate the addressee particularly if the speaker's high tone of voice is taken into account. The Arabic counterpart 'umarisu al-ḥub', [practice love], on the other hand, is highly softened and, as a result, it could not be equivalent to that in the English text. As a direct equivalent for the English expression 'blow in', colloquial Arabic has the word 'nakah', [fuck/copulate with]. However, this option was not taken up by the subtitler because of its offensiveness and perhaps the translation would sound unnatural in screen subtitling. This indicates that the subtitler was attempting to mitigate the severity of the swearing expressions for the Arab audiences. This translation strategy is further illustrated by example 10.

Example 10 (AD):

| This is just the beginning, <u>bitch</u>. | أنها البداية فقط عزيزي |
| | (Lit. It is just the beginning, <u>my</u> <u>dear</u>.) |

In example 10, the swearword 'bitch' in the source text was euphemized through the use of the word 'azizi', [my dear/darling] in the subtitles. Generally speaking, the Arabic word 'azizi' expresses infatuation and intimacy. It is used among very close friends and even between lovers or husbands and wives. The swearword 'bitch', on the other hand, is offensive and in this context it was used by a male to aggravate his threat for another male since the word 'bitch' is commonly used to address females. Opting for euphemism made the subtitler avoid using an Arabic equivalent swearing expression in similar situations namely; 'safil', [mean/of low status] or even worse, 'a'hir', [licentious] as the intent was to meet the viewers' expectations.

6.6 Changing Non-swearwords to Swearwords

The change of non- swearwords in the source texts to swearwords in the subtitles is one of the strategies adopted within the foreignization orientation. This strategy is the opposite of the deletion and de-swearing strategies representative of domestication. The change of non- swearwords to swearwords resulted in increasing the swearing severity of certain scenes in the movies as relayed to the Arab audiences in the subtitles. Examples 11 and 12 are some typical examples of this translation behavior.

Example 11 (HT):

| <u>Come on</u>, dude. | بالله عليك يا صاح |
| | (Lit. <u>For God's sake</u>, friend) |

In example 11, the non-swearing expression 'come on' in the source text was rendered into the religious swearing expression 'bilahi alaikah', [for God's sake] in the subtitles. In this scene, the speaker used the non-swearing expression 'come on' simply to calm down the addressee who got angry as his employment application for the job was rejected. This calming down intent was exaggerated in the Arabic subtitles with the use of the religious expression 'bilahi alaikah' which is full of emotional overtones. The other equivalent non- swearwords such as 'hayah', [come on], 'la bas alaikah', [Lit. no harm on you] or 'la tabtais', [Lit. do not be disappointed], which best express the speaker's calming down intent could have been used by the subtitler to convey this meaning. However, since none of these expressions was opted for, a shift in register from the informal to the religious was incurred. As a result of this shift, the subtitles became more emotion laden than intended by the movie director. A possible explanation for this is the fact that in the Arabic Muslim culture, 'bilahi alaikah', [for God's sake] implies taking an oath 'qasam' with high obligation. Thus, with the use of the emotion laden religious swearing expression, the subtitlers skewed the purpose

embodied in the source text to the Arab audiences, signaling a foreignization strategy. It might be argued that this translation trend shows that the subtitlers were under the influence of the general atmosphere of the movies hence, they overgeneralized swearing instances to non-swearing expressions. Example 12 further illustrates this strategy.

Example 12 (HT):

| Man, craziest head I know is going to be a fed. | يا للهول, أكثر إنسان جنونا أعرفه .. |
| | (Lit. Oh my God, the craziest man I know.) |

In example 12, the non- swearword 'man' in the source text was replaced by the highly shocking religious swearing expression 'yala al-hawil', [Oh my God], in the Arabic subtitles. Indeed, the word 'man' in the source text was used in an intimate situation as a vocative particle to get the addressee's attention to what was about to be stated. The speaker was astonished to see his old 'crazy' friend appointed as a fed. This intimate situation was not reflected in the subtitles with the use of the religious swearing expression 'yala al-hawel', which is usually used in the expression of very dreadful situations in Arabic. As a result of this twisting technique, a wrong message was conveyed to the Arab viewers who may question the high intensity of the swearing act in the subtitles. A situation like this can be expressed in Arabic with non- swearwords such as 'yal al-ajab', [Lit. what an astonishment], or 'takhayal', [imagine], which are functionally equivalent to the non- swearword in the movie dialogue. In this case, changing non- swearwords to swearwords is seen as a foreignization strategy that worked into increasing the foreignness of the movie to the Arab viewers and an indication of lack of experience in translation.

