

Artificial Intelligence Translation of Arabic Funny Comics by ChatGPT and Transmonkey

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Abstract

The translation of funny comics from Arabic into English is a complicated task because of the interaction between linguistic, cultural, and visual factors. The present study aims to investigate this issue. Sample data is collected from some chosen Arabic funny comics and their machine translations by ChatGPT and Transmonkey. The approach is based on content analysis and a comparison of textual and visual elements, to explore the way the linguistic, cultural and visual content is transferred. It delves into the theory of acculturation by John Berry (1997) that contributes to the explanation of linguistic and cultural adaptation in such funny comics. It concludes that Artificial Intelligence may fail to translate both the message and the visual content in Arabic comics and that translation depended on cultural strategies, specifically integration, in order to make the message and the funny comic effect as accessible as possible to the English target readers.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Machine Translation; Funny Comics; Arabic-English Translation; Cultural Acculturation; Visual Semantics

Abbreviations:

CR: Cultural References

LH: Linguistic Humour

ST: Source Text

TT: Target Text

VE: Visual Elements

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ترجمة الذكاء الاصطناعي للقصص الفكاهية المصورة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية عبر تشات

جي بي تي و ترانسمنكي

مستخلص

تُعدّ ترجمة القصص الفكاهية المصورة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية مهمة معقدة نظراً لتداخل العوامل اللغوية والثقافية والبصرية. هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى تقصي تلك المسألة. تتكون البيانات المستخدمة في التحليل من بعض القصص المختارة والمكتوبة باللغة العربية وترجماتها عبر برنامجي تشات جي بي تي ChatGPT و ترانسمنكي Transmonkey. واستخدمت الدراسة منهجاً يعتمد على تحليل المحتوى و مقارنة النصوص والمشاهد، لمعرفة كيفية نقل المحتوى اللغوي والثقافي والبصري عن طريق الآلة. وتقوم الدراسة على الإطار النظري الذي طرحه جون بيرري من خلال نظرية التثاقف Acculturation (1997) ، والتي نرى أنها تُسهم في تفسير التكيف اللغوي والثقافي في هذه القصص. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الذكاء الاصطناعي قد يعجز عن ترجمة كلٍ من الرسالة والمحتوى البصري في القصص المصورة العربية، وأن الترجمة تعتمد على استراتيجيات ثقافية، وخصوصاً التكمال، في محاولة لجعل الرسالة المنقولة والتأثير الفكاهي في متناول القراء المستهدفين قدر الإمكان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي؛ الترجمة الآلية؛ القصص المصورة الفكاهية؛ الترجمة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية؛ التثاقف الثقافي؛ الدلالات البصرية

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1. Introduction

The translation of funny comics from Arabic into English is a complicated task because of the interaction between linguistic, cultural, and visual factors. The present study aims to investigate this issue. Sample data is collected from some chosen Arabic funny comics and their machine translations by ChatGPT and Transmonkey. The approach is based on content analysis and a comparison of textual and visual elements, to explore the way the linguistic, cultural and visual content is transferred. It delves into the theory of acculturation by John Berry (1997) and the four strategies integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation, which we think will contribute to the explanation of linguistic and cultural adaptation in such funny comics.

The translation of comics is a difficult task since the interpretation of jokes depends on cultural knowledge, language structure, common social references, among others. In translating Arabic funny comics into English, a lot of the comic reference relies on pictorial messages, dialect and culturally-rooted phrases, which may not be present in the target language. As the number of individuals who use AI tools, including ChatGPT and Transmonkey, increases, the question of how artificial intelligence copes with culture-specific jokes and visual-verbal communication grows in popularity (Attardo 2002:22). ChatGPT is an advanced AI chatbot from OpenAI company, built on Large Language Models like GPT-4, which understands natural language to generate human-like text, to answer questions, to write codes, to create images, to summarise information, and to brainstorm ideas, acting as a conversational assistant for many tasks, even handling voice, images, and file inputs. Transmonkey AI is a next-generation AI translation platform translating texts, documents, images, audios, and videos into over 130 languages.

The translation of comics is a relatively new field of interest with the recent rise in the use of artificial intelligence tools, like ChatGPT and Transmonkey. With the spread of the short comic strips through digital platforms into various cultures, the idea of jokes, visuals, and cultural transference between languages has become more apparent (Kaindl 2004:263). Funny Comic is not merely verbal, but also visual and

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culturally embedded and this makes the process of translation more complex than merely a linguistic transfer (Cohn 2013:55). Although funny Arabic comics are extensively spread over the internet, the academic literature on the topic has not explored the issue of how AI-based tools process the cultural and visual elements of jokes. Most translations lose cultural information, and some of the translations distort the comic effect, which brings up issues regarding the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated translations (Inose 2012: 111). The latter gap shows the necessity to examine the way funny idioms changes in different cultures, and what strategies artificial intelligence follows within the context of the acculturation theory.

Key Concepts:

Translation of Comics. The translation of comics is the process of transferring not only meaning but also other essential elements in one language to another. Delabastita (1996) suggests that some of the strategies used in comic translation include adaptation, substitution, or compensation in case the joke cannot be translated directly. This is particularly relevant in Arabic funny comics, where the wordplay, the dialects, the exaggeration, and the visual context make the jokes. This concept is important to understand since ChatGPT and Transmonkey need to read between the linguistic and cultural lines as well as the visuals to come up with an effective version of the English version.

Visual Semantics. Visual semantics is the meaning that is produced by using pictures and visual symbols in a comic. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, images have the semiotic power and collaborate with text to produce comic, tone, and narrative (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Funny comics are frequently based on a visual scene and a brief punchline. When ChatGPT and Transmonkey translate such comics, it has to process the message visually, although AI systems do not always comprehend cultural imagery or visual jokes completely.

Cultural Transfer. Cultural transfer is a process where the cultural meaning is transferred to the target language when translated. According to Nida, cultural aspects, like social norms, dialects or religious expressions, have to be modified in a manner that would be comprehensible to the intended audience without distorting the original meaning (Nida 1964). In Arabic funny comics, a joke revolves around a cultural allusion. Therefore, the analysis of the translation of ChatGPT and Transmonkey can reveal how effective the transfer of culturally embedded comic into the target language is.

Significance of the Study:

The topic of the study has serious implications for the machine translation of culturally specific humour, which is one of the complicated fields of translation research and practice. While human translators use extensive cultural understanding and context sensitivity, AI systems might not be able to detect visual clues, dialectical jokes and culturally entrenched messages involved in Arabic funny comics. Through the analysis of ChatGPT and Transmonkey English translations, the research points out the strengths, weaknesses, and overall precision of the transfer of linguistic and visual humour. It can help comprehend the existing AI abilities in humour translation, and provide information which can be used to enhance AI performance in cross-cultural communication.

2. Literature Review:**2.1 Acculturation Theory**

The acculturation Theory was developed by John Berry (1997). It explains the way in which individuals or groups adjust whatever they encounter to suit another culture. The theory recognises four primary strategies of cultural contact, namely, assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation. Even though the theory was initially created within the context of cross-cultural psychology, it has been extensively used in translation studies to understand how cultural aspects are negotiated in the process of the movement of texts between languages and cultures.

