

OPTIONS FOR SUBTITLING ENGLISH MOVIE LYRICS INTO ARABIC¹

Sundus Hassan¹, Ahmad S Haider^{1,2}

^{1,2}*Department of English Language and Translation, Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan*

²*MEU Research Unit, Middle East University, Amman, Jordan*

Abstract: *Subtitling lyrics poses a problem regarding conveying the content and the form, which include meaning, rhyme, rhythm, and other musical features. This requires having well-trained professional translators to master the rendering of those features in the target language, bearing in mind the constraints imposed by subtitling as an audio-visual mode. This study examines the Arabic subtitled version of English movie lyrics and explores the translator's options in rendering their content and form. To this end, sixteen lyrics were extracted from five movies that have been subtitled. The compiled lyrics were classified into different categories based on the translation options proposed by Franzon (2008). The option of "translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration" was used 11 times, while the option of "aesthetic translation" was opted for four times. "Not translating the lyric" was used only once, while the option of "creating new lyrics for the music" was not adopted in any of the five movies. The study recommends two research areas: exploring dubbed Arabic versions of English movie lyrics and analyzing subtitled lyrics in other language pairs.*

Keywords: *Audio-visual Translation (AVT), Lyrics, Subtitling, Arabic-English*

About the author: *Sundus Hassan is an MA holder in Audiovisual and Mass Media Translation at the Applied Science Private University. Her main areas of interest include corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and translation studies.*

e-mail: *sundushassan6@gmail.com*

ORCID iD: *<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4052-1758>*

About the author: *Ahmad S Haider is an associate professor in the Department of English Language and Translation at the Applied Science Private University, Amman, Jordan. He received his Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Canterbury/ New Zealand. His current research focuses on how political events are socially, discursively, and linguistically represented in media, combining Corpus Linguistics and (Critical) Discourse Analysis. His main areas of interest include corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and translation studies.*

e-mail: *a_haidar@asu.edu.jo*

ORCID iD: *<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7763-201X>*

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Introduction

According to Chiaro (2012), audio-visual translation (AVT) is the process of translating the verbal elements of audio-visual works and products from one language (the source language) to another. AVT differs from other forms of translation as it is experienced simultaneously through watching and listening rather than being read separately from the source text. Dubbing and subtitling are the most popular branches of AVT (Alrousan & Haider, 2022; Debbas & Haider, 2020). Dubbing involves replacing the dialogue, making the characters appear to speak the target language (Chiaro, 2012). Contrarily, subtitling involves converting the spoken mode of AV products into written captions, typically presented at the bottom of the screen (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007).

Not many people conduct studies on the translation of lyrics. In contrast to other genres of translation, Low (2005) asserted that interpreting songs presents particular demands. To successfully translate songs the translator must understand and consider musical elements such as rhyme, rhythm, note value, harmony, duration, and phrasing.

In this study, 16 English-to-Arabic song lyrics are examined. Translation challenges arise when attempting to express the meaning and structure of lyrics, which fall under the literary genre umbrella and include many musical aspects. In addition, the Arabic language increases the complexity when considering the poem's poetic elements, such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and so on.

For those characteristics to be rendered correctly in the target language, it is necessary to have highly qualified professional translators. Additionally, the representation of those elements in Arabic and English is incongruent, which adds to the difficulties and responsibilities faced by translators. In the field of translation studies, lyrics translation is not an often-studied topic. According to many researchers (Admiati & Hartono, 2019; Åkerström, 2010; Gritsenko & Aleshinskaya, 2016; Reus, 2020), lyrics translated from English into Russian, Swedish, Dutch, and Indonesian were all of high quality. An area that needs more exploration is the translation of Arabic lyrics from English.

The present study investigates the subtitled versions of 16 lyrics of five Netflix movies through addressing the following question:

What are the subtitling options used in rendering the content and form of movie lyrics from English into Arabic?

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

The history of AVT started in the twenty-first century when television, DVDs, and media became more popular (Al-Abbas & Haider, 2023; AlBkowr & Haider, 2023; Jarrah et al., 2023; Saideen et al., 2024). This increased the demand for audio-visual translation. Cinema, opera, theater, and other live events required translation services, especially when channels and networks became national and international and more languages were involved (Díaz-Cintas & Anderman, 2008).

