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Accommodating Audience Needs in Islamic Subtitling: A Case of Manipulation?

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Article abstract

The field of subtitling has its own spatial and temporal challenges and constraints, which are further compounded in the case of translating Islamic programmes because of the culture-specific translation problems. Subtitlers have to bridge the cultural gap and accommodate audience needs, without the possibility of resorting to footnotes, glossaries, or explanatory notes. This may warrant some conscious changes to the Arabic source text (ST) to achieve maximum intelligibility in the English target text (TT). Manipulation in translation has mostly been used in a negative sense to mean a vicious attempt to alter STs to promote a dominant culture and ideology. In Islamic subtitling on the satellite channel Iqraa, this is far from being true as the Arabic text rewriting involves the activation of certain strategies to render complex Islamic concepts intelligible to a wider, international audience. This paper examines how audiovisual translators of the Iqraa satellite channel make conscious alterations to the ST, especially in the case of *Iltifat* – a rhetorical device in Arabic utilizing a reference/referent shift to involve the audience and achieve a heightened dramatic effect – as well as in the case of code-switching between Classical and Colloquial Arabic. The case study under scrutiny is two audiovisual programmes by two Islamic televangelists, who speak in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic.

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Accommodating Audience Needs in Islamic Subtitling: A Case of Manipulation?

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RÉSUMÉ

Le domaine du sous-titrage connaît ses propres défis et ses propres contraintes spatio-temporelles, encore plus accentués dans la traduction des programmes islamiques, et ce en raison des problèmes culturels de traduction. Les sous-titreurs doivent combler ce fossé culturel et satisfaire les besoins du public sans le recours aux notes de bas de page, à des glossaires ou encore à des notes explicatives. Ceci pourrait justifier les changements réfléchis du texte source (TS) en langue arabe afin d'atteindre une intelligibilité optimale dans le texte cible (TC) en langue anglaise. La manipulation, en traduction, a presque toujours été revêtue d'une connotation négative, désignant une tentative vicieuse d'altérer le TS afin de promouvoir une culture et une idéologie dominante. Dans le contexte du sous-titrage islamique sur la chaîne satellite Iqraa, c'est loin d'être le cas, puisque la réécriture du texte arabe implique une activation de certaines stratégies qui visent à accroître l'intelligibilité des concepts complexes de l'Islam auprès d'un public international aussi vaste que varié. Le présent article étudie comment les traducteurs audiovisuels de la chaîne Iqraa effectuent, consciemment, des altérations du TS, notamment dans les cas de *Iltifat* – un outil de rhétorique en langue arabe qui, à l'aide d'un changement de l'emploi de la référence/référent, implique le public et réalise un effet théâtral plus prononcé –, ainsi que dans le cas de changement du registre de langue entre l'arabe classique et l'arabe dialectal. La présente étude s'attarde sur deux programmes audiovisuels de deux prédicateurs islamiques qui s'adressent au public en arabe dialectal égyptien.

ABSTRACT

The field of subtitling has its own spatial and temporal challenges and constraints, which are further compounded in the case of translating Islamic programmes because of the culture-specific translation problems. Subtitlers have to bridge the cultural gap and accommodate audience needs, without the possibility of resorting to footnotes, glossaries, or explanatory notes. This may warrant some conscious changes to the Arabic source text (ST) to achieve maximum intelligibility in the English target text (TT). Manipulation in translation has mostly been used in a negative sense to mean a vicious attempt to alter STs to promote a dominant culture and ideology. In Islamic subtitling on the satellite channel Iqraa, this is far from being true as the Arabic text rewriting involves the activation of certain strategies to render complex Islamic concepts intelligible to a wider, international audience. This paper examines how audiovisual translators of the Iqraa satellite channel make conscious alterations to the ST, especially in the case of *Iltifat* – a rhetorical device in Arabic utilizing a reference/referent shift to involve the audience and achieve a heightened dramatic effect – as well as in the case of code-switching between Classical and Colloquial Arabic. The case study under scrutiny is two audiovisual programmes by two Islamic televangelists, who speak in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic.

> [t]ranslation can now be seen as a process in which […]
> intervention is crucial.
>
> Bassnett (1996: 22)

1. Introduction

Subtitling Arabic Islamic television programmes for an English-speaking audience constitutes a challenge that goes beyond the usual problems of translating between Arabic and English and dealing with religious culture-specific terms. Indeed, subtitling, with its space and time constraints and the fleeting nature of television audiences, makes the task of the audiovisual translator a complex one.

Iqraa is a non-profit Islamic channel that started broadcasting in 1998 with a vision to disseminate Islamic knowledge to Arab Muslims in the Arab world as well as in the West. The following year, Iqraa started subtitling its programmes in English in order to cater for the needs of its broadening audience around the globe. Currently, Iqraa broadcasts internationally through six satellites, namely Arabsat 2B and 4B, Nilesat 101, Hotbird 8, Asiasat 2, and Anik F3. The channel's target audience includes English-speaking Muslims living around the world, second-generation Muslims living in the West with little knowledge of Arabic, new converts who lack both Arabic and Islamic knowledge, as well as English-speaking viewers who have developed an interest in Islam. All together, it is a very mixed audience which makes the task of the translator working at Iqraa all the more complex as the audience will watch the subtitled programmes with differing levels of linguistic and cultural competence. This complexity is compounded by the space and time constraints of subtitling.

