

**A Study of Audiovisual Fansubbing
Translation of Abbreviations
of the Replicas Movie into Arabic**

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Abstract

Audiovisual Translation (AVT) is described as process of translating multimodal text from the source language SL into the target language (TL). It means, that the Audiovisual translator renders the meaning of all modes (aural, visual and written) in the body of the (movie, interview, documentary reports, interview, cartoon, etc.) from one language into another. Besides, the researcher chose abbreviation forms found in the body of the American science fiction movie (Replicas) to be analyzed into Arabic. The researcher chose three translations produced by fansubbers (amateur subtitlers) of the American movie in question. Moreover, he hypothesizes that amateur subtitlers whose translations were chosen for the analysis probably produce inappropriate translation of the abbreviation forms because subtitling from English into Arabic not only relies upon the linguistic aspect of abbreviation forms but also on the successful employment of the technical aspects accompanied by the process of fansubbing from English into Arabic among such aspects are (number of character per line, number of line and duration of product presentation on the screen). The analysis of the movie verified the abovementioned hypothesis.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation, Fansubbing, Replicas Movie, Abbreviation forms.

دراسة ترجمة الهواة للاختصارات الانكليزية في الافلام السينمائية الى العربية: فيلم ربلكاس
انموذجا

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المستخلص

تُعرّف الترجمة السمعية والمرئية (AVT) بأنها عملية تحويل منتج متعدد الوسائط من لغة المصدر إلى اللغة الهدف. بمعنى آخر، يعمل مترجم الترجمة النصوص السمعية والمرئية على نقل معنى جميع الوسائط التي تسهم في بناء المنتج السمعي والمرئي والمكتوب (في فيلم ومقابلة وتقرير وثائقي ورسوم متحركة.. إلخ) من لغة إلى أخرى. إلى جانب ذلك، اختار الباحث المختصرات الموجودة في فيلم الخيال العلمي الأمريكي الذي يحمل عنوان (ربلكاس) لتحليلها إلى اللغة العربية. واختار ترجمات لثلاث مترجمين هواة ترجموا الفيلم الأمريكي المعني. وعلاوة على ذلك، يفترض الباحث أن المترجمين الهواة الذين اختيرت ترجماتهم للتحليل ان ينتجوا ترجمة غير مناسبة لأن ترجمة الحاشية السينمائية من الإنجليزية إلى العربية لا تعتمد على عملية نقل معنى المختصرات فقط بل على التوظيف الناجح للجوانب التقنية المرتبطة بعملية ترجمة الهواة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية مثل (عدد الأحرف في كل سطر، وعدد السطر ومدة عرض المنتج على الشاشة). واثبت التحليل الذي اجراه الباحث صحة الفرضية المذكورة أعلاه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة السمعية والمرئية، ترجمة الهواة، فيلم ربلكاس، المختصرات.

1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation is defined as a challenging topic for research as well as practice because it requires a lot of efforts to be made by researchers in the field to extract the elements chosen for analysis not to mention it need intensive work from the side of AVT translators due to the fact it is not a process of transferring of the text from one language into another but from multimode of communication that forms text into mono-mode or multimode of communication from the source language into target language. besides, the situation is even more difficult when it comes to analyzing to AVT products subtitled into the target language by fansubbers who is equipped with less or no experience in translation nor in the technical aspects associated with the production process. The current study is about a sub-branch of subtitling, it is titled fansubbing which stands for (amateur subtitling). The researcher highlights through the theoretical part of the study the following sub-heading: introduction, literature review while the practical parts embrace methodology, data collection: the abbreviation forms found in the body of the American science fiction movie titled (Replicas). On the top of that, the researcher selected three available translations of the abovementioned movie subtitled by fansubbers. He aims to learn through the application of the methodology of the study how far fansubbers (amateur subtitler) are capable of rendering English abbreviation forms in the body of American science fiction movie Replicas into Arabic on the linguistic and technical levels as well (Ibrahim, 2023a).

