"Challenges and Constraints of Subtitling Audiovisual Products and Multimodality of Texts from English into Arabic Through Arab Translators' Perspectives"

Researcher:

Osama Mudawe Nurain Mudawe

English Department, College of Arts & Humanities, Jazan University, Saudi Arabia.

Abstract:

Contributing to revealing the myth of subtitling Audiovisual products into Arabic, the present study attempts intellectually to contribute to the flourishing of the subtitling industry by exploring in depth the challenges and the constraints, associated with the main threefold components of media that are represented in cultural, linguistics, and technical parameters. The study adopted the analytical and descriptive methodology where a questionnaire was administrated among Arab translators to discern their attitudes, perceptions, and standpoint of the nature of challenges and constraints that encounter while rendering meaning from audiovisual products. The data were processed by using SPSS and the data were presented in the form of frequency and percentage. The study identifies a number of challenges and difficulties that turn the subtitling process into a daunting task for translators. The study exploits the essential and most frequently faced difficulties that call for persisting research on the area to establish solid theoretical conceptual and practical frameworks that would contribute efficiently to the subtitling industry in the middle east.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation, Subtitling; Challenges; Constraints.

Introduction

In recent times, Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has become one of the most thriving translation studies due to the fast-paced technological advancement and its impact on media production and distribution. Subtitling, as one of the most recognized types of AVT, has captured a prominent place in the field of translation. This reality has been attributed to the wild influx of media production and the advancement of technology that provides impressive accessibility to all these media products. In the media industry, subtitling is defined as the process of rendering the meaning of oral language (dialogue) into a written translation displayed on the bottom of the screen, usually in a precise form compared to the spoken language, to enable the audience to catch the written message regardless of their reading speed. The flourishing of the media entertainment industry has dramatically increased the demand for subtitling to broadcast its products (movies, TV shows, Documentary Programs, and theaters) to a large number of audiences around the globe, regardless of the language they speak. As a result, companies and entertainment enterprises like Netflix, OSN, SONY Pictures, and 20 Century Studios, to name but a few, are thriving solely because of the subtitling services they provide to their audiences. To meet the ever-demand subtitling services, these entertainment companies are hiring Arab translators with subtitling experiences to meet the demand for subtitling. Moreover, they even go further by establishing subtitling departments with specific terms and conditions which are now being categorized among subtitlers.

Literature review

Subtitling

Subtitling, sometimes known as screen translation, is one of the most thriving genres of audiovisual translation. Subtitling is the process of transferring the spoken language of dialogue in a movie, for instance, into a written form on the screen in the language of the audience. Subtitling has been identified by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, p.161) as "the process of providing synchronized captions for film and television dialogue." In the same context, subtitling is defined by O'Connell (2007, p.169) as "supplementing the original voice soundtrack by adding written text on the screen." Likewise, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014) define subtitling as:

> A translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)" (P.8)

Gotlieb (1998) makes this classification clear. He categorizes subtitling into these groups: 1) Intralingual is also called vertical subtitles as they change perceptive modality (spoken text is converted into written without any change of change); 2) Interlingual or so-called diagonal type of subtitles change both perceptive modality and language; 3) Open or non-optional represented which are an integral physical part of a film or tele program; and 4) Closed or optional, which are represented in the form of Teletext which you can view using a correspondent decoder.

Subtitling, as a process, entails three main factors, the spoken discourse in the source language, the audience who speak a language other than the language of the source, and the subtitler who is responsible for the mediation between the source and the audience. Hence, the responsibility of the translators seems to be critical as the meditation between the source and the target language embraces several challenges and constraints.

Subtitling challenges and Constraints

All genres of translation studies have encountered a range of difficulties and constraints. However, subtitling, in particular, is highly complex due to the intricacy of the multimodality of texts that enjoy peculiar semiotics, inter-lingual, and cultural features. These issues have made audiovisual products originally broadcasted in English a daunting task for Arab translators to render meaning in Arabic. However, the nature of these constraints and challenges varies based on the type of particular translation process. For instance, translating cultural-oriented texts represents a challenge for translators with no exposure to Western culture, while translating a medical text represents a particular challenge in dealing properly with medical terminology. In the same regard, translating audiovisual products as a sub-division of translation studies also has distinguished difficulties that need to be addressed empirically to arrive at better solutions. Translating audiovisual products has been considered the most critical type of translation study with more complexity and intricacy. This could be attributed to the peculiarity of multimodality of texts that are distinguished and accompanied by various media components that represent the distinguishing trait of AVT.