The main translation approach employed in the early years at the Iqraa subtitling centre was foreignisation – when loanwords are used to reflect the ST culture – since it was assumed that members of the audience were already familiar with Islamic concepts and would watch the programmes in the company of other Arabic speakers who would provide any needed information. Illustrations of this approach are the many borrowings of Islamic concepts that were transliterated without an explanation, like Zakat [*obligatory charity*], Salat [*prayer*], Fiqh [*Islamic jurisprudence*] and Allah [*God*]. However, after the events of 11 September 2001, Iqraa translators became more aware of their critical role as cultural mediators and active players in an increasingly polarised world. Thus, Iqraa has changed its overall translation approach towards domestication – "when a text is adapted to suit the norms of the target culture" (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 9) – in an attempt to bridge the cultural gap between Islam and the West as well as to meet the growing interest in Islam on the part of non-Muslim audiences who have no knowledge of the Arabic language. This means that now Islamic concepts are explained in plain English and, if transliteration is necessary, it is done sparingly and is followed by an explanation between brackets. One of the most illustrative examples is that now the word *God* is used in subtitling instead of *Allah*, to stress the fact that God, for Muslims, is the same for Christians and Jews; the God of Abraham, the Monotheist. In addition, native-English editors are consulted on cultural sensitivities and the best ways to overcome possible ambiguities in translation.

The many e-mails received by the subtitling centre show that Iqraa's viewers, who watch religious programmes in a language that is not their own and read subtitles at

the same time, are reasonably involved, with some even recording the programmes to watch them later with their young children. From this perspective, the responsibility of the audiovisual translators becomes even greater, as their subtitles are regarded as an authoritative source of information on Islamic subjects.

In this paper, I explore how translators at Iqraa *manipulate* the Arabic text and to what extent. My aim here is to elucidate how some audiovisual translation (AVT) strategies that are activated in Islamic programming, focussing on the positive sense of rewriting/manipulation. Indeed, the *manipulation* of the ST here does not mean the alteration of the ST to promote a dominant culture or ideology as suggested by a number of scholars such as Hermans (1985), Lefevere (1992) and Venuti (1995) when discussing literary translation. Rather, it means changing the ST with the intention of carrying the intended meaning across different linguistic and cultural worlds, which can be arguably seen as an instance of didactic manipulation. Indeed, the subtitling of Islamic programmes at Iqraa involves the activation of certain strategies to render complex Islamic concepts intelligible to a wide-ranging audience. In this, both theories of dynamic equivalence (Nida 1964) and pragmatic equivalence (Baker 1992) are subscribed to as highly effective in the field of religious translation. Manipulation, as practised by Iqraa subtitlers, is thus a type of rewriting whose aim is to meet the needs of the channel's audience in terms of Islamic knowledge, by providing the information in an accessible and didactic manner through subtitling.

Specifically, I examine instances where rewriting of the Arabic text aims to render intelligibly in English the rhetorical device of *Iltifat* as used by two popular Egyptian Islamic televangelists, Amr Khaled and Mustafa Hosni, to engage their audience and to heighten the dramatic effect of their speech. *Iltifat,* as stated by Abdel-Haleem (1992), may involve a change in number, between singular, dual and plural; a change in addressee; a change in the tense of the verb; a change in case marker; and the use of a noun in place of a pronoun.

Both programme hosts employ the rhetorical device of *Iltifat* differently. On retelling a religious narrative, Mustafa Hosni sometimes assumes the voice of the characters in the narrative, without cautionary remarks, such as *he said*, *he told them*, etc, departing from the norm in English and the expectations of an English-speaking audience who must rely on the subtitles. In other instances, Hosni identifies himself with his audience and starts speaking their minds and voicing their thoughts, again using direct speech (Tables 2 and 3). Amr Khaled, on the other hand, engages in a pseudo-dialogue, using the implied second person pronoun *you*, starting the sentence with a vocative addressed to members of his assumed audience – that are not necessarily among his studio audience – following with a string of relative clauses, and then concluding with the *end-weight* (Table 1).

In addition, this paper explores how code-switching between Classical Arabic and Egyptian Cairene Arabic, as used by the two televangelists to engage their audience, constitutes a challenge for the subtitlers and discusses the various strategies activated to deal with this communication device in the English subtitles.

