



Dubbing and Redubbing Animation: Disney in the Arab World

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In 2012, the distribution of Disney's *Secret of the Wings* in the Arab world accompanied a revolution: unlike the long-standing dubbing tradition usually practised in Egypt, this film came out in the cinemas in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Although Egyptian Arabic – a non-standard, colloquial form spoken by over 80 million people—had been (and still was) the standard in dubbing for many years, a decision was made to start overturning this trend and opt for the pan-Arab, written language used for administration, education and certain media. In the same year Al Jazeera, the pan-Arab, television network, signed a deal with BBC Worldwide which included the broadcasting, on Al Jazeera children's channels, of universally known and appreciated cartoon series like the *Teletubbies*, all dubbed in MSA.

In March 2013, Disney signed a large-scale agreement with Al Jazeera enabling the distribution through its children's channels of virtually all of its television cartoon series and a number of feature films like *Toy Story*, *Cars* and many more. All these products had to be redubbed in MSA.

In 2013 and 2014, more Disney feature films dubbed in MSA were distributed in cinemas across the Arab world, including *The Brave* in 2013 and *Frozen* in 2014. The latter, in particular, attracted international attention and, since its release in the Arab world, it has been the object of countless debates across the media, the Internet and social networks. In an article for the *New Yorker*, journalist and professor of comparative literature Muhanna (2014: online) stated that "the Arabic of *Frozen* is



frozen in time, as 'localized' to contemporary Middle Eastern youth culture as Latin quatrains in French rap". Muhanna (ibid.) pointed out that the film is, like many others, loaded with ultra-colloquial American expressions, with Princess Anna "talk[ing] like a teen-ager from suburban New Jersey". She nonetheless highlights the profound difference between the source and target MSA versions, going as far as to suggest a linear back translation of the theme song "Let it Go" which, to her, sounds like a poem written in Middle English would to contemporary English-speaking ears: "I dread not all that shall be said! Discharge the storm clouds! The snow instigateth not lugubriosity within me" (ibid.).

Inspired by the events outlined above, this article seeks to contextualise the recent shift in dubbing animation from Egyptian to MSA, especially in Disney films and TV products, with a view to unveiling its underlying dynamics. The role played by Al Jazeera in reshaping media communication and translation across the Arab world and beyond will also be considered in an attempt to grasp the social, political and ultimately ideological implications of its strategies, as well as its power in significantly orienting traditionally imperialist, Western colossi like Disney. A comparative analysis of the original English TV series *Aladdin*, its Egyptian dubbed version and MSA redubbing will follow, providing evidence for this new trend in audiovisual translation (AVT) aimed at Arabic speakers the world over.

1. LANGUAGES AND POWERS, TRANSLATIONS AND IDEOLOGIES

1.1. Languages and Powers

As Blommaert (2010) states in his introduction to *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*, in terms of language the world is far from having become a village and the overused, too often oversimplified concept of globalisation falls short of encompassing the relationships woven through the use of languages across the globe. Languages, societies and the relationships between them are constantly changing, to the extent that Blommaert (ibid.: 1) suggests a sociolinguistics of mobile resources as a framework for their analysis, to be "framed in terms of trans-contextual networks, flows and movements". Mass media texts themselves generate large-scale movements, their threads outlining complex trans-contextual networks that occasionally lead to sociolinguistic and sociocultural revolutions, with the dubbing and redubbing of Disney products into MSA being one of them.

To Blommaert, a historical process like globalisation, in its true complexity, must be understood first and foremost synchronically: from the manifold manifestations witnessed today we can look backwards and trace their causes. Within these manifestations, acts of language are paramount, as they are always "grounded in historical connections between current statements and prior ones—connections which are related to the social order and are thus not random, but ordered" (ibid.: 138).