Subtitling like any genre of Audiovisual translation studies has faced abundant difficulties and constraints starting from the first initial stage of production to the appearance on the screens. This reality is illustrated by Karamitroglou (2000: 104) as "the number of possible audiovisual translation problems is endless and a list that would account for each one of them can never be finite". Hence, subtitling does not enjoy any exceptional here. It does have a multifaceted and complicated set of difficulties that become critical in the media industry around the globe.

Subtitling while compared to the other genres of audiovisual translation like dubbing, for instance, seems to enjoy a more intricate and complex manner. (Gottlieb, 1992; Fawcett ,1996; Haikuo, 2015) Investigating the nature of subtitling difficulties and constraints would lead to the notion that each potential difficulty has to be addressed in depth. Apparently, the most recognized genres of constraints are associated with three main categories: cultural, linguistic, and technical constraints. However, other factors such as **the constraint related to relevance**, **and abstract constraints as operative in any kind of translation,** Chesterman's (2000:69) taxonomy indicates other factors that may participate in subtitling constraints. Social communication among subtitling parties, personal traits, and the nature of the translation task is among the factors that contribute to the complexity of subtitling. However, this part of the study highlights and presents more details of the nature of subtitling difficulties through the three major categories mentioned above.

Cultural Constraints

Cultural constraints are represented in cultural references "either exclusively or predominantly visual (an image of a local or national figure, a local dance, pet funerals, baby showers), exclusively verbal or else both visual and verbal in nature". (Chiaro, 2009, p. 156). Sometimes referred to as Cultural-bound expressions, (Baker, 2018) represents the most critical issues that hinder translators in the subtitling process. Most audiovisual products (Movies, TV shows, documentary programs, and animation) embrace the immanence of cultural references that constitute a problematic issue for Arab translators due to the lack of the proper equivalents in the target culture and the existence of distinct positions in the context of some cultural norms and beliefs in the audience target language. The cultural gap exists between languages that make handling the otherness somehow complicated. Proper assimilation of western culture is still a far-reaching possibility for translators. However, the flourishing of media has somehow increased cultural awareness in the Arab world. Tackling cultural issues in a movie, for instance, requires more than familiarity with the cultural reference and its potential equivalents in the target language. How to deal with the inappropriateness of cultural contexts to the Arab audiences represents a doubled whammy in the subtitling process as some terms ought to be offensive and produce undesired attitudes among them based on having totally different ideological clashes. (Chung-ling, 2010). Hence, the translator's job seems to be "a cultural mediator" (Katan, 2003, p. 16), mediating between the source and the target languages rather than looking for equivalents. Hatim and Mason (2000: p. 223) have emphasized the role of translators in dealing with cultural issues in translation. They contributed "it is certainly true that in recent years the translator has increasingly come to be seen as a cultural mediator rather than a mere linguistic broker.". Accordingly, mediating between distinct cultures requires a deep understanding of the two cultures' contexts.

What makes rendering meaning from cultural references an overwhelming task for translators is based on the idea that most of them accommodate "interlinguistic culture value systems, text selection, belief systems, paralinguistics and so much more" (Pedersen, 2011, p. 48) and extralinguistic features "references to people, places, customs, institutions, food, etc. that are specific to a certain culture, and which you may not know even if you know the language in question" (Pedersen, 2011, 2-3) that have peculiar meanings in various contexts. This peculiarity of concepts and conceptions contributes to widening the gap between cultures' assimilation and adaptation. These features can be manifested in pop culture, idioms, contemporary culture, proverbs, phrasal verbs, connotations, and some other cultural issues that fall beyond the realm of language and can

not be linguistically fixed merely. Limon (2010) has explained the idea that translation should not be treated as a linguistics phenomenon, and translators should not neglect the impact of culture in shaping the understanding of texts. Therefore, translators have to move from focusing on examining the linguistic elements of the multimodal texts to rendering the meaning to the underlying meaning and concepts associated with social and cultural parameters.

Linguistics constraints

English and Arabic languages enjoy a profound variation of the linguistics system that is represented in the sound system, the structural system, semantical, and lexical differences to name but a few. These differences sometimes create confusion when rendering meaning from English into Arabic.

