Subtitling Cultural Expressions from English into Arabic

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the problems that translators faced when subtitling cultural expressions from English into Arabic. To achieve this goal, the researchers selected a convenient sample comprising 40 graduate and 40 undergraduate students who were enrolled in the English language programs during the academic year 2012/2013 in Jordanian universities. A translation test, which consisted of 10 cultural expressions selected from three American movies namely, "*Scent of a Woman*", "*Erin Brockovich*" and "*Casino*", served as the main instrument. Results revealed that translators encountered structural, lexical and semantic difficulties which are triggered by interference from L1 into L2. Also, results showed that translators lacked the ability to identify these cultural expressions due; perhaps, to the bilingual dictionaries they consulted which rendered meanings in isolation rather than in context.

Keywords: Translation, subtitling, cultural expressions, English/Arabic

Introduction

Nothing could be compared to watching a movie with your family or your friends, but does it really matter or do we always understand what's really going on the screen? Do we sometimes try to make less effort to link these actions with the subtitling shown on the television? These types of questions are more than obligatory to the subtitlers because this type of translation is of great challenge to these experts who work very hard in order to satisfy the viewer around the Arab world that has become in the new millennium crowded with all sorts of communication and technology.

Translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the same way the writer intended in the text. The aim is to communicate the ideas of the text in the Source Language (SL) to readers of the Target Language (TL) through a target text that has the same message and effect. Usually cultural terms are thought to pose the most difficult problem in translation; the problem has been overstated by many. One of the most challenging tasks for all translators is how to render culturally-bound elements in subtitles into a foreign language.

Subtitles are the most widely read after newspaper articles. It is calculated that one hour of subtitled television adds up to about 30 pages of text, and reckons that an adult watches one hour of subtitled television a week for ten months a year. This adds up to about 1200 pages (40 hours of television times

30 pages). The numbers used are very modest, but it still adds up to three or four novels a year, which is a lot more than the average person reads. (Lomhein, 1998) The first subtitles in the late 1920s, which used what was called (inter-titles or title cards), were seen in 1903 in "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*". These inter-titlers were written or painted on cards that were filmed, and then placed between sequences of the film. At that time, translating was not a problem. The inter-titlers would simply translate the cards and re-insert them with the film. In 1927 came the invention of sound films, or "talkies" and with it came the necessity to use other alternatives as subtitle or dubbing. The first country to experiment subtitling was France. The subtitling process underwent different stages; from the manual projection subtitles through the stage of stamping titles until Denis Aboyer in Paris developed the laser subtitling.

The subtitling process nowadays involves several operations. Spotting or cueing involves marking the transcript or the dialogue list according to when subtitles should start and stop and then they calculate the length of the subtitles according to the cueing times of each frame. After that, the translator will take over and carry out the actual translation with the aid of the dialogue list annotated for cueing. With cultural expressions, the meaning which lies behind this kind of expression is always strongly linked to the specific cultural context it aims to re-create. Sometimes, cultural expressions can be easily rendered into the target language (TL) but in other kinds of terms it is often impossible.

One of the most challenging tasks for all translators is how to render subtitled language elements into culturally accepted expressions in the (TL). Indeed the meaning which lies behind this kind of expression is always linked to a specific cultural context where the text is originated or within the cultural context it aims to re-create.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the problems that translators face when they subtitle cultural expressions from English into Arabic.

There has been already an extensive research and investigations concerning the subtitling process. However, not enough research has been conducted regarding translating language expressions in subtitles within a cultural context in the Arab world and the current study aims to fill this gap. Howver, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the whole population due to the type and size of the selected sample and the instruments used. The study was conducted in Amman, Jordan during the academic year 2012/2013.

 Review of Literature Related to Subtitling and Cultural Expressions

The processes of subtitling or as referred to as "captions" are transcriptions of film or TV dialogue presented simultaneously on the screen. Gottlib (1998) assumes that "cinema subtitlers normally work from paper to paper, translating dialogue from a post-production script, the end product being a list of subtitles; these subtitles are then transferred onto the film by others" (p. 36).