These words will guide us in our analysis of acts of language (translation) as manifested in the dubbing and redubbing of Disney animated products in MSA, which



have been emerging over the past few years. Such acts of translation may appear at first glance to be unnecessary, sitting uncomfortably with the current global trend for localising animation to bring it closer to local communities of young viewers. However, the use of MSA aims to counterbalance the global influence of English by catering for the needs of all Arabic speakers; more significantly, as we shall see in Section 5, it allows for the rewriting of values and relationships which appear in the source texts. The reasons why Disney has consented to these rewritings are largely, but not solely, economic, since its association with a global communications giant like Al Jazeera involves securing wide distribution, visibility and promotion for its products. Of course the overall move may reflect political agendas defined at higher levels.

Acts of translation like the dubbing and redubbing of Disney animation into MSA are, therefore, deeply grounded in today's world order, reflecting the past and aiming to construct an ideology-driven, pan-Arab future.

1.2. Translations and Ideologies

Looking at linguistic movements and hegemonies from the narrower viewpoint of translation studies, it may be interesting to start by focusing on the two relations between translation and ideology identified by Hatim and Mason (1997). The two scholars make a distinction between "the ideology of translating" and "the translation of ideology" (ibid.: 145-146). The first refers to the beliefs, strategies and subjects orienting translation processes and flows, whereas the second applies more specifically to acts of translation (recalling the acts of language above) of ideologically-loaded texts. Thus, in the former, ideology mainly enters a target text from outside the source, whereas in the latter translators are confronted with an ideology that is within the source. Moreover, Hatim and Mason (ibid.: 146) were among the first translation scholars to highlight the fact that "the translator acts in a social context and is part of that context", to such an extent that acts of translation are never neutral.

In an article written in 2003, Tymoczko also reflects on the translation/ideology pair, focusing on the first relation expressed by Hatim and Mason. As far as Tymoczko (2003: 183) is concerned, the ideology of (a) translation "resides not simply in the text translated, but in the voicing and stance of the translator". She sees translators as the key figures in terms of conveying ideology in translation, even though their efforts are determined by geographical, temporal and ideological factors pertaining to the context they are translating in and for. According to the scholar, "translations are grounded in the politics of a particular place and time. Rather than being outside cultural systems, translation is *parti pris* and the translators are engaged, actively involved, and affiliated with cultural movements" (ibid.: 200). Tymoczko's stance is particularly interesting in our case in that contextual forces orient the work of the translator, who is normally engaged, even affiliated with cultural and political movements within the context of reference. However, this can hardly be said of translators called upon to translate (or retranslate) Disney animated products through



the medium of MSA. As some of them have stated publicly,¹ professional audiovisual translators who had worked into Egyptian Arabic for many years were not equipped for a total change of practice. Although they were not only unprepared linguistically (most dubbing translators would have worked exclusively in their vernacular variety of Arabic, mainly Egyptian), but also culturally and ideologically (the switch to MSA comes with precise guidelines for linguistic and semantic manipulation), they nonetheless found themselves in a take-it-or-leave-it situation. Perfecting their MSA and adhering to the commissioners' rules became essential factors determining whether they remained in business.

Focusing on the relationships between vernacular and vehicular languages, Brisset (2004) reflects on the recentering of identity through translation, which, to her, can only occur when a vehicular language is replaced by a vernacular as a target in/for translation. With the relationship between French and Québécois in mind, Brisset (ibid.: 339) states in her seminal paper that translation can indeed change the relationship of linguistic forces and make it possible for a vernacular to take the place of a vehicular language. Brisset (ibid.: 339) defines as *vernacular* a language "which is local, spoken spontaneously, less appropriate for communicating than for communing", and as *vehicular* a language "which is national or regional, learned out of necessity, to be used for communication in the city". If we apply Brisset's analysis and definitions to the relationship between Egyptian and MSA as target languages for dubbing translation, the first is indeed a vernacular language, a mother tongue, whereas the second is vehicular, used for official purposes, intelligible across a vast region, but only in written form.

The translations and retranslations of Disney films and TV products in Modern Standard Arabic call into question the very notion of identity as it ought to be understood and conveyed by translation (Brisset 2004: 240) so that, if MSA potentially aims at a larger group of Arabic speakers beyond their national barriers, it also strikes these speakers as unexpected and unnatural. Imposed as a vehicular language in a domain never its own, MSA crosses over the realm of vernacular varieties, the only ones in the Arabic diglossic landscape that are able to express feelings and convey day-to-day exchanges.

