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## Dubbing Religious References from English into Arabic: A Case Study of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Hercules*

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### ABSTRACT

Dubbing religious references between two incongruent cultures may be considered one of the most complicated tasks due to the use of complex and specialized religion-specific concepts. This especially so when dealing with English and Arabic because the two religions of Christianity and Islam, being divine religions, may converge and diverge on several concepts, whether partially or completely. The present study examines dubbing religious references in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Hercules* animated movies into Arabic (Egyptian Vernacular) both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the quantitative part, the religious terms are classified based on the dubbing strategies suggested in this paper, including omission (21%), TT substitution (19%), generalization (15%), ST substitution (14%), topic shifting (14%), literal translation (11%), and paraphrase (6%). A sample of the overall adaptation of songs is also included. For its turn, the qualitative part looks critically into the strategies used in dubbing religious references. The findings show that the dubbers have opted for using a variety of translation strategies in order to avoid blasphemous expressions in the target Muslim culture. It seems that the avoidance of blasphemy emanating from Greek and Christian cultures in the two works has been a top priority for the dubbers. These findings are expected to be of great help to students and practitioners who engage in religious translation.

**Keywords:** Dubbing; Religious References; Translation Strategies; English; Arabic

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## 1. Introduction

Audio-Visual Translation (AVT) is “the term used to refer to the transfer from one language to another of the verbal components contained in audiovisual works and products”<sup>[1]</sup>. The AVT industry seeks to make it easier to distribute the product in a global market. Many works are available and require AVT, including movies, television shows, plays, musicals, operas, websites, and video games. While there are many different types of AVT, dubbing and subtitling are the most common<sup>[2]</sup>. Subtitling, on the one hand, focuses on turning the spoken form into a written mode and adding it to the bottom of the screen, along with other discursive elements that appear in the image like letters, inscriptions, graffiti, inserts and the like. Dubbing, on the other hand, which is the focus of the present study, is the act of substituting a soundtrack of a dialogic audiovisual text in the Source Language (SL) with another soundtrack on which dialogues have been recorded in the Target Language (TL), taking into account the lip synchronization of characters on the screen. The need for dubbing audiovisual works and making them available in additional languages has increased as the movie market expanded.

The challenges and constraints faced by audiovisual translators when subtitling and dubbing are numerous. These include technical and cultural problems resulting from the interaction between various codes<sup>[3]</sup>. According to Melies, et al.<sup>[4]</sup>, the role of AV translators is demanding because their work is sensitive to several challenging communication aspects like image, dialogue, and music. AVT restrictions also depend on the type of AVT and the mode employed. The two types of technical limitations are spatial (connected to the amount of space available for translation) and temporal (governed by the limitation of time)<sup>[2]</sup>. According to Fois<sup>[5]</sup>, the key to successful dubbing is to synchronize the translation and the original dialogue properly.

Although dubbing is more expensive and time-consuming than subtitling, it may be the better option for translating children’s materials<sup>[6]</sup>. Yahiaoui and Al-Adwan<sup>[7]</sup> write “Despite the dominance of subtitling on the Arab screen, dubbing reigns supreme when it comes to cartoons and animations. Their target audience is children, who cannot read, and teenagers, who are the most impressionable and vulnerable segment of viewers.” In other words, the decision to use dubbing or subtitling depends on the nature of the AVT works and their target audience. Children

and teenagers constitute the majority of animated cartoon viewers, yet they are both challenging to impress. Besides, not any type of content can be appropriate for these ages. Because translators or producers can add, edit, or delete undesirable scenes, phrases, or other elements that do not fit into the society or culture of spectators, dubbing has become the top choice when it comes to children’s materials. De Linde and Kay<sup>[8]</sup> argue that dubbing “entirely substitutes an original dialogue with a phonetically-tuned synchronous oral translation”. Other criteria to consider when assessing dubbing quality include coherence between utterances and images, technical accuracy, over- or under-acting, persuasion, gestures, delivery and intonation, natural dialogue, and spontaneous sounding<sup>[9, 10]</sup>.

Dubbing does not require a high level of literacy from viewers, because literate as well as illiterate people can understand everything and follow the action sequence in the TL. Thus, it is considered better for children who have not yet learned to read and for people with poor reading skills. Successful examples of dubbing in the Arab World include *Barney*, *Sindbad*, *Sesame Street*, and *Teletubbies*. The dubbing industry has recently developed a rich market where the trend began with dubbing Mexican series, Turkish series, followed by Indian, East Asian, and Eastern European works.

Dubbing is a sophisticated mode in which translation, adaptation, and lip-syncing of an audiovisual script constitute the linguistic, cultural, and technical dimensions of a creative, cooperative product<sup>[10]</sup>. Re-voicing, which involves replacing the original audio track with a new one in the TL, is more prevalent in dramas and series than in films. Dubbing is more restricted to animation and cartoons on the big screen. Platforms like Netflix now pay attention to dubbing in dramas and movies, not only to subtitling.