Newmark (1988) comments on the cultural expressions where there is culture focus; there is a translation problem due to the culture gap or distance between the (SL) and (TL). He does not regard language as a component or feature of culture. Language contains all kinds of cultural deposits, in the grammar, forms of address, as well as the lexis which are not taken account of in universals or translation. The more specific the language for natural phenomena, the more it becomes embedded in cultural features, and therefore creates translation problems. He adds that most cultural expressions are easy to detect, since they are associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated, but many cultural customs are described in ordinary language, where literal translation would distort the meaning and a translation may include an appropriate descriptive-functional equivalent.

Newmark (1988, p103) categorizes the cultural expressions as follows:
   a- Ecology: animals, plants, local winds, mountains, plains, ice, etc.
   b- Material culture (artifacts), food, clothes, housing, transport and communication.
   c- Social culture – work and leisure.
   d- Organizations, customs, ideas, political, social, legal, religious, artistic.
   e- Gestures and habits (often described in 'non-cultural' language).

Ayoub (1994) shed light on Idiomatic Expressions (IEs) as a problematic area when translating from Arabic into English and vice versa. The researcher classified the linguistic and cultural problems that IEs present to the process of translation and he also discussed and analyzed the problems and what caused them, and finally he proposed some effective methods and strategies to be used in solving such cultural problems of translating IEs from Arabic into English and vice versa. The study results showed that:

- The IEs in Arabic and English are problematic to translators.
- The context where IEs occur is very important for determining their intended meanings and translating them adequately and properly.
- Arabic and English IEs are more or less translatable into each other.
- It is very crucial and essential for the translator to be acquainted with the language or culture he is translating from and/or into.
- Semantic and pragmatic aspect of IEs is of great importance in the process of translation.
- There is a lack of bilingual dictionaries which deal with Arabic/ English IEs.
- We use IEs as an outlet for our attitudes while we speak.
- It is almost impossible to have translational equivalence in the full formal and functional sense of IEs.

- Arabic and English have conventionalized a diverse network of IEs to express a variety of language functions.

Williams and Thorne (1999) describe how language learners benefit from inter lingual subtitling training. It also shows that student's communication competence in both L1 and L2 improved while they simultaneously mastered transferable skills. These language skills that were practiced during inter lingual subtitling required these specific linguistic processes:

- Listen attentively: recognize and fully absorb the content of program/film.
- Read/view the screen for visual clues which place the language into meaningful context.
- Translate: or interpret all of the above in an effective and natural manner into TL.
- Edit the content in such a way that the original meaning will remain intact.
- Consider the written language of the subtitles; subtitling involves transferring spoken language into written language and this aspect needs particular consideration.
- Create easy-to-read subtitles which enable the viewer to absorb the program's meaning as effortlessly as possible.
- Display the target language version in an aesthetically pleasing, accessible and consistent way on the screen, whilst keeping the syntactical units intact and respecting punctuation conventions.
- Review subtitles with tutor and discuss the choices made.

While teaching subtitles to second language students of Welsh through a two-day intensive induction course followed by a group session and also tutorial sessions were also included on one-to-one basis, given after that an independent study period of 3-4 hour per week, these problems occurred:

- Difficulties in understanding the spoken language in dramas, soap operas and comedy programs.
- Gaps in vocabulary: as the students were required to generate subtitles for up to 10 television programs across a wide range of genres, the range of vocabulary required is exceptionally wide.
- Difficulties in summarizing content of TL into the L1: in order to reach acceptable words per minimum reading rate, rather than simply omitting individual words.

Dweik (2000) investigated bilingualism and the problem of linguistic and cultural interference. The study aimed at identifying the phonological and socio-cultural factors that impede or enhance the degree of bilingualism among speakers of Arabic and English. The linguistic factors stemmed from two sources, first, inter-lingual interference which occurs when linguistic and

cultural features of the native language are transferred into the system of the target language; second, intra-lingual factors when the bilingual makes overgeneralization of the target language rules. In his answer to the question, what is necessary in order for us to compare two cultures?
Dweik states that (2000, p. 233):

a- We must have accurate understanding of each culture.
b- We must be able to eliminate the things we claim to do but actually don't do.
c- We must make sure that we are able to describe practices accurately, not ideally.
d- We must be able to describe the situations in which we do what we do.