With all the reflections noted above in mind, let us move more specifically into the realm of dubbing, bringing with us the concept of translation as a powerful act of language and that of translocalisation as a tool with which to convey ideologies.

2. THE IDEOLOGY OF DUBBING

As Muhanna (2014) observes, dubbing is translation in four dimensions. It has to convey meaning in highly constrained timeslots, to take a context-specific body language for translation into account, to comply with lip movements for

¹ See, for instance, the debate at <<http://arablit.org/2014/06/04/cant-let-it-go-the-role-of-colloquial-and-modern-standard-arabic-in-childrens-literature-and-entertainment>> (30 August 2015).



synchronisation and, last but not least, to relay cultural references, songs and jokes appropriately. Yet, although it is the result of the careful and complex consideration of constraints in four dimensions, dubbing translation still remains *the* site for linguistic and semantic manipulation in AVT. Since manipulation and ideology generally go hand in hand, dubbing has been associated by practitioners and scholars for decades with the expression of powerful ideologies not least with Fascism and Francoism (Ballester 2001; Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2004; Rundle 2010). While this might be one of the reasons behind the lack of systematic attention given by the community of AVT scholars—who may deem dubbing somewhat too grovelling to be worthy of attention—this feature makes it all the more fascinating to research aiming beyond the merely descriptive linguistic level.

According to Chaume (2012: 151-153) ideology can be expressed in dubbing along four axes, namely, censorship, normalisation, gender issues and patronage. With reference to our case, normalisation and patronage are certainly the most interesting axes on which to focus. For Chaume (*ibid.*), normalisation refers to the quest for linguistic standardisation in dubbing, usually sought through specific rules for the use of language required by dubbing translation commissioners. Patronage, on the other hand, refers to a more sophisticated concept in relation to dubbing. Inspired by Lefevere's (1992) topical description of patronage in translation, Chaume (2012: 154) states that patronage in dubbing can be defined as "a system that imposes a series of constraints on those who take part in the process of writing, reading and rewriting".

Looking back at Lefevere's (1992) own terms, patronage consists of (1) an ideological component, which acts as a constraint on the choice and development of both form and subject matter (thus encompassing Chaume's normalisation); (2) an economic component, whereby patrons pay their own writers and rewriters for their loyal work; and (3) an element of status, in that acceptance of patronage implies integration into a certain group and its lifestyle. Patronage is further defined by Lefevere (*ibid.*: 17) as undifferentiated or differentiated, where the former type sees the control of the three factors noted above by one and the same patron, compared by the scholar to the absolute rulers of the past.

If we apply Lefevere's concept of patronage to the case of the dubbing and redubbing of Disney films and TV products into MSA, it seems that Al Jazeera is dictating most of the rules of the game, with Disney being somewhat condescending. Patronage, therefore, is here apparently differentiated, but *de facto* undifferentiated in essence. The ideological component behind these new efforts at dubbing and redubbing points to the increasing recourse to a language which fails to convey day-to-day exchanges and emotions fully, but ensures that it is understood by all Arabic speakers, while at the same time lending itself to semantic manipulation. On the economic front, dubbing translators working for Al Jazeera and/or Disney receive their fees from either commissioner, although they basically adhere to the same ideology. With regard to status, the translators involved in this move towards MSA in dubbing and redubbing Disney are called to comply with the new course of action or be prepared to lose both their job and their status as audiovisual translators for animated films. On the whole, however, since this complex, (un)differentiated form of patronage



has only recently appeared, it would be both useful and interesting to follow its future development along all three axes defined by Lefevere.

Before shifting the focus to Al Jazeera and its communication strategy, the issue of redubbing ought to be explored. Hardly ever mentioned in AVT studies, redubbings, or redubs, are the subject of a very interesting, recent study by Zanotti (2015), in which the scholar analyses redubs after classifying them as revoicing, revising or rewriting. Where revoicing implies a new recording of an existing script, revising involves some alterations of the original dubbing script prior to re-recording. The third category, rewriting, signals a significant move away from the first script, which Zanotti connects to the need for a fresher, newer version, normally produced after a significant time lapse, or to the restoring of equivalence with the source, where the first dubbing failed to convey it appropriately.