2. Literature review

The researcher chose to review the study whose title “Amateur translation in Arabic-speaking cyberspace” to be presented in the literature review of the current study. It is published by “Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice whose publisher is Taylor & Francis: UK in 2012. The problem of the selected study examines the localization and AVT organized by fansubbers. It investigates the products translated, the process of translation dynamics, SLs, translators’ decision making, the quality of the translated materials, Fansubbers VS. Professionals are highlighted. Arabic fansubbed products have their own formats and subjects. Moreover, there are various elements shaping the fansubbed products in Arabic. Among such elements are religious views, political standpoint not to mention the individual passion. According to the researcher’s view, the fansubbed products quality is not good enough because Arabic fansubbers are inclined to modify the ST to a big extent. Besides, the study concluded that Arabic (community translation) fansubbed products have their subjects and formats. Among such subjects are as follows: wisdom expressions, religious topics and political issues. The abovementioned topics are circulated by means of internet platforms. They are floated online via various formats like short clips on YouTube platform, printed fansubbed products as in the case of subscene websites, i.e. it is dedicated to publishing countless number of Arabic subtitled products along with their English versions as well and PowerPoint presentations. These products are carried out and organized by fansubbing teams. There are many elements shaping the process of fansubbing translation such as politics, religions and fansubbers’ passions.

Therefore, the quality of such products is poor because it is rather subjective and they are based on individual's passion. In other words, if there is a product circulated online and the fansubbing team assigned a fansubber to carry on the subtitling and the product in question goes against the passion of the fansubber assigned to do the task in question, he could change the entire context. Then, there will be a fabrication. Besides, the element of faithfulness disappeared. This is why, the quality is not good enough as a result of subjectivity, political views and religious issues as well. The Arab fansubbers are featured by the employment of colloquial language and this leads to changing the ST to a big extent once they are delivered in the form of subtitles. They make use of offensive terms in the body of their own subtitles as well. In other words, the ST products could consist of swear words, taboos. Since, the fansubbers are not armed with professional norms, they translate them as they are regardless of cultural and religious boundaries. Working on various fansubbing plans, fansubbers will have a big say in defining their own norms and codes of practice. Therefore, they are able to compete with professional subtitlers. And professionals are required to know how they can put themselves into such plans so as to guide the process instead of letting fansubbers take the leading position. It is worth noting that this type of product must be investigated meticulously to know how far they are able to be part of the general framework set for professionals when it comes to impact and norms. It is understood that the topic selected by the researcher is worth researching because it is about the analysis amateur subtitling of abbreviation forms in the American science fiction movie into Arabic. In other words, this is a new topic in the field of Audiovisual Translation.

3. Subtitling

Subtitling is described as “the rendering in a different language of verbal messages in filmic media, in the shape of one or more lines of written text, presented on the screen in synch with the original verbal message” Gottlieb (2004, p. 86). Technically speaking, there are two types of subtitles, they are explained as follows: Open subtitle: it is a type of subtitle that cannot be removed or be hidden because they are burned onto the image of the film production frames. While the second one is titled closed subtitles, it gives the receivers of the AVT product the freedom to see the subtitles below the screen or not (Diaz Cintas, Remael, 2007).

3.1 Fansubbing

Fansubbing is defined as the process of rendering multimodal products from one language into another by amateur translators. In other words, it is similar to subtitling but it is carried out by fans (Cintas & Remael, 2006).

3.1.1. History of fansubbing

According to Cintas & Remael the Fansubbing phenomenon floated on the surface of AVT during 1980s. The term in question was associated with the Japanese animation films at first. American fans decided to render the Japanese animations into English. and their move satisfied a lot of youth at that time because they were eager to watch such products. Afterward, the concept of fansubbing was expanded to include the rendering of countless number of films and series all over the globe to meet the needs of fans especially, the younger generations. Historically speaking, fansubbing does not follow rules and censorship imposed by governments. Therefore, it is a form of freedom expressed by youth to

choose what they want to watch in the way they like the most. In other words, the type of AVT mode is not conditioned by any procedures (2006).

3.1.2. Process of fansubbing

According to the interview held by the researcher back in 2021 with a group of Iraqi fansubbers Via Zoom Meetings Platform, he found out that the fansubbing process is simple comparing it to subtitling by professionals because fansubbers could have majors far from translation and media or they may not be educated at all, they might be of different ages (teenagers, young, old) people, they have no unified ground rules that can organize the process of rendering AVT products from SL into TL. Therefore, fansubbed products could manifest huge differences from one country to another or even from one group of fansubbers to another within the same country. It is worth noting that the younger generation are derived by this type of AVT because they want to watch what they prefer as quickly as possible. For this reason, the fansubbed versions of any AVT products might be available online for fans sake before the subtitled version of the same product done by professionals. It is worth mentioning that fansubbing process is a piece of cake especially for Iraqi fansubbers, it is as follows: firstly, the fansubber should have big or little experience in translation to be able to work in this field. Secondly, he has to have a computer (desktop or laptop). Thirdly, he must install subtitling software on his computer such as (workshop subtitle program). Fourthly, the multimodal product is available for the fansubber. If the abovementioned steps are available. The process of fansubbing can be done easily. Yet, it is not successful completely due to the fact that fansubbers are not having rules that can manage their works like professionals, they could work in pairs, groups or even individually. Their works are not always proofread by specialists,

they may cause some sort of confusions for viewers because of the presence of spelling, linguistic, stylistic mistakes, etc.