In the subtitling industry, linguistic constraints represent another parameter that adds more complexity to the subtitling process. Considering the case of English and Arabic translation and vice versa, it has been stated that some divergent features are observed between the two languages. For instance, syntactical and lexical choices hinder is one of the most common hindrances that face translators in the subtitling process. Shahooth, et al. (2015) have explained various constraints that face subtitling translators associated with linguistic issues: 1) Problems with tense, 2) Changing Questions to Statements or vice versa, 3) Changing Negative to Affirmative and vice versa, 4) Problems with Modality, 5) Homophones, and 6) Collocations. In the same context, some other constraints associated with sociolinguistics parameters are identified: 1) slang language contributes to the linguistic difficulties that are encountered by translators. (Senja, 2015; Lingual, 2019; Istiqomah, 2019; Holmes, 2001). In the case of diverting languages such as the case of English and Arabic, arriving at a better translation of slang is adequately complicated. Rittmayer (2009) explains "The biggest problem in translating slang is censorship — either performed willingly by the translator or imposed by some outside body". 2) Dialects are the regional languages used by certain groups within a particular society. It tends to embrace various vocabulary, spelling, and grammar in contrast with the standard language. Within each country, there are tremendous dialects being used and shaped by cultural and regional norms and values. For instance, there are African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), Boston English, and Vermont in the USA. These types of dialects represent the real problematic areas for translators when they encounter them in subtitling, and 3) Arab translators encounter various obstacles related to understanding the accent of the speakers featured in AV products. These accent-related issues sometimes influence the productivity and accountability of Arabic AV translators due to unfamiliarity with the various accent across the globe that represent tough enough issues to handle in the subtitling process. Some of these accents are Received Pronunciation (RP), American Accent, Cockney, Irish, and Scotch, to mention but a few. The complexity of having tremendous accent variation represents in many media products as personal attributes of the people involved in the talk, lecture, or any dialogue. These difficulties are often associated with repetition, unfinished sentences, using short forms, and putting two concepts together (juxtaposition), for instance, which creates more trials and tribulations for the subtitling process in terms of space and time restriction.

Technical Constraints

Basically, subtitlers are confronted with another type of constraint that falls within the realm of technical issues that contribute significantly to the complexity of subtitling. These technical constraints overlapped with how Arab translators tackle cultural and linguistic issues accommodated in audiovisual translation. Therefore, the study has probed into the nature of these technical constraints as one major issue along with cultural and linguistic issues. Georgakopoulou (2009) reflects on the necessity to consider the temporal dimension:

> The subtitling process has been split into two distinct tasks. The timing of a film or audiovisual program is made by English native speakers who produce a unique timed subtitle file in English, that is, a file where all the in and out times have been decided. (P: 30-31).

In the same context, Leppihalme (1994) and Cintas and Remael (2010, p.19-21), have contributed to the identification of the nature of the technical parameters in the following points: 1) The space: Translators are restricted with a limited number of characters through the subtitling process which is about (37 +, -) characters per line with a maximum of two lines for one image. This number of characters may slightly differ from one language to another. The used syllables affect this number such as using (MW) takes more space than using syllables like (li), 2) Time: Another technical limit is that the allowed time for subtitles is no longer than six seconds on the screen, i.e. the content has to be cut down to fit the limits of characters as well as the time has shown the subtitle on screen. This may have an effect on how the viewers will be able to catch the subtitle and understand the content. Therefore, the correct word choice to present the content with a possible limited number of words may help in this issue, 3) Spotting: The subtitle on the screen has to be carefully matched with the dialogue.

However, subtitling may not include the dialogue of the characters or narrators only, but it may include other meaningful signs, letters, or any other written words (Cintas and Remael, 2010), 4), Position on screen: Pictures on the screen made 720 pixels wide by 576 pixels high and the subtitle must be positioned between 10% from each frame edge to be in the central and at the bottom of the screen., and 5) Font: The standard font type, size, and color have effects on the subtitles whether the character will be with or without shadowed background like;

Methodology
Study design

The study adopted a quantitative approach where a questionnaire was administrated among Arab translators to generate their attitudes, and perceptions about the difficulties that hinder subtitling into Arabic. Moreover, the study design demonstrates how the procedural level of the study is developed to present the ethical and rational assumptions underpinning all aspects of the study, including the literature review, the research objectives, and the study's questions. Consequently, the data generated statistically proceed to examine in-depth the nature of challenges and constraints that Arab translators would think of and how these difficulties can be solved by proposing a set of effective methods and strategies.

Questions of the study

1) What are the challenges encountered by Arab translators in subtitling Audiovisual translation products?

2) How do Arab translators perceive the constraints in the subtitling process?

