

Complexity in Subtitling: Interacting Factors Influencing Decisions on Sensitive Content from English to Arabic

Feda Ghnaim¹, Linda Alkhawaja^{1*}, Sawsan Saad Eddeen Badrakhan²

¹English Language Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Jordan

²Social Sciences Department, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Amman, Jordan

Email: l.alkhawaja@ammanu.edu.jo

Abstract

Subtitling approaches are constantly changing based on the factors surrounding their implementation. This qualitative secondary study seeks to explore the factors that influence subtitlers' decision in translating English to Arabic sensitive audiovisual material. This study adopts complexity theory to unveil the intricate interplay of factors that influence these decisions. We move beyond a linear cause-and-effect model, exploring how social media, Turkish movies, globalization and the Arab Spring influence subtitlers' decision in translation. The results of this qualitative secondary investigation indicate that many factors such as audience age and westernization among others influence subtitlers' approaches in translation. Hence, it is essential for subtitlers to be dynamic and consistently review their subtitling approaches to ensure that they meet the needs of their target audiences, considering the presence of new and old target audiences of English to Arabic audiovisual translations.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation; Complexity Theory; Sensitive Content; Subtitler; Intercultural Communication.

1. Introduction

Translation serves as a means of communication and reflects cultural exchange. According to Ivarsson and Crofts (1992), subtitlers should account for the linguistic diversity and cultural awareness of their intended audience. When translating sensitive content, it is important for subtitlers to recognize that such content can play a crucial role in communication by conveying individuals' emotions and ideas, such as anger, surprise, or dissatisfaction (Jay, 1992).

Subtitling sensitive content is subject to many social restrictions, especially in conservative societies such as Arab culture (Malenova, 2015; Haider et al., 2023). Many researchers (see Ameri and Ghazizadeh, 2015; Alsharhan, A. (2020) assert that the norms of the target culture restrict subtitlers' behavior in translation, exposing them to criticism from viewers if these norms

are not respected. In this regard, Alabbasi (2009) affirms that subtitling sensitive content to Arab viewers should not be translated with the same degree of offensiveness, thus, it needs filtering.

Religion, customs, and ideologies are the dominant factors in Arab life and society. The Arab culture is most recognized for its conservatism and influence from Islam. This means that viewing media content in plain-spoken, sensitive language is unacceptable (Aqel, 2016). According to Al-Adwan and Yahiaoui (2018, p. 87), English and Arabic languages "are culturally and linguistically distant, and what might be accepted in the West might not be tolerated in the Arab World".

Many studies have confirmed that subtitlers' approach to translating sensitive content has been more conservative (Abdelaal and Al Sarhani, 2021; Al-Zgoul and Al-Salman, 2022). However, recent research has found that subtitling behaviors in translation from English to Arabic have become more liberal and open-minded (Moud and Bekkouche, 2020; Alqahtani et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2024). On that basis, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing subtitlers' behavior in translation and explain this influence using complexity theory.

Subtitling refers to the process of translating written or spoken text into audiovisual texts either in the form of subtitling or dubbing (Karamitroglou, 2022). Audiovisuals utilize programs to augment auditory and visual channels which require subtitles (Zárate, 2021). This has gained significant attention today because of the digitalization that characterizes TV shows today (Sasamoto, 2024). The presence of technology, such as streaming services, has also created a dynamic environment whereby audiences demand up-to-date content. The audiovisuals presented to the public today require a subtitling expert to cater to the mixed cultural or linguistic diversities of global audiences (Ghourdou, 2023). Another challenge to subtitling, especially cultural-wise, is how to remain liberal, especially when dealing with sensitive audiovisual material and meeting the needs of a target audience (Haider et al., 2023). According to Schäffner (1997), sensitive content can be determined based on the reaction sensitive content prompts in viewer. She further elaborates that translating any content that might cause irritation or confusion can be considered as sensitive material. In the same vein, Olimat et. al. (2023) define sensitive content as those cases that involve sexual abuse or assault. Therefore, this study adopts the concept of sensitive audiovisual content to refer to material that deals with controversial topics, potentially triggering strong emotional responses in viewers. These topics might include cultural sensitivity and sexuality.