6.7 Over-translation

The second foreignization strategy is over-translation, which implies that the amateur subtitlers exaggerated instances of swearing in the subtitles by adding swearwords or expressions not found in the source text. The result was an intensified degree of swearing in comparison to that intended in the source text. Over exaggerating swearing instances in the subtitles conflates with the expectations of the target recipients. Examples 13 and 14 illustrate this foreignization tendency.

Example 13 (AD):

| - Dickwad | أيها السافل الحقير |
| | (Lit. You mean and villain) |

In example 13, the single swearword 'dickwad' in the movie dialogue was rendered in the subtitles using two swearwords 'safil', [mean/ of low status] and 'ḥaqīr', [villain]. In fact, the speaker used the swearword 'dickwad' to address his friend in a friendly atmosphere to tease him in front of some girls. This indicates that the swearword was used for social purposes namely to create banter and was not meant to be interpreted literally. In situations like this, Culpeper (1996, p. 352) argues that "banter reflects and fosters social intimacy (i.e. relative equality in terms of authority and closeness in terms of social distance): the more intimate a relationship, the less necessary and important politeness is." On this basis, the use of the swearword in the above example needs not be interpreted as an offense. In the Arabic version, it is likely that the subtitler had failed to appreciate this intended purpose of the swearword which led him/her to exaggerate its force by using two swearwords instead of one. The subtitler might have thought that the swearword in the source text was very pejorative to the extent that one swearword in the target text was not enough to convey its communicative effect to the target recipients. However, the incompatibility between the severity of the swearing act in the subtitles and the humorous atmosphere reflected by the image on the screen would perhaps be noticed by the viewers. Example 14 further illustrates this strategy.

Example 14 (HT):

| Because you're a little <u>faggot</u>. | لأنك شاذاً و ملعون |
| | (Lit. Because you are a <u>homosexual</u> and <u>damned</u>.) |

Example 14 contains the single swearword 'faggot' which was rendered by two swearwords 'shadh', [homosexual] and 'mala'ǔn', [damned] in the subtitles. The word 'faggot' was used as a comment by the speaker to criticize an idea presented by the addressee. In the subtitles, however, instead of toning down the offensive swearword in the movie for the Arab audience, the degree of the offensiveness was increased by the subtitler. Put differently, the selected swearword 'shadh', [homosexual] in the subtitles was enough by itself to cause disgust and resentment for the Arab audience because homosexuality is a sign of disgrace in the Arab culture (Baker, 1992). Such a repulsive reaction was intensified by the use of the religious swearword 'mala'oon', [damned]. With the use of these words, such a foreignization tendency could have increased the wave of protest on the part of the target audiences.

6.8 Literal Translation

The third foreignization strategy adopted by the amateur subtitlers was literally rendering the movie dialogue swearwords in the Arabic subtitles. That is to say, the amateur subtitlers provided the denotative meaning of the swearword in the source text as if detached from the context in which it was used. In such a case, the subtitlers were keen at preserving the spirit of the original text. This finding agrees with that arrived at by Izwaini (2014) who argued that Arab amateur subtitlers of foreign movies literally transferred swearwords in these movies in the subtitles. Moreover, according to Ferklová, (2014), the tendency for literal translation is a consequence of the vulnerability of subtitling. To explicate, since the subtitler believes that the viewers can still hear the swearword articulated in the source text, s/he becomes reluctant in providing another equivalent in the target language. Examples 15 and 16 illustrate this translation strategy.