According to Ferriol<sup>[11]</sup>, there are six different constraints that pertain to AVT: professional constraints, formal constraints, linguistic constraints, semiotic or iconic constraints, socio-cultural constraints, and void constraints. Besides, dubbing is a process that can be sensitive to various cultural, aesthetic, and technical constraints<sup>[7, 12–14]</sup>.

## 2. Empirical Studies

There are several studies that address subtitling from English into Arabic in terms of translation strategies used

as well as difficulties and challenges faced. Al-Adwan<sup>[15]</sup> addresses euphemistic strategies in translating swear words into Arabic, emphasizing the importance of maintaining pragmatic function. Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah<sup>[16]</sup> analyze taboo words in hip-hop movies, noting the use of euphemism and omission due to cultural constraints. Ben Slamia<sup>[17]</sup> stresses the need for appropriate translation strategies for taboo words, highlighting literal translation, partial translation, and inaccurate equivalence as common strategies. Almijrab<sup>[18]</sup> examines translation challenges from English to Arabic, observing the influence of cultural variations. Khalaf and Rashid<sup>[19]</sup> and Al-Jabri, et al.<sup>[20]</sup> investigate subtitling strategies in American dramas, with a focus on foreignization, domestication, and politeness levels. Abdelaal and Al-Sarhani<sup>[21]</sup> evaluate subtitling quality in the movie *Training Day*, mentioning euphemism and omission as common strategies. Finally, Alzgoul and Alsaman<sup>[22]</sup> and Abu-Rayyash, et al.<sup>[23]</sup> look into swear word translation strategies, noting a prevalence of omission, euphemism, and slight changes in connotative meanings. Also, there are several studies that have dealt with the problems and challenges encountered in translating religious material in general<sup>[24–26]</sup>, among others.

No study, however, has dealt with dubbing religious references from English into Arabic, a gap which this investigation seeks to fill. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to critically examine the translation strategies employed in dubbing English religious references extracted from two animated movies: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Hercules* into Arabic. The choice is motivated by the fact that the former mainly represents Christian religious culture, while the latter heavily falls back on classical Greek religious culture, which are both incongruent with the Arab Muslim religious culture in varying degrees.

### 3. Research Method

The corpus of this study consists of 72 different religious references extracted from two animated movies: *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Hercules*, which are dubbed into the Egyptian Vernacular. One should note that this vernacular is very familiar all over the Arab world due to its early widespread through cinema and television. The two movies are watched, and the original dialogues (transcriptions) are retrieved from (<https://subscene.com/>), which offers many

subtitles and transcriptions of several movies. Subtitlers and transcriptionists voluntarily upload their translations and transcriptions on this website to make their work freely available to everyone. However, the Arabic dubbed scripts are not available on any platform; therefore, extracting the religious expressions has started from scratch. Subsequently, all the religious references are collected and inserted into a table. Next, the religious data is examined quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of the translation strategies noted in the corpus. While several of these strategies intersect with the typologies in the literature<sup>[27–29]</sup>, some of which are new and may be religious-references-specific (see below).

## 4. Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1. Quantitative Analysis

The corpus of religious references (72 instances) is classified based on the dubbing strategies suggested in this study, viz. omission, TT substitution, ST substitution, topic shifting, generalization, literal translation, and paraphrase. The frequency and percentage of each strategy are displayed in **Table 1** below.

As shown in **Table 1**, omission has the highest frequency (21%), which may have been motivated by the fact that *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* plot contains several Catholic elements that may contradict the target audience's religion, Islam. More seriously, *Hercules* draws heavily on Greek religious culture, where there are many gods and goddesses, something which clearly contradicts Islamic teaching. To avoid blasphemy in the Arab-Muslim culture, this may have prompted the dubber to omit several religious references. In addition, omission may have been followed for lack of equivalents in the TL. Whatever the case is, omission should only be considered as a last resort when the internal coherence of the flow of discourse is not affected.

TT substitution, on the one hand, comes second with (19%), thus indicating how important it is to localize blasphemous religious references in order to render them congruent with the target culture (TC). This is what Larson<sup>[30]</sup> refers to as “cultural substitutes”, which are TL cultural expressions that correspond to their SL counterparts in terms of function, apart from form. On the other hand, ST substitution (14%) is employed in order to avoid blasphemous expressions by falling back on non-religious synonymous expressions in the

**Table 1.** Frequency and percentage of dubbing strategies.

Name of Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	15	21%
TT substitution	14	19%
Generalization	11	15%
ST substitution	10	14%
Topic shifting	10	14%
Literal translation	8	11%
Paraphrase	4	6%
Total	72	100%

ST, i.e., items that render blasphemous expressions without being offensive to the target audience. The viewer, therefore, will figure out what the dubber contextually means when watching the scene.

Topic Shifting (14%) is used to avoid a religious expression by coming up with an expression featuring a completely different topic. Apparently, the dubber opts for topic shifting when they feel that the religious reference is irrelevant in the TC and there is no harm done by changing the entire domain. For its part, generalization (15%), which may be confused with topic shifting albeit being distinct, involves the use of a general term for a specific one, i.e., a hypernym for a hyponym, thus conveying the religious reference in a general sense within the same domain.