Based on secondary data, this research aims to answer the following research questions: How subtitlers' attitudes and approaches to Arabic-to-English translations changed, and what are the factors that have shaped the demand for more liberal subtitles among new generations in the Arab world? How do globalization and the Arab Spring influence subtitlers' behavior in translation?

The need to produce culturally relevant subtitles has thus gained much traction. Hence, it is essential to investigate how subtitling-related behaviors have changed. The overall goal of this qualitative secondary investigation is to identify the factors that have influenced subtitlers' behaviors and how they have evolved among those involved in translating English to Arabic.

2. Literature Review

Subtitling activities have transitioned based on the dynamic demands of target audiences and the presence of emerging technologies (Sasamoto, 2024). The creation of subtitles regarding English to Arabic audiovisuals has constantly encountered numerous challenges related to cultural and language-related preferences of target audiences (Ghourdou, 2023; Haider et al., 2023). These aspects warrant the review of published studies on how subtitling-related behaviors in English to Arabic translations vary significantly with more studies indicate liberal open-minded translations.

Previous studies have shown that subtitling sensitive content from English to Arabic often relies on euphemisms to soften offensive language (Abdelaal & Al Sarhani, 2021; Al-Zgoul & Al-Salman, 2022). Euphemism is whereby a subtitler uses a polite expression to represent a term instead of a direct one (Albarakati et al., 2023). However, a growing body of research (Moud & Bekkouche, 2020; Thawabteh et al., 2022; Albarakati et al. 2023) suggests a shift towards more liberal translation method, namely dysphemism, with some subtitlers opting for more direct equivalents of swear words and taboo language in contemporary movies.

Omission, transposition/substitution, euphemism and generalization are interrelated methods adopted by subtitlers in translating English to Arabic audiovisuals to ensure that the original meaning of a term is attained while also preserving the Arabic-related cultures and beliefs (Al Saideen et. al. 2022). On the contrary, strategies include explication/ dysphemism, direct translation and generalization are used by subtitlers to preserve the original meaning and emotional impact of the ST (Al Saideen et. al. 2022).

Abdelaal and Al Sarhani (2021) analyze the approaches the subtitler adopted to handle words and expressions which were swears or taboo terms. The findings of the mixed-methods research revealed that the most adopted subtitling behavior was omission (11%), followed by euphemism (10%), direct translation (7%), rendering informal (3%), specification (3%), and generalization (1%). They revealed that omission is mostly adopted (11%) in the movie's subtitles because expressions like excretion and sex are not translatable into Arabic because of cultural constraints, thus proving that the subtitler chooses a liberal translation option.

Likewise, Al-Zgoul and Al-Salman (2022) study allotted the corpus of fansubs of the bad boy movies to explore how functional connotations were regenerated to ensure that swear English words were translated to liberal terms. Their mixed-methods study findings revealed that omission was the most adopted strategy (37%), whereas the other approaches used were transposition (29%), explication at 25%, calques at 8%, lexical creation at 0.5%, and compensations at 0.13%. Al-Zgoul and Al-Salman (2022) found that transposition was used to translate 141 incidents in the movie to a liberal term that is culturally relevant to the Arabic language while still retaining the English meaning. For instance, the expression ‘-Your country, my a*s’ was translated to ‘- Shame on your country.’ These reveal that the above approaches enabled the subtitler to adopt a liberal-minded translation which made the bad boy movies to be relevant to Arab cultures and beliefs.

Further, Abu-Rayyash et al. (2023) used an English-Arabic corpus comprising of 699299 words to identify the translation approaches which subtitlers on Netflix use in transcribing 1564 swear

terms from English to Arabic. The Sketch Engine concordance tool enabled Abu-Rayyash et al. (2023) to identify that omission was adopted in drama (66%), action (61%), biography (52%), and sci-fi (40%). Swear-to-swear was evident in sci-fi (21%), biography (14%), and action (11%). Abu-Rayyash et al. (2023) also found a softening translation approach in sci-fi (39%), biography (32%), action (28%), and drama (20%). The liberal minded translation approaches were thus identified to have been used in today's subtitles, however, the use of omissions and euphemisms were identified to have altered the meaning of a character or its intended meaning.