2. Subtitling: Constrained Translation

Subtitlers work within various constraints. Gottlieb (1998) groups subtitling constraints into two categories: textual or qualitative constraints and formal or

quantitative constraints. The former are dictated by subtitling being a type of synchronous translation and the latter by the physical limitations of the screen. Hatim and Mason (1997: 78) argue that the main difficulty in subtitling lies in: "The shift in mode from speech to writing. This has the result that certain features of speech (non-standard dialect, emphatic devices such as intonation, code-switching and style-shifting, turn-taking) will not automatically be represented in the written form of the target text". This, coupled with the time and space constraints imposed by "a two-line subtitle of 60–70 characters to stay on the screen for 5–6 seconds" (Gottlieb 1998: 247), which at Iqraa translates into 13 characters per second, means that "the translator has to reassess coherence strategies in order to maximize the retrievability of intended meaning from a more concise target language version" (Hatim and Mason 1997: 79). Some of the constraints are described by Gottlieb (1994) as diagonal, in the sense that the subtitler crosses over from speech in the source language to writing in the target language, thus changing mode and language. From a pragmatic point of view, Gottlieb comments that

> In subtitling, the speech act is always in focus; intentions and effects are more important than isolated lexical elements. This pragmatic dimension leaves the subtitler free to take certain linguistic liberties, bearing in mind that each subtitle must be phrased and cued as part of a larger poly-semiotic whole aimed at unimpeded audience reception. (Gottlieb 1998: 247)

As discussed below, when it comes to translating *Iltifat,* Iqraa subtitlers have to take what Gottlieb (1998: 247) calls "certain linguistic liberties" and rewrite the Arabic speech so that it is easier to read as English text.

3. *Iltifat*: A Listener-Involvement Strategy

Iltifat as used in Classical Arabic has been extensively discussed, especially with reference to its use in the Holy Qur'an. However, the way Egyptians use *Iltifat* in their spoken discourse has not been dealt with in academic circles or in the case of interlingual subtitling.

Based on various Arabic grammarians' definitions, Abdel-Haleem (1992: 409) agrees that *Iltifat* involves a transition from one of the personal pronouns to another after having used the first and provides the lexical definition of *Iltifat* as "to turn/turn one's face to". In his opinion, the types of *Iltifat* involving change between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person are: change in number, between singular, dual and plural; change in addressee; change in the tense of the verb; change in case marker; and the use of a noun in place of a pronoun. Hatim and Mason state that *Iltifat* or reference switch in Arabic:

> involves a sudden and unexpected shift from the use of one form (a particular tense or pronominal reference) to another form within the same set. In the area of pronominal reference, this may be illustrated by the switch from the first person, which may be the norm and therefore the expected option in a given co-text, to the second person, which in that co-text constitutes a departure from the norm. (Hatim and Mason 1997: 112)

The following example from the Qur'an illustrates the kind of *Iltifat* relevant to this study; the one involving a sudden change in the addressee without a cautionary remark:

(1) "وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالوالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَاناً إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا
فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلاً كَرِيماً"
(سورة الإسراء: آية 23)

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour.

(*Chapter Al-Isra: verse 23*, translated by Yusuf Ali)[1]

The referent of the first possessive determiner, *Thy* (your*)*, is a singular addressee, Muhammad. However, the referent of the second person pronoun *Ye* (you) that follows is a plural addressee, as suggested by the second person plural inflection of the Arabic verb for *worship* تَعْبُدُوا. Moreover, there is yet another instance of *Iltifat* when the referent of the third possessive determiner *Thy* (your) is switched to the singular again in عِنْدَكَ, which is the same in English. But in this case, the addressee is not Muhammad, something that Arabic speakers can decode, relying on the background information that he was an orphan. *Iltifat* here is aimed at getting individual Muslims involved.

Hatim and Mason enumerate the following communicative functions performed by *Iltifat* when used in Classical Arabic:

> Within pronominal reference switching, the functions identified were said to: 1 relay a more supportive attitude and thus establish intimacy by, for example, involving the receiver in the communicative act; 2 underscore and specify certain concepts; 3 scold; 4 exaggerate the wonder of the situation in which the addressee finds himself. (Hatim and Mason 1997: 114)

The kind of *Iltifat* used in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic is similar to that of Classical Arabic in only one aspect, namely turning from the immediate addressee. For example, Amr Khaled suddenly engages in a pseudo-dialogue with an absent addressee rather than his immediate addressees (studio audience and viewers at home), starting the sentence with a vocative, followed by a string of relative clauses, to finish with the message or "end-weight" at the very end (Table 1). So, the switch is not realised by a change in the pronoun, but by a shift of referent. Arabic speakers are able to decode this, since it is a conventionalised discourse strategy in Arabic. However, an English speaker would expect a cautionary remark like, "To every woman, I say...". The problem lies in the fact that the speaker addresses individuals from his assumed audience that are not necessarily present in the studio, using a vocative structure, and then gives his advice using the implied second person pronoun (*you*). For English speakers, a string of vocative structures and a sudden shift to a dialogue, without any cautionary remarks as to who is being addressed, would only create confusion since the pronoun *you* can refer to a singular and a plural addressee. So, the subtitler sacrifices the dramatic effect achieved by means of *Iltifat* in Arabic and opts for using an impersonal structure, *Any woman should...* (Table 1, Excerpt 1), which aims to enhance clarity in the TT.

In contrast, *Iltifat* as employed by Mustafa Hosni involves a different way of dramatisation, where the speaker assumes the voice of the characters in the narrative he is retelling and the referent switch poses a real challenge for the subtitler (Tables 2 and 3), warranting alterations to the ST for didactic purposes.

