



## **Translating Politeness Principle & Speech Acts from English into Arabic in Dubbed Children's Movies**

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**Abstract** : This paper investigates how Arab translators render Politeness Principle and Speech Acts from English into Arabic in dubbed children's movies. Analytical method is adopted. It analyzes five dubbed children's movies. Arab translators empaddition, Omission and Modification strategies to convey these pragmatic aspects from English into Arabic.

### **1.0.Introduction**

This paper aims at investigating some pragmatic features – Speech Acts and Politeness Principle of dubbed children's movies from English into Arabic in the Arab world. Also, it depicts how Arab translators deal with such pragmatic features during dubbing process.

The discussion of the pragmatic features - politeness principle and speech acts – in this paper is based on the analysis of five movies for children along with their Arabic dubbed versions. The original scripts of these movies are available online, whereas the Arabic dubbed versions have been carefully transcribed. These movies are chosen because of their availability as well as their regular broadcasting on Arab television. Further more, the chosen movies are Oscar winners. These movies are : Lion King( 1994), Incredibles(1994), Cars 2 (2003), Toy Story (1995) and The Rescuers Under Down(1990).

An analytical method is adopted in this paper. The analytical method is conducted by means of a close analysis of examples, not so much to pass judgments on the product, rather to investigate the linguistic aspects that pose difficulty, the errors that result from this difficulty (if any) and the strategies adopted by the translator to overcome this difficulty (if any).

### **2.0. Questions of Research :**

**This paper tries to answer the following questions :**

- 1-Are Arab translators aware of Politeness Principle and Speech Acts during dubbing process?
- 2-What are the strategies Arab translators use to convey Politeness Principle and Speech Acts from English into Arabic?

### **3.0.Theoretical Framework**

Nowadays, there are various cultures in the world, and translation emerges as a tool to bridge the gap between various societies. It is worth mentioning that

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there is a relation between pragmatics and translation. Abulhassan (2011) states that they are semantic in nature, aiming at understanding and facilitating communication. Jacobson (2000) defines translation as an interpretation of verbal signs by other verbal signs in a different language.

In the translation process, a translator should pay attention to the language in use to convey the SL message accurately. Levy stresses that “as all semiotic processes, translation has its pragmatic dimension as well” (2000, p. 165). The pragmatic approach has three important features: situationality, intentionality, and acceptability. According to Abulhassan (2011, p. 14), “situationality refers to the appropriate use in a particular situation, intentionality to the intention of the producer and acceptability to the effect of the SLT on the readers”.

The pragmatic problems may appear, generally, in translation and dubbing, in particular, when the SL and TL have different pragmatic principles. Different languages employ different pragmatic principles and maxims in the same communication behavior. Leech (1983) illustrates “that languages have different pragmalinguistic structures and norms and transferring. The norms of one community may lead to pragmatic failure” (p. 231). Thus, a principle of politeness may differ from one language to another. Also, what is understood as a request in one community is not understood in the same way in another community. This is called translator’s competence. A translator should identify the pragmatic inferences between the SL and the TL. A definition for the pragmatic competence as “The ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context.” (Thomas, 1983, p. 94 as cited in Cutting, 2002, p. 159).

As a kind of translation, dubbing is closely related to pragmatics. “The pragmatic approach goes beyond the syntactic and semantic code of the text” (Abulhassan, 2011, p. 14). Like the pragmatic approach, dubbing is concerned with the verbal elements of the text as well as non-verbal to convey SL message accurately

### **3.1. Speech Acts (SA)**

One of the most important pragmatic concepts is Speech Acts (SA). Austin (1969) introduces the term to mean “The action performed in saying something.” Leech (1983)

views that a regular speech act should have the following semantic characteristics:

1. The verb of the main clause is an illocutionary verb
2. This verb is in a simple present tense
3. The subject of this verb is in the first person
4. The indirect object of this verb, if one is present, is you
5. Optionally, this verb is preceded by the adverb hereby.

6. The verb is followed (exception elliptic Called cases) by reported speech clauses reformed in saying something."

Austin revolutionized the way people think of language. Not only do people use language to make statements, but also to perform actions. A speech act is represented by the issuance of a certain kind of utterance (the locutionary act), together with reference to the intention of the speaker (the illocutionary force such as commands, and promises), and the effect it achieves on the listener (the perlocutionary act).