Abdelwahab (2022) selected the UNESCO files to analyze the Baker model translation approaches used in English-Arabic translations during the "World Arabic Language Day." All the translation approaches under the Baker taxonomy were adopted in the English-Arabic translations in the translation of UNESCO documents. Some of the identified translation approaches including translating to a more general term, cultural substitution, loan word with explanation, paraphrase using a relevant term, omission, or illustration Abdelwahab (2022).

Sensitive content such as taboo words or phrases have transitioned with some being accepted by new generations (Thawabteh et al., 2022). Subtitlers have thus chosen to adopt approaches for subtitling to address taboo words depending on their target audiences. For instance, cultural substitutions and omissions are adopted if the target audience of an audiovisual is the old generation. However, these strategies can lead to distorted or incomprehensible meanings in the original dialogue. In the case of new generations and younger audience, subtitlers might choose to ignore cultural considerations in some cases as they believe that younger viewers can better understand audiovisual content that includes slang and taboo language (Thawabteh et al., 2022).

The cultural indifference between the English and Arabic languages has driven subtitling behaviors to change towards the attainment of liberal open-minded English translations. Several studies have revealed liberal open-minded English to Arabic conversion of the swear and taboo words adopted in subtitling in today's movies. For example, Albarakati et al. (2023) examined the transition of the animal farm movie. They found that 95% of the terms in the movie were rendered literally leading to their intended meaning. The other approaches identified in the movie were omission (4%), and paraphrasing (1%).

Similarly, Moud and Bekkouche (2020) also examined the use of explicitation in subtitling English to Arabic TED-ED lessons. They analyzed a parallel corpus of 17491 words and found that the use of explicitation was the dominant strategy, accounting for 75.86% of the instances. Substitution and ellipsis were used less frequently, at 13.79% and 10.34%, respectively.

The reviewed literature (see also table 1) reveals a multitude of factors influencing subtitlers' decisions on euphemism and dysphemism in English to Arabic audiovisual translation. This research seeks to expound on these reviewed studies to conceptualize the factors in the context of Arabic to English audiovisual translation and subtitling strategies.