The use of *Iltifat* in Colloquial Egyptian through a referent shift can be explained through the Theory of Deictic Shift (TDS). This theory has been used in analysing fictional narratives as a way of explaining the reader's positioning within the diagetic world, by identifying the deictic triggers in a text which cause the reader to view the diagetic world from a different angle. According to Calame and Clay,

> [t]he linguistic phenomenon of deixis renders possible verbal references to the space and time of, as well as to the participants in the act of communication. Deixis thus is a process belonging to the "enactment into discourse" (mise en discours); it renders possible an extra-discursive reference that is conveyed by discursive means. (Calame and Clay 2004: 415)

Margolin explains that the deictic centre shifts slightly even in the course of a single conversation, as different participants adopt the role of speaker:

> It is participants' orientation to the deictic center of the speaker's utterances, combined with their knowledge of the symbolic meanings of deictic expressions, that allows them to construct a shared indexical meaning of each deictic expression (indexical symbol token) used in that particular context, thus enabling communication. (Margolin 1984: 201)

As this quote illustrates, participants' orientation is central to communication in English, where a shift in referent is normally initiated either with a cautionary statement or by a change in pronoun. The following example – taken from Barack Obama's 2009 inauguration speech – highlights the difference between Arabic and English by demonstrating how English speakers secure audience involvement and heighten dramatic effect in addressing a public:

> (2) To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that *you* are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if *you* are willing to unclench your fist.
>
> (Obama 2009)[2]

As we can see, an English speaker normally sets the scene for a change in addressee through sentences like *to those who*, *know that you are*, and the like. This way, the use of the second person pronoun is readily decoded by the listeners as being used to refer to an absent addressee, having been cautioned at the beginning of the sentence.

Egyptian Arabic speakers, on the other hand, use the second person pronoun, making a referent rather than a pronoun shift without informing the listener. This poses a challenge for translation into English, as further explained by Green:

> The second person pronoun poses […] problems. It is similar to the first person pronoun in that the form you isolates the referent as the individual or individuals whom the speaker is addressing, but there are no linguistic or external clues to who the individual(s) addressed might be. The addressee is whoever the speaker intends to be addressing, and does not have to be physically present where the utterance is made […] The addressee does not have to exist at the time the utterance is produced. It is knowledge (or beliefs about) the speaker, including beliefs about his beliefs and intentions, at all levels, that enables an interpreter (addressee or otherwise) to define the intentional referents of indexical pronouns. This inference is constrained somewhat by the spatio-temporal coordinates of the utterance, but is by no means uniquely entailed by them. (Green 1996: 19)

In the case of subtitling, as the viewer has to assimilate the written information in the few seconds that the subtitle is on screen, translators working on a case of *Iltifat* need to translate the implied referent shift into a reference shift, changing the pronoun in order to avoid confusion on the part of the audience. On occasions, this approach entails rewriting of the ST. The English-speaking audience may not be able to decode the second person pronoun *you* as being addressed to someone other than the immediate addressee(s), following the normal English discourse conventions. Thus, in subtitling, translators must supply the referents to disambiguate deictic references with a view to achieving maximum intelligibility for the target audience (Table 3).

Just as news translators, subtitlers of Islamic programmes at Iqraa are now "primarily concerned with the transmission of the message" (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 11). In subtitling, as in news translation, "the dominant strategy is absolute domestication as the material is shaped in order to be consumed by the target audience, so has to be tailored to suit their needs and expectations" (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 17). Arguing for domestication or acculturation as a translation strategy that is suitable for news translation as well as interpretation, Bielsa and Bassnett mention that it has been branded as "a practice that appropriates the other", asserting that "such appropriation is essential [...] where the objective is to bring a message to the target audience in a clear, concise and totally comprehensible way" (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 17).

Hatim and Mason cite Bell's (1984) taxonomy of audience design in relation to the challenges faced by the translator of audiovisual materials, arguing that in the case of mass communication, "the orientation towards the mass auditors is perhaps the overriding consideration" (Hatim and Mason 1997: 84). They conclude that audience design is significant to subtitling:

> As a translator, the subtitler is seeking to preserve the coherence of communication between addressees on screen at the same time as relaying a coherent discourse from screenwriter to mass auditors. Given the severe constraints of the task […] hard choices have to be made. Elements of meaning will, inevitably and knowingly, be sacrificed […] typically, subtitlers make it their overriding priority to establish coherence for their receivers, i.e., the mass auditors, by ensuring easy readability and connectivity. (Hatim and Mason 1997: 84)

As the excerpts below demonstrate, to maintain this "coherent discourse", subtitlers at Iqraa rewrite the ST, at times sacrificing some rhetorical devices used by the Arabic speakers for dramatic effect (Table 4). For subtitlers at Iqraa, the pedagogical priorities of intelligibility and informativity of the TT take precedence over any dramatic effect present in the ST.

3.1. Iltifat *used by Amr Khaled*

The following is the transcript from a programme broadcast on Iqraa in 2004 by Islamic televangelist Amr Khaled in front of a studio audience (immediate addressee). Table 1 shows the verbatim ST in Arabic on the top; a literal translation providing formal equivalence is on the right-hand side; and the subtitles that were broadcast appear on the left-hand side, giving the pragmatic or dynamic equivalent.