Literal translation (11%) represents happy incidents where the two languages literally and conceptually converge on some religious references. Last comes paraphrase (6%), whereby the dubber unpacks a religious reference for the sake of comprehensibility in the TC.

Besides these 7 quantified dubbing strategies, we have the strategy of “adaptation”, which is employed to localize the songs in the two works. This strategy cannot be quantified because it involves changing an ST song into a TT song through adaptation. A separate section (4.2.8) touches on this strategy. The qualitative part below provides illustrative examples of the translation strategies utilized and critically examines the dubs in terms of appropriateness and coherence.

## 4.2. Qualitative Analysis

### 4.2.1. ST Substitution

ST substitution involves rendering an ST textual label in the TT, which is contextually synonymous with an ST religious reference, in order to avoid a culturally inappropri-

ate Arabic rendition. **Table 2** shows some examples of ST substitution in the data (Henceforth, religious references and their renditions are highlighted in **boldface**, and modified literal translation is provided underneath Egyptian Arabic renditions).

John Musker, one of *Hercules* film directors, states that *Hercules*’ story seemed like it would be perfect for animation because of its mythical component, half man and half deity. With the release of *Hercules* in 1997, Disney delved into ancient Greek mythology. Greek mythology is most famous for the strong gods who were called “Olympians” because, according to tradition, they resided on Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece. The Olympians became well known and gained power after the Titanomachy, so the Great War between the Olympians and the Titans, the gods who had ruled before them, came to an end. The Twelve Olympians took control of the world and deposed the Titans, which lasted ten years<sup>[31]</sup>. Several Greek and Roman deities, including Zeus, Hercules, and Hermes, are mentioned in different versions of the Bible. Therefore, it is typical to find terms like ‘god’, ‘gods’, ‘goddess’, and ‘goddesses’ or any other compound word linked to the word “god” like ‘god-like’, ‘god-hood’, and ‘demi-gods’ in the ST since Anglo-American cultures have imbued Greek cultural heritage and have been predominantly Christian.

However, in Islam and according to the Islamic declaration of faith, or *shahada*, there is only one God, *Allah*, who is referred to and described in the Quran and *hadith* by 99 names that depict His attributes. Muslims believe that He created the world in six days and sent prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and lastly, Muhammad, who urged people to worship only Him and reject idolatry and polytheism.

**Table 2.** ST substitution strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
1	HADES: Pain? Panic? Got a little riddle for ya. <b>How do you kill a god?</b>	وجع هلع عندي ليكو فزورة إزاي تحطموا هرقل [Pain! Panic! I have a riddle for you. How can you destroy Hercules?]	ST substitution
2	ALCMENE: It's the symbol of the <b>gods</b> .	دي علامة سكان الأوليمب [This is the mark of Olympus' inhabitants]	ST substitution
3	CALLIOPE: It was tragic. Zeus led all <b>the gods</b> on a frantic search.	كانت مأساه. زيوس قاد سكان الأوليمب في بحث محموم [It was a tragedy. Zeus led Olympus' inhabitants in a heated search]	ST substitution

Table 2 above shows that the religious words mentioned in the ST, like ‘god’, and ‘(the) gods’ are substituted with ST contextually synonymous expressions to suit the TT religion and culture. In example (1), the dubber substituted the term ‘god’ with هرقل ‘Hercules’ because it would have been problematic to translate it literally to an Arab audience, which would yield تحطمو الله ازاي ‘How can you destroy Allah’. This would indicate that *Allah* is as mortal with limited power as His believers and that He could be destroyed, which seriously contradicts Muslims’ beliefs, for Allah is seen as the eternally existing creator and sustainer of the cosmos Who will ultimately bring all people back to life. In Islam, God is seen as a perfect, eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent being Who is infinite in every way. The dubber rightly decided to use a contextual synonym هرقل ‘Hercules’ to avoid the blasphemous religious expression that conflicts with the Muslims’ beliefs by utilizing a non-religious expression, which is used in the ST as a contextual synonym of ‘god’.

Similarly, in examples (2) and (3), the dubber substituted the term ‘gods’ with سكان الأولمب ‘Olympus’ inhabitants. If the dubber rendered ‘(the) gods’ literally as الآلهة ‘the gods’, it would contradict the target audience’s belief in the world’s one and only creator, and nothing is like unto Him. Therefore, the dubber used contextual substitution by replacing the term ‘gods’ with الأولمب سكان to avoid blasphemous religious expressions. Thus, the viewer will figure out what الأولمب ‘Olympians’ refers to by watching the pictures; they are characters with superhuman strength. As can be seen, ST substitution, which may be genre specific here, is a leeway to deal with religious expressions that are incongruent with the TL culture by contextually falling back on ST material.