Participants

Attributing to the peculiarity of AVT, the study's sample population was selected based on practitioners' and audiovisual translators' core competencies, intellectual skills, and knowledge required to translate different types of Audiovisual products. Respondents who participated in the questionnaire were Arab professional translators from different parts of the Arab world. There were 40 participants responded to the questionnaire. All participants were of Arab nationalities (60% were from Sudan) and (95%) of them stated that the Arabic language is their mother tongue. The majority of them work as freelancer translators (52%) and (50%) described their activities in AVT as subtitling. (40%) of them often translate from English to Arabic and vice-versa. The great majority of respondents were novices in the field as (42%) had a relatively short period of experience ranging from 1 to 2 years which is numerous compared to (22%) of those who had more than 10 years of experience in the field.

Data Collection

The quantitative data collection method allows for numerical data that can be statistically processed and analyzed. A close-ended questionnaire was administered among audiovisual translators to obtain their perception of the types of constraints and challenges they may face when translating and subtitling texts' multimodality and how they often overcome those difficulties by applying the proper techniques and strategies.

Data Analysis

The numerical data generated from the questionnaire were statistically processed by using SPSS. The analysis seeks to establish logical, statistical relations between the variables of the study.

Results

This part of the study demonstrates the data collected from the Arab translators' questionnaire. The data tables are designed with numerical data represented in the form of percentages to explore how Arab translators anticipate the nature of difficulties they might have encountered when subtitling audiovisual products in Arabic. The procedure level followed is to group the questionnaire items into three distinct groups that represent the main categories that are considered as the most frequently encountered hinders of subtitling: Culture, Linguistics, and technical parameters. Moreover, to reveal the statistical data of every single statement included in each category, the percentage of each item is arranged in tables.

Table No. (1) Cultural parameters

No.	Items	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	The massive demand for subtitling represents persisting challenges for translators. (n=40)	32.5%	60%	7.5%	0%	0%
2	Most of the multimodal texts equipped with informal language and contemporary culture represent challenges for subtitling translators. (n=40)	27.5%	55%	0%	2.5%	15%
3	Cultural differences are the main challenges that encounter the Arabic translator in the process of subtitling. (n=40)	27.5%	52.5%	0%	10%	7.5%
4	Most of the subtitling constraints fall within the technical, and cultural domains. (n=40)	22.5%	65%	2.5%	10%	0%
5	Subtitling Extra-linguistic cultural references is very complicated to subtitle into Arabic. (n=40)	25%	55%	0%	15%	2.5%
5	The lack of equivalence hinders the subtitling of the culture-bound terms. (n=40)	20%	67.5%	0%	12.5%	0%

Statement No. (1): The massive demand for subtitling represents persisting challenges for translators.

The respondents who are in the field are aware of the necessity of subtitling at the international level. 32.5 % and 60.0% of respondents believe that the subtitling industry has become one of the most factors that shape media business.

Statement No. (2): Most of the multimodal texts equipped with informal language and contemporary culture represent challenges for subtitling translators.

The majority of respondents (27.5 and 55%) have experienced critical issues while attempting to render the meaning from multimodal texts that are equipped with informal language and contemporary culture, for instance. Strangely enough, 15 % do not agree with the given statement that most of the multimodal texts are necessarily equipped with informal and contemporary culture components. It could be attributed to the fact that they might not come across these types of texts in their subtitling journey. Moreover, they might have the proper culture and knowledge to deal with these types of texts

Statement No. (3): Cultural differences are the main challenges that encounter the Arabic translator in the process of subtitling

The majority of respondents (27.5% and 52.5% respectively) link the difficulties of rendering meaning from culture-bound expressions to the fact that both English (represents Western culture) and Arabic (represents Eastern culture) enjoy distinct cultural differences that impact the process of subtitling in a sense that most of the western culture components do not have their equivalent in the Arabic language.

Statement No. (4): Most of the subtitling constraints fall within the technical, and cultural domains.

The vast majority of respondents (22.5 and 65.5 % respectively), believe that most of the difficulties associated with subtitling into Arabic fall within the technical and cultural domains. (2.5 %) of respondents are not sure and there is a possibility that other domains such as linguistics might contribute to the difficulty of subtitling. A few respondents (10.0%) disagree with the statement.

Statement No. (5): Subtitling Extra-linguistic cultural references are very complicated to subtitle into Arabic.

The bulk of respondents (25% and 55 % respectively) trust that subtitling extra-linguistic culture is very complicated due to the fact that extra-linguistic culture includes elements that are very much connected to concepts that are purely cultural rather than language. A few (15%) do not agree with the complexity it might be developed as a result of subtitling extra-linguistic cultural references.