Table 1

Besmica Nahia (By Your Name, O God, We Live)* – Episode: *Al-Jabbar

Excerpt N°	Verbatim ST in Arabic	
	Broadcasted subtitles	**Literal translation**
1.1.	يا ست ياللي اتظلمتي	
	Any woman who has been done injustice	O you woman who were wronged.
1.2.	يا بنت ياللي اُفترِيَ عليك كلام وأنت مظلومة، وتقال عليك في جَامَعتك وُلا في أَهلَ حتتك كلام	
	any girl slandered by her classmates or neighbours	O you girl who lies were made up about though you are innocent and people talked about you in your university or in your neighbourhood
1.3.	وأنتِ بريئَة من هذا الكَلام.	
	though innocent,	and you are innocent of this talk.
1.4.	لكِ مين إلا الجبار.	
	should resort to God, *Al-Jabba*r, (The Supreme Support Giver).	Who is there for you but Al-Jabbar?
1.5.	يا يتيم ياللي الدنيا تعَبِتك،	
	Orphans who suffer in life should resort to God*, Al-Jabbar,*	O you orphan who the world has exhausted you.
1.6.	يا ست يا أَرملة، يا مطلقة	
	so should widows and divorcees,	You widow, you divorced woman,
1.7.	ياللي الناس اتنكِّرت لك حتى جيرانك وحَسِّيتِي إن إنت بَيُنْظَرَ لكِ نظرات...	
	who are looked down upon or judged as immoral by neighbours,	you who people rejected, even your neighbours, and you feel that you are being given looks…
1.8.	وحتى بين جيرانك بقيتى مكسوفة وأنت داخلة عمارتك ووأَنت خارجة من عمارتك	
	And are made to feel unwelcome and unworthy;	Even among your neighbours you become embarrassed when you are going in or coming out of your building
1.9.	من النظرات اللي بتُلُقى لكِ من رجال أومن ستات خَايِفين على رجالتهم،	
	women think widows and divorcees would snatch their husbands.	From the looks you get from men or from women who fear for their men.
1.10.	لكِ مين إلا الجبار.	
	---	Who is there for you but Al-Jabbar?

As illustrated in Table 1, the host of the programme assumes a pseudo-dialogue by means of a direct address to members of his assumed audience (i.e., second person singular) in order to involve them and heighten their interest. The pronoun *you* and possessive determiner *your* are indiscriminately used in English regardless of number and gender. Therefore, if the translator opts for the formal equivalence, an English-speaking audience, who does not share the contextual information, will not

know who is being addressed by the second person pronoun *you*, and will assume that the immediate (studio) audience is being addressed. Let's take a closer look at this dialogue. Excerpt 1.1. starts in Arabic with a vocative which translates literally as *O you woman, who were wronged!*, followed in Excerpt 1.2. by another change of addressee starting with a vocative as well, *O you girl who lies were made up about.* Then Khaled engages in narrating details about such a girl's unfortunate experience, as if narrating a story, but in the form of dialogue: *your classmates gossip about you*, *your neighbors slander you while you are innocent. Iltifat* in this case is realized by a switch in the addressee or by an implied referent shift.

The subtitles in the left-hand column render the vocatives into generics – *any woman*, *any girl* –, paying attention to the patterns of textual cohesion in English, and presenting ideas accordingly. Using Gottlieb's (1998) taxonomy, the main translation strategies employed are condensation (e.g., Excerpts 1.2., 1.7., 1.8., 1.9.) and expansion (e.g., 1.4., 1.5.). This way, the TV audience can easily identify the addressee and focus on the message being conveyed, that is, turning to God in the face of adversity. Here the focus is maximum intelligibility and an attempt to foreground the religious message above the stylistic devices.

3.2. Iltifat *used by Mustafa Hosni*

In an episode of the series *Lao Kanu Ya'lamoun, Qesas men Al-Qur'an* [*If Only You Knew: Stories from the Qur'an*], we find Mustafa Hosni narrating the story of the Sleepers of Ephesus (Table 2) where he suddenly shifts from the role of the narrator to that of characters, without using any of the conventionalised cautionary phrases such as *he said* or *he wondered*. To give an impression of immediacy and authenticity, Hosni, the host of the programme, uses direct speech in his narrative and a whole scene is told by means of dialogue exchanges that if rendered in English in direct speech would only confuse the audience, who cannot go back and forth in the text as when reading a book. In Excerpt 2.1., Hosni starts with a third-person narrative mode, *So, the People of the Cave entered the Cave*, but in the same sentence, switches to the first-person narrative mode, assuming the voice of his characters without any cautionary remarks. This happens again in Excerpt 2.4., when Hosni assumes the voice of his characters and uses the first person pronoun to move his Arabic-speaking audience: *So long as my beloved is pleased with me for being here*. The subtitler, on the other hand, continues using the third-person narrative mode, stressing the moral of the message: *They didn't care about anything but pleasing God* (Excerpt 2.4.).