#### 4.2.2. TT Substitution

TT substitution, which contrasts ST substitution, is rendering an ST religious reference with an Arabic cultural substitute in order to avoid inappropriate renditions. In this way, TT substitution is TL oriented. Table 3 shows illustrative examples of TT substitution in the data.

In example (4), the word ‘Pope’, which is used sarcastically, was substituted with خالتي ‘my aunty’ in the TT, which is of a comparable sarcastic use in Arabic here, especially in the Egyptian vernacular. Both expressions are meant to ridicule the question in (4). The Arab culture, unlike the Anglo-American culture, is a conservative culture in which religious figures may not be ridiculed. Therefore, the dubber decided to replace the religious reference ‘Pope’ with خالتي ‘my aunty’, a kinship term that is usually used in a sarcastic context like the one in hand. In this way, the dubber managed to add a humorous effect without manipulating target audience beliefs. A literal translation of the religious reference would produce word ambiguity because البابا here could mean ‘Pope or father’, and may both confuse the viewers and nullify the humorous effect. In addition, it may cause offence to fellow Arab Christians who hold البابا ‘Pope’ in high esteem.

In example (5), instead of literally using النبيذ ونقطع الجبن ‘Pour the wine and cut the cheese’, the dubber employed the TT substitution strategy by rendering this utterance into a familiar Egyptian expression حناكل فتة ولحمة ‘We’ll eat stew and meat’, which also falls within the food domain. Most Christians who drink spirits like wine, which according to their belief is a gift from God that enhances joy, customarily eat cheese with wine. According to them, wine’s tannins might appear less bitter and fruitier when combined with the proteins and fats in cheese. Also, wine’s acidity enhances cheese’s flavor. On the other hand, the *fattah* “stew” dish is one of the authentic Egyptian dishes that contains a

Table 3. TT substitution strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
4	Victor: As your friends and guardians, we insist you attend the festival. Quasimodo: Me? Hugo: No, <b>the Pope</b> . Of course, you!	كأصدقاء مخلصين ومحبين نصر على زهابك للمهرجان أنا؟ لا خالتي طبعا انت [As faithful friends and lovers, we insist on your going to the festival. I? No, my aunty! You, of course]	TT substitution
5	Hugo: All right, all right! <b>Pour the wine and cut the cheese.</b>	حلو اوي اوي اوي مية فلة حناكل فته ولحمة [Very, very good! A bunch of a hundred flowers. We'll eat stew and meat]	TT substitution
6	Victor: A festival! Hugo: You mean <b>the Feast of Fools</b> ?	مهرجان! أصدك مهرجان التنكر؟ [A festival! You Mean the disguise festival?]	TT substitution

high nutritional value. It consists of meat, rice, bread, onion, butter, and tomato. The dubber opted for omitting the ST religious effect by substituting it with an expression that would be acceptable and familiar to the target audience's beliefs and culture.

In example (6), Clopin, everyone's favorite gypsy and storyteller, started 'the Feast of Fools' with performers hopping onto the central stage and waving flags. 'The Feast of Fools' was a well-known holiday celebrated during the Middle Ages around January 1st. In the Middle Ages, Christianity, and more specifically, Catholicism was the only acknowledged religion. The Feast allowed low-ranking subdeacons to lead worship, usually held by the bishop or the cantor. Participants would choose either a false Bishop, false Archbishop, or false Pope during the Feast in honor of the scriptural teaching in the Bible, "God chose what is foolish in the world to disgrace the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27). It was officially banned in the 15th century. These celebrations were possibly Christian adaptations of the pagan Saturnalia rituals<sup>[32]</sup>. The dubber decided to adopt the western idea of 'Halloween' and translated 'the Feast of Fools' as التنكر مهرجان, which is an Arabic loan-translation alongside the loanword هالوين. Halloween (on October 31 every year) is nowadays practiced in many parts of the world. Hence, the dubber substituted the Christian reference in the SL with a familiar label in the TL, thus appropriately doing away with the religious reference through TT substitution.

### 4.2.3. Topic Shifting

Topic shifting occurs when the dubber opts for something that is irrelevant in terms of content to the ST expression. Besides, the strategy involves shifting the sense from one domain to another different domain. **Table 4** gives illustrative examples of topic shifting in the data.

The term 'heathen' in example (7) was translated as 'الحيوانية' 'animalistic'. Heathen means 'having no religion or belonging to a religion that is not Christianity, Judaism, or Islam'. The dubber decided to use the topic-shifting strategy by rendering 'their heathen ways' into أساليبهم الحيوانية 'animalistic styles', thus shifting the topic from heathenry to animalism. He could have been more faithful to the ST, using the literal translation strategy by offering أساليبهم الإلحادية 'atheistic styles' or أساليبهم اللادينية 'non-religious styles'. His option, however, might have been motivated by choosing a register more comprehensible to the audience (children) than that in the literal strategy. That is, the literal renditions may involve a high degree of formality that goes beyond children's cognitive abilities.