Acculturation may be applied to translation studies to examine the way in which translators (or machine translation systems) respond to culture-specific content. Assimilation is a situation where the source culture is mostly substituted by those of the target culture such that the translated text is more understandable by the target audience at the expense of the cultural identity of the original text. Meanwhile, integration tries to preserve the content of the source culture and the target one, so that the target text also retains its original cultural taste, and at the same time can be interpreted by the target audience. Separation indicates a disposition to keep the source culture with little adaptation and this can lead to foreignness or decreased understanding. Marginalisation, on the other hand, is a situation where the source culture or the target culture is not represented clearly and therefore the meaning or communicative effect is lost (Berry 1997). Applied to the translation of Arabic funny comics into English with the help of ChatGPT and Transmonkey, the Acculturation Theory offers a viable model of studying the transfer of humour and cultural references.

Arabic Funny comics tend to be based on dialect, cultural standards, social clichés and visual indicators which are highly embedded in the original culture. Using the Acculturation strategies by Berry, we will explore whether ChatGPT and Transmonkey are more inclined to assimilate comics by substituting them with culturally neutral terms, integrate humour by both maintaining cultural allusions and explanation, separate with little adaptation to keep the foreignness of the source text, or marginalise humour by generating translations that no longer have the comic effect at all. Therefore, the Acculturation Theory can be used to unveil how far ChatGPT and Transmonkey are able to handle cultural adaptation in terms of translating humorous and multimodal texts.

2.2 Previous Studies

2.2.1 Comic Translation: A Multimodal Genre

Comic translation is not a straightforward linguistic transfer, but a multimodal process which incorporates images, text, sound effects, layout, and cultural references. Kaindl (1999) discusses the fact that comics work in a system of verbal and visual signs that cannot be translated independently but only in combination. Zanettin (2008) states that the visual frame restricts the translator, particularly when it comes to humour because images limit the amount of text that can be added or altered. Similarly, Cohn (2013) believes that visual grammar organises the narrative; any translation choice has to take into account how pictures determine the direction of reading, pace, and comic timing. The art of translating funny comics has received a lot of attention in the field of translation studies due to the increased contact between global media cultures. The translations of comics are based on laughs and it is not a matter of easy task since what is comic is not just a linguistic phenomenon but a cultural and visual one.

In addition, Zanettin (2008:14) argues that comics are a multimodal discourse in which meaning is created because of the interaction between text and image. This shows that multimodality complicates the work of the translator especially in cases where funny, irony or wordplay is involved as these effects are usually culturally specific. Also, according to scholars as Chiaro (2010:22) and Vandaele (2011:148), funny translation needs innovative and situational approaches in order to achieve the same comic effect in the target language. Therefore, the analysis of the translation of funny comics from Arabic into English can be useful in the understanding of the interaction between linguistic

creativity, cultural adaptation, and visual semiotics in intercultural communication.

2.2.2 Humour Translation across Cultures

Humour is believed to be the hardest thing to translate. According to Chiaro (2010), humour is based on wordplay, cultural reference, stereotypes and shared knowledge, which are not always easily transferred between languages. Attardo (2002) emphasizes that linguistic humour (such as puns) is likely to lose its meaning when the organisation of the target language is very different to that of the source language. Inose (2012) confirms that the translators have to overcome the differences in cultural expectations, taboos and social norms; some of the jokes are not understandable in the target language unless they are modified. The translation of funny comics is a huge challenge, both linguistically and culturally.

Funny comics usually depend on wordplay, jokes, and native phrases that fail to work when translated straight into a different language. Cohn (2013: 45-46) mentions that funny comics are based on language-specific elements which are highly unresponsive to literal translation. On the same side, Attardo (2002:178) argues that linguistic comics depend on a lot on phonological, lexical or syntactic ambiguity, which change among languages. Other than linguistic influences, cultural situations are important in crafting the comic effect. As highlighted by Inose (2012:223-224), translators have to interfere between two systems of cultures and rebuild jokes that are not necessarily clear to the target audience. When it comes Arabic/English translation, cultural adaptation is even more complicated so long as comics tend to be socially and or religiously unacceptable in the new culture and language and should be localized. Furthermore, Al-Jabr (2013:67) says that Arabic translators often use the device of substitution or explanation when a joke is related to a culture or context.

Comedy is a culturally defined process that operates based on culturally defined norms, and therefore what will be seen as laughter in a given linguistic group will fail or offend in another. Comparative studies of Arabic and English humorous practices show that there are distinctions in the application of puns, irony, and culturally specific references like social taboos (Newmark 1988:135-137; Baker 1992). Such differences impact comic strips and panels; Arabic comics often have to be based on register shifts and cultural situational signs that cannot be transferred literally, whereas English comics may be based more on lexical play that may be compensated in some other way (Chiaro 2010: 41; Alshahrani

2024). Consequently, translators operating between Arabic and English should be especially sensitive to register, ideology, and taboo sensitivity, selecting the strategies (localisation, explication, or compensation) suitable to the target audience.

2.2.3 Translating Acculturation Theory

Acculturation theory's (Berry 1997; 2003) four strategies, namely assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation, which have been recently extended to translation by scholars. According to researchers like Tahir-Gurcaglar (2011), such strategies are applied by translators to determine the level of the cultural content that should be retained or modified. Assimilation during translation of comics is often manifested through the rewriting of a culturally specific joke by the translator to suit the target culture, and integration through the insertion of the original reference by the translator, but with linguistic interpretation. In Arabic/English translation, research by Al Fadhli (2020) and Ahmed (2016) indicate that humour can be achieved with a combination of strategies to preserve the meaning and comedic value.

The linguistic structure, cultural codes, and comedy conventions are some of the factors that complicate the translation of funny comics between Arabic and English. Attardo (2017:125) notes that jokes are a culturally-confined phenomenon that is based on implicit social knowledge, and therefore, it is especially hard to find a parallel in translation. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021: 89) stress that funny translation is not only a matter of transfer of linguistic meaning but also a matter of re-creating the pragmatic role of the elicitor of laughter. Moreover, Mohammed (2019:7) claims that in the process of funny translation to English, translators frequently have to deal with the dilemma of linguistic untranslatability versus cultural sensitivity. Moreover, Eljazouli and Azmi (2024:56) observe that Arabic translators of comedy works are likely to use compensatory measures like paraphrasing or cultural replacement in order to fit the Western comic to the Arab people.

2.2.4 AI-based Comic Translation

As AI tools are emerging, researchers have started investigating how these systems as ChatGPT and Transmonkey process multimodal and humorous texts. According to Jiao and Wang (2023), machine translation cannot deal with humour that is culturally embedded and lacks pragmatic cues that human beings can make inferences about. Ziad & Hussein

(2022) suggest that AI tends to give direct translations of jokes, particularly Arabic dialect jokes, as models do not have a grounding in local cultural practices. The recent reviews of GPT-based translation (Krikmann 2023) reveal that AI is effective in working with neutral texts but weak in humour when pragmatics, images, and references to culture are necessary.