If Disney redubs for Al Jazeera can be made to fall within the category of rewriting, interestingly enough they neither present a fresher version of the source texts, nor do they restore a partial or faulty equivalence. As we shall see in Section 4, Disney redubs in MSA involve the rewriting of dialogue exchanges following strict linguistic-semantic rules aiming less for universal understanding and more towards reflecting clear political and religious beliefs.

To conclude, with regard to Chaume's concept of normalisation, the dubbing and redubbing of Disney into MSA represent an extreme example in that they include the complete omission of words conveying undesirable feelings and actions. Regarding patronage, the new course of action involving dubbing into MSA points to an ideologically-loaded policy with one major patron behind it. Finally, as far as redubbings are concerned, the typologies suggested by Zanotti all fall short of encompassing the Disney redubs into MSA. In contrast with all the major trends, Disney redubs in MSA come with manipulative equivalence and are expressed in a language remote from orality all over the Arab world. The next section will help us clarify the ideology behind the patronage outlined here.

3. MISSION AL JAZEERA

In a book that reads very much like a personal account, Rushing (2007) recounts his experience of the so-called *Mission Al Jazeera*, which is also the title of his publication. Rushing weaves his own story of Marine-turned-Jazeera-reporter through that of the ascent of Al Jazeera as a huge international media network, a media empire from an Arab empire, controlled and funded as it still is by the Emir of Qatar. As Rushing (ibid.: 193) somewhat naively remarks with reference to the birth of the Al Jazeera English network, "we launched Al Jazeera English because the Emir of Qatar said to do it". And yet, the mission and objective of the Al Jazeera network are far from being so simplistic and monolithic.

With the *mission Al Jazeera* motto as our guiding light, we shall briefly explore the policies, strategies and achievements of the Al Jazeera group in order to relate



them to their children's channels and the distribution of Disney TV and cinema products in a *new* language.

Founded in 1996 by Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, the Al Jazeera Arabic channel soon gained strength internationally due to the fortunate hiring, in 1997, of 120 bilingual journalists left jobless by the breaking of the agreement between the pan-Arab Saudi channel Orbit and the British BBC. In 1998, Al Jazeera became known to the world thanks to its coverage of the American-led Desert Fox operation in Iraq. Its strength and distribution have continued to grow, with the addition of thematic channels such as JCC, the Jazeera Children's Channel. Started in 2005 as one channel only, the JCC now comprises four different channels, of which Jeem TV remains the most important. Focusing on entertainment for the 7 to 12 year-old group, Jeem TV is now flanked by Baraem, offering programmes for pre-school children (aged between 2 and 6), Biwar, for children 9 to 16 years old, and Talaam TV, a channel with eminently didactic purposes.

In spite of the criticisms it receives from many, Al Jazeera has established itself as the reference point for information and entertainment over all previously existing, and even subsequently founded, pan-Arab channels. It has also managed to revamp the ideal trail set by pan-Arab Saudi channels at the beginning of the 1990s, whose aim was to provide a reverse flow of information and entertainment from the Arab world to Europe and North America.

Journalist and researcher Della Ratta (2005: 25) suggests analysing Al Jazeera and its mission by looking at the network solely as a television broadcaster rather than as a promoter of political and religious values. Yet, a few pages later the same author highlights the fact that, despite its worldwide success and distribution, Al Jazeera has not yet managed to become profitable and abandon the subsidies coming from the Qatari monarchy because profit-making is still less important than political goals (ibid.: 9-10).