Statement No. (6): The lack of equivalence hinders the subtitling of the culture-bound terms

The result clearly demonstrates a higher percentage of respondents (20% and 67.5 % respectively) fully endorse the statement that claims the lack of equivalence in the target culture represents staid constraints for Arab translators. This agreement is based on their accumulated professional and expert knowledge as a result of frequent contact with culture-based texts. Relatively, a small proportion (12.5%) of the respondents are not sure about the impact of the nonexistence of the equivalence on the target culture.

Table No. (2) Linguistic parameters

No.	Items	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	The syntactical and lexical choices hinder the process of subtitling into Arabic. (n=40)	10	47.5	10	30	7.5
2	English dialects, accents, and slang are difficult to subtitle into Arabic. (n=40)	20	57.5	2.5	17.5	2.5
.3	The variation of the linguistic system of Arabic and English is one of the linguistic challenges and constraints faced by subtitling translators. (n=40)	20	70	0	10	0
4	Subtitling English multimodal texts into Arabic is quite challenging due to the diverse linguistic system of each language. (n=40)	20	65	2.5	12.5	0
5	Native-like proficiency in the source and the target languages is the main challenge that faces subtitling translators. (n=40)	40	55	0	2.5	2.5
6	Subtitling semiotic features of audiovisual products is one of the challenging aspects of the field. (n=40)	27.5	52.5	0	10	7.5

Statement No. (1): The syntactical and lexical choices hinder the process of subtitling into Arabic.

The study reveals great variations in respondents' acceptance of what might be considered true when it comes to the explanation of whether or not the syntactical and lexical choices hinder the process of subtitling into Arabic. However, (47%) of them agree with the idea of how it is complicated to unpack the words through analysis and scrutiny in particular contexts to render an accurate meaning that is represented in the lexical form in the target language. Moreover, subtitling has to be a maximum of two lines. Therefore, the lexical choice made by translators should go in harmony with the spaces available.

Hence, choosing the proper words in Arabic that convey meaning and fitting them into the space contributes to the subtitling hurdle. Controversially, (30%) of the respondents disagree with the degree of complexity resulting from the successful treatment of the variation of syntactical and lexical differences that exist between English and Arabic. A few (10%) remain uncertain and 2.5% strongly discard the whole idea.

Statement No. (2): English dialects, accents, and slang are difficult to subtitle into Arabic.

Based on the data generated, a higher proportion of respondents (20% and 57.5% respectively) fully support the idea that Arab translators face immense complexity in dealing with English dialects, accents, and slang when subtitling into Arabic. In spite of what they would think, these issues are not only affecting the process of translation in general but have a great impact on arriving at a relevant understanding of the source language. However, (17.5 %) which is a bit higher, believe the difficulties associated with mastering English dialects, accents, and slang could be overcome either by living abroad in English-speaking countries or through a wide range of exposure to authentic spoken language. (---% of respondents are located in English-speaking countries).

Statement No. (3): The variation of the linguistic system of Arabic and English is one of the linguistic challenges and constraints faced by subtitling translators

The statistic demonstrates that (20% and 70 % respectively) of the respondents believe that the variation of the linguistics system of Arabic and English has much contributed to the complexity and intercity of subtitling whereas only 10% considered the variations of the linguistics system of the two languages have no direct impact on subtitling difficulty.

Statement No. (4): Subtitling English multimodal texts into Arabic is quite challenging due to the diverse linguistic system of each language.

the majority of the respondents (20 % and 65% respectively) consolidate that both languages embrace a diverse linguistics system. The most recognized difference that impacts the translation from English into Arabic is that Arabic has 6 individual morphemes. There are also some differences in terms of grammar, sound elision, verbs, and sentence structure. (2.5) remain neutral and (12.5) % do not agree with the given statement

Statement No. (5): Native-like proficiency in the source and the target languages is the main challenge that faces subtitling translators

The majority of respondents (40%) strongly support the statement while (55%) percent which is extremely higher are in the same position. (5 %) represents disagreement with the statement that might have had the opportunity to live in western countries and enjoy wide exposure to the culture and social practices.

Statement No. (6): Subtitling semiotic features of audiovisual products is one of the challenging aspects of the field.

In the line of the result displayed, the greater part of the respondents strongly believes that audiovisual texts contain several semiotic features that play a great role in shaping and constructing meaning through symbols, signs, gestures, and gist. These semiotic features contribute to meaning construction in particular contexts that constitute a challenge for Arab translators to decode its underline meaning especially when they refer to inter-textual and cultural references. On the other hand, the table shows (15 %) (7.5 +7.5) of the respondents represent uncertainty or disagreement with the difficulty that might be developed based on the direct impact of semiotic features on the process of meaning interpretation.