Olk (2003) aimed to find out whether German readers would comprehend transferred English terms based on bilingual dictionaries. For the purpose of this study nineteen students of a British university (English native speakers) who were either in their final B.A. year in German or had recently finished their degree were asked to translate, in writing, an English article featuring a high frequency of British Cultural References (CRs) for the aim of publication in the well-known German newsmagazine Der Spiegel. The students were also asked to think aloud while translating, and all participants were additionally questioned about their approach in translating individual culture references in the task. And at last additional data were collected to explore the use of translation in the students' educational context.

The findings of the study were as follows:
- Lack of source-cultural knowledge: it is most surprisingly that students lack familiarity with their native cultural concepts and consequently, had difficulty rendering them for German readers.
- Insufficient knowledge of German source-culture terminology: a possible factor that may have contributed to this is the student's unfamiliarity with German common source-culture terminology due to the types of teaching materials which had been used in their translation classes.
- Consideration of readership's source- cultural knowledge: the problem about the students approach is the total reliance on the bilingual dictionary to determine what German readers would probably know.

Samaker (2010) investigated and analyzed the strategies used in the translation of culturally-bound elements presented in the English subtitle of the Iranian film "The Lizard", and he tried to point out the frequency that the strategies of translation that were used. For the purpose of his study, data were gathered from the film that was subtitled into English by viewing the film and referring to the original transcripts. Then the researcher detected the culturally-bound elements and compared them with those subtitled into English. Finally the subtitle translation strategies were identified and the most

frequent was studied to find if it had conveyed the intended meaning. The findings showed that the most frequent translation strategies used were the paraphrasing strategy and the substitution strategy; other strategies were used but not so frequent.

Suleiman (2010) investigated the obstacles that Jordanian graduate students majoring in English language face when translating cultural expressions. The researcher designed a 40 question translation test and it was submitted to respondents of which 40 were collected. The second instrument was informal open ended interviews; she interviewed four experienced teachers of translation and five M.A. students whose major is English language and literature. The results of the study showed that graduate students face different kinds of difficulties when translating culturally bound expressions. These difficulties are mostly related to:

1. Unfamiliarity with cultural expressions.
2. Achieving the equivalence in the second language.
3. Ambiguity of some cultural expressions.

The study also revealed that lack of cultural interaction with native speakers, lack of courses that are revealed to culture, poor researching skills and lack of knowledge of the proper use of translation techniques might stand behind these difficulties.

Dweik and Abu Shakra (2011) investigated the problems in translating collocation in religious texts from Arabic into English. The study aimed to explore the problems students faced in translating specific lexical and semantic collocations in three religious texts, namely, the Holy Quran, the Hadith and the Bible. The sample of the study consisted of 35 M.A. translation students enrolled in three different public and private Jordanian universities. The method used in the research consisted of a translation test that comprised 45 relatively short sentences of contextual collocations selected from the above-mentioned three religious texts and divided as 15 collocations per text. Students were required to translate these collocations from Arabic into English. The findings showed that students did not realize the disparities between Arabic concepts and beliefs and Western ones, and should always avoid literal translation by taking the context into consideration. The results also revealed that translators encountered difficulties in lexical and semantic collocations.

Method

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this study consisted of graduate and undergraduate students who were enrolled in the English language programs during the academic year 2012/2013 in Jordanian universities. A sample of 40 graduate students and 40 under graduate students was selected from Jordanian universities based on availability.