In the process of dubbing, a translator should be certain of applying these previous semantic characteristics to the verb in order to convey the intended meaning correctly. Also, s/he should try to understand the intention of the speaker (commands, orders, warning, and the like) well. Austin (1969) suggests that it is possible to distinguish a number of broad classes or families of speech acts which are classified according to their illocutionary force. He suggests the following classes:

1. Verdictives are typified by the giving of a verdict, estimate, reckoning or appraisal and finding.
2. Excersitives that mean the exercising of powers rights or influence, exemplified by voting, ordering, urging, advising and warning etc.
3. Commissives are typified by promising or otherwise undertaking.
4. Behavitives means what to do with social behaviors and attitudes, for example apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing and challenging.
5. Expositives mean how to make it clear how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation. Also, how we are using words. For example, I reply, I argue, I concede, I illustrate, I assume, and I postulate.(, Austin: 1969:pp.151-152 cited in Malmkjar: 1991: pp.418-419)

Austin assures that there are many marginal cases, and many instances of overlapping. Moreover, speech acts are classified into direct and indirect speech acts. In Searle's terms, an indirect speech act (ISA) is a speech act performed by means of another. In direct speech acts (DSA), there is a direct relationship between the form and the function whereas in ISAs, the form does not directly reflect its functional use.

What is important is how hearers interpret the force of ISAs. Felicity conditions are quite helpful in this regard " In ISAs, the form resembles a certain DSA, but one or more of the felicity conditions are obviously violated. Meanwhile, one or more of the felicity conditions for the underlying ISA are mentioned by the locution " (Peccei, 1999, p. 55).

For Searle, "Felicity conditions" are classified as follows:

1. General conditions: the speaker is not acting nonsense and the hearer must hear and understand;
2. Preparatory conditions: the hearer will benefit from the act;
3. Content conditions: different speech acts have different content conditions.
4. Sincerity conditions: the speaker is sincere (Peccei, 1999, p. 51; cited in Cutting, 2002, p. 18).

Accordingly, understanding the speech acts of the TL is very essential in translation, in general, and dubbing, in particular. Since misunderstanding the illocutionary force of the speech acts may lead to distorting the dubbing process and to misconveying the SL message. Thus, the result may be unfaithful translation.

Rendering speech acts could lead to challenges as translators should pay due attention to the following issues:

1. “Mistranslating speech acts is due to the difference between the sense and the force of utterances, in other words, locutionary and illocutionary acts” (Hatim, 2001, p. 179).
2. Literal translation of speech acts does not produce the desired effect as “Translators are invited to reproduce locutionary acts and preserve illocutionary acts to achieve the same perlocutionary (effect) in the target language” (Blum-Kulka, 1981, p. ). Furthermore, the illocutionary force of the whole text should be preserved in the TL.
3. “Speech acts are culturally bound and vary from a community to another, and from a culture to another” (Blum-Kulka, 1981). Aziz (1998, p. 129) notices that English speakers use indirectness to express orders or requests, but Arab speakers use direct speech acts. It is noticeable that Arab speakers use religious formulas to express thanking and greetings.

### **3.2. Politeness Principle**

This section examines how expressions of politeness are rendered in dubbing, and how translators deal with these expressions while dubbing. Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as “A communicative process that means the use of language to show a friendly attitude to people. It serves to establish interpersonal relationships among language users(p.88). In other words, politeness is a tool reflecting rapport among community members. “Politeness is a pragmatic phenomenon that is not expressed by the form of the words, but by their function and meaning. It implies speakers “choice of linguistic expressions to organize their interpersonal relationships” (Cutting, 2002, p.105). .

One of the most important terms related to politeness is face which Goffman (1987) defines as “The public presentation of self or the public self-image” (p. 61). A rational person is able to choose the appropriate linguistic

expressions to maintain the mutual faces of the speaker and the interlocutor. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are the events which “run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and the speaker” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). There are two major types of face: the negative, and the positive. “Negative face is the desire to be independent and not to be imposed on by others. Positive face is the desire to be appreciated by others and to show involvement with them” (Brown/ Levinson,1987,pp. 61-2). These types are used in pragmatics to analyze the rapport between the speakers.

#### **4.0. Anylsis of Data**

##### **4.1. Speech Acts**

Translators render speech acts in the children’s movies under analysis to convey the intended meaning of the target speech acts. Sometimes, translators fail to transfer the speech acts into the TL. The following is a discussion of how translators render Speech Acts from English into Arabic.

Understanding the intended meaning of the Speech Acts makes the dubbing process easier. Translators succeed in conveying the intended meaning beyond the different types of Speech Acts into the TL. For instance, Helen asks her husband, Bob, to intervene to stop the quarrel between their son and daughter “Do not just stand there. I need you intervene,” (Incredibles, table 2)  
”صبحي اعمل حاجة. ما تقفش تتفرج.. عايزاك تتدخل“

The translator realizes that the intended meaning of the request is to put an end to the fight, so s/he resorts to adding *اصبحي اعمل حاجة* to create the same pragmatic effect of a request in English in Arabic.