AVT can be applied to many genres including entertainment such as films and music. Susam-Sarajeva (2008) argued that the place music has in everyday life resulted in interest in the study of lyric translation. A lyric, according to Gioia (2005, p. 10), is “a short poem that expresses thoughts and feelings of a single speaker.” The connection between movies and lyrics is that both carry the same entertainment mission. Similarly, Greenall et al. (2021, p. 16) described lyrics as “words bound to a piece of music in a song.”

Salmon (2010) reported that a good translator must pay attention to the musical background and save the poetic features of a lyric, including melody, rhyme, and rhythm. Considering that songs and lyrics are part of poetry, Low (2003) pointed out that to translate a poem, one should observe the purpose of the translation. He argued that people previously assumed that since poetry is presented in written form so would the translation. However, this is not applicable all the time. Furthermore, translated poems cannot replicate all features of the original, neither in form nor content. In addition to the general challenges of translating lyrics and poetry, film lyric translation is further complicated by context. The translator must, therefore, consider the effects of the lyrics on the plot.

Another musical principle to be considered is singability, which must be applied to ensure the final musical product’s modeling and sense of musical harmony. Many scholars agree with this principle and argue that using musical features will achieve a worthy translation of lyrics and singability (Franzon, 2008; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2016). In the current paper, the 16 compiled lyrics are considered a singable part of a movie, highlighting the need to translate such content carefully.

Empirical Studies on Movie Lyrics Translation

As mentioned in the previous section, the translation of lyrics is included under the umbrella of literary works containing songs and poetry. This section brings to light some remarks which characterize the translation of songs and poetry. The increasing demand for translating audio-visual materials led to an

increase in demand for lyric translation. Therefore, studies on subtitling lyrics became more popular. This section sheds light on some empirical studies in this domain.

In the context of film lyrics translation, Penilaras (2016) investigated the subtitled lyrics of *The Princess and the Frog*. The study identified six techniques for translating song lyrics: literal, modulation, reduction, establishing equivalent, borrowing, and generalizing. Additionally, Iitola (2017) investigated how musical characteristics, such as rhythm, rhymes, naturalness, and linguistic quality, were translated in *Frozen (Frosty Adventure)*. In addition, the research also compared the singability of two subtitles of the same lyrics. The analysis showed that the Blu-Ray subtitles were largely singable while the television subtitles were only partially singable. The results indicated that the dubbed rendition was more singable but less faithful in meaning.

In the same vein, León Alonso (2019) analyzed both English and Spanish versions of selected songs from Disney animation films based on translation techniques, syllabic structures, emphasis, rhyme, and methods that can be applied to song translation. The study concluded that discursive creation and functional equivalence are the most common techniques in translating selected songs. The reason behind using such techniques more than literal translation is that they contribute to reaching the desired naturalness in the target language and make adapting the original song's rhythm easier. In addition, literal translation was also used in cases of accurate rendering of meaning, syllabic structure, and consistency. The aforementioned studies tackled the translation of songs based on translation techniques. However, Abu-Rayyash and Haider (2023) conducted their analysis based on song translation options, following Franzone's (2008) song translation options. They concluded that Netflix's subtitles used four options to translate English lyrics into Arabic. These include neglecting the music in translating the lyrics (literal subtitling), which was used 60% of the time, not translating the lyrics (deletion), which was seen in 17% of the cases, and adapting the translation to the music (aesthetic subtitling), which was used in (8%) of the times. The researchers also found an additional option combining the three above-mentioned options, namely (blended subtitling) which was observed 15% of the time.

Additionally, Saperi et al. (2022) investigated language and cultural similarities of the English subtitles of a song lyric, namely "Keris Sakti," which was extracted from the animated Netflix movie *Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris*, and translated from Malay. They applied a qualitative descriptive method to analyze and compare the data. The researchers found that the translation holds many inaccuracies due to the cultural differences between the two languages. They also found that the role of translators is to preserve the meaning intended

underlying the songs, ensuring that no misinterpretation and misunderstanding occur among target language audiences.

Methodology

In this section, the researchers discuss the corpus of the study and the procedures followed in data collection and analysis. A parallel corpus of 16 lyrics retrieved from five English movies subtitled into Arabic by Netflix was compiled.

Source of Subtitles

For the sake of consistency, the selected movies were subtitled by Netflix translators. Netflix is the most popular platform in the Arab world (Abu-Rayyash et al., 2023). Netflix is a subscription-based platform that allows subscribers to watch TV shows and movies without commercials on an internet-connected device (Al-Abbas & Haider, 2021). It provides access to best-in-class series, documentaries, feature films, and movies. Netflix allows members to watch whatever they like anytime and without ads. What makes Netflix the best choice to extract data for this study is that it streams more than 30 languages and provides a subtitled version of most of the films it produces.