The students' general background included social data such as gender, age, nationality, number of years they have worked in translation, and the number of years spent in English speaking countries is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
Distribution of the participants' demographic and social data

Variables		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	20-24	12	26	38
	25-29	10	18	28
	30-34	0	6	6
	35 and above	8	0	8
Educational Level	B.A.	14	26	40
	M.A.	16	24	40
Translation Experience	None	20	38	58
	1-5	4	8	12
	More than 5	6	4	10
Period of Living in an English Speaking Country	None	20	42	62
	1-5	10	4	14
	More than 5	0	4	4
Nationality	Jordanian	30	40	70
	Non-Jordanian	2	8	10

Instruments of the Study

The researchers used one instrument, a translation test which comprised 10 cultural expressions taken from the original transcripts of different scenes of three American movies namely, "*Scent of a Woman*", "*Erin Brockovich*" and "*Casino*". The participants were asked to fill out the demographic data, and to subtitle the highlighted cultural expressions in the translation test from English into Arabic. The criteria for test making were:

a) Linguistic correctness
b) Cultural correctness
c) And finally the Juries' acceptance of the rendered translation.

Data Analysis

One instrument was used to collect data for this study, a translation test. In the translation test, participants were asked to translate 10 cultural expressions. The total score for the translation test was 60 marks:

1. Correct answer was given two points. The correct answer was considered so if the subtitle of the given highlighted cultural expression was rendered correctly.
2. The accepted subtitle that had some linguistic error that did not change the meaning was given one point each.
3. If the participant failed in giving the suitable subtitle or committed unaccepted linguistic errors the answer was given zero point.

The results of the translation test were tabulated using frequencies and percentages followed by describing the cultural expression with their model answer subtitles and the analyses of the original subtitles and the participant's translation test results.

Results

Results of the participant's performance in the translation test are presented in Table 2. In order to answer the question of the study, each item is discussed separately to show the kind of difficulties and the results of participants and examples of the correct, acceptable, and the wrong subtitles provided by them. These answers were compared with the model subtitles that were confirmed by the panel of experts and jury (See Appendix B). As shown in Table 2, items 2, 3 and 10 have the highest No Answer occurrence with the percentages 27.5%, 12.5% and 12.5% respectively.

Table 2
Students' subtitling performance in the translation test

Item No.	Correct Answer 2 points		Acceptable Answer 1 point		Wrong Answer Zero		No Answer	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	26	32.5%	2	2.5%	50	62.5%	2	2.5%
7	20	25%	10	12.5%	46	57.5%	4	5%
8	14	17.5%	18	22.5%	44	55%	4	5%
2	14	17.5%	10	12.5%	34	42.5%	22	27.5%
9	34	42.5%	8	10%	34	42.5%	4	5%
5	14	17.5%	32	40%	28	35%	6	7.5%
3	24	30%	20	25%	26	32.5%	10	12.5%
6	22	27.5%	26	32.5%	26	32.5%	6	7.5%
4	44	55%	10	12.5%	24	30%	2	2.5%
10	32	40%	14	17.5%	24	30%	10	12.5%

Scenes from the 2002 American Movie 'Scent of a Woman'

Item One
*HARRY: "**How short are you**?"*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "كم طولك من النقود"!

Results reported in Table 2 show that 26 participants, 32.5%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as

"كم نقودك من المال" and "كم يقصك" and "كم قصيرك" and 2 of them, 2.5%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as "كم يلغ عجزك المادي". Nonetheless, 50 participants, 62.5%, provided wrong subtitling because of using the literal translation (word by word translation) strategy as in these examples "قصير جدا" and "كيف حالك" and 2, 2.5%, did not provide any answer at all. Such a failure in rendering this item could be a result of the unfamiliarity of translation strategies and the appropriate manipulation of these strategies.

Item Two
*ACE: "Who could resist? Anywhere else in the country, I was a bookie, a gambler, **always lookin' over my shoulder**"*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "ولكن يكننتت عطئما خئا في نفسي من لكانه والغدر."