Table No. (3) Technical parameters

No.	Items	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Some technical issues, such as font size and fast-moving subtitles, obstruct the subtitling process. (n=40)	12.5%	53%	7.5%	2.5%	0%
2	Time restrictions, space, and cut sync are the most difficult technical issues to handle in the subtitling process. (n=40)	17.5%	50%	15%	15%	7.5%

| 3 | Fitting Arabic-translated text into a fixed space on the screen is a challenging feature of subtitling. (n=40) | 15% | 62.5% | 2.5% | 20% | 0% |
| 4 | The technical skills required to operate a subtitling software editor have become a challenging aspect for translators. (n=40) | 22.5% | 50% | 15% | 12.5% | 0% |

Statement No. (1): Some technical issues, such as font size and fast-moving subtitles, obstruct the subtitling process.

In response to the statement " How the technical issues associated with the font size and moving subtitles obstruct the process of subtitling," a broad spectrum of responses (12.5 and 55.0 % respectively) attest full support to the claim that technical issues related to font size and fast-moving subtitles are representing a problematic area for Arab subtitlers. In contrast, (25.0 %) disagree with the given statement. There is a possibility behind that obviously shaped by the idea these difficulties are minor issues in the subtitling process. On the other hand, (7.7%) remain not sure about how these technical issues contribute to subtitling difficulties.

Statement No. (2): Time restrictions, space, and cut sync are the most difficult technical issues to handle in the subtitling process.

The majority of respondents (50.0%) agree to the given statement that time restrictions, space, and cut sync represent the most frequently encountered technical issues that hinder the process of subtitling while (15%) are not in the favor of the idea that these issues have no great impact on subtitling. On the other hand, (15%) are not sure whether the above-mentioned types of technical constraints could be taken as major hindrances of subtitling.

Statement No. (3): Fitting Arabic-translated text into a fixed space on the screen is a challenging feature of subtitling.

Apparently, most of the respondents (15% and 62.5 respectively) accept as true the fact that the technical process of fitting Arabic subtitles into the screen is one of the technical issues related to the last stage of subtitling production. Conversely, 20 % of respondents, which is higher, think that the process of fitting the subtitle into the screen is a minor technical issue. 2.5 % are not sure whether fitting the subtitling into the screen signifies any difficulty for Arab translators.

Statement No. (4): The technical skills required to operate a subtitling software editor have become a challenging aspect for translators.

Seemingly, the majority of the respondents (22.5 and 50% respectively) agree and agree strongly agree with the necessity of having these skills to survive in the workplace. 15 % remain not sure whether mastering these skills would create any difference while 12.5 % disagree with the statement which could be attributed to the adequate training they might have received earlier. 72.5 % (22.5% & 50.0 %) believe that technology has dramatically influenced media production and distribution.

Discussion

Subtitling audiovisual products and multimodality of texts from English into Arabic is a highly multifaceted and complicated practice compared to the other types of translation. Within all stages of subtitling production up to the displaying on the screen, the subtitling translators encountered enormous constraints that hinder the process. Moreover, lacking technical skills, less exposure to culture, and inadequate linguistics competence along with other parameters associated with translators' personal cognitive skills and competence are contributing to the complexity of subtitling. With reference to the identification and recognition of the nature of subtitling constraints, this part of the study tries to pinpoint the nature of challenges and constraints through Arab translators' perspectives. The challenges and constraints they have already identified are mainly based on three main parameters: culture, linguistic, and technical parameters. These constraints and challenges are discussed under question No. (1)

1) What are the challenges encountered by Arab translators in subtitling Audiovisual translation products?

Having to probe into the nature of the challenges and constraints of subtitling, it is worth mentioning that the field of audiovisual translation embraces enormous types of constraints. Dawn on the Arab translators' perspectives and opinions, the three categories represented in Cultural, linguistics, and technical parameters are identified as the most critical and problematic areas translators have to deal with.

1) The massive Need for Subtitling Services

The wild influx of media production has created a massive demand for subtitling audiovisual products to reach audiences globally in their favorite language. This creates a burden for subtitles to meet the ever-persisting demand. Meeting deadlines, working under pressure, and keeping the rate of quality at the standardized level have become real challenges for them to handle. What makes subtitling a daunting task is associated with "viewing, reading and note taking, segmentation of the original work, translation, and synchronization, and finally, subtitles edition". (Talaván, 2016, p. 67). During COVID-19 when everybody was at home, media production companies have taken advantage of the situation by adding subtitling to their products in the language of the targeted audiences. These practices have spired the demand for subtitling in an unprecedented manner.