Examples (8) and (9) indicate that the dubber used a topic-shifting strategy to shift the sense from one domain to another. The words 'god' and 'immortal' were dubbed as قوي 'strong' and بطل 'hero', respectively. According to Greek mythology, Mount Olympus was home to the Greek deities. They were immortal, just like all gods. In Islam, *Allah* is the only immortal; He has always existed and will continue to exist. Being aware of the blasphemous nature

Table 4. Topic shifting strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
7	Frollo: Their <b>heathen ways</b> inflame the peoples' lowest instincts, and they must be stopped.	<p>وأساليهم الحيوانية يبتئير في الناس أحط الغرائز واحنا لازم تمنعهم [and their animalistic styles excite in people the lowest instincts and we must forbid them]</p>	Topic shifting
8	PANIC: You can't. They're <b>immortal!</b> HADES: Bingo! So, first you gotta turn the little sunspot ... mortal.	<p>ده قوي! والقوى ما يتحطمش بيئى الأول لازم نخلي المضروب ينسمع [This is strong! The strong cannot be destroyed. We must first let the beaten be heard]</p>	Topic shifting
9	HADES: This is—this is impossible! You ... you ... you can't be alive, you'd have to be a, a—PAIN/PANIC: <b>A god?</b>	<p>ده مستحيل مش ممكن تكون عايش انت بكده تئى ... بطل [This is impossible! There's no way you're still living. Then you are ... A hero]</p>	Topic shifting

of these two terms in the Arab Muslim culture, the dubber used the topic shifting strategy by changing the topic from 'godhood' to 'power' in example (8), and from 'immortality' to 'heroism' in example (9), i.e., from the domain of 'gods' to the domains of 'humans' in both of them.

#### 4.2.4. Generalization

Generalization usually aims at conveying the overall meaning or making the ST expression appear neutral. In most cases, hyponymy and synecdoche are used to achieve this purpose (for more on this, see Farghal and Alenezi [33]). Table 5 offers some illustrative examples of generalization from the data.

In example (10), the dubber used a general term for "1470 burgundy", i.e., مشروب رخيص 'a cheap drink'. The Bible and Christian tradition teach that wine is a gift from God that enhances joy; excessive consumption that results in drunkenness is wrong (Psalm 104:14, 15; Ecclesiastes 3:13; 9:7). Christians are not prohibited from drinking beer, wine, or any other alcoholic beverages per the Bible. However, in Islam, the Arabic word for alcohol is *khamr* خمر. Alcohol is seen as *haram* 'forbidden/unlawful', and its consumption is considered impure or *najis* نجس. However, مشروب رخيص 'a cheap drink' could either mean a cheap alcoholic drink or a cheap nonalcoholic drink. The dubber used a general term to tone down the religious effect, thus making the ST closer to the target audience's cultural beliefs by using a hyponym مشروب رخيص instead of a hyponym نبيذ برغندي 'burgundy wine' or نبيذ معتق 'aged wine'.

In example (11), the translator replaced the word

'stocks' with a specific item كرباج 'whip' to stand for the act of whipping, i.e., synecdoche (a part standing for the whole). Europe's medieval era, which generally lasted from 500 to 1500 CE, was characterized by the widespread use of physical punishment. The Arabic word كرباج is used as a tool for control and punishment, torture, or as a weapon<sup>[34]</sup>. The dubber employed one torturing tool that may be used in the 'stocks', i.e., they utilized a part to represent the whole for lack of correspondence to the Christian term.

In example (12), the dubber opted for using a general term for 'mass' كرباج 'the bells', which is a symbol for the 'church' in particular and Christianity in general. An essential worship service in a Catholic's life is 'mass', which is an opportunity to spend time with God and to receive his blessings (inner strength to live a Christian life). In the Arab World, Muslims are not familiar with such term and prayer; hence, the word 'mass' was generalized using a familiar and acceptable term in the TT الأجراس, which signal times of church prayers.

#### 4.2.5. Omission

The omission strategy involves removing an ST element by not rendering it in the TT. It may be justified if it does not contribute to the meaning in the TT. Table 6 shows some examples of omission from the data.

In example (13), the word 'nun' was omitted in the TT. While it is possible in a liberated culture like the Anglo-American culture to make fun of religious figures like a nun or the Pope, this kind of address is considered blasphemous in the Arab Muslim culture. The dubber here did well by

Table 5. Generalization strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
10	Esmeralda: You'll hide here until you're strong enough to move. Phoebus: Great. I could use a drink. Yes. Feels like a <b>1470 burgundy</b> . Not a good year.	حستخبي هنا لحد ما تؤوم بالسلامة عظيم هو ده الي انا عاوزه ابوا مشروب رخيص. معتنى أوي بس مبهور منك [You'll hide here until you recover peacefully. Great! This is what I want. Yes! Cheap drink. It is very old. Amazing]	Generalization
11	Guard 2: Maybe a day in <b>the stocks</b> will cool you down.	دي عايزة كرياتج ياديك بنى [This demands a whip to discipline you, then]	Generalization
12	Quasimodo: But at sunset, I ring the evening <b>mass</b> , and after that, I clean the cloisters.	بس ساعة المغربية لازم أدء الأجراس وبعد كده بنظف الأرض [But at sunset I must ring the bells and after that I clean the floor]	Generalization