Example 15 (HT):

| And they will <u>burn</u> me | و لسوف يحرقونني ... |
| | (Lit. They will <u>burn</u> me) |

In example 15, the swearword 'burn' in the movie dialogue was literally rendered into 'yaḥriqu', [burn] from the same semantic field in the subtitles. The swearword 'burn' was metaphorically used in this scene as a cathartic function to express the speaker's annoyance toward imminent rejection of his application for a job. In the Arabic subtitles, on the other hand, by opting for literalness, the subtitler could have caused confusion to the Arab audiences (Rodriguez-Madina, 2015). To reiterate, the word 'yaḥriqu', [burn] in Arabic does not imply being rejected as a candidate for the job. Hence, when the audiences read this word, they might have thought that the act of burning the speaker could have been real. A corollary of this option was that the translation outcome was neither idiomatic nor natural. Therefore, fidelity to the source text prevented the subtitler from looking for other options that could have better conveyed the meaning of rejection. Words such as 'yarfuẓu', [reject] or even 'yaṭrudu', [dismiss] would have been a better option. Although these words are non-swearing options and fall short of expressing the same level of annoyance, they are target audience friendly. However, insistence to keep the spirit of the source text impaired loyalty to the target recipients. Example 16 further illustrates the use of this strategy.

Example 16 (AD):

| Oh, <u>Jesus</u>! You just tell me how much and I will write the check. | يا يسوع – أخبرني وساحرر الشيك فورا |
| | (Lit. <u>Jesus</u>, tell me and I will endorse the check immediately) |

Example 16 illustrates a rather different and a religious sensitive case. In this example, the religious word 'Jesus' was literally rendered into 'yasua', [Jesus] in the subtitles. The expletive interjection expression 'Oh, Jesus!' was used to express a mother's deep grief and anguish for the killing of her little son which is the norm in English Christian communities to use this highly charged steam venting religious expression in situations like this. However, in the recipient Arab Muslim culture, this literal rendition might have caused a wave of protest. The reason for the protest might be attributed to the religious beliefs of the different cultures. In this sense, whilst Christian people believe in Trinity, Muslims believe in the oneness of Allah. Therefore, to express the same level of grief and sorrow of the mother, a Muslim would have said an expression such as 'ya ilahi' or 'ya Allah', [Oh my God]. Accordingly, when handling cultural sensitive issues such as this one, it might be wiser to opt for more neutral target culture-oriented translation strategies such as cultural equivalence or adaptation. However, in the above example, fidelity to the source text contradicted dominating norms in the target culture. In this case, by literally translating these swearwords, the amateur subtitlers preserved the spirit of the source text whereby the target audiences were forced to come very close to it (Venuti, 1995). Thus, it is likely that foreignization was what the subtitlers were aiming at.

6.9 Functional Equivalence

The last identified translation strategy was the attempt on the part of the amateur subtitlers to find equivalent swearwords in the target language that best retain the functions of swearwords in the source text. This strategy is different from literal translation in that the equivalent swearwords were not used on the basis of their denotative meaning but rather, on the similarity of the equivalent effect expressed by the swearwords in both languages (Nida, 1964). Accordingly, the functions expressed by the swearwords in the movie dialogue were maintained in the Arabic subtitles; hence, fidelity and adequacy were both achieved. By the same token, the subtitlers were loyal to the movie directors' intention for using the swearwords. In other words, the amateur subtitlers succeeded in conveying the same functions of swearwords as used in the movies to the target audiences. Examples 17 and 18 are illustrative of the use of this strategy.

Example 17 (AD):

| - I mean, your brother is a <u>dickhead</u>. | لكن اخاك شخص <u>مغفل</u> |
| | (Lit. But your brother is a <u>stupid</u> person) |

In example 17, the swearword 'dickhead' from the sex organs domain was replaced by a swearword 'mughafal', [stupid] from the mental disability domain in the subtitles. Nevertheless, both swearwords express the same notion of insulting the mental ability of the addressee. In this scene in the movie, the speaker metaphorically used the swearword 'dickhead' to blame the addressee that because of his/her irrationality they ended up in this difficult situation. The same meaning was conveyed to the Arab audience through the use of the swearword 'mughafal', [stupid]. Accordingly, the skopos of the translation was relayed intact in the translatum to get a more immediate response from the audience though in a lesser degree of offense.