2) Rendering meaning from Multimodal Texts

As a matter of fact, a significant number of translators are overwhelmed by the complexity of rendering meaning from multimodal texts which accommodate a wide range of multimedia. The reason why multimodal texts are problematic to be subtitled in Arabic revolves around the notion that multimodal embrace distinct modes for meaning construction that requires deep understanding and successful interpretation.

2) How do Arab translators perceive the constraints in the subtitling process?

The study has identified a number of constraints that face Arab translators in subtitling Audiovisual products from English into Arabic. These constraints are discussed below.

1) Cultural Differences between English and Arabic

Issues such as family, religion, tradition, habits, and social relationships are among the issues that characterized each culture. The question of How to render meaning from these distinctive contexts remains controversial and notorious for most of the Arab translators working in the subtitling industry. What makes these types of cultural references a complex issue to handle is that both functional and meaning as attached to the source language can not be treated the same way in the target culture due to the lack of equivalence or having a different situation. This complexity is very much associated with the fact that culture shapes language contexts and a deep understanding of that particular context in its cultural entity represents a huge challenge for translators.

2) Subtitling Extra-linguistic cultural references

Cultural references are classified into two broad categories: 1) Extra-linguistic and 2) Intra-linguistic Cultural References (Pedersen, (2011). Extra-linguistic references represent problematic issues for Arab translators owing to the fact that most of the extra-linguistic references embrace a particular meaning which is directly associated with a particular culture rather than language. The influence of culture on language and vice versa is clearly demonstrated by Karimghasemi, et al. (2022) believe that "The complexity of culture, language, and the relationship existing between them develops Extra-linguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) as a very challenging task for a translator." This complicated relation explains why sometimes Arab translators provide audiences with footnotes and glosses that appear on the screen as an attempt to add more clarification to particular extra-linguistic cultural references.

3) The lack of equivalence hinders the subtitling of the culture-bound terms

In translation studies, the term equivalent has a crucial role to play. The term equivalent has two types: 1) the quantitative equivalent and 2) the qualitative equivalent which has various types as well. Translators usually deal with particular content from the source language and attempt to convey the context and meaning in the target language. However, sometimes the

content they are planning to convey doesn't have a null equivalent in the target culture. Therefore, alternative strategies have to be applied to solve the non-existence or the lack of the equivalent.

Linguistics parameters

In spite of the enormous linguistic constraints and challenges that face Arab translators when subtitling audiovisual products, the present study is limited to a few of them. Some of these constraints are presented below.

1) The syntactical and lexical differences between the English and Arabic languages.

Syntactically, English and Arabic enjoy a wide range of differences. This distinct syntactical system occurs at the level of sentence structure, grammar patterns exist in descriptive forms, and verb tense (complex verb-word order system), to name but a few. In fact, Arabic translators should understand these differences when rendering meaning from the source texts that originated in English. Other differences are associated with phonology, semantic, pragmatic, and morphological levels as well.

2) Difficulties associated with subtitling dialect, Slang, and accent.

What makes English dialect and slang difficult to translate in Arabic revolves around the idea that dialect represents particular geographical areas or is spoken by a particular people. In the same context, slang is the representation of informal language in particular communities. For instance, often translating African-American movies is more complicated as they tend to use considerable dialect and slang particularly shared in their communities. In the same context. Paralinguistic features which include accent, intonation, speech rate, voice tone, and pitch are common difficulties encountered by Arab translators when rendering meaning from the English authentic spoken language. The way these paralinguistic features are interpreted is entirely different from one culture to another. Here comes the overlapping between language and culture where more obstacles exist. What seems to matter, is the way how things are said rather than what is said.

3) Differences between the linguistic system of Arabic and English.

As far as linguistic systems are concerned, English and Arabic are completely different at the morphological, syntactical, lexical, and semantic levels. This distinctiveness creates a hassle for Arabic translators based on the fact that rendering meaning from English into Arabic is not only the transformation of context to the target language. However, the primary function of translators is to decipher and interpret all the elements and functions of the source texts which is far behind changing and arranging words from the source to the target texts.

4) Reaching Native-like Proficiency

Obviously, mastering the source and the target language is considered one of the core competencies of translators. However, reaching native-like proficiency is a far-reaching possibility. The reason behind that revolves around mastering only the linguistics competencies of the languages a translator often translates into would not be adequate for the job. Cultural and social complexity has added another critical dimension that has to be fully aware of to arrive at a better assimilation that would reflect on the productivity of translation through the successful rendering of meaning. The respondents seem to be fully aware that reaching native-like proficiency in the source and target languages is somehow complicated.