Table 1: Research on Sensitive Subtitle Translation: Approaches & Factors

Author(s)	Year	Title	Main Aspects in the Research
Thawabteh	2019	The Translatability of Euphemism and Dysphemism in Arabic-English Subtitling	Analysis of euphemisms and dysphemisms translation challenges
Al-Yasin & Rabab'ah	2019	Arabic audiovisual translation of taboo words in American hip hop movies: A contrastive study	Comparison of translation methods for taboo words in hip hop movies
Briechle & Duran Eppler	2019	Swearword Strength in Subtitled and Dubbed Films: A Reception Study	Viewer perception and reception of swearwords
Alsharhan	2020	Netflix's No-Censorship Policy in Subtitling Taboo Language from English into Arabic	Censorship policies in Netflix subtitling
Al-Zgoul, O., & Al-Salman, S.	2022	Fansubbers' subtitling strategies of swear words from English into Arabic in the "Bad Boys" movies	Methods used by fansubbers for translating swearwords
Thawabteh, M. A., Al-Adwan, A., & Shqair, A.	2022	Subtitling Arabic profanities into English and that aggro: The case of West Beirut	Handling profanities in subtitling specific films
Al-Yasin, N.	2022	Translation procedures of cultural-bound expressions in the Egyptian vernacular dubbed versions of three Disney animated movies	Techniques for cultural expressions in Egyptian-dubbed Disney movies
Alqahtani, S. M., Busabaa, N. A., & Salih, H. M. O.	2022	A change in Saudi attitudes from use of euphemism to taboo: A Sociolinguistic study	Shift in linguistic attitudes towards euphemisms and taboos in Saudi Arabia
Alaa, A. M., & Al Sawi, I.	2023	The analysis and quality assessment of translation strategies in subtitling culturally specific references: Feathers	Evaluation of subtitling methods for cultural references
Haider, A. S., Bassam Saideen, & Hussein, R.	2023	Subtitling taboo expressions from a conservative to a more liberal culture	Cultural sensitivity in subtitling taboo language
Ghourdou, T.	2023	Translating and subtitling taboo and offensive language into Arabic of some American Movies	Strategies for dealing with offensive language in translations
Abu-Rayyash, H., Haider, A. S., & Al-Adwan, A.	2023	Strategies of translating swear words into Arabic: A case study of a parallel corpus of Netflix English-Arabic movie subtitles	Techniques for translating swear words in Netflix movies
Tounssi Mounadil	2023	Subtitling Strategies of Swear Words and Taboo Expressions from English into Arabic in the American Sitcom Friends: Corpus-Based Study	Strategies in subtitling swear words in sitcoms
Olimat, S. N., Mahadin, D. K., Mashaqba, B., & Al-Adwan, A.	2023	Subtitling sensitive Arabic language for English audiences: A case study of Netflix's Jinn and Al-Rawabi shows	Adapting sensitive Arabic language for English viewers
Fraihat, I., & Yaseen, T.	2020	Evolving trends in the Post-Arab Spring era: Implications for peace and stability in the MENA region	Political and social changes post-Arab Spring
Moud, H., & Bekkouche, M. S.	2020	Shifts of cohesion in subtitling from English into Arabic: A corpus-based study on explication of reference, substitution, and ellipsis	Cohesion and explication shifts in translation

Mehawesh, M. I., & Neimneh, S. S.	2021	Problems in subtitling cultural-bound expressions in "Theeb" movie	Challenges in subtitling cultural expressions
Abdelaal, N. M., & Al Sarhani, A.	2021	Subtitling strategies of swear words and taboo expressions in the movie "Training Day"	Subtitling techniques for explicit content
Albarakati, M. A., Fattah, E. A., & Youssef, S. S.	2023	One novel and multiple voices: tackling euphemism in five Arabic translations of animal farm	Variation in translating euphemisms across multiple translations

3. Theoretical Framework

The newly prevalent norm of using more dysphemism can be explained through different variables in complexity theory. Complexity theory states that social phenomena can be conceptualized in terms of systems (Bertolini, 2014). A system is a network of agents (any agent) that exist in relation to each other. These relationships are unstable and can change direction and strength over time. Feedback cycles are possible, such that one agent's actions can influence other agents and provoke reactions from others. Feedback can be positive or negative, so small initial changes in the agent can lead to non-linear changes in the network. Thus, small changes can produce huge consequences, and huge changes may produce tiny ones (Gear et al., 2018).

Complexity theory is mainly started in physical and biological sciences. It investigates how various components of a complex system interact with one another to display collective behavior that leads to the creation of a complex system, as well as how this system interacts with its surrounding environment. According to Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), complexity theory has many important features, what matter the most for our research is dynamism and openness. Dynamism and openness refer to the interaction between the system and its surrounding environment which leads to continuous change making it a dynamic system (Pishghadam & Ashrafi, 2013). This dynamic system includes many independent and heterogeneous elements that constantly interact with one another (Whitesides & Ismagilov, 1999).

To further illustrate the application of complexity theory in the context of translation and subtitling, it is important to discuss how the theory affects subtitlers' behavior and decision making. Understanding the dynamics of the systems in which subtitlers' work provides insight into how subtitling standards are changing and how they relate to external factors. By examining the interrelationship of these actors and their impact on subtitling, we can explore how changing socio-political conditions, media trends, and cultural factors influence translators' behavior in subtitling sensitive language.

Complexity theory is a valuable framework for understanding the complexities of the subtitling process. Subtitling is a complex social practice in which translators, cultural contexts, technology and audiences interact. These interrelated agents contribute to the complexity found in translation and subtitling norms and practices. As agents in the system, subtitlers are influenced by many factors such as their cultural background, and personal experience which influence their translation decisions (O'Brien, 2011). Additionally, they are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they operate, including norms, ideologies, and power relations (Buzelin, 2007).