Example 18 (HT):

| You're such a <u>prick</u>. | أنت مجرد <u>حمار</u>, |
| | (Lit. You are just a <u>donkey</u>) |

In example 18, the swearword 'prick' in the movie dialogue was replaced by the word 'ḥimar', [donkey], in the subtitles. In this scene, the speaker used the swearword 'prick' to reproach a cop who intended to arrest them, but finally appeared to be their old friend. Here, the speaker intended to insult the addressee as being obnoxious for scaring them. This function of the swearword in the source text was retained in the subtitles through the use of the swearword

ḥimar', [donkey] whose figurative meaning in Arabic is normally used to indicate thick headedness and unpleasant behavior. Hence, it is used as an insult inducing great humiliation (Motamadi, 2008), which is suitable in situations similar to the one expressed in the movie dialogue. On this basis, the functional equivalence strategy was suitable to maintain loyalty to the intention intended in the source text. Consequently, the skopos of the translation was maintained in the translatum and the recipients were brought close to the source text, hence functionality and loyalty were achieved.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the translation strategies adopted by the Arab amateur subtitlers when rendering swearwords in English movies into Arabic revealed inconsistencies in their translation behavior. These subtitling translators adopted certain domestication strategies which display a target text-orientation and other foreignization strategies which display a source text-orientation. These are summarized as follows.

As for the domestication strategies, 5 strategies including deletion, de-swearing, the use of deictic and other linguistic substitutes, ambiguity, and euphemisms were adopted by the subtitlers. These strategies were arranged on a target culture-oriented axis of a continuum according to how far each strategy was positioned towards domestication. On this basis, deletion was the most vivid domestication strategy as it eradicated any traces of swearing in the Arabic subtitles by omitting the swearwords. De-swearing came next to deletion as a domestication strategy in which the swearwords were not deleted by the subtitlers, but they replaced them with Arabic words that were devoid of swearing. This strategy was followed by the use of whatever deictics or linguistic particles the context provides to ameliorate the swearwords for the Arab audiences. Ambiguity was the fourth domestication strategy, which resulted in equivocation in terms of rendering the intended meanings of the swearwords. At the end of this axis, euphemism was placed close to the point separating this axis from the foreignization axis since by using euphemistic expressions traces of swearing instances in the source texts remain in the target texts despite being toned down. Taken together, the domestication strategies worked to minimize the foreignness of the source text, resulting in a transparent and fluent translation outcome to the Arab audiences (Yang, 2010).

From a functionalist perspective, by opting for these strategies, the amateur subtitlers were attempting to abide by the active cultural norms in the Arab community and the expectations and needs of the target recipients. Indeed, the functionalist approach enables the translator to select any of the previously mentioned strategies as long as the skopos of translation is retained in the translatum. In the fansubbing community of practice, this skopos is determined by the subtitler him/herself. On the basis of the function the amateur subtitler assigns to the source text, s/he is given freedom to select the strategy as deemed suitable to achieve acceptability of translation even if that was at the expense of fidelity to the intention of the source text's producer.

As for the source text-orientation, the amateur subtitlers adopted 4 foreignization strategies including changing non-swearwords to swearwords, over-translation, literal translation, and functional equivalence. Changing non- swearwords to swearwords was the clearest foreignization strategy adopted since by opting for this strategy, the subtitlers added swearwords originally not found in the source text. In this light, this strategy was located very far to the end of the foreignization axis on the continuum. This was followed by over-translation, a strategy which exaggerated the swearing effect of swearwords in the subtitles by employing two swearwords in the subtitles to replace one in the source texts. These two foreignization strategies conveyed different functions of swearwords to the target recipients than those intended by the source text producer. As for literal translation, it conflated with the definition of swearwords adopted in this study. Put differently, opting for literal translation ruled out the associative meanings swearwords were used to communicate. Finally, the most faithful translation strategy used to convey the intention of the source text's producer via the swearwords used was functional equivalence. The adoption of this strategy suggests that the subtitlers had fully analyzed the function of a swearword in the source text and selected an appropriate equivalent in the target language that best conveyed its meaning whilst at the same time taking into account certain issues such as self-censorship.