5) Subtitling Semiotic Features

Subtitling semiotic features is another dimension that contributes to the subtitling challenges and constraints. These difficulties are manifested in the linguistics and non-linguistic relationship that develops between texts and images. Gottlieb (2005, p.14) identifies two categories of semiotic features and their impact on translation productivity.

> This dia-semiotic and super-semiotic change is actualized as target language subtitles. The original audiovisual text can include some texts appearing on the picture, such as news headings or street signs, but subtitles form a whole new information channel for people who do not understand the language of the original audiovisual text.

Figuring out these types of relations requires a proper interpretation action that leads to a deep understanding of particular signs that convey language in oral and written formats. Linguistically, semiotic features entail semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic components that add great complexity to the subtitling process. However, semiotic features that are globally

recognized such as traffic lights, and the use of emojis in social interaction, for instance, are translatable compared to the semiotic features that are more cultural-oriented in audiovisual products and multimodal texts.

Technical parameters

In the subtitling industry, the constraints associated with the technical parameters are often discussed by considering the Three-dimensional (Spatial) and the Time-based considerations (temporal). These two dimensions are very crucial in addressing technical difficulties for Arab translators that are postulated to cope with it by considering the technical skills required to overcome these difficulties. In line with its potential difficulties, some of these spatial and temporal dimensions are illustrated as follows:

1) The complexity associated with the font size and Moving Subtitles.

The complexity associated with the font size is that the subtitling has to be legible and eligible for audiences using various screen sizes on different devices. Conversely, the speed of the subtitling could create a problem for audiences because it gives them the hassle of catching up with the lines, especially with low readers. Therefore, translators have to plan carefully to adjust the subtitling speed. Otherwise, they may go for reducing the space.

2) Time Restriction

As it has been observed, the translators who are working in the subtitling industry are aware of the fact that time restriction is one of the technical constraints that require considerable experience in dealing with its complexity. Time restrictions induce translators to synchronize between the image and the dialogue, and the dialogue and the written subtitling. Moreover, translators are not advised to go for what is known in the field as cut sync which refers to the translators' attempt to provide subtitling even if the scene or the shot changes.

3) Space Restriction

In point of fact, it has been stated that space restriction is one of the most technical parameters that have to be handled carefully. The critical issue related to time constraints is related to the text length and screen width. Therefore, the translators must fit the subtitling texts which are standardized as two lines in the spaces provided. The text expansion technique has some value in fitting lines into the space.

4) Technological Skills

To keep abreast with the technological advancement in the field of Audiovisual Translation, translators are facing new challenges that might risk their jobs. Recently mastering technology-enhanced subtitling has become one of the most required competencies of translators. Hence, translators have to secure these technical skills to stay in the business.

Conclusion

The study is basically carried out to identify the challenges and constraints encountered by Arab translators when rendering meaning from audiovisual products and multimodal texts. The study's finding reveals that most participants are aware of the nature of difficulties and constraints that hinder the subtitling process. Moreover, Arab translators need to identify a set of strategies they would think of their effectiveness in overcoming cultural, linguistic, and technical constraints. The study addresses only three main categories (culture, linguistics, and technical) that shape the complexity of subtitling, however, there is a persisting demand for further studies to include other factors such as companies' constraints, spatial awareness, and meta-constraint of relevance, to name but a few.

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مخلص الدراسة:

تحاول الدراسة الحالية أن تساهم فكريًا في ازدهار صناعة الترجمة من خلال الاستكشاف المتعمق للتحديات والقيود المرتبطة بالمكونات الثلاثة الرئيسية والتي يتم تمثيلها في المشاكل ذات العلاقة باللغة والثقافة، والمعايير التقنية اللازمة لترجمة النصوص المسموعة والمرئية. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي حيث تم عمل استبيان للمترجمين العرب لمعرفة وجهة نظرهم حول طبيعة التحديات والمعوقات التي تواجههم أثناء استخلاص المعنى من المواد الإعلامية السمعية والبصرية. تمت معالجة البيانات باستخدام برنامج SPSS وقدمت البيانات على شكل تكرارات ونسبة مئوية. تحدد الدراسة عددًا من التحديات والصعوبات التي تحول عملية الترجمة إلى مهمة شاقة للمترجمين. تستغل الدراسة الصعوبات الأساسية والأكثر تكرارًا والتي تتطلب بحثًا مستمرًا في المنطقة لتأسيس أطر نظرية وعملية متينة من شأنها المساهمة بكفاءة في صناعة الترجمة المسموعة والمرئية في الشرق الأوسط.