Table 6. Omission strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
13	-Hugo: Oh, man! I thought he'd never leave! I'll be spittin' feathers for a week! -Victor: Well that's what you get for sleeping with your mouth open. -Hugo: (Sarcastic chuckle) Heh, heh, heh... <b>go scare a nun!</b> Hey, Quasi! What's goin' on out there?	-يا ساتر دا لازنه بغرا باله أسبوع معشش بيبي -عشان تبطل تنام وانت فاتح بونك -ها ها ها خوفتنا خفيف كوازي في ايه النهاردة؟ [O God! He is stuck with glue for a week now. He's nesting then. - So you stop sleeping while opening your mouth. - Heh heh heh .. You scared us, you light. O Quasi! What's happening today?]	Omission
14	And that's <b>the gospel truth!</b>	و دي الحنيئة يا ناس [and this the truth, oh people]	Omission
15	HERCULES: Oh, <b>mighty Zeus</b> . Please ... hear me, and answer my prayer.	يا زيوس يا زيوس ارجوك اسمعي ورد على ندائي [O Zeus! O Zeus! I beg you to hear me and answer my call]	Omission

omitting the religious reference and, simultaneously, preserved the shade of humor by creating the rhyming utterance 'You scared us, you light', which takes care of both the communicative meaning as well as the sarcasm.

In example (14), the dubber rightly omitted the religious reference in 'the gospel truth' by rendering it as 'دي الحنيئة' 'this is the truth'. It would have been odd to preserve the religious meaning by translating the expression as 'دي الحنيئة الإلهية' 'This (is) the Godly truth' because the target audience would not accept such an option. The dubber, however, could have used a neutral intensifier in Arabic by offering something like 'دي الحنيئة الواضحة' 'this is the clear truth' or 'دي الحنيئة الدامغة' 'this is the undisputable truth'. Thus, while the omission is pragmatically justified, the dubber could have compensated for it by using a non-religious,

neutral term.

In example (15), the dubber also opted for omitting an item that has a religious ring and is incongruent with the TC, viz. 'mighty Zeus' is relayed as 'Zeus'. As in example (14), a non-religious, neutral term could have been used to modify Zeus in address such as 'يا زيوس الأوي' "O, powerful Zeus" instead of an expression that would sound blasphemous to the target audience like 'يا زيوس العظيم' 'O, great Zeus' or 'يا زيوس الجبار' 'O, mighty Zeus', because such attributes are reserved for 'الله' "God" for Muslims.

#### 4.2.6. Paraphrase

Paraphrase refers to creating a liberal approximation for an ST item. Table 7 shows some examples of paraphrase from the data.

In example (16), the term 'the house of God' was para-



Table 7. Paraphrase strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
16	Archdeacon: Frollo, have you gone mad? I will not tolerate this assault on <b>the house of God!</b>	فرولو انت تجننت انا مش حسمح قمرح نلع بأبي اعتداء على حرمة المكان ده [Frollo, have you gone mad? I will not allow any aggression on the sanctity of this place]	Paraphrase
17	Archdeacon: Don't worry. Minister Frollo learned years <b>ago to respect the sanctity of the church.</b>	فرولو محدش حيارب منها ما تخافيش الوزير فرولو اتعلم من زمان انو يحترم بيوت ربنا [Frollo! Nobody will come near her. Don't worry! Frollo, the minister, learned for long now how to respect houses of our Lord]	Paraphrase
18	ZEUS: Hmmm ... what day is that, son? HERCULES: The day ... <b>I rejoice the gods.</b>	يوم ايه ده يابني اليوم اللي خرج فيه في وسطكم [What day is that, my son? - The day when I come back among you]	Paraphrase

phrased as 'sanctity of this place'. The dubber's use of the paraphrase strategy maintained the idea of religion and sacredness in general while also not really acknowledging the sacredness of the Church. The term 'sanctity' has a religious connotation in the TT. It could be defined as a place of special sanctity in which certain practices are prohibited, and respect must be shown there. The dubber did well by paraphrasing the religious reference rather than literally rendering it into 'the house of Allah' or substituting it in the TT with 'the mosque'. Both would be incongruent with the context of the ST since they reflect specific religious culture rather than neutral general culture.

In example (17), the church is a Christian place of worship, which is the counterpart of 'the mosque' in the Arab Muslim culture. To neutralize this state of affairs while maintaining the religious reference, the translator used a more generic term 'houses of our Lord' to indicate the holiness of the place in both cultures.

In example (18), the term 'gods', which is used to refer to Olympians, was paraphrased as 'among you'. If the dubber translated it literally as 'the gods', it would conflict with what the target audience believes about the oneness of the world creator. In other words, the dubber here used a paraphrasing strategy to explicate the term 'gods' by 'among you' while addressing Zeus in reference to the 'gods' in order to avoid the blasphemous religious expression in the TT.