They may fail on the level of synchronization when the subtitled version appears below the screen before or even after the conversation between character of the AVT product in question. However, such type of process is not always legal because it might cause copyright issues. To sum up, fansubbing is a type of subtitling, it is easily done by anyone equipped with the computer, subtitling software, big or little experience in translation and the multimodal product.

3.1.3. Usages of fansubbing

Fansubbing was first employed for rendering the Japanese animation products in 1980s and then, it was expanded to be part of all forms of AVT products. This is why, it is employed in rendering films, series, animations, songs and even interviews. This type of AVT mode is resorted mostly by fans and nowadays, some networks like Iraqi Cinemana Shabakaty network hires fansubbers to subtitle films, series, programs, etc. the fansubbers of the network mentioned above work for free for reasons of fun, developing themselves in translation and its technical aspects as well. Fansubbing such products are always gone viral because the target group is youth who are always well versed in technology and internet, they are easy to access and free of charge as well.

4. Methodology

The researcher combines within the formation of the model of analysis of the current study three scholars' translation strategies regarding audiovisual translation (Pederson, Gottlieb and Tomaszekiewicz.) not to mention the researcher's added strategies so as to make a happy marriage between all of them. Besides, he builds the technical aspects area in the

body of the model of analysis. In other words, the rate of success is determined by the balance between the successful application of the translation strategies in rendering the meaning of the abbreviation forms from English into Arabic on one hand and the successful use of the technical aspects associated with the process of subtitling the abbreviation forms of the American science fiction movie into Arabic such aspects are (number of characters per line, number of lines and time of subtitle presentation on the screen). The model of analysis embraces the following strategies combined with three technical aspects associated with the TT subtitling production: one or two-line rule, 35-38 character including spaces per line and 6-minute presentation on the screen.

- 1- Explanatory translation: it is after spelling out the initial letters that form the English abbreviations in the Arabic subtitle.
- 2- Addition: it is about adding a letter or a word to the TT version.
- 3- Established equivalent: it is concerned with employing the equivalent form of the English abbreviation in the TT subtitle.

All the aforementioned strategies along with the application of the technical aspects lead to the production of function fansubbing in the TT.

- 4- Partial omission: it is a strategy proposed by the researcher, it aims at rendering the SL abbreviations found in the English movies into Arabic partially for reasons of avoiding breaching the technical aspects of subtitling.

- 5- Transliteration: it is a strategy of making use of the Arabic language letters in describing abbreviations found in the English movies.

Therefore, the employment of the fourth and fifth strategies with the technical aspects will produce incomplete fansubbing.

- 6- Original form: it is the process of taking the English abbreviations as

they are in the TT subtitle without any sort of change nor transfer.

7- Total omission: it is defined as the complete deletion of the abbreviation form found in the SL English movie from the TT version in Arabic.

8- Irrelevant equivalent: it is a strategy suggested by the researcher because the ones who carry out the process of fansubbing as amateur subtitlers.

This is why, it is expected to discover irrelevant equivalent with reference to SL abbreviation in the TT version of Arabic.

It is worth noting that the application of the sixth, seventh and eighth strategies along with the technical aspects will produce incorrect fansubbing (Ibrahim, 2023b).

5. Data Collection

The researcher pinpointed all the abbreviations forms found in the body of the American science fiction movie (Replicas), they are as follows: (AP: Access Point, DNA: Deoxyribonucleic Acid, ASAP: As Soon As Possible, ER: emergency room and MF: Medium Frequency)