In Lion King, Zazu cries when he, Simba, and Nala (the heroes in the movie) were surrounded by some naughty hyenas: “That’s Mr. Banana Beak, fuzzy. And right now we are all in very real danger” (table 1)

انا الأستاذ أبو منقار ودلوقتي كلنا روحنا في داهية

. The illocutionary force of the direct declarative speech act is rendered into TL via a famous Arabic expression: *’روحنا في داهية* the translation is complemented by nonverbal elements: trembling heroes and wild hyenas. In the scene, the heroes trembling are surrounded by three hyenas and the cubs are hiding behind Zazu, the bird. again illocutionary force of SAs is rendered In Cars 2, when Matar expresses his regret after losing cars race, saying: “This ... This is my fault.” (table 3 ) which is dubbed as *كل اللي حصل كان غلطتي*. The translation stresses the expressive speech act literally to show how remorseful Matar is. In a similar vein, McQueen (the hero of Cars 2) expresses his anger with Matar who caused them to lose the race: “I do not need your help...I do not need your help,” (table 3)

, literally rendered as *مش محتاج مساعدتك...مش محتاج مساعدتك*. The purpose of repetition either in the SL, or in the TL is to show how angry McQueen is after losing the race.

The means through which an opinion is expressed in English is important as in *Incredibles* when Helen says, "I think you need to be more flexible," (table 2) *أنت محتاج تبقي مرن*. The target audience understands that Helen admires Bob and wants him to change himself for better. Thus, the translation has the same pragmatic influence as the original because it preserves the effect of speech act in the TL. As indicated in Appendix 3, the translator renders what Mama tells Polin: "Whoever finds a friend find a treasure," (*Cars 2*, table 3) into a famous Arabic expression: *واحد عنده صديق يبقي عنده كنز* which transfers the communicative nature of the speech act.

the SL message communicatively. Therefore, Arab children get the meaning as the English children do.

Wilbur says, "I can land this thing on a dime", rendered as (table 5) *أقولك إيه أنا أقدر اهبط علي قشايه*. Wilbur's intention here is to show how skillful he is. Using these *أقدر*, and *قشايه* is apt in order to preserve the intended meaning in the given translation.

Jake says, "I can make your stay pleasant, don't hesitate to ask"( table 5) rendered as

*لو في حاجة ممكن اعملها اطلبني وأنا أنفذ*

The illocutionary force behind this direct speech is offering services which is transmitted into Arabic communicatively.

A doctor says, "Hop to it, ladies. We've got a bent bird on our hands," (*The rescuers under down*, Table 5), *يلا يا بنات إحنا لازم نعالج الطائر المسكين ده*. The speaker's intention of request has been translated into the following colloquial expressions *يلا*, and *المسكين* to clarify the meaning in the TL.

In the same movie, Wilbur shouts, "Relax? I have never been relaxed in my life!" (table 5), translated as *اهدأ! أنا عمري ما هديت أكثر من كده*. Wilbur intends to assert that he is relaxed while being given an injection. The literal translation succeeds in conveying this illocutionary force of the speech act.

## **4.2. Politeness Principle**

One area of meaning that should be balanced in dubbing process is the different strategies of politeness used in the SL. The factors, mentioned in chapter 4 determine the characters' variation between directness and indirectness. In the following examples, some utterances are examined to reveal how the different politeness expressions are rendered in children dubbed movies. The first set of examples stress the preservation of politeness expressions in dubbing. Firstly, Zazu says, "Oh, just look at you two. Little seeds of romance, blossoming in the Savannah. Your parents will be thrilled"

يا عيني عليكم أنتم الجوز لايقين على بعض.. يافرحة أهاليكم بيكم يوم ما (Lion King, table 1), تتلاقوا Zazu's utterance uses a positive, politeness strategy. His praise, and admiration of both Nala and Simba are categorized under positive politeness. Scar as well states, "Yes, well ...forgive me for not leaping for joy. Bad back, you know" (Lion King, table 1),

كان نفسي اتنطط من الفرحة. بس ظهري بيوجعني

The politeness strategy used here is off-record as Simba tells his uncle, Scar, that he will be the king in the future. Ironically, Scar expresses his unhappiness for not being the king. His strategy is to avoid being on-record. This results in making the utterance more ambiguous, and the same degree of vagueness is kept in the TL.