The two major assets of the Al Jazeera networks are its notorious "opposite opinions" policy (ibid.: 157), whereby an opinion and its opposite are always presented and, perhaps most significantly its transnational essence, its desire to be pan-Arab, regional and global at the same time. To quote the famous Al Jazeera anchorman Faisal Al Kasim (in Della Ratta 2005: 82, my translation):

Our Pan-Arabism is the effect of our content, not of the planned and structured policy which determines it. We don't claim to be Pan-Arab, but it is undeniable that, although it is geographically and politically divided, also thanks to us, the Arab world is becoming more aware of itself and its cultural unity.

Cultural unity is indeed one of the driving forces behind Al Jazeera and this applies to Qatar as a country in the first place, reverberating from Qatar all over the Arab world and beyond. Such a cultural mission clearly goes hand in hand with a political and religious agenda, namely that, united in one mediatic voice, speakers of Arabic and believers in the Islamic religion will become one and the same political and religious force. As Bayramoglu (in Zayani 2005: 31) puts it, "the secret and power of Al Jazeera



lie in a vision structured around a context of international Islamic identity. Al Jazeera reflects the on-going process of the politicization of an Islamic identity and in that sense points to the 'Other'. It is interesting that, on more than one level, the Other seems to condescend and lends itself to the pursuit of the Al Jazeera mission, as is the case for Disney and its translations/re-translations in MSA since 2013.

4. DUBBING AND REDUBBING

4.1. The *Aladdin* saga

Aladdin made its first appearance in the Disney world in 1992, with the feature film named after the petty thief himself—*Aladdin*—successfully distributed in cinemas across the globe: according to Internet Movie Database, it was the 14th (and the first animated movie) to gross more than \$200,000,000.²

Inspired by the tales from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, Aladdin's adventures on the big screen were a perfect mix of exoticism, witty dialogues and references to contemporary US culture. The first version of the film, distributed across North America's cinemas, provoked the anger of the Arabic-American community (Fox 1993, Opinion 1993): the opening song by the peddler/narrator said, "where they cut off your ears, if they don't like your face, [...] it's barbaric but, hey, it's home". As far as the DVD release was concerned, owing to pressure from the community the first two lines were replaced by "where it's flat and immense, and the heat is intense", whereas the reference to a barbaric home remained unchanged.

The success continued with its sequel, *The Return of Jafar*, which was one of the first, hugely fortunate direct-to-video releases from Disney. In 1994, the film was distributed in VHS taking "the industry by storm with \$150 million in profits" (Cerone 1995). Disney produced a TV series named *Aladdin* as a continuation to the thief and genie's adventures; it was aired in the USA from 1994 to 1995. A preview was broadcast by Disney Channel at the beginning of 1994 and, as of September of the same year, it appeared concurrently on Buena Vista Television as part of the syndicated weekday Disney Afternoon³ and on CBS. The series, which won several Emmy Awards in 1995, was released for home video in several batches of episodes, from 1996 to 2005 (VHS and DVDs). It was rerun by Disney for television on its Disney Channel in the late 1990s.

As a further addition to the saga, another direct-to-video feature film was distributed in 1996. *Aladdin and the King of Thieves*, starring Robin Williams as the voice of Genie as in the very first film, was also remarkably successful.

Both the films and the TV series were dubbed in Egyptian Arabic, in line with the long-established tradition of cinema and TV distribution that used this vernacular language. These translated versions travelled extensively through the Arabic-speaking

² <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0103639/trivia>> (30 August 2015).

³ <[http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aladdin_\(TV_series\)](http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aladdin_(TV_series))> (30 August 2015).



world and were enjoyed by children on television, in cinemas and in home video format.

As a consequence of its 2013 deal with Disney, Al Jazeera commissioned the redubbing of the whole *Aladdin* TV saga in MSA, which has recently been aired on its Jeem TV channel. The next section offers an analysis of brief excerpts from several episodes of the original English, Egyptian dubbing and MSA redubbing of *Aladdin*.