#### 4.2.7. Literal Translation

Literal translation occurs when the ST form is adhered to as nearly as possible in the translation in so far as the SL system allows. **Table 8** shows some illustrative examples of literal translation from the data.

In example (19), the word 'church' was translated literally in the TT as 'كنيسة'. Webster's Dictionary defined it as 'a building for public and especially Christian worship'. Islam and Christianity have similar religious concepts, such as fasting, pilgrimage, ablutions, etc., which have similar functions. However, they differ in their details. One of these similarities is that both have places that believers go to in order to worship God, 'a place of prostration' to God. In Islam, the site is called a 'mosque', Arabic *مسجد* *masjid* or *جامع* *jāmi'*, but a 'church' in Christianity. The dubber rightly opted for literal translation rather than TT substitution, i.e., *مسجد* or *جامع* because this would be incongruent with the Christian atmosphere in this work. That is, we have two labels symbolizing two different religions.

In example (20), the word 'lashes' was translated literally in the TT as 'جلدة' 'lash'. In Christianity, many gospels like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have mentioned the lashings that Jesus endured prior to his crucifixion. For Christians to confess their sins and participate in Jesus' Passion, flagellants and lashings are common in Christian penitentiary confraternities. This is also a familiar punishment type in Islam, which also includes death by stoning, limb or limbs amputation, and flogging with one hundred or eighty lashes for a variety of offences. Since 'punishment by lashing' is a familiar method in both Christianity and Islam, the dubber rightly rendered this concept literally, which maintains its

**Table 8.** Literal translation strategy.

Number	ST	TT	Translation Strategy
19	Phoebus: Ah, ah, ah! Watch it— you're in a <b>church</b> .	[Oh, be careful! You are in a church]	حيالك انتي في كنيسة Literal translation
20	Frollo: Guard! Guard: Sir? Frollo: Ease up. Wait between <b>lashes</b> . Otherwise, the older sting will dull him to the new. Guard: Yes, sir.	[Stop! Yes, sir? Be careful! This way his Body will get used to it. I want him feel every lash until he's well-done. Okay, sir]	وقف أفندم بالراحة جسمه كدة حينجس وانا عاوزه يحس بكل جلدة لحد ما يستوي تمام يا فندم Literal translation
21	Frollo: The prisoner, Esmeralda, has been found guilty of the crime of <b>witchcraft</b> .	[It was proved that the accused Esmeralda was practicing the crime of witchcraft]	ثبت على المتهمه از ميرالدا جريمة ممارسة السحر Literal translation

religious function as a kind of punishment.

In example (21), the word 'الأسود السحر الأسود' 'black magic' was under-translated literally in the TT as 'السحر' 'magic'. The ability to damage others allegedly without their knowledge by occult or supernatural techniques and by those thought to have access to the supernatural world is known as 'witchcraft,' which is a familiar concept and is condemned in both Christianity and Islam, among many other religions. In order to convey to viewers that witchcraft is an evil practice that should be avoided, the dubber opted for substituting and omitting it in some mentions whenever it had a positive connotation like 'such a clever witch', which was substituted with 'أنت فعلا عجيبة' 'You're a real gypsy' and 'You'd risk your life to save that gypsy witch', which was dubbed as 'ممكن تموت نفسك عشان خاطر العجيبة' 'you may risk your life to save the gypsy', in which the term 'witch' is omitted. However, it was maintained in other mentions by under-translating it literally as 'السحر' whenever it had a negative connotation, such as 'the crime of witchcraft' and 'This evil witch'. Therefore, the dubber rightly rendered it literally, which maintains the religious function.

#### 4.2.8. Adaptation

Adaptation occurs when the entire text is localized in the TC, i.e., it largely loses its linguistic and cultural features in the translation, including religious references. The song "God saves the outcast" in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* movie, is adapted into Arabic, especially the religious expressions, mainly focusing on improvising prosody and rhyme in the translation. The dubber changed the SL culture in the direction of the TL culture. The religious references

that are blasphemous or do not suit the TL culture have been replaced with things that belong to the TL culture. By way of illustration, **Table 9** shows some examples of adaptation from the lyrics in "God saves the outcast" song.

In 'God Help the Outcasts', Esmeralda is facing a phase where she starts doubting her Catholic beliefs about God by saying, 'I don't know if you can hear me or if You're even there', 'I don't know if you would listen to a gypsy's prayer', and 'I shouldn't speak to you'. First, Catholics firmly believe that God hears their prayers and answers them in a way that always benefits them. Second, being a Catholic entails believing in God; thus, you cannot become Catholic if you do not believe in God. Third, every Catholic has the right to talk to God and praying is a way to connect with God, speak to Him, and deepen their relationship with Him. Although there are some similarities between Islam and Catholicism, translating the song literally would let Muslims start thinking and doubting their Islamic beliefs. For example, one of Allah's 99 names is 'السميع' 'the all-hearing'. Hence, translating 'I don't know if you can hear me' literally would shock the audience as it casts doubt on one of Allah's attributes. More blasphemous is the utterance 'Or if you're even there' if rendered literally because it questions the very existence of God.