Cultural context plays an important role in shaping translation and subtitling practices. Cultural norms and values influence the decisions translators make when translating content into target languages (Venuti, 1998). Another major player in the system is the target audience who has a significant impact on translation and subtitling practices. Audience expectations, preferences and cultural backgrounds drive the decisions of translators and subtitlers (Gambier, 2013). This complexity arises from audience diversity, language skills, cultural backgrounds, and differences in viewing habits.

4. Methodology

This qualitative secondary study explores the factors that influence subtitlers' behavior and how they have evolved among those involved in translating English to Arabic sensitive audiovisual content. The methodology section entails the approaches, models, or tools that will be used to attain the study's overarching purpose.

4.1 Research Design

A qualitative secondary research design is adopted in this research. The approach entails reviewing existing literature to create a hypothesis or theory related to a study's concepts, that is, the inductive approach to theoretical development (Young et al., 2019). A qualitative approach is selected in this study because the researcher aims to inductively create a theory related to the evolution of subtitling-related behaviors in English to Arabic translations. It is chosen over the quantitative and mixed methodologies, which often require collection of quantitative data and in studies following the deductive approach to theory development (Strijker et al., 2020).

4.2 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Published documents are the source of data for this qualitative secondary research. This entails collecting secondary data from published studies to answer the study's research questions. It is advantageous because it eliminates the challenges associated with collecting data directly from participants (Cheong et al., 2023). Using qualitative secondary data is also suitable for this study because there are many published articles that investigate subtitlers' behavior and decision making, particularly regarding the translation of sensitive content from English to Arabic. Correspondingly, the search for relevant studies is conducted in well-known academic databases, including Google Scholar, Embase, and ProQuest. The search keywords used in the search include subtitling, sensitive audiovisual content, English, Arabic, and behaviors. Studies considered in this investigation should be in line with the following criteria:

- i. An article must have been published in the past five years, from 2019-2024.
- ii. An article should be freely available online and does not require payment or logins.
- iii. An article needs to be published in English.
- iv. An article needs to focus on subtitling-related behaviors in English to Arabic translations.

The search for articles was done to identify information which can be used to answer the questions of this study. Hence the articles' search was intended to identify subtitlers' behavior in translating sensitive language from English to Arabic. The articles were also explored regarding how they conceptualize the factors which have led to an increase in demand for more liberal and modern film subtitles among new generations in the Arab world.

4.3 Analysis

The secondary data collected in this investigation will thus be analyzed through thematic analysis. According to Naeem et al. (2023), this analytical approach is one that a researcher conducts inductive research (qualitative) to identify recurrent patterns. Collected data will thus be analyzed through thematic analysis instead of content analysis. According to Vespestad and Clancy (2021), content analysis entails analyzing data and statistically representing any figures or rankings in the data. This research does not involve any statistical analysis, leading to the adoption of the thematic over content analysis approaches.

5 Findings and Discussion

This research aims to explain how subtitlers' attitudes and approaches to Arabic-to-English translations change, and what are the factors that have shaped the demand for more liberal dysphemized film subtitles among new generations in the Arab world? How do social media, Turkish movies, globalization and the Arab Spring influence subtitlers' behavior in translation?

5.1 Research Question One

The studies reveal that subtitling approaches used today in English to Arabic are aimed at ensuring that a liberal meaning of a term is used by a subtitler. The reason behind the use of varying approaches in subtitling is that both younger and older generations watch audiovisual content together today. Hence, a subtitler might develop a positive attitude towards ensuring that both cultures are preserved while they are translating Arabic to English audiovisuals. Hence, subtitlers might adopt a liberal-minded approach whereby a term is translated in a manner that does not lose its meaning while also maintaining the cultural beliefs in the language it is being translated into.

