

British Aristocratic Irony on Screen: Subtitling Shifts in Downton Abbey

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Abstract : The subtitling process for period dramas implies a set of linguistic challenges. Audio-visual (AV) texts in this genre weave a rich tapestry of verbal irony blended with humor. The famous TV series Downton Abbey contains such irony as one of the British aristocracy's linguistic markers. This study aims to examine subtitling strategies utilized in rendering such verbal irony. To counteract the negative postulated by Berman with the positive shifts, a qualitative analysis is conducted to examine the impact of the presence and absence of negative deforming tendencies in the Arabic subtitles of the first season of the British drama. This research is significant because it contributes to the discipline of translation studies, specifically the realm of AV translation. It seeks to provide a set of guidelines for optimal subtitling strategies that maintain the stylistic peculiarities of a social class that don't exist in the target culture while also considering the practical aspects of translating subtitles. The findings indicate that negative shifts in the use of ironic expressions distort not only the stylistic elements of British aristocracy's utterances but also result in a loss of the intended meaning. This implies that what Berman's model identifies as negative is also perceived as negative linguistic shifts in the Arabic subtitles of the British aristocracy's verbal irony.

Keywords : Downton Abbey, deforming tendencies, berman, subtitling shifts, verbal irony

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