4.2. Dubbing and Redubbing *Aladdin*

Companies providing AVT services for the Arab world, and translators working for such companies, have recently had to comply with new rules for dubbing animation, especially Disney products. In line with the Al Jazeera policy concerning the dubbing and redubbing of Disney in Modern Standard Arabic, professionals in the field have had to revise their practice first of all by switching to a new target language that is not their mother tongue (see section 1.2). Whether Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese or Saudi Arabian, all dubbing translators have had to abandon their vernacular languages and learn how to use the written language of their formal education to translate oral speech. This has meant considerable effort, leading many professionals to go back to studying MSA in order to grasp its vocabulary and syntax fully. The effort has been, and still is, made tougher by the need to convey the strongly colloquial and strictly contemporary American English of so many Disney products in an eminently written, formal language. To make matters worse, the use of MSA has come with precise guidelines, which impose the suppression of words, expressions and whole semantic fields and their replacement with a host of alternative solutions.

Although these guidelines are not available outside strictly professional circles, its precepts can largely be inferred by analysing the source and target language versions of one or more Disney products that have recently been dubbed in MSA. To make the analysis even more poignant, a triple comparison is made wherever possible: when MSA is used for a redub, the US English source is compared with the first Arabic translation in the Egyptian variety and with the redub in MSA.⁴ It is precisely this sort of analysis that we will be making in the following pages.

If we look at the *Aladdin* television saga in its original version, the first Arabic dub in Egyptian and the MSA redub, one recurrent feature that certainly strikes us is the systematic deletion of any reference to the word and the overall semantic field of *love*. Whether it is expressed between lovers, friends or relatives, love is banned from the MSA dubbed versions, to be replaced by words that convey different emotions or suppressed altogether. In the first Arabic (Egyptian) dubbing, love is conveyed in the

⁴ All English back translations for the Egyptian and the MSA versions of the excerpts discussed below were provided by two professional dubbing translators who have been working in the Arabic dubbing industry for several years. Although they prefer to remain anonymous, the author wishes to thank them for their precious collaboration and support.



same way as in the original, as we shall be pointing out in the following analysis based on excerpts from a variety of episodes.

Table 1 below features a short exchange between Aladdin and Jasmine, occurring at the beginning of episode 6. The two are talking to the Genie about the weather, in what is a witty, very informal dialogue in the English source. The column on the left presents the original English dialogue, whereas on the right a linear back translation from the MSA redub is offered. The Egyptian version, which is the equivalent of the original English version in all the examples analysed here, will only be referred to in the comments.

After Aladdin’s remark on the shortage of rain in Agrabah, Jasmine’s reply brings love into the exchange. As she finishes her line, a close up of her and Aladdin shows her fluttering her eyelashes. Soon after, the parrot ligo sighs deeply. The reference to love, despite being accompanied by the visual and aural supporting elements just mentioned, disappears in the MSA version and is replaced by a rather awkward reference to ‘ethics’:

	Original English dialogue	MSA dubbed version	Back translation from MSA
Aladdin	Jas, Agrabah’s entitled to rain as much as the next desert.	... و بطريقة سيئة - ياسمين! تمنيت أن تمطر السحب في صحراء أغربة	Jas, Agrabah is entitled to rain as much as the next desert.
Jasmine	I’m not talking about rain, Aladdin. I’m talking about love.	أنا لا أتحدث عن الأمطار يا علاء الدين أنا أتكلم عن الأخلاق....	I’m not talking about rain, Aladdin. I’m talking about ethics.

Table 1. Episode 6 (running time 01:16:10)

In another short exchange occurring at the beginning of episode 10 (see Table 2), references to love are even more clumsily replaced: the two solutions adopted to delete references to love (‘won’t leave’ and ‘important’) do not provide coherence and are likely to result in a lack of clarity for the viewers.