Attitudes or viewpoints regarding the factors to consider in English-Arabic subtitling have also evolved. According to Alaa and Al Sawi (2023), the quality of subtitling is identified by its ability to capture cultural aspects accurately. Initially, subtitling was viewed as requiring the consideration of cultural aspects such as ensuring that the words used reflect the meaning of the original source text (Mehawesh & Neimneh, 2021). However, today's subtitles might be viewed as not culturally sensitive because of the influence of new generation slang terms (Thawabteh et al., 2022). Subtitling-related attitudes have thus evolved from the full focus on the need to capture culture to favoring the needs of today's generations.

Subtitlers' preference for using dysphemism in translating sensitive content from English to Arabic, despite the cultural preservation norms of Arab culture, can be justified within the

broader context in which subtitlers operate. By delving into the intricacies of complexity theory, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic and evolving landscape of subtitling practices. This approach provides a more nuanced interpretation of subtitlers' decisions and behaviors in translation. Complexity theory applies to this research as there is a network of agents which influenced the wider system that translators live in, in turn affecting their translation behavior.

5.2 Research Question Two

There are many other factors that influenced subtitlers' behavior in translation. For example, the ethical considerations in transferring the message from source language into target language with fidelity. This dimension adds a layer of complexity to the translation process as subtitlers' face the challenge of whether preserving fidelity or and considering the cultural sensitivity of the Arab culture. Moreover, with an evolving media landscape, subtitlers are highly concerned with viewers' reactions and critiques, which can be immediately expressed online. This can influence subtitlers' future choices and behavior in translation as their aim is to meet their audience expectations.

Today's generations also use slang which has completely new meanings, which subtitlers might not know. Hence, they have been prompted to learn these slang languages that are used in audiovisuals targeting new generations (Ali et al., 2024). Some of the subtitling approaches which have been used in the translation of the Book of the Sun include cultural substitutions, direct translations, generalizations, paraphrasing, and the use of official equivalents. However, these approaches were unsuccessful as they displayed an inaccurate meaning of the translated slang terms within the movie (Ali et al., 2024). Thus, there is a need for subtitlers to adopt approaches which are dynamic to meet the changing languages or phrases among new generations to create translations that appeal to them in audiovisuals that target them. This dynamism augurs with the complexity theory regarding the need to constantly update adopted subtitling approaches to meet the target audience of an audiovisual.

5.3 Research Question Three

The third research question focuses on how social media, Turkish movies, globalization and the Arab Spring influence subtitlers' behavior in Arabic-to-English translations. Let us delve into each factor from the complexity theory perspective.

5.3.1 Arab Spring

On 17 December 2010, Tunisian street vendor Bouazizi Mohammed set himself on fire, sparking Arab Uprisings throughout the MENA region (Beaumont, 2011). The Arab Uprisings reached their peak in Egypt and Yemen very quickly. The unrest caused by the demonstrations spread to neighboring countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Sudan (Poulis, 2015). Protests were observed in increasing numbers throughout the MENA area. While the initial goal of the Arab Spring was regime change or a significant shift in the political status quo, the revolutions that sprung from the movement have taken complex and, at least up to this point, non-democratic paths to their final destinations (Fraihat and Yaseen, 2020). The only Arab

Spring success story is Tunisia, which, despite difficulties, has adopted democratic transitions (Fraihat and Yaseen, 2020).

As a result of the Arab Spring's inability to bring about lasting change, many new developments have emerged that threaten to destabilize the region further and impede its progress towards peace and prosperity. Throughout these developments, Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood started to win seats in governments. Since the Arab Spring, however, mainstream Islamist organizations have been brutally suppressed in Egypt, thrown out of power in Tunisia, split internally in Jordan, and overshadowed by armed groups in other countries (Syria and Libya) (Fraihat and Yaseen, 2020). The Egyptian military has also used its control over the media to shape public opinion in its favor and has been accused of carrying out a propaganda campaign to demonize the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters (Hauslohner, 2013). In 2011, Egypt imposed the strictest regulations on religious practice.