As comics are a form of communication that involves both verbal and visual means, it is important to understand the relationship between pictures and text when communicating humour, because the visual content can be as significant as words in an effective translation. According to Kaindl and Ramey (2015: 189), the visual aspect of comics can either facilitate or complicate the process, as images sometimes support the joke or contradict the verbal message. Therefore, translators are required to interpret both layers at the same time. These issues indicate that the process of translating funny comics cannot be viewed as a simple linguistic activity, but compound process of negotiating between two languages, cultures, and visual semiotics. Visual semiotics is a key factor in the translation of funny comics in the way meaning is within different cultures. Comics are multimodal in nature, with word and image working together to create meaning. There is also a McCloud (1993:67) thinks that images in comics are not passive illustrations, but active narrative agents, that is, any translation should take into account both verbal and visual codes at the same time.

Nevertheless, Zitawi (2005:43) points out that during the translation of Disney comics into Arabic, cultural symbols and idiomatic jokes are often adapted by the translators to conform to the local moral and social values. Overall, these works prove that the process of translating funny content in comics is not simply a linguistic process but a cross-cultural bargaining, which demands creativity, awareness, and cultural adaptation.

2.2.5 Difficulties Encountered in English Translation

As afore-mentioned, Arabic comics tend to be based on dialect, exaggeration, visuals and socio-cultural stereotypes. Abu-Matar (2019) notes that the Egyptian Arabic humour is particularly situational, i.e. jokes cannot be directly translated into English. Besides, Shalaby (2018) demonstrates that visual symbols can be misunderstood by the English readers of the Arab comics because gestures and facial expressions can mean something different in cross-cultural contexts. Research on translation constraints (Remael and Vercauteren 2016) underlines that due to the small area within speech bubbles, translators have to cut text, which tend to make humour less intense.

Funny perception and expressions are quite different in Arabic and English cultures, and a translator has to find the way not only through the words but also through the deeper social and cultural values that define what is funny to the audience. As Diaz and Remael (2014:30) explain, the translator should analyse the connection between text and image as the change of one component can break the entire sense of the joke. Similarly, Delabastita (1996:127-139) adds that visual details may support or oppose the funny variable, forming multiple layers of semiotics which the translator must decode.

According to Pérez-González (2014:102), the timing and rhythm of the humour are also achieved by the spatial arrangement of the panels and typography which is not always possible when one replaces the text. Kaindl and Ramey (2015:191) indicate that in an intercultural setting, including Arabic/English translations, a translator might be required to alter visual symbols, which have a different meaning in the target culture. Therefore, translation of funny comics demands both a linguistic ability and a semiotic understanding of the visual and textual elements working together to create comedy.

3. Methodological Framework:

There are complicated issues when it comes to translating funny comics from Arabic into English that transcend linguistic equivalence. Cultural allusions, wordplay, and visual-verbal exchanges usually fail to their original purpose when translated directly. A lot of translations either dilute or localise jokes resulting in cultural dilution or even a loss of the comic original meaning. From this problem, it appears that studying the ways in which translators can cross cultural boundaries and preserve the comic effect and the interest of the reader becomes necessary.

The primary goal of the research is to analyse and assess how ChatGPT and Transmonkey translate funny comics from Arabic into English and see the difficulties they face in this regard. It aims to determine the translation strategies used according to the Acculturation theory (assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalisation) and the impact these strategies have on cultural preservation and readers understanding. It raises two research questions:

1. How ChatGPT and Transmonkey translate the text of the funny comics?
2. How do ChatGPT and Transmonkey interpret visual semantics during the process of translation?

To answer these questions, the following objectives are set:

- To identify how ChatGPT and Transmonkey understand the funny terms of Arabic comics;
- To analyse how ChatGPT and Transmonkey visual cues like facial expression, action lines, exaggerated shape the comic layout;
- To examine the impact of translation on the target culture; and
- To evaluate which is better in translating funny comics and retaining tone, intent and comic timing in the language of translation.

In so doing, the study follows the following procedures:

- To collect the sample data in Arabic;
- To collect the translation in English by both the two AI tools;
- To analyse ST and TTs;
- To compare the TTs to the ST; and
- To figure out how funny comics can be translated.

The data that will be used in this research is a collection of Arabic funny comics selected based on visual semantics. They will be collected from social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Arabic comic websites. All comics will be presented in their original Arabic and the English versions produced by ChatGPT and Transmonkey. The reason why this topic is selected is that Arabic humorous material has a specific cultural and semantic richness that is not always easy to translate into the English language. Comics in general, especially funny ones, are a combination of language, visuals, and references to culture, which form a challenge to AI translation systems. With this multimodal genre, the research will be able to understand how the model is successful in detecting the humour, maintaining the meaning, and addressing cultural differences that do not necessarily flow across languages in a popular widely-read genre of digital texts.

This study uses a qualitative multimodal approach based on content analysis, visual semiotics and comparison as main research tools to best approach this interesting assessment of AI translations. However, we are well-aware of the research limitations. The size of the data represents a limitation as it is based on a few Arabic funny comics. Another reflection of other forms of comics could enrich the analysis and conclusion. Also, the Arabic/English language pair limits other perspectives from other languages. The applied theoretical framework does not exhaust all the dimensions of translating funny comics and it could narrow down the

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interpretation of some factors not mentioned in the analysis. The disparity between Arabic and English languages, cultures, way of expressing comics, word play, and expressions is culturally wide and dialectical; maybe comics in more closer language families can be easily translated by machines. The study uses only two AI systems, so the results cannot be generated to other systems. Finally, most of these free AI systems allow the translation of a few numbers of pictures, for example Transmonkey allows 25-30 limited uploading picture range to translate, while ChatGPT allows uploading 2-4 pictures per day.

The present study will be divided into an introduction, a review of literature, a methodological framework and the analysis and discussion of the data, in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. The analysis and discussion part will be categorised according to the recurring themes of these comics into three sub-sections. This thematic division will contribute to the smooth organisation of the analysis. The first sub-section is called 'Comics about Husband and Wife', tackling humorous circumstances between husbands and wives. These comics tend to be based on marital stereotypes, daily domestic relations, and culturally specific demands between spouses. They are chosen to discuss the way relationship-based humour is translated into English. The second, 'Comics about Motherhood', includes five Arabic humorous comics that focus on mothers and motherhood. Emotional attachment, parental authority, sacrifice, and exaggerated maternalism are the sources of humour in these comics. It is a set that is used to examine the way family humour, which is culturally embedded, is translated. The third, 'Comics about marriage', also includes five comics, which are associated with marriage as a social and cultural institution. These comics point out to social norms, traditions, and general attitudes of marriage in the Arab culture. They give us an idea of the way in which ChatGPT and Transmonkey interpret humour that is closely tied to cultural values.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion:

The data consists of fifteen Arabic funny comic images that were gathered online. The selected comics are categorised into three thematic groups: five comics that show funny situations between husband and wife, five comics that talk about motherhood, and five comics that talk about situations related to marriage. They necessitate typical social and cultural background of Arabic funny comics and are mostly dependent on visual and verbal communication to deliver a meaning. Each comic is analysed using a comparative qualitative method. The original Arabic text

is marked as ST (Source Text), and the translation of the English text by ChatGPT or Transmonkey are marked as TT (Target Text). The visual elements are called VE, which consist of facial expressions, gestures, and symbols. Linguistic humour is abbreviated as LH. Cultural references are identified as CR. These signs are applied throughout the analysis to make it clear and to compare the Arabic comics and their translations into English in a systematic way. The analysis will start with the discussion of the linguistic and visual characteristics of each comic and compare them with the English version of the translation to determine the shift in meaning and identify the translation strategies employed.