The dubber, therefore, did well by adapting these blasphemous expressions into Arabic utterances that praise God, which is congruent with the TC. As can be observed in **Table 9**, in addition to adapting religious references, improvising prosody and rhyme was a top priority for the dubber in an attempt to maintain the musicality of the song in the TT,

Table 9. Lyrics from “God Saves the Outcast”.

<p>I don't know if You can hear me Or if You're even there I don't know if You would listen To a gypsy's prayer</p>	<p>[My heartbeats are calling you You who provides for birds My heart knows your way My heart is full of goodness]</p>	<p>لبي دأته تنادي لك يا اللي رزأت الطير ألبي دا عارف سبيلك ألبي كله خير</p>
<p>Yes, I know I'm just an outcast I shouldn't speak to You</p>	<p>[Yes, I know I'm one Of the poor and deprived]</p>	<p>يوا عارفة إني لوحدة من الفأره الغلبانين</p>
<p>I thought we all were The children of God God help the outcasts Children of God</p>	<p>[Extend to them your hand. They are poor people You are their supporter. Who else would be?]</p>	<p>مدلهم إيدك، دول ناس مساكين إنث نصيرهم مين غيرك مين</p>

which is a key feature in expressive discourse. Witness, for example, how the first utterance 'لبي دأته تنادي لك' 'my heartbeats are calling you' rhymes with the third 'سبيلك' 'my heart knows your way' and the second utterance 'يا اللي رزأت الطير' 'you who provides for birds' rhymes with the fourth 'كله خير ألبي' 'my heart is full of goodness', to recreate a musicality that would amuse Arabic speaking children the way it impacted English speaking children.

Toward the end of the song, moreover, Esmeralda uses the term 'Children of God', which is an extremely blasphemous expression in Islam if literally rendered into 'أبناء الله', because Allah neither begets nor is begotten. In Christianity, sons and daughters of God are people who have made a covenant with God and have vowed to carry out His will. For Muslims, by contrast, people are 'عباد الله' 'slaves of God' rather than 'children of God'. Once again, the dubber rightly resorted to adaptation by localizing supplications to God in their context positively rather than skeptically.

As can be seen above, religious references in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Hercules* prove to be a sensitive area when dubbed into Arabic. While it is true that Christianity and Islam share some religious concepts such as prayers, charity, and pilgrimage, there are several mismatches such as the key concept of trinity which is denied in Islam. The situation is further complicated in the two works under study by the fact that the religious discourse in them is highly influenced by Greek culture with its multiple gods and goddesses. Consequently, the dubbers rightly employed

different translation strategies including ST substitution, TT substitution, topic shifting, generalization, omission, paraphrase, literal translation, and adaptation, in order to avoid blasphemous expressions and render them acceptable in the TC.

## 5. Conclusions and Limitations of the Study

This research has investigated the use of Egyptian Vernacular in dubbing sensitive religious material into Arabic. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Hercules* movies, the works under study, have many Christian concepts and Greek mythologies that do not fit well in the Muslim culture. Therefore, the dubbers have used a variety of translation strategies to appropriately render expressions that are not acceptable in the TC.

The study combines a quantitative and qualitative approach in the data analysis. On the one hand, the quantitative part indicates the frequency and percentage of the different strategies employed in rendering the religious terms, viz. omission (21%), TT substitution (19%), generalization (15%), ST substitution (14%), topic shifting (14%), literal translation (11%), paraphrase (6%), and a small sample of adaptation. On the other hand, the qualitative part provides an analytical commentary and a critique of the strategies used, showing that the dubbers have generally succeeded in transferring the culture of the SL into what mainly suits the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) audience by avoiding

blasphemous expressions and blocking misunderstandings and misinterpretation of ideas and concepts.

One limitation of this study is the small size of the corpus (72 items), whose findings may not be generalized. Future studies, therefore, may work with a larger corpus of religious references from children's Arabic-dubbed animated movies in order to deepen our understanding of the sensitivity of rendering such references and the translation strategies employed to avoid offensive blasphemy in Arab-Muslim culture, especially that western audiovisual materials, children's animated movies in particular, draw heavily on Greek mythology in terms of multi-gods and their heroic deeds.

Another limitation has to do with the fact that the two works under investigation are specifically dubbed into the Egyptian Arabic vernacular, which may not represent the diverse dialectal map in Arabic. Future studies, therefore, may examine dubbing English religious references into other Arabic vernaculars whether the same translation strategies are used. One should note, however, that the Egyptian vernacular is the most common and readily comprehensible across the Arab world due to its pioneering role in creating and disseminating Arabic movies and series, as well as dubbing foreign works.

## Author Contributions

The two authors (Reem Odeh and Mohammed Farghal) have contributed equally to conceptualization of the paper, methodology, software, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, writing, editing, and funding acquisition.

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## Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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