After the Arab Spring, these societies were divided between older members who are more likely to have been influenced by the revolutionary situations of the Arab Spring, typically characterized by cross-ideological collaboration between Islamists and non-Islamists, and younger members who are more likely to have been influenced by their own generation's experiences (Poulis, 2015). This generational change favors open-minded, reformist technocrats and professionals who are less fixated on ideologies, identity conflicts, and culture wars and more eager to create coalition governments with liberal, non-Muslim ideological rivals (Gerges, 2015).

On that basis, one could argue that these new liberal ideologies increased subtitlers' autonomy. They might have influenced translators' behavior, making them more inclined towards dysphemism in order to avoid being called a true Muslim, conservative, or against liberalism. The impact of the Arab Spring on societal values and norms can explain its potential influence on subtitlers and their choice of translation strategies.

5.3.2 Globalization

Norms in a globalized society are not just a set of laws that people follow without question; rather, they are outward expressions of the cumulative responses of spectators to what they experience and the reactions of actors to these responses (Keenan, 2008). Norms exist because observers take actions that convey to actors—via a wide variety of channels—what is correct, acceptable, commendable, or unacceptable. The norms conversation must include the spectators as well as the performers. Further, decisional biases impact all cultures and alter how individuals respond to events (Cole, 2020). For instance, audiences' responses to taboo language in subtitling vary.

The global exchange of ideas has greatly aided contemporary perspectives on sexuality, even though this is still a contentious issue. Countries once intolerant of homosexual rights are now learning about them and showing increasing support. In many parts of the globe, coming out as other than heterosexual is no longer frowned upon. A more accepting international community is the long-term result of cross-cultural dialogues on issues like gay and trans rights (Helsinki Times, 2020).

Sociologists see globalization as a dynamic phenomenon that affects every facet of modern life. It entails deepening connections across previously separate countries, regions, groups, and even inaccessible locations (Cole, 2020). With the impact of expanding social interactions, this likely results in greater beneficial human interconnectedness across cultures, which is the cultural component of globalization, or ‘cultural globalization’ (Paul, 2006). The scholarship seems to agree that cultural globalization (if not other global processes) heightens social connections between people of different cultural backgrounds. Also, the embedded social phenomena are also in a permanent state of change since the empirical components that make up any particular social setting are always shifting (Crozet, 2017). As a result of having to provide new answers and legitimize and affirm new identities, social phenomena like norm and value systems, religious traditions, etc., take on new shapes, functions, meanings, and ways of expression. The content of a tradition and how it is understood and expressed change with the society it is a part of. In the continuing development of values and norms in recent years, globalization processes have influenced how people think and behave (Crozet, 2017).

Globalization has been greeted with significant opposition in many areas of the globe, especially in Islamic nations. Strong players in such contexts have attempted to bring back old interpretations or create new ideologies that are consistent with technical and economic globalization but are also opposed to decadent Western ideologies, which include Western standards and values (Crozet, 2017). The role of globalization and its influence on media consumption patterns can explain how subtitlers are exposed to different linguistic and cultural contexts and how it might influence their translation practices.

5.3.3 Social media shifting social norms

It is important to note the impact of international mass media, satellite television, and other forms of modern communication technology, since they are often cited as the principal drivers of global mass culture by disseminating images and generating discourses (Magu, 2015). The term ‘mass culture’ describes the widespread adoption of a shared set of norms, beliefs, and practices due to widespread exposure to the same media (Crozet, 2017). The extent to which global mass media affects people and society is a contentious topic among academics. When mass media and new technology create cultural hybridity, it may challenge existing power systems (Kraidy, 2002). In our case, although euphemism is the preferable method for translating taboo language, as previously discussed in the literature, and it is part of the norms of subtitling taboo language, dysphemism gained wider acceptability because of cultural hybridity. This can influence subtitlers’ translation behaviour and can easily change their adopted norms (Crozet, 2017).

The power of conventional media to alter public opinion on established standards has been well-acknowledged for a long time. For example, the usage of supermodels in advertising affects people’s idea of what constitutes a normal or appropriate weight for a human being.