Relying on paralinguistic hints, Arabic speakers are able to recognise the different voice inflections immediately. Iqraa subtitlers, who have to abide by the English language rules as well as comply with the subtitling constraints, decode the rhetorical device of *Iltifat,* identify the voices of the characters in the narrative, distinguish them from that of the host of the programme and cohesively rephrase the ideas so as not to confuse their English-speaking audience. Whereas the Arabic-speaking host relies on paralinguistic cues exclusive to spoken discourse, the subtitler moves along the written-spoken discourse continuum and realises cohesion through lexicalisation. For example, before the start of Excerpt 2.1., Hosni has digressed for four whole minutes – more than 50 subtitles – as he tries to explain the concept of trusting in God and how a young Muslim can resist temptation. He then continues retelling the

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narrative of the Sleepers and the subtitler alerts the target audience that there has been a transition by adding: *Back to our story.*

In Excerpt 2.5., Hosni digresses and establishes a link between the two narratives of the Sleepers of Ephesus and the Prophet Muhammad's Emigration to Medina. He starts in the third-person narrative mode, *And the Prophet [...] did the same*, and continues doing so until Excerpt 2.10. But then in Excerpt 2.11., Hosni speaks in the first person to make his narrative vivid. The translator, however, sticks to the third-person narrative mode, which is expected by the English-speaking audience, and makes the necessary changes: *So, Muhammad moved to Medina to preach Islam.*

Again, in Excerpt 2.16. and 2.17., Hosni tries to reach out to his young audience by using the first-person narrative mode and speaking their slang Arabic, telling them how to make up their minds when torn between two choices, that of pleasing God or the self: *As long as Allah told me He likes me to be here, I don't care about any lust or anything that pleases me.* Once again the Arabic-speaking audience can tell that these are not the words of Prophet Muhammad thanks to certain paralinguistic elements and register. The subtitles help the target audience through maintaining the third-person narrative in Excerpt 2.16. – *God ordered him to leave Mecca, so he did* – and by spelling out the moral in Excerpt 2.17.: *Any personal desire should be shunned if it doesn't please God.* This involves manipulating the ST to maximise its educational thrust for the target audience. Thus, as this last example demonstrates, the translator has decided to make explicit in English the underlying moral of the Qur'anic parable narrated in Arabic by Mustafa Hosni. This not only reduces redundancy in the TT, but also enhances the didactic aim of the programme itself.

Table 2

*Lao Kanu Ya'lamoun, Qesas men Al-Qur'an (**If You only Knew: Stories from the Qur'an**) – Episode 7*

Excerpt N°	Verbatim ST in Arabic	
	Broadcasted subtitles	**Literal translation**
2.1.	لذلك أهل الكهف دخلوا الكهف وإن شاء الله ربنا مش هيضيعنا	
	Back to our story: the Sleepers of Ephesus entered the Cave knowing that God would be with them.	So, the People of the Cave entered the Cave and if Allah wills it He will not let us down
2.2.	وخذ بالك دول كانوا من أغنياء القوم يعني كانوا عايشين عيشة حلوة	
	By the way, those young men were rich and lived in luxury.	Mind you, those were from the rich, meaning they were living an easy life
2.3.	فكون أنهم يسيبوا الدنيا عشان الله ده اسمه حب يا جماعة	
	But they abandoned everything to worship God, this is a sign of true devotion.	Abandoning life for Allah, this is called love, folks.
2.4.	أن حبيبي راضي وأنا هنا خلاص ما دام حس أن حبيبي قريب مني ما تفرقش معايا	
	They didn't care about anything but pleasing God.	So long as my beloved is pleased with me for being here and that He is close to me, nothing matters

2.5.	والنبي (ص) عمل كدة مكة أتربى فيها (ص)	
	Similarly, Muhammad left Mecca, the place where he was born	And the Prophet, peace be upon him, did the same. Mecca, he was raised there, peace be upon him
2.6.	عاش فيها 53 سنة	
	and where he lived for 53 years	He lived there for 53 years
2.7.	مش 5 أو 6 سنين أتعود على الناس	
	not just 5 or 6 years: he spent his entire life in Mecca!	Not 5 or 6 years. He got used to people there
2.8.	ده النبي قعد فيها 40 سنة ثم بعث (ص)	
	Muhammad lived for 40 years in Mecca before receiving Revelation	The Prophet lived there for 40 years then he was revealed to, peace be upon him
2.9.	قعد 13 سنة في مكة (ص)	
	and then he stayed there for 13 more years.	He stayed 13 years in Mecca
2.10.	وبعدين أمر بالهجرة لأن مكة خلاص مفيش أمل دلوقتي أن الناس دي تخش في الإسلام	
	Then, God ordered him to leave Mecca when Quraish refused to accept Islam.	Then he was ordered to emigrate because Mecca: "there is no hope now that those people will enter Islam."
2.11.	فأطلع أبني الإسلام في مكان تاني اللي هو المدينة	
	So, Muhammad moved to Medina to preach Islam.	"I'll go somewhere else to establish Islam; I'll go to Medina."
2.12.	53 سنة ثم يترك لدرجة أن النبي وهو ماشي من مكة نظر إليها وقال	
	It wasn't easy to leave Mecca. When Muhammad was leaving, he addressed Mecca saying:	53 years then he leaves to the extent that as he was leaving Mecca, he looked at it and said
2.13.	والله أنك أحب البلاد إلى الله وأحب البلاد إلى قلبي	
	"By God you are the most beloved land to God and... to me."	"By God you are the most beloved country to Allah and the most beloved country to my heart
2.14.	ولولا أن قومك أخرجوني منك ما خرجت	
	"Had your people not driven me out, I wouldn't have left."	Had your people not driven me out I would not leave."
2.15.	حب بلده لكن في الآخر لا	
	Muhammad loved his home, but his love for God was bigger.	He loved his home, but in the end No.
2.16.	ما دام الله قال لي أنا أحبك تبقى هنا	
	God ordered him to leave Mecca, so he did.	As long as Allah told me He likes me to be here.
2.17.	خلاص متفرقش معايا أي شهوة عندي ولا أي حاجة ترضيني	
	Any personal desire should be shunned if it doesn't please God.	I don't care about any lust or anything that pleases me.