Table 2 shows that 20 participants, 25%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in, "أحرص جدا في" وينبه من الخطر" and "نفسي". Also, 10 participants, 12.5%, provided acceptable

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subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as "طائما خائف" and "طائما ﻗﻠﻖ ﻋﻠﻰ ﻛﻞ ﺷﻲء". Yet, 46 participants, 57.5%, provided wrong subtitling such as "ﻃﺎﺋﻤﺘﻨﻈﺮ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻔﻲ" and "ﻟﻤﺤﺔ ﺳﺮﻳﻌﺔ" and 4, 5%, did not render this item. Such a result could be due to the participants' unawareness of the metaphorical and cultural nature of the item. As a result, they rendered it literally.

Item Three
DETECTIVE JOHNSON: *"You know, he's gotta realize everything **can't be a home run that he does**"*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "ﻋﻠﻴﻚ ﺍﻥ ﺗﺪﺭﻙ ﺍﻥ ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺭ ﻟﻴﺴﺖ ﺑﻬﺬﺍ ﺍﻟﺴﻬﻮﻟﺔ"

Table 2 shows that 14 participants, 17.5%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly, rendering the exact cultural meaning as in, "ﻻ ﻳﻤﻜﻦ ﺍﻥ ﺗﺤﻘﻖ ﺍﻟﻨﺠﺎﺡ ﺑﺴﻬﻮﻟﺔ ﻓﻲ ﻛﻞ ﻣﺎ ﺗﻔﻌﻠﻪ" and "ﻻ ﻳﻤﻜﻦ ﺍﻥ ﺗﻜﻮﻥ ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺭ ﺳﻬﻠﺔ". In addition, 18, 22.5%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as "ﺍﻟﻴﺴﺘﻄﻴﻊ ﺍﻟﻌﺎﻝ ﻫﺮﻭﺏ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻤﺴﺆﻭﻟﻴﺔ ﻛﻞ ﻣﺎ ﺍﺭﺍﺩ ﺫﻟﻚ" and "ﺍﻟﻴﺴﺘﻄﻴﻊ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﻳﻠﺠﻲ ﻋﻦ ﻣﺴﺆﻭﻟﻴﺔ ﺑﻴﺴﺮ". On the other hand, 44 participants, 55%, provided wrong subtitling such as "ﻟﻴﺴﺖ ﺟﻤﻴﻊ ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺭ ﻳﻤﻜﻦ ﺍﻥ ﺗﺪﻳﺮﻫﺎ ﻭ ﻛﻞ ﻛﻤﺎ ﺗﻔﻌﻞ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ" and "ﻻ ﻳﻤﻜﻦ ﺍﻥ ﻳﻜﻮﻥ ﺳﺮﻳﻊ" and 4 of them, 5%, did not answer this item. This result could be due to the participants' lack of researching skills which is a reason of not being able to translate the item properly. Also, it could be due to the participants' use of paraphrasing technique in translation.

Item Four
FRANK SLADE: *"even with students Aid plus **the folks back home hustling the corn nuts**?"*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "ﺣﺘﻰ ﺑﻮﺟﻮﺩ ﺍﻟﻤﻐﺎﺓ ﻻ ﺯﺍﻝ ﻭﺍﻟﺪﺍﻙ ﻣﻀﻄﺮﺍﻥ ﻻ ﻳﻌﻤﻼﻥ ﻟﻴﻞ ﻧﻬﺎﺭ ﻟﺘﺄﻣﻴﻦ ﻣﺼﺎﺭﻳﻔﻚ"

Table 2 shows that 14 participants, 17.5%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in "ﺍﻻﻫﻞ" ﻳﺪﻓﻌﻮﻥ ﻧﻘﻮﺩ ﻟﻴﻚ and 10 of them, 12.5%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle like "ﺣﺘﻰ ﺗﻜﺘﺐ ﻟﻨﺎ ﻋﻦ ﻟﻘﻤﺔ ﺍﻟﻌﻴﺶ". On the other hand, 34 participants, 42.5%, provided wrong subtitling and failed to use reliable resources to extract the correct cultural equivalent, such as "ﺍﻥ ﺍﻟﺼﻘﺎء ﻋﺎﺩﻭ ﺍﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﺒﻴﺖ ﻳﻘﺮﺷﻮﻥ ﺍﻟﺬﺭﺓ" and "ﻋﺎﺩ ﻻﺟﻤﻴﻊ ﺍﻟﻰ ﻣﻨﺰﻟﻪ ﻭ ﻫﻢ ﻳﺄﻛﻠﻮﻥ ﺭﻗﺎﺋﻖ ﺍﻟﺬﺭﺓ" and 22 of them, 27.5%, did not provide any translation to this item. This result can be explained due to the fact that they were not able to identify the metaphorical nature of the item due to the disparity between the two languages. Thus, they either rendered the item literally or left it without translating it.