5.1. Replicas Movie Data						
Abbreviations	ST Dialogue and Timing	TT Fansubbers	No. of Lines	Number of Characters Per Line	Time	
AP	AP insular. Primary action.	_____	—	—	Start	—
					End	—
	2	أرتباط أولي الأحصانيات إستثنائية	2	L1: 11 L2: 20	Start	00:05:16,934
					End	00:05:22,895
Start	00:05:42,920	_____	—	—	Start	—
	00:05:45,435				End	—
ER	How many times have you had a patient flatline in ER and you brought them back?	كم مره كان لديك مريض في الطوارئ وأعدته للحياة ؟	2	L1: 31 L2: 15	Start	00:10:09,679
					End	00:10:12,619
					Start	00:10:14,665
Start	00:10:44,920	كم مرة سمحت للمريض أن يموت في الإسعافات الأولية ،	1	L1: 49	End	00:10:17,657
					Start	00:10:09,953
					End	00:10:12,891
End	00:10:48,675	كم مرّة كان لديك مريض في الطوارئ، تعرض لنوبة قلبية "إي آر 3"	2	L1: 33 L2: 26	End	—

[illegible]

DNA	The accelerants follow the DNA profile precisely, okay?	1	المسرّع يتتبع ملف الحمض النووي بشكل مضبوط	1	L1: 39	Start	00:39:36,794
		2	المسرّع يتتبع ملف الحمض النووي بشكل دقيق	2	L1: 28 L2: 9	End	00:39:40,861
		3	المسرّع يتتبع ملف الحمض النووي بشكل مضبوط.	1	L1: 40	Start	00:39:39,728
ASAP	We got a donor inbound. 37 minutes. You gotta meet me at the lab, ASAP.	1	يجب أن نقابلني في المختبر فوراً	2	L1: 32 L2: 21	End	00:39:43,789
		2	لدينا متبرع، مات منذ ٣٧ دقيقة	2	L1: 29 L2: 39	Start	00:39:36,690
		3	يجب أن نقابلني في المختبر بأسرع ما يمكن	2	L1: 35 L2: 23	End	00:39:40,754
ASAP	We got a donor inbound. 37 minutes. You gotta meet me at the lab, ASAP.	1	يجب أن نقابلني في المختبر فوراً	2	L1: 32 L2: 21	Start	00:57:18,883
		2	لدينا متبرع، مات منذ ٣٧ دقيقة	2	L1: 29 L2: 39	End	00:57:21,854
		3	يجب أن نقابلني في المختبر فوراً	2	L1: 35 L2: 23	Start	00:56:36,026
ASAP	We got a donor inbound. 37 minutes. You gotta meet me at the lab, ASAP.	1	يجب أن نقابلني في المختبر فوراً	2	L1: 32 L2: 21	End	00:56:38,017
		2	لدينا متبرع، مات منذ ٣٧ دقيقة	2	L1: 29 L2: 39	Start	00:57:18,556
		3	يجب أن نقابلني في المختبر فوراً	2	L1: 35 L2: 23	End	00:57:21,526

Table (5.1.) Replicas Movie Data

6. Discussion of results

The first abbreviation form deals with (**AP: Access Point**) which refers to (نقطة الوصول). It is rendered into Arabic by two individuals and one team. In other words, the sample produced by the first fansubber, the second version rendered by the second team. On the other extreme, the third individual was the one responsible for the last fansubbed product. The first and third fansubbers adopted total omission strategy where they translated no word into Arabic. speaking of the technical constraints, they applied no rule. In other words, both first and third fansubbers produced incorrect technical fansubbing products. While the second team also failed to render it into Arabic because they made use of irrelevant equivalent strategy, they rendered it into (ارتباط اولي). As for the technical rules, they followed two-line subtitle whose characters are highlighted in the following brackets (L1: 11 cs and L2: 20 cs) which remained on the screen for 6 seconds. They produced incorrect fansubbing product. The second abbreviation form is concerned with (**ER: Emergency Room**) which stands for (غرفة الطوارئ). It rendered into Arabic into three versions they are as follows: the first fansubber adopted partial omission strategy as in the following brackets (الطوارئ). The second team made use of irrelevant equivalent because they employed (الاسعافات الاولى) in the TL. The third fansubber resorted to transliteration and partial omission strategies as in the following (الطوارئ) and (أي ار). Speaking of technical constraints, the first and second fansubbers followed two-line subtitle while the second team employed one-line subtitle whose characters are explained in the following brackets (L1: 31 cs and L2: 15 cs), (L1: 49 cs) and (L1: 33 cs and L2: 26 cs) respectively. Besides, the aforementioned product lasted for (3), (3) and (3) seconds respectively.