Individual or direct impacts and societal or indirect effects are two ways to categorize the mechanism behind media influence (Arias, 2018). The former occurs when people are exposed to and persuaded to adopt new social standards via mass media. The data in the latter case is not only informative but also helps in coordination. The requirement for coordination arises from social norms being seen as coordination dilemmas or circumstances in which individuals are

motivated to act only if they perceive that others will do so (Dellavigna and Gentzkow, 2010). Thus, making information available to the public may improve cooperation on that standard by fostering the development of shared understanding (Chwe, 2001).

On that basis, we could argue that the advent of social media has revolutionized communication and information sharing by creating new platforms for cultural exchange, thus influencing subtitlers' practices.

5.3.4 Turkish televised drama

There were 75 Turkish dramas shown to Arabic audiences in 2006. Interestingly, the Saudi Arabian audience had the greatest consumption rate of Turkish drama (Berg, 2017; Bhutto, 2019). In 2008, *Noor*, a Turkish romantic soap opera, was viewed by 85 million people in the Middle East (half were women) (Buccianti, 2010). Over 500 million viewers across the globe tuned in to watch *Magnificent Century*, a popular 2011 Turkish historical soap opera (Bhutto, 2019).

Turkish dramas are popular because they portray a modern lifestyle. Certain forms of gender equality and gender relations are seen as particularly modern by Arabs (Alardawi et al., 2021). Women in these shows have more independence and opportunities than their Middle Eastern counterparts, including the ability to hold professional roles and engage in more egalitarian relationships with males. Similarly, Arab women have praised the romantic male protagonists. But if the contemporary way of life is the draw, why do Turks prefer Turkish TV shows over Western ones? First of all, the region's increasing anti-Western attitude, particularly in the wake of the Iraqi invasion, did not favor Western popular culture.

Second, although there are significant differences between Arab and Western cultures, many cultural standards are shared by modern Arab and Turkish populations. For instance, Islam is shared by Turks and Arabs, and both cultures are patriarchal and supportive of strong family connections. By placing the action in a context they are already acquainted with, concepts are more likely to resonate with Arabic-speaking viewers (Yiğit, 2013). By being exposed to more liberal content, Arab audiences become more tolerant of taboo content.

This explains how the consumption patterns can express an identity and enable freer conversations surrounding taboos, particularly in a conservative Arab society. Watching Turkish dramas that address forbidden issues can function as a tool to subvert societal norms by providing a safe space for forbidden topics and language that would not be tolerated in more public settings. Thus, they contribute to breaking down social boundaries and taboos in a generally accepted setting. This can explain how Turkish televised drama has contributed to the normalization of more direct language and the reduced use of euphemisms in subtitles.

6 Conclusion

This qualitative investigation using secondary data aimed to reveal some of the factors that influence subtitlers' behavior in translating English to Arabic sensitive audiovisual content. It was found that subtitlers need to change their approaches to address the impacts of audience

expectations because of globalization, cross-ideological collaborations, new generation needs, and constantly changing social media impacts. Moreover, these factors reveal that subtitlers should consider their audience's age and the impacts of westernization while translating Arabic to English audiovisuals today. This is because westernization and social media have driven younger Arabic generations to use more English expressions and be comfortable with taboo topics, unlike baby boomers who view slang and sensitive areas as being a threat to their culture and religion. The findings of this research would benefit companies initiating subtitling projects, as they might reconsider their instructions to subtitlers. Moreover, subtitlers might rethink their methods and strategies, taking into account the target culture and audience.

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Author Contributions

Feda Ghnaim was involved in the conception and design of the study, as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data. Additionally, she contributed substantially to the drafting of the paper and revising it critically for intellectual content. Linda Alkhawaja contributed to the conception and design of the study, along with the analysis and interpretation of the data. Furthermore, she played a significant role in drafting the paper and revising it critically for intellectual content. Sawsan Badrakhan participated in discussion section, providing valuable insights. She also contributed to the drafting of the paper and revising it critically for intellectual content.

All authors have given final approval of the version to be published and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Conflict of Interest

Authors state no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

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