On another programme, also by Mustafa Hosni, he again makes up a dialogue in his audience's slangish Egyptian Colloquial Arabic to identify himself with them and motivate them to action (Table 3). He assumes the voice of his addressees, using the inclusive *we*, as in Excerpt 3.1., to avoid sounding patronising and to show solidarity with his target audience, mostly youths. Hosni takes it further in Excerpts 3.2. and 3.3. Trying to get his young audience to relate to him, he engages in pseudo-dialogue using their Egyptian Colloquial Arabic.

Excerpt 3.2. is a dialogue changing from the first voice (*"Don't call the prophet a terrorist"*) to the second voice (*He is a terrorist*), and back to the first voice (*"No he's not"*). In Excerpt 3.3., from the first voice (*"Want me to prove he is not a terrorist?"*), Hosni switches to first-person narrative: *and then I go and read his biography.* Hosni's Arabic-speaking audience can rely on the change in voice performed by Hosni, between the host of the programme and the characters he creates to get his point across. However, the English-speaking audience of the subtitled programme would be confused if this dramatic technique were to be maintained in English. So, the translator focuses on pragmatic equivalence and remains message-focused, making the necessary alterations to appeal to Iqraa's assumed target audience. By concentrating on the message of the programme, the translator is once again manipulating the ST to meet the didactic aims of the channel so that English-speaking viewers can better understand the Qur'anic stories being narrated.

TABLE 3

Lao Kanu Ya'lamoun, Qesas men Al-Qur'an (If You only Knew: Stories from the Qur'an) – Episode 9

Excerpt N°	Verbatim ST in Arabic	
	Broadcasted subtitles	**Literal translation**
3.1.	كل ده بسبب أن إحنا مكناش مهتمين قوي نعرف قصة حياة النبي إلا لما أتشتم	
	We didn't care to know about the Prophet's life until he was insulted.	It's all because we didn't care to know about the Prophet's life story until he was insulted.
3.2.	متقولش على النبي إرهابي طيب لا النبي إرهابي لا مش إرهابي	
	To defend the Prophet Muhammad and prove he was not a terrorist,	"Don't call the prophet a terrorist." "He is a terrorist." "No he's not."
3.3.	تحب أقول لك بقى أن النبي مش إرهابي أقرأ قصته	
	Muslims quoted from his biography.	"Want me to prove he is not a terrorist?" and then I go and read his biography.
3.4.	فنرجع نقرأ أه والله صح ده مش إرهابي ده مش بيدبح في الناس	
	Reading about Muhammad's life, we realized he never killed anyone.	And then we go: "Oh, it is true, he was not a terrorist, he does not murder people",
3.5.	بس لما عرفنا قصته (ص) ورحمته بالمسلم وغير المسلم	
	Now we know how merciful he was with Muslims and non-Muslims.	but now we know his story and his mercy to Muslims and non-Muslims.

Excerpts in Table 4 below are taken from another episode of the same programme by Mustafa Hosni. After calling his audience to seek religious knowledge and not waste their time aimlessly, Hosni resorts to *Iltifat* in Excerpt 4.1., creating an absent addressee and speaking in the third-person pronoun, so as to avoid sounding condescending. This way, Hosni successfully avoids threatening his audience's positive face and gets his message across in Arabic. However, it would only be confusing for the English-speaking audience to understand the referents of *you* and *he* in the dramatic scene created by Hosni to appeal to his audience and to avoid monotony. So, again, the subtitles provide the pragmatic equivalent and resort to matter-of-fact statements rather than rhetorical questions that may prove more challenging to follow on screen. The threat to the audience's positive face in subtitles 4.1. and 4.2. is mitigated in English by the use of *Some Muslims* and *they ask*. In Excerpts 4.3. and 4.4., Hosni assumes the voice of the character he has created and starts asking rhetorical questions about ritual ablution to motivate his audience to seek Islamic knowledge. Here, the translator opts not only for clarity, but also for informativity and didacticism, addressing the target audience's perceived need for correct information about Islam.