4.1 Comics about Husband and Wife

Example 1:

ST

TT (ChatGPT)

TT (Transmonkey)



This example shows the variation between ChatGPT and Transmonkey machine translation systems in processing humorous and visually dependent meaning. The ST, “Don’t be late because I want to annoy you”, is very much dependent on the cultural tone and facial expressions to create a humorous warning as opposed to a literal statement. The translation of ChatGPT transforms the message by replacing the command ‘Don’t be late’ with a personal message ‘I am late’, which leads to the distortion of semantics and the loss of comic intent. The translation does not capture the harsh facial expression in the picture, which means that there is not much interaction with visual semantics. Transmonkey, in its turn, makes a translation that preserves the directive pattern and adds a verb ‘scold’, which is more appropriate to the expression of the character and the humour that is implied. This analogy implies that ChatGPT can produce fluent language but may not be very capable of maintaining funny terms when meaning is based on visual signals and culturally implicit tone. In terms of acculturation, the translation by ChatGPT is an act of marginalisation, as both the cultural tone and comic effect are diluted, while Transmonkey displays a partial

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approach to integration, retaining the original meaning and modifying it to fit the language.

Example 2:

ST



TT (ChatGPT)



TT (Transmonkey)



Here, the humorous meaning of comics is extremely reliant on cultural knowledge and visual context. Exaggeration and social irony are used in the ST, “If you find lipstick on his shirt, you should be happy that he was not taking off his shirt”, to make the comic effect, supported by facial expressions and body language of the characters. The translation of ChatGPT, “If you find your husband sulking over his shirt, be happy that he did not take off his nightmare”, is, however, incorrect in its semantics, especially when it comes to the translation of the words ‘lipstick’ and ‘shirt’, which are mistranslated as ‘sulking’ and ‘nightmare’. This mistake breaks the sense and funny idioms, and leaves a text that seems to be bizarre instead of being comic. Moreover, the translation does not engage with the visual stimuli in the image to indicate a weakness in processing visual semantics. However, in comparison, the translation of Transmonkey, “If you find lipstick on his shirt, be happy that he isn’t shirtless, Ya Nousa”, is more in line with the original joke in that it retained the structure of exaggeration and the desired contrast, thus retaining a certain amount of humorous impact. This analogy reveals that ChatGPT is more focused on linguistic fluency than cultural and visual interpretation, which influences its performance in the translation of

visually-based comics. Acculturation-wise, the translation provided by ChatGPT is more marginalised, with both cultural specificity and comedy being undermined, whereas Transmonkey is partially integrated, trying to preserve the comic motive of the original culture.

Example 3:

ST



TT (ChatGPT)



TT (Transmonkey)



The translation of Transmonkey shows an example of semantic over-interpretation in the re-contextualisation of culturally-specific expressions based on presumed target-culture narratives. The original writer of the ST, 'He made "seen" but he did not answer and he forgot his shameful origin', is irritated about someone's lack of attention to social media, whereas the translation includes the elements of money and social rank that are not present in the original text. Even though the derogatory term trashy origins retains some practical intensity, the contextual change changes the communicative purpose and reduces the comedic quality based on immediacy and relatability in both translations, ChatGPT ('This is the work of 'seen.' Mursh, and the adulterer Nesi') and Transmonkey's (The guy is showing off and flaunting his wealth and he forgot his trashy origins'). Acculturation-wise, Transmonkey strategy is a representation of assimilation because the situational meaning of the source culture is substituted with target-culture presumptions. Whereas ChatGPT a severe

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case of separation and machine translation failure to understand colloquial Arabic. ChatGPT delivers a piecemeal result that is based on phonetic similarity as opposed to semantic understanding. Other significant practical factors like the social media term "seen" and derogatory word "shameful" or "trashy" are not translated in a literal way and lead to semantically distorted and communicatively distorted consequences. Acculturation-wise, this translation is a sign of marginalisation because neither the original culture nor the language of translation has been portrayed well.

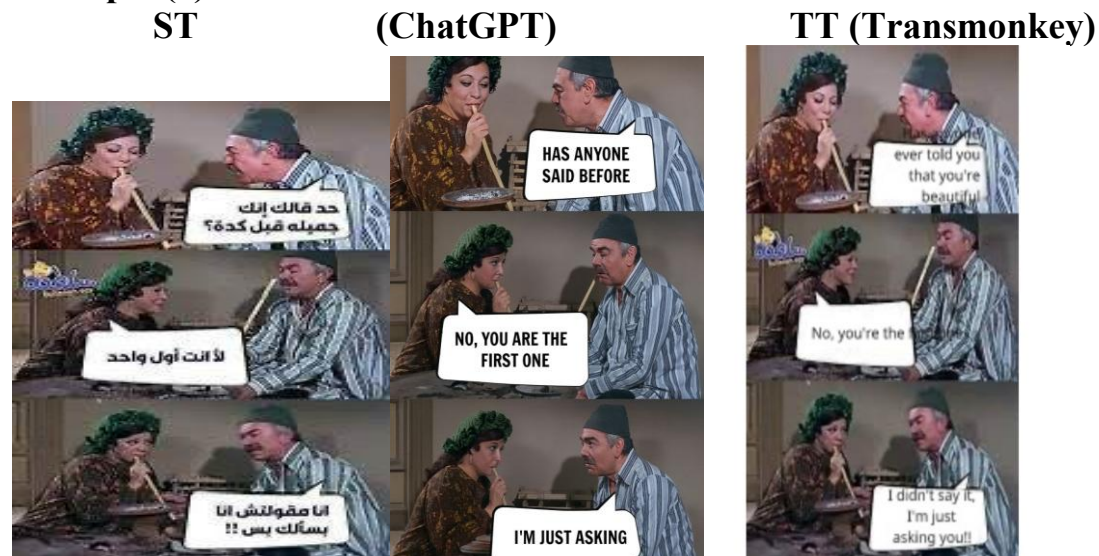
Example 4:



This example shows that jokes in comics are frequently based on cultural stereotypes and visual timing and not necessarily on the linguistic meaning solely. The ST, ('The silent man is a man thinking. And the silent woman, dad? is Lucifer engineering a plot. '), is based on irony and gender jokes, which is supported by breaks and facial expressions of the actors. The translation provided by ChatGPT ('A quiet man is a thinking man. What about a quiet woman? God forbid.') is a linguistically accurate

translation in the first two parts; nevertheless, it eliminates the cultural influence by substituting the culturally charged word "Iblis" (Lucifer) with the phrase "God forbid", which is strangely inaccurate and meaningless as Lucifer is translated into 'god' which is extremely unacceptable in Islam and consequently Arabic. This option undermines the comic shock and distorts the satirical purpose of the ST. The translation also lacks an adequate interaction with the visual semantics that underpin the punchline. Transmonkey, on the contrary, ('A quiet man is a human with a thought. And the silent woman, a door? Iblis plots.') does not change the name of the term "Iblis", which does not lose the cultural specificity and supports the intended irony, though the syntax is a bit awkward. The given comparison indicates that ChatGPT is more semantically transparent and culturally neutral, whereas Transmonkey is more ready to keep the funny idiom of the source-culture intact, even to the point of compromising its fluency. From the acculturation perspective, the translation by ChatGPT is assimilation because it aims to adjust the joke to the norms of the target culture, and Transmonkey is integration because it maintains the important cultural elements with the translated information.

Example (5):



Example 4 ('Have you ever been told that you are beautiful? No, you are the first one. I haven't, I am just asking.') shows the importance of sequential dialogue and visual timing in the building of funny comic. The ST is based on the progressive accumulation of the conversation, meaning, which is built up in a sequence of frames until the last punchline breaks the expectations of the audience. The linguistically correct translation of ChatGPT ('Has anyone said before No, you are the first one. I 'm just asking.') does not consider individual utterances in

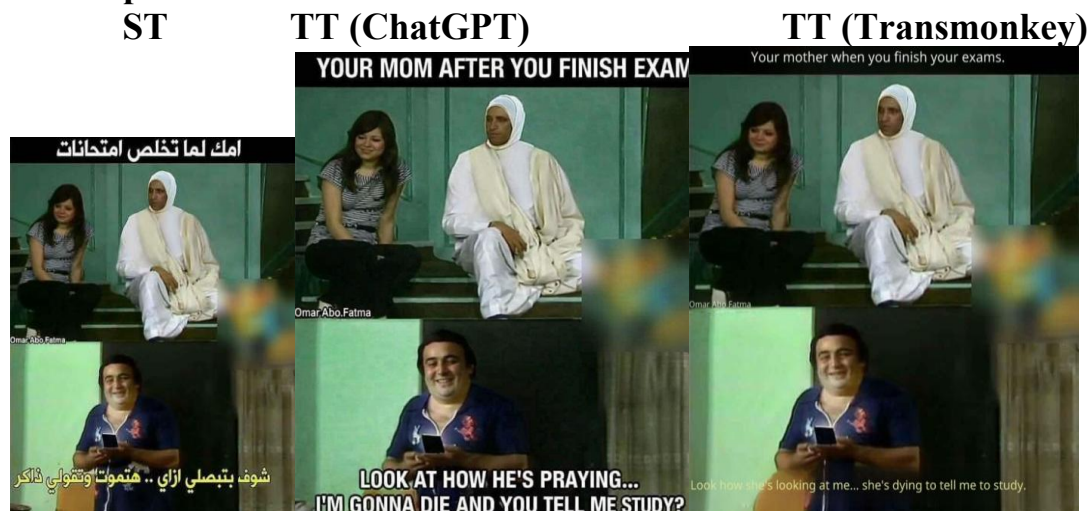
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context and therefore it provides a piecemeal interpretation that dilutes the comedic punch. The lack of visual pacing and dialogic development sensitivity results in the loss of irony. The translation of Transmonkey ('ever told you that you're beautiful? No, you are the first person. I didn't say it. 'I'm just asking you!!') shows a more direct effort to maintain the flow of the conversation but due to the restrictions in wording and adapting to the culture, the overall comic effect is diminished. This example reveals that funny idioms in a text that is visually oriented cannot be properly translated without taking into consideration the interplay of dialogue, sequencing and visualisation. In terms of acculturation, this example shows that there are specific translation strategies embraced by the two systems. The translation of ChatGPT is an example of assimilation because the joke conversation is translated into a neutral and culturally generalised variant, where the language and the culture are given less importance. By so doing, the translation does not give due consideration to the comic structure of the source culture, and thus, the effect of humour is lost. Transmonkey, on the other hand, is a partial integration as it tries to maintain the sequential and ironic quality of the original conversation. Nonetheless, insufficient cultural adaptation is a limitation to the success of this strategy. This endorses the claim that Berry makes in stating that in order to integrate successfully cultural meaning and the communicative role should be maintained.

4.2 Comics about Motherhood

This part changes the emphasis on gender-based humour to the concept of motherhood and the way in which the experiences of mothers are humorously portrayed in comics and how it is approached in machine translation.

Example 6:



Funny comics about motherhood as seen in this example are firmly based on the culture of shared experiences and visuals. The ST ('Your mother, when you finish exams. Look at how she's looking at me. She would rather die to tell me to study.') relies on exaggeration and motherly stereotypes, especially the constant linkage of motherhood with academic pressure. The translation of ChatGPT ('Your mom after you finish exam. Look at how he's praying...I'm gonna die and you tell me study.') shows serious semantic and pragmatic errors, such as gender confusion and incorrect words usage, which interfere with meaning and comic effect. The system considers the text as individual sentences without taking into consideration the visual context, which drives the joke. Conversely, the translation of Transmonkey ('Your mother when you finish exams. Look, how she's looking at me... She is dying to tell me to study.') maintains the overall meaning and emotional attitude of the original text by connecting the gaze of the mother to her standard order to study. However, the comic intensity is lessened by smoothed exaggeration. In acculturation terms, the output of ChatGPT is marginalised, whereas Transmonkey is partially integrated, trying to maintain cultural meaning with the transfer of linguistic meaning. The two machine translations exhibit various approaches in the way culturally entrenched jokes about motherhood are addressed. The translation provided by ChatGPT is an act of marginalisation because it does not maintain the maternal stereotype of the original culture, as well as the comic role of the text. The visual cues and gender references are mistranslated, which leads to the loss of meaning, and thus neither cultural authenticity nor communicative effectiveness is preserved. The translation of Transmonkey, on the contrary, is closer to integration, as it tries to preserve the culturally specific image of motherhood, especially the overstated maternal anxiety associated with studying, and makes it available to the target language. The translation does not have an optimal balance between cultural meaning and linguistic clarity, but the humorous intensity is slightly lower. This substantiates the claim of Berry that even in cases where complete equivalence is impossible; integration makes the partial retention of culture possible.