Item Five

*GINGER: "**I'm going to go powder my nose**"*

The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "سأذهب لأصلح مكياجي"

Table 2 shows that 34 participants, 42.5%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in, "سأذهب" "ساذهب الى الحمام" and 8, 10%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle but it seems that there was some shift in formality, such as in, "سوف اضع بعض البودرة على وجهي" and "سوف اعدل مكياجي". Nonetheless, 34 participants, 42.5%, provided wrong subtitling such as "انا سأتجاوز المر" and "(سأتناول الدواء المخدرات" and 4, 5%, left the item unanswered. This result could be explained due to the participants' manipulation of guessing the meaning of the item due to the lack of cultural awareness.

Item Six

*ERIN: "**They took some bone from my hip and put it in my neck**. I didn't have insurance, so I'm about seventeen thousand in debt right now"*

The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "استغلوني في مهنتي وعملي شهرا".

Table 2 shows that 14 participants, 17.5%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in اخذوا مني "ما اعطيني الشمال اخذ بالميمين" and "الكثير واعطوني القليل". Similarly, 32 participants, 40%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as

"استغلالي للفرد دون مقابل" and "في الممكن لدي اي في الله قد سرقا كل شيء في". However, 28 participants, 35%, provided wrong subtitling which showed a lot of cultural influence and using machine translation, such a result was expected "علموا في عملية" and "لقد قاموا بنزع عظمة من فخدي وزرعوها في رقبتي" and 6 of them, 7.5%, left the item unanswered.

Item Seven

*GEORGE: "He's good-cop, bad copping us. He knows I'm Old guard. You're fringe. **He's going to bear down on me, soft soap you**. Did he try to soft soap you?"*

The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "سيحاول ان ينال مني لكنه سيقمعك".

As Table 2 shows, 24 participants, 30%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in عطف في يسرق و "سيرقق لك ويكون لطيف معك" and "العك". In addition, Only 20 participants, 25%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as

"سيتعامل معك بشدة" and "سيستغل للوصول لك". However, 26 participants, 32.5%, provided wrong subtitling such as "يبدو معي بتلطف معي" يليّن مع الخر" and 10 of them, 12.5%, did not render "سوف يساعد معا" and "يستطيع المساكين" the item. Such a result could be due to lexical and semantic incompetency.

Item Eight
*ERIN: "First of all, **don't talk baby talk to your wife in front of me**."*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "لا تتلاطف مع زوجتك امامي".

　　Table 2 shows that 22 participants, 27.5%, were successful in subtitling this item corectly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in " لا تعامل زوجتك بهذه اللهجة امامي " and 26, 32.5%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as

"لا تتكلم بدلاله مع زوجتك امامي". In contrast, 26 participants, 32.5%, provided wrong subtitling such as "لا تتحدث مع زوجتك بحنان امامي " and "لا تضحك على زوجتك امامي" "لا تتحدث مع زوجتك مثل الاطفال " and 6, 7.5%, left the item unanswered. Such a result can be explained in light of the use of literal translation due to their unawareness of the basic translation techniques.

Item Nine
*CHARLIE: "Hello. I don't know, Mrs. Rossi – I got the feeling **I screwed up**."*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was "اشعر بانني لم احسن التصرف".