Table 4

Lao Kanu Ya'lamoun, Qesas men Al-Qur'an (If You only Knew: Stories from the Qur'an) –
Episode 10

Excerpt N°	Verbatim ST in Arabic	
	Broadcasted subtitles	**Literal translation**
4.1.	وبعدين نيجي نقول له هو أنت كده مش وضوئك أنتقض لما نمت ؟ أنت نمت وضوئك خلاص أنتقض	
	Some Muslims don't even know basic information about Islam.	We go and tell him, "Hasn't your ablution been nullified since you slept? You fell asleep and your ablution is no longer valid".
4.2.	أيه ده هو النوم بينقض الوضوء ؟ أيه ده ؟ ده بقى له عشر سنين بيصلي كده	
	They ask simple questions like if sleeping nullifies ablution.	"What? Does sleep nullify ablution? This is strange!" He has been praying like that for 10 years!
4.3.	طيب وهل كل نوم بينقض الوضوء ؟ ولا لو أنا نايم وأنا قاعد كده يبقى خلاص ؟	
	It's important to know that… … not every kind of sleep breaks an ablution	Does every type of sleep nullify ablution? Or is it okay if I sleep while sitting?
4.4.	ولا لو كنت مضجع ؟ ولا لو غفلت لحظه وصحيت تاني وأنا نايم على جنبي ؟	
	and that the sleeping position has to be taken into consideration.	What if I slept in a reclining position? What if I napped on my side for a little while and then woke up?

4. Code-switching in audiovisual translation

Code-switching between Classical Arabic and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic poses a challenge to the subtitler, whose target audience may not realise the code-switch and may think the speaker is being redundant. This tends to happen when the speaker cites a Qur'anic verse, a saying by Prophet Muhammad, or a poem. Given that

Classical Arabic is not readily understandable to many young Egyptians, the speaker opts for explaining some references in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. Since the subtitler has already rendered the poem or the verse directly from the Classical Arabic, the meaning is already clear for the English-speaking audience, and the translator is left with the task of filling the *gap* where the speaker reiterates the information in the Colloquial variety (Table 5). In Excerpt 5.1., the speaker uses the Classical Arabic expression for *attributing knowledge to Him*, and guessing that members of his audience may not understand it, he goes on to clarify it in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic in Excerpt 5.2. Since the first subtitle is clear enough in English, the translator chooses a solution in subtitle 2 which involves the rewriting of the ST and crucially spells out the message in a much more direct and didactic way.

In Excerpt 5.3., Hosni cites a saying by Prophet Muhammad in Classical Arabic: *If God wills to do a person good He makes him well-versed in religion*. Again, this can be readily understood by the English-speaking audience and needs no further elaboration. However, Hosni knows that his Arab audience needs further explanation, which he provides by switching to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic in Excerpt 5.4. In order to avoid repetition, the subtitler decides to emphasise the need for learning Islam in a significantly pedagogical way: *Learning about Islam is a blessing from God*, again rewriting the original.

TABLE 5

Lao Kanu Ya'lamoun, Qesas men Al-Qur'an (*If You only Knew: Stories from the Qur'an*) – Episode 9

Excerpt N°	Verbatim ST in Arabic	
	Broadcasted subtitles	**Literal translation**
5.1.	فعتب الله عليه أنه لم يرد العلم أليه	
	God reproached Moses for not attributing his knowledge to Him.	Allah blamed him for not attributing knowledge to Him.
5.2.	يعنى ربنا عاتبه لأنه مقلش الله أعلم	
	Moses should have declared that God is the Most Knowledgeable.	Meaning, God blamed him for not saying Allah knows
5.3.	"من يرد الله به خيراً يفقه فى الدين"	
	If God wills to do a person good He makes him well-versed in religion.	"Whoever God wills good He makes him understand religion"
5.4.	لو أراد الله بك خيراً يخليك تفهم دينك	
	Learning about Islam is a blessing from God.	If Allah wills to do you good He will let you understand religion

5. Conclusion

In the case of Iqraa's interlingual subtitling of Islamic television programmes from Arabic into English, I would like to argue that contrary to Lefevere's (1992: xi) opinion, the rewriting of the ST is not "manipulation, undertaken in the service of power", nor is it meant to "repress innovation, distort and contain". This type of manipulation

is not done to promote a hegemonic target culture at the expense of the source culture, as suggested by Venuti (1995). Instead, translators at Iqraa work to make Islamic concepts more comprehensible for an audience that is not fully conversant with the Arabic culture. The majority of Iqraa's viewers watching subtitled Islamic programmes are Muslims trying to learn more about their faith from Arabic-speaking scholars or speakers. Consequently, most of the rewriting and manipulation that takes place in the translation serves the purpose of rendering the TT more intelligible and informative, hence reinforcing its didactic and educational dimensions. As we have seen, this may involve paraphrase, condensation and expansion, as well as changes in the register.

Part of the job of the subtitlers at Iqraa is not only to work within the time and space constraints of subtitling, but also to render complex Islamic narratives and concepts in a manner that is comprehensible for a diverse and non-specialist audience. Far from being subversive, the rewriting of the original is aimed at making clearer and more accessible the message conveyed by the Arabic-language programmes being broadcast. Indeed, religious programmes are message focused and for translators to achieve their purpose it can be argued that they need to act as parallel Islamic televangelists in English, maintaining the "invariant core" (Popovič 1976, cited in Bassnett 2002: 33) and using the most effective strategies to get the message through to their target audience. Manipulation of the ST is done with the sole aim of meeting the needs of Iqraa's target audience for intelligible subtitles that are instrumental to conveying Islamic knowledge.

NOTES

1. *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary* (1934/2001): Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Reprinted by Islamic Vision. Visited on 1 May 2012, <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=17&verse=23>.
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