Example 7:



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The original Arabic phrase of "تعبني وشقايأ عند ربنا" (God knows my efforts and handwork (has a religiously and culturally coloured meaning that God sees one's suffering, appreciates it, and rewards him. The expression is not simply a declaration of suffering, but a belief system which is culturally shared based on faith, patience, and moral endurance. The TT of ChatGPT, ('Our misery and suffering are with God'), uses an integration-oriented approach. Although the religious allusion that is at the center of the ST is retained, it paraphrases the phrase in a manner that makes sense to an English speaking audience. The translation maintains the group voice "our" and the religious context of suffering, therefore, the cultural world view inherent in the original meme. Conversely, the TT of Transmonkey ('My tiredness and misery are with our Lord') is more literal and assimilation-oriented, for it aims at the superficiality of the similarity without necessarily embracing the cultural and emotional colouring of the expression. Consequently, the translated output seems to be less faithful to the original in terms of meaning, its faith-based consolation and implicit moral reassurance. This case demonstrates that expressions that are religiously charged need an integration approach and not a literal one. In addition, Berry's model suggests that effective intercultural communication would be achieved when the core cultural values are retained and modified to the target language, which was better done in the translation of ChatGPT than Transmonkey.

Example 8:

ST	TT (ChatGPT)	TT (Transmonkey)
<p style="font-size: small; color: gray;">علي فكره انا بعيش مع عيالي احلي ايام حياتي...</p> 	<p style="font-size: small; color: white; background-color: black; padding: 2px;">BY THE WAY, I'M LIVING THE BEST DAYS OF MY LIFE WITH MY KIDS...</p> 	<p style="font-size: x-small; color: gray;">By the way, I'm living the best days of my life with my children...</p> 

In this example, the (ST), "على فكرة أنا بعيش مع عيالي أحلى أيام حياتي" (By the way, I am experiencing the best days of my life'), has a high degree of irony as it is commonly spoken with a sarcastic meaning and not a literal one of emotional exhaustion or an underlying discontent. Therefore, the meaning is quite contextualised and cultural. The TT by ChatGPT, ('By the way, I am spending the best days of my life with my kids...') can be viewed as an integration strategy. The translation maintains the pragmatic meaning and emotional undertones of the original expression and

translates it in a natural and idiomatic English form. The implied irony is further supported by the use of ellipsis, which enables the target audience to read between the lines the unmentioned emotional tension, just as it was in the source culture. In comparison, the translation by Transmonkey ('By the way, I'm living the best days of my life with children...') is more literal and assimilation-based, and it is centred on lexical correspondence more than pragmatic meaning. Consequently, the text that has been translated seems to be unemotional and does not produce the sarcastic meaning that the original Arabic meme has. This contributes to the decrease of cultural resonance and communicative impact. This example shows that in culturally loaded expressions, particularly in meme culture, an integration-based strategy of translation is more successful in preserving meaning and emotional nuance than an assimilation-based strategy of translation.

Example 9:



This is another illustration of translation strategies variation when it comes to culturally loaded expressions. The ST, هسييلكم البيت ومحدث هيعرفلي طريق "طريق" (I will leave home and no baby would know where I would go'), is not about directions or a physical path but it should be translated as the disappearance or deliberate withdrawal of someone. The TT by ChatGPT, ('I will change the house and no one will know the way.'), follows the integration strategy since it does not change the intended meaning. The translation is to a large degree semantically acceptable and culturally relevant by making it recreate the implicit feeling of escape or invisibility. On the contrary, the literal translation of Transmonkey ('I will make the house inaccessible to you, and no one will know how to find me.') is an assimilation-oriented strategy that emphasises word-to-word equivalence. This leaves a sentence that is unnaturally constructed, and makes the original meaning less clear and the humorous and sarcastic impact of the meme less strong. The comparison also reinforces the thesis that integration-based translation is more useful with informal

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culture-bound texts like memes, where the meaning is implicit more than literal.

Example 10:



There is a distinct difference between translations of the ST, (Thank God, I finished my study. Does studying finish?), done by ChatGPT and Transmonkey. The TT by ChatGPT, (‘Thank God I finished studying. Studying finishes you.’), represents an integration strategy. Although the original Arabic meme is loaded with sarcasm, ChatGPT translated the text word-to-word and retained the original meaning in the first part in a culturally natural English sentence which effectively brings out the emotional and humorous tones of the original text, unlike the second part misses both the communicative and the sarcastic meaning intended in the ST. Conversely, the TT of Transmonkey, (‘Praise be to God? I am done studying. Does studying ever end?’), is similar to the source text in terms of linguistic expression but do not bring out the full sarcastic and colloquial tone of the text, with the meaningless phrase ‘I am done studying’. Consequently, the translation can be either too formal or unnatural to the English-speaking audience, and the cultural and comic effect of the meme is partially lost. Overall, this comparison demonstrates that in translating culturally-loaded texts like memes, lexical accuracy is not the only successful way to translate. Berry’s Acculturation Theory postulates that an integration-based approach such as ChatGPT’s proves to be more effective in transferring meaning and cultural resonance, and assimilation-based translations can undermine communicative effectiveness.

4.3 Comics about Marriage

In the following comics, humour is created based on the culturally prescribed marriage roles and daily domestic experiences. They rely on irony, exaggeration and visuals, which make them difficult to translate and may lead to shifts in meaning and the comic effect.

Example 11: ST



TT (ChatGPT)



TT (Transmonkey)

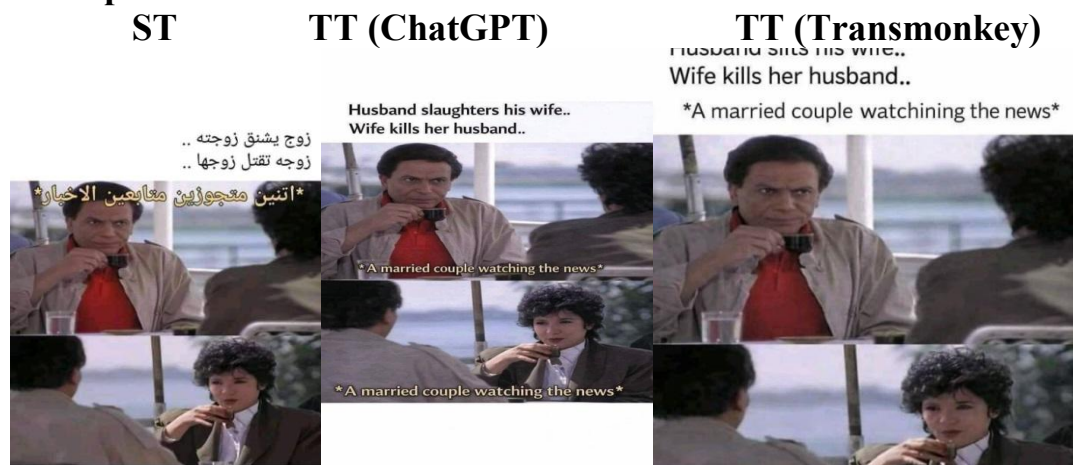


Humour can be created through the ironic application of religious discourse in the context of daily domestic communication. The ST , (Come and listen to what the Sheikh says, the wife's service made to the husband is not religiously imperative. Stop it, my woman. Since we got married you have been either pregnant or dizzy and tired, and we all serve you.') depends on the use of brevity and contextual irony in that the wife tries to use the power of religion to bargain marriage roles. The translation of ChatGPT, ('Husband: Come here, listen , the Sheikh says that serving your husband is not obligatory for a wife. Wife: Yassin, sit down. Ever since we got married you've been whining and exhausted. And all of us serve you. Wife: Yassin, sit down. Ever since we got married you've been whining and exhausted. And all of us serve you.') adds a lot of details to the conversation, adding new characters, names, and emotional remarks, which are not mentioned in the original work.