Corpus of the Study

For the purpose of this study, the researchers selected five movies, as shown in Table 1. For the movie to be included in the corpus, it needs to meet the following criteria: it (1) should be subtitled by Netflix, (2) should contain lyrics, (3) should have a high IMDB rating, and (4) all should have 7+ maturity rating.

Table 1. *The selected movies with the year of production*

No.	Movie	Genre	Production Year
1	Over The Moon	Animated musical film	2020
2	Vivo	Computer-Animated Musical Comedy Film	2021
3	13: The Musical	Musical film	2022
4	The Secret Life of Pets	Computer-animated family comedy film	2016
5	Riverdance	Computer-animated family comedy film	2022

Table 1 shows the names of movies selected with their genre and production year.

Sixteen lyrics were found in the selected five movies. Table 2 shows the titles of the lyrics and the movie from where they were retrieved.

Table 2. *The Investigated Lyrics*

No.	Movie	Lyrics Number	Lyric Title
1	Over The Moon	1	Change's
		2	Mooncakes
		3	Fly Away
		4	Rocket
2	Vivo	5	Keep the Beat
		6	Vivo
		7	It's Not Too Late
		8	One More Song
3	13: The Musical	9	13
		10	Wait until you're
		11	opportunity
		12	Lame set place on earth
4	The Secret Life of Pets	13	Fiver
		14	Dinga
5	Riverdance	15	The Dark
		16	Apart from you

The subtitled versions of the movies were extracted directly from Netflix. After downloading the subtitles, the researchers saved them as an Aegisub file. The lyrics lines are then copy-pasted and aligned on an Excel sheet to ease the process of analysis. After the data was retrieved, the English script was aligned with the Arabic subtitled versions. The English and Arabic data were copy-pasted onto an Excel sheet. Each lyric was saved in a sheet with two columns. The first column includes the English source text, while the second column contains the Arabic subtitled target text.

Study Procedures

The processes followed in this study are as follows:

- (1) Writing the research questions: one research question was addressed.
- (2) Selecting the movies that contain lyrics to be investigated: 16 lyrics were selected from 5 movies.
- (3) Extracting the subtitled version directly from Netflix.
- (4) Examining the subtitled movie lyrics based on the translation options used.
- (5) Conducting a critical analysis of the data based on the previous literature.

Analysis and Findings

The translation of lyrics differs categorically from other types of translation, given that lyrics are considered literary works with poetic features. Therefore, subtitlers should give considerable attention to the musicality of lyrics while taking into account both form and content. This section is dedicated to providing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the compiled parallel corpus of lyrics based on Franzon (2008) model.

Quantitative Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the compiled 16 lyrics were classified into different categories based on the translation options proposed by Franzon (2008). These are *leaving the song untranslated*, *translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account*, *writing new lyrics to the original music*, *translating lyrics and adapting music accordingly*, and finally *adapting the translation to the original music*. Table 3 shows the subtitling options for the 16 investigated lyrics.

Table 3. *Classification of lyrics based on their translation options*

Movie	No.	Lyric Title	Subtitling Option
Over The Moon	1	Change's	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	2	Mooncakes	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	3	Fly Away	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	4	Rocket	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
Vivo	5	Keep the Beat	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
	6	Vivo	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
	7	It's Not Too Late	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
	8	One More Song	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
13: The Musical	9	13	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	10	Wait until you're	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	11	Opportunity	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	12	Lame set place on earth	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration

Movie	No.	Lyric Title	Subtitling Option
The Secret Life of Pets	13	Fever	Not translating the lyrics
	14	Dinga	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration
Riverdance	15	The Dark	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration
	16	Apart from you	Translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration

According to the classification of lyrics outlined in Table 3, the researchers counted the number of times each option was used, as Table 4 shows.

Table 4. Frequency of translation options used in the investigated movies.