In the excerpt corresponding to the dialogue below, Jasmine is trapped in a well and her image appears to Aladdin on the surface of the water. Saleen, who is also in love with Aladdin, is standing beside the boy. He addresses Saleen (line 1), whereas Jasmine replies to him directly from the well (line 2). Saleen then replies to Aladdin (line 3). The triple reference to love in this short exchange provides the key to understanding the sequence; without it, the overall comprehension is inevitably hampered. The Egyptian dubbed version is fully equivalent concerning the expression of love, whereas, as can be seen below, the MSA version appears inconsistent. The use of ‘I won’t leave you’ uttered by Jasmine sounds odd, considering that the young princess is trapped inside a well. Finally, the MSA translation of Saleen’s line adds to the inconsistency: replacing ‘love’ with ‘important’ disconnects her line from the overall exchange:



	Original English dialogue	MSA dubbed version	Back translation from MSA
Aladdin	I love her.	- أطلقني سراح ياسمين ، لن أتركها !!!!	I won't leave her.
Jasmine	I love you too, Aladdin.	وأنا أيضا لن أتركك.	I won't leave you either, Aladdin.
Saleen	Oh, Aladdin, maybe for you this is <i>true love</i> . And maybe for me it's all just a cruel game.	علاء الدين ! بالنسبة لكما هذا مهم ، ولكن بالنسبة لي ليست إلا لعبة.	Oh, Aladdin, maybe for you this is <i>important</i> . And maybe for me it's all just a cruel game.

Table 2. Episode 10 (running time 01:13:56)

In episode 14, reproduced in Table 3, Jasmine has to face yet another rival: Sadira. The latter has had Jasmine captured by a huge, white Sand Beast, which has turned its belly into a prison cell with Jasmine inside it, behind white bars. From her sandy cell, Jasmine shouts at Sadira, telling her she has no hope as far as Aladdin is concerned.

Love is mentioned by both female characters in the exchange in Table 3, whose back translation from MSA reveals this time a subtler, more insidious replacement of the concept of love. Jasmine tells Sadira that she will not be able to force Aladdin to treat her well, suggesting in a manner very much unlike the original English version, that Aladdin will inevitably be unkind to her. In her reply, Sadira refers to the choice that Aladdin will make, this reference sounding slightly sexist at least to European ears. The Egyptian dubbed version is, once again, equivalent to the English source in all its references, including love:

	Original English dialogue	MSA dubbed version	Back translation from MSA
Jasmine	Sadira, don't be a fool! You can't force Aladdin to <i>love you</i> !	- فهمت لماذا تفعلين كل ذلك ، منيرة لا تكوني حمقاء ! لن تجبري علاء على حسن معاملتك.	Sadira, don't be a fool! You can't force Aladdin to <i>treat you well</i> !
Sadira	Shut up! I don't care what you say. He will <i>love me</i> , he has to! Sand Beast, take her away.	أنا... أصمتي !!!! لا أهتم بما تقولينه لأنه سيختارني... يجب عليه.	Shut up! I don't care what you say. He will <i>choose me</i> , he has to! Sand Beast, take her away.

Table 3. Episode 14 (running time 01:13:31)

If we jump to Episode 16 for the last set of examples, we see the Genie in an exchange with Aladdin. As the young boy rubs the lamp, a flying cabin springs up and remains suspended in mid air. The Genie is inside it behind a switchboard. He utters his first line dressed like and pretending to be a telephone operator. Aladdin speaks back to him through a receiver. The Genie then regains his normal appearance, lands next to Aladdin and pats him on the shoulder while uttering his final line.



In the source text, the exchange contains three references to love and a few more interesting words/concepts which are deleted from the MSA version. Even in this rather complex, fast and witty exchange, the Egyptian version has managed to retain the flavour and references of the source, especially if we compare the MSA version with its deletions and replacements. Let us therefore have a look at the host of solutions found by the translators (proofreaders?) of the MSA version, displaying a lack of coherence between each other as well as with the overall exchange in this sequence.

The first two references to ‘love’—made by the Genie in his first line—are duly deleted and replaced by the MSA equivalent of ‘respect’. Doctor Love—which also involves a cultural reference—thus becomes Doctor Respect. ‘Respect’ is indeed one of the most frequently used words and concepts used to replace ‘love’ in the Disney MSA redubs: a shift of relations which points to the religious and social attitudes inspiring it. For reasons that would require further investigation beyond the scope of this study, the reference made by the Genie to Rapunzel in the second line is deleted in the MSA redub, and replaced by a more generic ‘long-haired’. Similarly, Rasoul is renamed Taymour.

