A Study of the Translation of Humor in Sitcoms on JTV Channel Two

By
Areej Ahmad Abu-Mallouh

Supervised by
Dr. Abdullah Shunnaq

August 2001
A Study of the Translation of Humor in Sitcoms on JTV Channel Two

By
Areej Ahmad Abu-Mallouh
BA English Language and Literature
Yarmouk University 1998

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Translation at Yarmouk University

Thesis Supervisor
Dr. Abdullah Shunnaq ......................... Chairman

Co-Supervisor
Prof. Dr. Fawwaz Al-Abed Al-Haq.................. Member

Examining Committee
Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Al-Quda.......................... Member
Dr. Ibrahim Dawood................................. Member
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Khatib................................. Member
Abstract

A Study of the Translation of Humor in Sitcoms on JTV Channel Two

By
Areej Ahmad Abu-Mallouh

Supervised by
Dr. Abdullah Shunnaq

This study aims at evaluating the translation of humor in sitcoms aired on Jordan Television (henceforth JTV) Channel Two in terms of accuracy and faithfulness to the original text. In an attempt to achieve this goal, the researcher has studied the translations of eight episodes of four different sitcoms, two episodes allocated to each show.

Upon close examination of the translated materials, it has been found that most of the translators have given erroneous renderings of some humorous situations in the original text, thus distorting the message conveyed in the target language text.

In this study, the researcher analyzes and categorizes some erroneously translated jokes observed in the corpus of the study which adopts Zabalbeascoa’s categorization. She also tries to suggest alternative, supposedly more appropriate, translations of the source language utterances.
The thesis concludes with some recommendations, which hopefully, will enhance the process of translating sitcoms. It is recommended that JTV should employ translators specialized in the translation of sitcoms and should also employ translators to review the translations, prior to their broadcasting on air. In addition, JTV should avoid purchasing shows that require many omissions.

As for the translators themselves, they should have good command of the Arabic and English languages as well as their cultures and they need to be highly qualified, skilled and experienced in the different types of programs aired on JTV.

Finally, the researcher sees the need for further research on the subtitling of other types of programs on JTV in addition to studying the technique of dubbing TV programs.

Though the researcher hopes that this study will improve the performance of JTV translators, research is required to clarify the appropriate methods for translating the jokes in sitcoms especially the two problem points found in this research: language dependent jokes and national sense of humor jokes.