The following examples are categorized under indirect politeness. Indirectness is a negative politeness that gives an option to the hearer, and enables the speaker to retreat behind the literal meaning of the words. An instance is Grem who says, "We'd like to get our private business here. If you don't mind" (Car 2, table 3), أنت يا ونش.. إحنا عايزين نأخذراحتنا هنا شوية.. عندك مانع؟. The politeness strategy used is off-record; Grem uses indirect speech acts to express his wish that it would be better for Matar to leave. Literally, the implicit meaning is preserved in the TL.

Another example of indirect negative politeness is evident in Simba's brave speech to hyenas, "Why don't you pick on somebody your own size?" (Lion King, table 1), ما تتشطر على حد قدك يا خي؟. The implicit meaning of the utterance is that hyenas are so coward that they can attack weak animals. Simba's strategy is off-record as evident in the interrogation which is a means of indirectness. The intended meaning from the politeness strategy is kept in the TL.

Sometimes, characters in dubbed children movies flout the politeness maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. In the following examples, characters flout the maxim of approbation. Matar, for instance says, "That's the worst engine ever made" (Car 2, table 3), ده أوحش. المواتير فى الدنيا. Flouting the approbation maxim produces face-threatening act. Translators convey the meaning literally into the TL so that Arab children find it easy to grasp the meaning of the politeness expression. Another example is Violt when she shouts at Dash, "Shut up. You little insect," (Incredibles, table 2), اسكت. يا تافه. Flouting the approbation maxim, Violt insults her brother, Dash; this is maintained in the translation. The target audience understands the meaning easily as the SL. In the same movie, Mr. Kropper says, "This little rat is guilty" (Incredibles, table 2), مذنب.. مثلبس.. مذنب. Showing a video tape for Dash's bad behavior, Mr. Kropper accuses Dash of putting a pin on his chair; the translators use omission and addition strategies to match the translation with

paralinguistic elements. In the video type , it is obvious that Dash put a pin on teacher's chair in a rapid way .

It is noticeable that characters usually follow the politeness maxims in the common utterance implying: welcoming, greeting, and thanking. As a result, translators try to give the suitable equivalents for these politeness expressions in the dubbing process. The following example focuses on what the school principle says, "I appreciate your coming here, Mrs. Parrie" (Incredibles, table 2), شكرًا لحضورك مدام شبار. Praise is considered a positive politeness utterance which is on-record. In these utterances, speakers show their admiration with the hearers. The following examples show some utterances of praise used in dubbed children movies. Nala says to Simba, "I thought you were very brave" (Lion King, table 1) that is conveyed as كنت شجاع أوى. Matar also utters the following: "You're very pretty, Holly" (Car 2, table 3), أنت حلوة قوى يا هولى. Another example is when a potato says, "Oh, My little sweet potato!" (Toy Story 2, table 4), الله يخليك يا سيد البطاطس. Moreover, a potato toy does a favor for another toy, so it utters the Arabic expression of praise: الله يخليك which is used as a sign of gratefulness, the beginning of a praise sentence. In dubbing, translators usually use religious expressions to convey sentences used to express: thanking, welcoming, gratefulness, and greetings out of the fact that using religious expressions makes children's movies more domestic.

In another instance, Bianca says, "Barnard, you are absolutely the hero of the day" (The rescuers under down, table 5), برنار أنت بكل تأكيد بطل النهارده. Communicatively, The preceding positive politeness act are preserved in the TL. Thus, the target audience may have no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning.

## **5.0.Conclusion**

Arab translators empaddition, Omission and Modification strategies to convey these pragmatic aspects from English into Arabic.

Regarding Speech Acts ,Arab translators tend to add more Arabic words to convey the intended meaning from English into Arabic. Moreover, No difficulty in rendering the direct declarative speech acts into Arabic to produce precautionary force. Sometimes, A translator , in dubbing resorts to literal translation in order to render some pragmatic feathers especially direct SAS. Additionally , Communicative translation is employed to produce an acceptable translation. It's noticeable that the illocutionary force is lost because Arab translators lack an enough amount of linguistic knowledge. Sometimes an indirect speech act is preserved into Arabic but in different form. Also It's noticeable, in dubbing process, Arab translators might fail to understand the hidden means of the speech act . as a result, the translation

produced could lose its precautionary force. In short, not understanding different pragmatic functions of SAS distort the message.

As for politeness principle, flouting politeness principle affects conveying the meaning from English into Arabic in dubbing process. For some extent, Arab translators are aware of flouting the politeness maxims. Moreover, Arab translators in dubbed children's movies, use addition and omission strategies to match the produced translation with paralinguistic elements ( sound ). In short, paying enough attention to politeness strategies may result into producing more faithful translation of dubbed children's movies.

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