In Aladdin’s second line, ‘love’ is brought back into the dialogue, preceded by an overt reference to his feelings: ‘how I feel’ in the source text is replaced, in MSA, with the equivalent of ‘everything’, as if the allusion to feelings is to be avoided even when the reference is generic. The positive expression of love is here again replaced by a negative verb (‘I won’t leave her’), and the ‘spirit’ of the last line uttered by the Genie is turned into a more concrete, less emotional ‘right thing’:

	Original English dialogue	MSA dubbed version	Back translation from MSA
Genie	Love is in the air, Doctor Love. Line one, Agrabah! Who’s tugging on your <i>heartstrings</i> ?	- الاحترام على الهواء ، طبيب الاحترام ، الخط الساخن لأغربة، من يداعب خلايا عقلك؟	<i>Respect</i> is in the air, Doctor <i>Respect</i> . Line one, Agrabah! Who’s tugging on your <i>mindstrings</i> ?
Aladdin	Jasmine. She locked herself in the palace and won’t talk to me.	ياسمين، حبست نفسها في القصر وترفض التحدث إلي.	Jasmine. She locked herself in the palace and won’t talk to me.
Genie	Ah, the Rapunzel complex! She’s got to let her hair down...	أه! عقدة ذات الشعر الطويل عليها أن تسدل شعرها.	Ah, the long-haired complex! She’s got to let her hair down...
Aladdin	I don’t care if I have to fight Rasoul and all of the guards... I’m going in there to tell her <i>how I feel</i> . I love her.	لن أراجع ! حتى وإن كان علي مواجهة تيمور وكل الحراس! سأدخل القصر لأخبرها بكل شيء، لن أتركها!	I don’t care if I have to fight Taymour and all of the guards... I’m going in there to tell her <i>everything</i> . I <i>won’t leave</i> her.
Genie	That’s the <i>spirit</i> . And don’t worry about Rasoul.	- هذا هو المطلوب ولا تحمل هم تيمور، يبدو أنهم طردوه.	That’s the <i>right thing</i> ! And don’t worry about Taymour.

Table 4. Episode 16 (running time 01:10:48)



As the very last example analysed above recalls, it is not only love which is banned from the new MSA dubs for Arab-speaking children, but a host of other feelings and, more generally, terms which might convey or even just suggest the 'wrong' type of spirituality.

On other occasions, however, actions are tabooed from the new dubbed versions, especially if they refer to, or hint at, some form of personal enjoyment. As a matter of fact, another recurrent deletion in the Disney redubs affects the verb/noun 'dance'. In line with a specific, and not in itself universal, Islamic belief, dancing is not considered a desirable activity, and children should possibly learn to avoid and deprecate it from their early years. Dancing is, therefore, often replaced by verbs suggesting movement, the changing of a position, or other actions involving the neutral displacement of one or more bodies.

CONCLUSIONS

As the examples and preceding reflections ought to have intimated, dubbing is still perceived and practised today as a manipulative activity, insofar as the total recreation of a film soundtrack allows for substantial linguistic rewriting performed in the wake of a specific cultural, political or religious agenda.

Needless to say, manipulation is hardly ever exclusively negative. Even if the move to MSA for dubbing and redubbing animation involves substantial rewriting in accordance with the patrons' agenda, we should also admit that it also brings opportunities for the new distribution of old animated products as well as the introduction of new ones, thus catering for newer, larger audiences.

This may well be one of the reasons for Disney's acceptance of this new course of action in the distribution of its productions in the Arab world. Sacrificing *some* of the meaning for the sake of wholesale audience expansion is certainly worthwhile. The superficial sharing in the patronage behind this new dubbing and distribution trend is, therefore, an acceptable, profitable deal as far as Disney is concerned.

Since the overall phenomenon of dubbing and redubbing in Modern Standard Arabic is relatively recent, it will be interesting to observe how it evolves in the years to come. Meanwhile, the discontent, confusion, enthusiasm, curiosity and even rage expressed by Arabic-speaking Disney fans over the Internet and social media worldwide are of equal interest and deserve careful consideration.

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