　　Table 2 shows that 44 participants, 55%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as "لقد اخفقت بشدة" and "لقد فشلت " and 10 participants, 12.5%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as " شعور ينتابني". Yet, 24 participants, 30 %, provided wrong subtitling by trying to guess the meaning such as "انا متعب جدا" and "هل انزعجت" Also, 2 of them, 2.5%, did not answer this item.

Item Ten
*ACE: "I mean, without us, these guys, **they'd still be shovellin' mule shit**"*
The model subtitle suggested by the jury panel was " لولا وجودنا لكانوا ما زالوا في حضيض".

　　Table 2 shows that 32 participants, 40%, were successful in subtitling this item correctly and in rendering the exact cultural meaning as in, " مهينون لكانوا" and 14, 17.5%, provided acceptable subtitling that would somehow provide the viewer with basic subtitle such as

"لكانوا في درك المجتمع السفلي". Meanwhile, 24 of them, 30%, provided wrong subtitling such as "لكانوا غارقين في الوحل" and " مؤدب وغير" and 10, 12.5%, left the item unanswered.

Discussion

Results related to the problems that the translators encountered in their subtitling of cultural expressions indicated that most of the participants found it difficult to render the cultural Arabic equivalent of the cultural expressions used in the translation test many of them were not able to identify these expressions since they are associated with the particular language and

therefore they translated them literally. The results agree with Newmark (1988) who implies that where there is a cultural focus there is a translation problem, he also adds that most cultural expressions are not easy to detect, since they are associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated. The results agree with Ayoub (1994) who implies that idiomatic expressions are problematic to translators because the context where they occur is very important for determining their intended meanings. Also, it is in line with Dweik & Abu Shakra (2011) who found that students did not realize the disparities between Arabic concepts and beliefs and Western ones, and should always avoid literal translation by taking the context into consideration. The results also revealed that translators encountered difficulties in lexical and semantic collocations.

Furthermore Arabic English dictionaries such as Al-Mawrid, Atlas, etc… do not render the meaning contextually, instead such dictionaries give a list of meanings in isolation. This result is in line with Olk (2003) who maintains that the problem about the students' approach is the total reliance on the bilingual dictionary to determine what German readers would probably know.

The results also indicated inter-lingual interference among the participants who were sometimes using the system of the TL in their subtitling to the cultural expressions in the translation test. The results agree with Dweik (2000) who identified inter-lingual interference which occurs when linguistic and cultural features of the native language are transferred into the system of the target language.

The results also indicated that lack of researching skills is a reason behind not being able to get the needed information about an expression. This result agrees with Williams and Throne (1999) and Suleiman (2010). Williams and Throne (1999) discovered that the students lack knowledge in using research tools. Thus, the researchers gave the students a two-day intensive induction course. As a result students developed their research skills. Additionally, Suleiman (2010) found that poor researching skills, lack of cultural interaction with native speakers, lack of courses that focus on culture and lack of knowledge in the proper use of translation techniques might stand behind the difficulties that translators encounter.

Conclusions

The data obtained by means of the translation test indicated that translators encountered many problems while translating cultural expressions such as the translators' inability to use the appropriate translation techniques in subtitling, literal translation and linguistic and cultural interference which resulted in mistranslation and poor performance. In addition, results showed that:

- Most of the participants found it difficult to render the cultural Arabic equivalent of the cultural expressions. Many of them were not able to

identify these expressions since they are associated with the particular language and therefore they translated them literally.

- Arabic English dictionaries such as Al-Mawrid and Atlas do not render the meaning contextually. Instead, such dictionaries give a list of meanings in isolation.
- Lack of researching skills is a reason behind not being able to get the needed information about an expression.
- The implementation of different translation theories and education theories in the various translation teaching institutes' class rooms for translators is preferred, in order that translators be aware of different styles and abide by the most suitable to the written or spoken language.

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Appendix A
Translation Test

Dear participants,

I am Saleh Al Abwaini an M.A. student in the department of English Language and Literature at the Middle East University (MEU) Amman / Jordan. I am doing my M.A. thesis on **"Problems that Translators Face When They Subtitle Cultural expressions from English into Arabic"**.