Moreover, they all failed on the linguistic level because they produced incomplete products but they succeeded on the technical ones except for the second team because they exceeded the number of characters as highlighted above. So, the first and third fansubbers whose products are duplicated produced incomplete fansubbing products while the second team produced incomplete technical fansubbing product. The third abbreviation form is about (**MF: Medium Frequency**) which means (التردد المتوسط). All the fansubbed produced were rendered into Arabic via employment of irrelevant equivalent strategy as in the following brackets (مطابقة الوجه ببديل الخادم), (مطابقة الوجه ببديل الخادم) and (مطابقة الوجه ببديل الخادم) respectively. Technically speaking, the first fansubber and the second team followed one-line subtitle while the third fansubber adopted two-line subtitle who characters are elaborated on in the following brackets (L1: 52 cs), (L1: 55 cs) and (L1: 26 cs and L2: 30 cs) respectively. The first fansubber and second team failed on the technical level because their products' characters exceeded the limits while the third fansubber applied

the rules. Therefore, the first fansubber and second team produced incorrect technical fansubbing products while the third one produced incorrect fansubbing product. The fourth abbreviation form is (**DNA: Deoxyribonucleic Acid**) which refers to (الحمض النووي). On the top of that, it has two mentions, as for the first one, all the products were rendered by fansubbers and fansubbing team were successful because they applied established equivalent strategy as in the abovementioned Arabic product. Speaking of technical constraints, they all followed two-line subtitle whose characters are highlighted in the following brackets (L1: 26 cs and L2: 23 cs), (L1: 32 cs and L2: 27 cs) and (L1: 28 cs and L2: 25 cs) which remained on the screen for (5), (4) and (4) seconds respectively. In other words, they all produced functional fansubbing products.

The second mention was translated as follows: all fansubbers and the team managed to produce a suitable translation because they adopted established equivalent strategy as in the first mention. It is worth noting that the first and third products were duplicated. Technically speaking, the first and third fansubbers made use of one-line subtitle while the second team adopted two-line subtitle whose characters are highlighted in the following brackets (L1: 39 cs) (L1: 28 cs and L2: 9 cs) and (L1: 40 cs) respectively. Furthermore, they lasted on the screen for (4), (4) and (4) seconds respectively. The first and third fansubbers failed on the technical level because they breached the number of character rule as explained above. Moreover, the first and third fansubbers produced semi-functional fansubbing products while the second team produced functional fansubbing product.

The fifth abbreviation form is concerned with (**ASAP: As Soon As Possible**) which refers to (بأسرع ما يمكن). Besides, the first and third fansubbers duplicated their products and they made use of irrelevant equivalent strategy because they rendered it into (فورا) which refers (to do the thing now unlike ASAP which stands for doing the thing quickly). The second team adopted established equivalent strategy with slight modification on the Arabic version structure as in the following brackets (بأسرع ما يمكن). Both fansubbers and the second team applied two-line subtitle whose characters are presented in the following brackets (L1: 32 cs and L2: 21 cs), (L1: 29 cs and L2: 39 cs) and (L1: 35 cs and L2: 23 cs) respectively. They were present on the screen for (3), (2) and (3) seconds respectively.

Both the first and second fansubbers managed to handle the technical constraints but this is not the case with the second team because they kept the product on the screen for 2 seconds only, it is not enough because it is a two-line subtitle. Moreover, the first and third fansubber

produced incorrect fansubbing products while the second team produced incomplete fansubbing product.

6.1. Quantitative Analysis of Replicas Movie

No.	Abbreviation Form	Fansubbers (Teams or Individuals)	Results on the linguistic level	Results on the technical level	Final Product
1	AP	First	F	F	F
		Second	F	S	F
		Third	F	F	F
2	ER	First	F	S	F
		Second	F	F	F
		Third	F	S	F
3	MF	First	F	F	F
		Second	F	F	F
		Third	F	S	F
4	DNA	First	S	S	S
		Second	S	S	S
		Third	S	S	S
5	DNA	First	S	F	F
		Second	S	S	S
		Third	S	F	F
6	ASAP	First	F	S	F
		Second	S	F	F
		Third	F	S	F
Total Results		Rate of Success: 22.2 %		Rate of Failure: 77.7 %	

Table (6.1) Quantitative Analysis of Replicas Movie

Conclusions

It is concluded that the rate of failure with regard to rendering abbreviation forms found in the body of the American science fiction movie titled Replicas is high in comparison with low rate of success. It is because fansubbers in resorted to total omission and irrelevant equivalent

strategies. This is why, the rate of failure is high. On the top of that some fansubbers succeeded in transferring the meaning abbreviation forms from English into Arabic not to mention using the right technical rules. Therefore, there was a slight success. And this result validated the hypothesis of the study.

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