Nevertheless, the foreignization strategies enhanced the foreign nature of the movies and portrayed an environment alien to the Arab audiences. Hence, the sense of estrangement created by such strategies became inevitable. In fact, according to Vermeer (2000, p. 231), this situation was not ruled out by the *Skopos theories* as it does not claim "that a translated text should *ipso facto* conform to the target culture behavior or expectations". Rather, "a translation must always "adapt" to the target culture". As a result of employing foreignization strategies, the subtitles became thick and non-fluent to the Arab audiences. Moreover, the subtitlers became visible by retaining the foreign elements of the source texts and breaking sociocultural and ideological conventions of the target culture. Indeed, for some translation scholars, subtitling is meant to be source text-oriented since all original verbal and visual elements in the movie are kept intact and subtitles are imposed on these elements (Ulrych, 2000; Guardini, 1998).

Whether the overall translation behavior was source text or target culture oriented can be seen from the number of identified strategies on each axis and the percentage of each of these strategies. As previously indicated, 5 domestication and 4 foreignization strategies were adopted by the subtitlers.

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التوطين أم التغريب: الاستراتيجيات المتبعة في الترجمة المرئية غير المهنية للكلمات البذيئة في أفلام الجريمة الأمريكية إلى اللغة العربية

عبد شاحوذ خلف [1]، صبرية محمد رشيد [2]

ملخص

إن الطبيعة الفظة للكلمات البذيئة تجعل عملية نقلها إلى ثقافة أخرى مشكلة في عملية الترجمة المرئية. والسبب في ذلك يعود إلى اختلاف الثقافات في درجة تسامحها في استخدام مثل تلك الكلمات وخصوصا عند عرضها في وسائل الإعلام. وبناءً على ذلك، ينبغي على المترجمين المرئيين الحذر عند التعاطي مع قضية نقل المفردات البذيئة الحساسة. وعلى أية حال, فعلى الرغم من أن اختيار إستراتيجية معينة للترجمة يتأثر بمختلف العوامل الإيديولوجية والثقافية والسياقية, فهناك اجماع على أن المفردات البذيئة أما أن ترقق أو تحذف تماما في عملية الترجمة. وفي ضوء هذا المفهوم, تحاول هذه الدراسة تحديد الاستراتيجيات التي يتبناها المترجمون المرئيون العرب الهواة عند نقل المفردات البذيئة في أفلام الجريمة الأمريكية إلى اللغة العربية. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم جمع عينة للدراسة تتكون من النصوص الحوارية المكتوبة لاثنين من تلك الأفلام يحتويان على نسبة عالية من المفردات البذيئة وترجماتها المرئية باللغة العربية. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك, تم تبني نظرية سكوبص ثيري للعالم فيرمير (2000/1978) في تحليل استراتيجيات الترجمة المستخدمة وكذلك نظرية العالم فيونتي (1995) للتوطين أو التغريب لتحديد السلوك العام للمترجمين سواء كان يتجه نحو النص أو الثقافة الأصلية أم نحو النص أو الثقافة الهدف. وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى انه تم استخدم عددا من استراتيجيات الترجمة التوطينية للتماشي مع التقاليد الثقافية في الثقافة الهدف، وعددا من استراتيجيات الترجمة التغريبية للحفاظ على روح النص الأصلي. وعلى أية حال، كان السلوك الترجمي العام يتجه نحو الثقافة الهدف.

الكلمات الدالة: المفردات البذيئة، الترجمة غير المهنية، السلوك الترجمي، التوطين، التغريب.