You are kindly requested to take part in translating the highlighted English cultural expressions in the attached test. I would like to thank you in advance for participating in the test.

The test includes 10 cultural-bound expressions, taken from three original transcripts of three American movies namely, "*Scent of a Woman*", "*Erin Brockovich*" and "*Casino*".

Best Regards,

Saleh Majed Al Abwaini
Email: salehabwaini_salti@yahoo.com

Translation Test

Dear participant,

This test consists of two sections. The first section elicits demographic data such as age, gender, and nationality. The second section is a translation test which consists of 10 cultural expressions selected from three American movies namely, "*Scent of a Woman*", "*Erin Brockovich*" and "*Casino*". You're kindly requested to fill in the first section by putting an (X) next to your chosen answer, And to translate in the second section the highlighted cultural expressions from English into Arabic.

Thank you so much for your cooperation,

The researchers.

<div style="border:1px solid;">

Section 1
Demographic Data

Education level:
B.A. (   )   M.A. (   )   Other (   ) specify
_____

University affiliation:
MEU   (   )   Other   (   ) specify
_____
Number of years you have worked in translation:
None (   )   1-5   (   )   More than 5 (   )
Number of years you have spent in a country where English is the first language:
None (   )   1-5   (   )   More than 5 (   )
Age:
20-24 (   )   25-29 (   )   30-34 (   )   35 and above (   )
Nationality:
Jordanian (   )   Non-Jordanian (   )
Gender :
Male (   )   Female (   )

</div>

Section 2

Scenes from the 2002 American Movie *'Scent of a Woman'*

   1- HARRY: "**How short are you**?"

   2- FRANK SLADE: "even with students Aid plus **the folks back home hustling the corn nuts**?"

   3- "GEORGE: "He's good-cop, bad copping us. He knows I'm Old guard. You're fringe. **He's going to bear down on me, soft soap you**. Did he try to soft soap you?".

   4- CHARLIE: "Hello. I don't know, Mrs. Rossi – I got the feeling **I screwed up**

Scenes from the 2000 American Movie '*Erin Brockovich'***

   1- ERIN: "**They took some bone from my hip and put it in my neck**. I didn't have insurance, so I'm about seventeen thousand in debt right now"

   2- ERIN: "First of all, **don't talk baby talk to your wife in front of me**."

Scenes from the 1995 American Movie *'Casino'*

   1- ACE: "Who could resist? Anywhere else in the country, I was a bookie, a gambler, **always lookin' over my shoulder**"

   2- DETECTIVE JOHNSON: "You know, he's gotta realize everything **can't be a home run that he does**"

   3- GINGER: "**I'm going to go powder my nose**"

   4- ACE: " I mean, without us, these guys, **they'd still be shovellin' mule shit**"

Appendix B: The model subtitle confirmed by the panel of experts and jury

الفيلم الأول 'Scent of a Women' تمت ترجمة لحكمة وتم اعتمدة

1. كل ما يلزمك من النقود
2. حتى بوجود العائلة لا زال ولدك مضطران لاى العلى لى ليال ونهارا لتأمين مصاريفك
3. سيحاول انهي لا في و لكنه سيتلقاك
4. اشعر بأني لم احسن التصرف

الفيلم الثاني 'Erin Brockovich' تمت ترجمة لحكمة وتم اعتمدة

1. استغلني لى مصلحتي ولكي يا شيئا
2. الثقف بلطف مع زوجتك امامي

الفيلم الثالث 'Casino' تمت ترجمة لحكمة وتم اعتمدة

1. ولكن يا ابنتي دائما جفا في نفسي من الخيل ه اوال غدر
2. عليك ان تدرك ان الامر ليس بهذا السهولة
3. سأذهب لأصلح مزاجي
4. لوال ج هون لكانوا ما زالوا في حضيض

Note on Contributor

Saleh Majed Al Abwaini teaches at the Middle East University, Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In 2013, he received his MA in English Language and his research interests focus on translation, sociolinguistics and literature. Email: salehabwaini_salti@yahoo.com.