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The turn taking in the conversation is inaccurate: wife then husband in ST, and husband and wife and repeated wife again in ChatGPT. Perhaps the wrong Arabic spelling in ‘تعالى‘ switched the gender reference in the verb from male to female, which is not intended logically. This excessive expansion in the TT distorts the communicative purpose and undermines the humour. Likewise, exaggerated contextual information, like pregnancy and physical exhaustion, is introduced by Transmonkey and changes the emphasis on irony to dramatisation. Transmonkey translated the comic into ‘Come here, listen to the sheikh, he says the wife serving her husband is not obligation. Sit down. You’ve been standing for an hour already! You’re pregnant, exhausted, and tired- and we’re all at your service..’. Even though the religious reference is maintained in both systems, there is no balance in humour, power dynamics and cultural implication. Consequently, the comic effect is minimised significantly. Both translations are indicators of division as opposed to assimilation. In spite of the religious language, the translations introduced new contexts that distort the original communicative role instead of preserving the ironic application of authority that is used in the source culture. This implies that effective integration in humour which is related to marriage should not only be based on cultural references but also be sensitive to pragmatic restraint and visual timing. Nevertheless, both AI systems show that it is not enough to preserve cultural references when the humour is based on irony and economy of context.

Example 12:



The funny side in this comic does not depend not on verbal indicators but on dark irony and visual contrast. The ST, (A husband kills his wife. A wife kills her husband. *A married couple follow the news update*’) is a

parody of news headlines that cover domestic violence, and then a contradictory image of a regular married couple watching the news. The TT by ChatGPT, ('Husband slaughters his wife..Wife kills her husband.. A married couple watching the news. A married couple watching the news*') retains the overall propositional meaning but makes violence more intense with the choice of lexicon, which changes the tone of the work to sensational reporting, instead of being ironic. Consequently, the comic contrast of media talk and the real marital life is diluted. Meanwhile, the TT of Transmonkey ('Husband hangs his wife..Wife kills her husband..* A married couple watching the news *') does not represent the central meaning because of a serious semantic mistake, which interferes with coherence and irony. Regarding the lack of sensitivity to visual contrast and imitation of genres, the translation provided by ChatGPT is an example of assimilation since the text is translated into the standard language of the target culture news, which is more likely to be interpreted as expected by the target culture, but the irony of the source culture is lost. The result of Transmonkey is marginalisation because the meaning of the source culture and the coherence of the target language is not effectively preserved. This example substantiates the fact that dark comic that relies on media parody needs cultural and practical consciousness, which cannot be transferred literally.

Example 13: ST**TT (ChatGPT)****TT (Transmonkey)**

The present example tends to be based on extended metaphor and dark irony. The ST ('Marriage is like someone crossing the street and getting hit by a car. It's all a matter of luck, then. He may get concussion, fractures, or bruises. Yet, the important thing is that he's still alive.') presents marriage as a traffic crash using a list of injuries to over-emphasise the experience and ending with a sarcastic focus on survival. The TT of ChatGPT captures the main metaphor, but it is plagued by the problem of phonetic transfer and poor structure, which breaks the comic

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flow. The TT of Transmonkey ('Marriage is like someone crossing the street and a car hits them; it's him and his luck then. Concussion.... Fracture... contusions... the important thing is he's still alive.') shows that the metaphor is better understood; the syntactic errors and the neutral tone make the ironic effect less significant. In both translations, the colloquial exaggeration of both texts is replaced by the descriptive narrative which undermines the dark humour that the ST possesses. The two translations are both indicative of assimilation in that the metaphor is translated in a manner that is acceptable to the target-language norms, and minimises cultural tone and comic exaggeration. Even though the key picture of marriage as an accident is maintained, the practicality of the source culture and cynical position are watered down. This substantiates the argument by Berry that assimilation usually leads to cultural accessibility at the cost of expressive intensity. This case proves that dark comic based on metaphors is a major challenge to machine translation especially where meaning relies on the tone, pacing, and colloquial exaggeration. Finally yet importantly, the word "الجواز" (marriage) is metaphorically applied in the original text (ST) to express a complicated relationship. The metaphorical depth is diminished in the translation done by ChatGPT and the word is translated into a more literal form. As an example, the initial statement in the ST, namely 'Marriage is like crossing the street', is translated by ChatGPT in a manner that makes the metaphor more straightforward and less meticulous. In the same manner, the translation of Transmonkey tends to add some context, which changes the meaning of the original meaning that is metaphorically applied in the original text to express a complicated relationship.

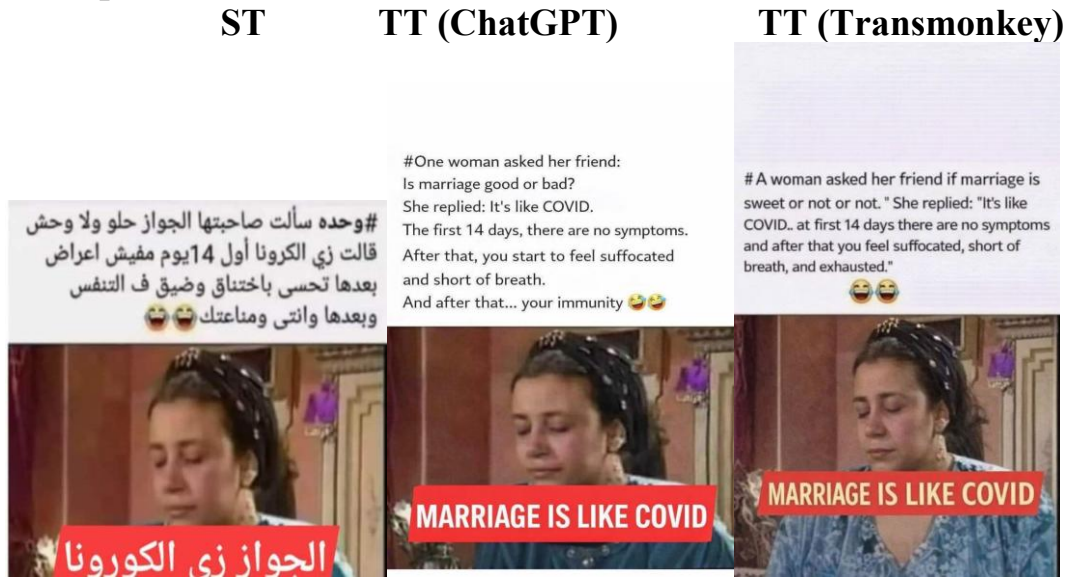
Example 14:

ST	TT (ChatGPT)	TT (Transmonkey)
 <p style="text-align: center;">"الصياد" @MahmmoudElsayad</p> <p style="text-align: center;">هو صحيح الحب بييجى بعد الجواز أومال مش الحب ويس .. والضغط والسكر والسلف والديون و رمى الزبالة كله بييجى بعد الجواز بس انكل انت ع الله</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">"الصياد" @MahmmoudElsayad</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It's true, love dies after All that's left after that are money, blood pressure, diabetes, loans, and trash... it all happens right after the wedding, but may Allah keep you 😊</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">"الصياد" @MahmmoudElsayad</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"It's true that love flourishes after marriage. Exactly like love and ... pressure, debt, loans, and piles of trash... It all flourishes after marriage. Once you get married, you eat fire.</p>

The humour in the source text (ST) is built up using sarcasm and accumulation whereby marriage is described as a catalyst not only to love but also to other social and physical diseases and stresses. This is said ironically, as the simple naive question 'Does love come after marriage?' is immediately succeeded by a list of the potential diseases and bad habits it causes as well: high blood pressure, diabetes, borrowing, debts, throwing garbage into streets, etc. a matter which creates a satirical contrast between what is expected or what should be and what is. The sarcastic tone in ChatGPT translation is diluted by the semantic distortion that took place through the incomplete sentence 'love dies after', which contradicts the assumption that loves comes after marriage. Also, the culturally-based term 'borrowing' is generalised as money in the TT, and the accumulation effect is broken with awkward wording and lexical mistakes. Consequently, the translation turned less sarcastic exaggeration into fragmented commentary. In the same vein, the translation of Transmonkey ('It's true that love flourishes after marriage. Exactly like love and..... pressure, debts, loans, and piles of trash..... it all flourishes after marriage, Once you get married, you eat fire.') changes the initial irony by translating 'love comes after marriage' into 'love flourishes after marriage' which contradicts the sarcastic meaning of the original text. In addition, the repetition of 'it all flourishes after marriage' cancels the tone of criticism and makes the comic exaggeration a literal one. The culturally expressive sentence is changed to a figurative one, 'you eat fire' which adds another metaphor to the original text and changes the funny comic of the situation. In general, the two translations show that it is hard to maintain the ironic build-up and punchline of the original comic, especially in cases where funny idioms rely on colloquial sarcasm, cultural allusions, and cumulative enumeration. As a matter of acculturation, ChatGPT and Transmonkey are both acculturated in that they conform the text to the expressions of the target language and do not preserve the sarcastic attitude of the source culture. Though the overall theme of marital pressure is maintained, the irony and the colloquial tone are lost, which means that the effect of humour is reduced, and it proves that the assimilation philosophy tends to be more semantically accessible than being culturally and pragmatically faithful. Though the ST uses irony to mock the romantic image of marriage, both TTs take the statement at face value, which leads to a change in the humorous role.

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Example 15:



The humour in the source text ST (One woman asked her friend: Is marriage good or bad? She answered it is like Covid-19, there are no symptoms during the first 14 days, then you feel suffocated and short of breath. The rest depends on your immunity.’) is built on an extended metaphor, which is associated with marriage and Covid-19 background and our lived experience. The ST presents marriage as something that seems to be harmless at first but slowly it turns out to be harmful and maybe deadly. This metaphor is further supported by the use of time, which starts with the temporal progression of the first ١٤ days, then proceeds with physical pain as in the case of suffocation and short breath, and ends with the ironic commentary ‘then it depends on your immunity’.

The metaphor is partially retained in the translation by ChatGPT (‘One woman asked her friend: Is marriage good or bad. She replied it is like Covid-19, the first 14 days, there are no symptoms. After that you start to feel suffocated and short of breath. After that...your immunity.’). Nevertheless, its comic coherence is undermined. While the title of the work is translated literally as 'Marriage is like Covid', the segment ‘your immunity’ is a fragment communicating no meaning. This literal division breaks the sarcastic closure of the original text and reduces its comic effect.

Transmonkey (‘# A woman asked her friend if marriage is sweet or not or not. “She replied: “it’s like COVID... at the first 14 days there are no symptoms and after that you feel suffocated, short of breath, and exhausted.’) has a better understanding of the structure of the metaphor and managed to carry through the development of the symptom-free initial stages to physical exhaustion. Nevertheless, the absence of the

expression 'Then, it depends on your immunity' in the TT eliminates the ironic punch-line, which presents marriage as an ordeal. Consequently, the metaphor is brought down to a descriptive analogy and not a satirical comment. In both translations the colloquialism and cultural tone is lost, undermining the funny comic that relies on exaggeration, timing and shared social experience. The two translations are assimilation, as the culturally specific and colloquial metaphor is translated into a more neutral and explanatory one. The ironic end is missed although the main analogy between marriage and Covid-19 is maintained. The example shows that machine translation assimilation usually maintains metaphorical meaning but destroys humorous functionality. The last example proves that in case a funny idiom is based on modern cultural metaphors and colloquial irony, machine translation systems can easily retain the outer meaning but cannot recreate the comic effect.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the issue of translating Arabic humorous comics into English, specifically the humour that is culturally intertwined as regards marriage, motherhood, and social relations. Comparing the translations of ChatGPT and Transmonkey, the study has demonstrated that humour in Arabic comics is strongly dependent on informal language, reference to culture, irony, and social common experience. These factors were hard to be translated in machine translation systems. It has been found that both ChatGPT and Transmonkey may transfer the basic semantic content of the source texts. Nevertheless, they often did not maintain the realistic and humorous tone of the original comics. Sarcasm was also taken literally in most cases, punchlines were diluted or dropped, and culturally charged phrases were either translated in a mistranslated way or neutralised. Consequently, the translations tended to run towards humorous commentary to mere statement of description.

According to the acculturation theory by Berry, the results show that both translation systems have a predominant assimilation tendency. Although the translations made the content fit the target culture and language in many cases, this was done at the cost of the identity and comic voice of the original culture. The fact that colloquial irony and cultural resonance are lost proves that the process of assimilation, when used without balance, may lead to the loss of the communicative role of humour. There were few and sporadic instances of integration in which the elements of both the source and target cultures were retained. These results indicate that machine translation, despite being effective in passing informational meaning, is still weak in translating humour, which

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requires cultural background and visual and verbal engagement. This is the reason why human intervention should be considered when translating humorous comics especially where social satire and culturally sensitive themes are involved.

The translation of humorous comics is not limited to the concept of linguistic equivalence and goes to the sphere of cultural negotiation. Although machine translation systems like ChatGPT or Transmonkey provide quick and convenient solutions, they are not always able to reproduce the flavour of the humour based on the common social reality. In the end, the paper highlights the importance of the fact that humour does not just survive the translation process using linguistic meaning only; it lives by culture, time, and mutual understanding. In this way, the message in funny comics can cross the borders, but does not necessarily result in laughter.

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