Translation Option	Movie	Frequency
Not Translating the lyrics	Over the Moon	0
	13: The Musical	0
	The Secret Life of Pets	1
	Riverdance	0
	Vivo	0
Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration	Over The Moon	4
	13: The Musical	4
	The Secret Life of Pets	1
	Riverdance	2
	Vivo	0
Translating lyrics and adapting music accordingly	Over The Moon	0
	13: The Musical	0
	The Secret Life of Pets	0
	Riverdance	0
	Vivo	0
Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic Translation)	Over The Moon	0
	13: The Musical	0
	The Secret Life of Pets	0
	Riverdance	0
	Vivo	4
Writing new lyrics to the original music	Over The Moon	0
	13: The Musical	0
	The Secret Life of Pets	0
	Riverdance	0
	Vivo	0
Total		16

Based on the frequency count of translation options in Table 4, it can be noticed that only some of the options were used. For example, the options of *creating new lyrics for the music* and *translating lyrics and adapting music accordingly* were not adopted in any of the five movies.

Qualitative Analysis

As an AVT mode, subtitling is considered the most popular method in translating movies. According to Gottlieb (1992), subtitling constraints can be divided into formal or quantitative and textual or qualitative. The formal constraints are imposed on the subtitlers by the visual context of the film, but the textual are space- and time-related factors. Aminoroaya and Amirian (2016), on the other hand, discussed song translation constraints, including those of rhyme, rhythm, and image. Therefore, when dealing with subtitling constraints in addition to song translation constraints, it would be challenging for the subtitler to choose the suitable translation option when translating lyrics. This section discusses the options used by Netflix subtitlers in rendering the compiled lyrics.

Not translating the lyrics (Deletion)

Rendering lyrics from one language to another needs more skills than rendering other genres. Table 5 shows the number of times the option “Not translating the lyrics” was used in the subtitled versions.

Table 5. “Not Translating the Lyrics” options in the investigated corpus

Translation Option	Movie	Subtitling
Not translating the lyrics	13: The Musical	0
	The Secret Life of Pets	1
	Riverdance	0

Table 5 shows that the option of deleting the lyrics was used once. This suggests that Netflix aims to convey all aspects of the source text to provide viewers with the most understanding. *Not translating the lyrics* in subtitling a musical movie is not a recommended option to use. According to Garwood (2006, p. 93), lyrics are “narrational devices,” meaning that they significantly affect the plot, especially when carrying vital information regarding the characters or events. Aleksandrowicz (2019, p. 175) argued that “this option is applied mostly in subtitles when the translator prioritizes the content over the form,” which means that Netflix tends to provide the viewer the ability to understand the entire movie. Hence, the primary purpose of subtitling a movie is to reflect all aspects contained in the original language. Table 6 is an example of subtitling a lyric in a non-musical movie.

Table 6. *Subtitling the English lyric “Fever” into English.*

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version
1	now, who got the fever for the flavor	-----
2	who can dig the way that I flex on a track	-----
3	I’m causin’ rampage,	-----
4	Ricky Rick on point	-----
5	with the 9-5 m style from my lips	-----
6	They’ll be rollin’ the mad joints	-----
7	A disco lick that’s deeper’	-----
8	Cause we got to get with the fever,	-----
9	fever,	-----
10	fever,	-----
11	Fever	-----

The Secret Life of Pets follows a dog named Max whose life changes when his owner gets another pet dog, Duke. The song “Fever” appears in a scene where Max tries to trick Duke into misbehaving.

The lyric is written with an African English accent that compliments Max’s walk and feeling of pride. The lyric itself does not hold any essential information; in fact, there is a small conversation between Max and his friend in the middle of the lyric.

As shown in Table 6, the option “Not translating the lyrics” was used in this non-musical movie. This genre does not hold any conversation in the lyric itself. Considering that the lyric does not add any crucial information that affects the film plot, not subtitling the lyrics is acceptable, i.e., the main aim of subtitled movies is to provide the viewer with a complete understanding of the movie with a smooth, neat translation flow.

Translating Lyrics without taking the music into consideration (Literal Subtitling)

Bogucki (2004) argued that screen translators, i.e., subtitlers, are restricted by temporal, spatial, and other constraints, which make them narrow down the range of possible equivalents and translation strategies to the absolute minimum. In addition to these constraints, the type of translated materials may affect the process of subtitling. For example, Aminoroaya and Amirian (2016, p. 49) stated that “songs which appear in movies are an interdependence of words, music, and image. Each of these elements creates several constraints for translating a song”. Therefore, many subtitlers decide to stay on the safe side in translating movie lyrics and neglect the music by providing a literal translation.

Table 7 shows the number of times this option (literal translation) was used in the compiled corpus.

Table 7. Number of times “literal translation” was used

Translation Option	Movie	Subtitling
Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration	Over The Moon	4
	13: The Musical	4
	The Secret Life of Pets	1
	Riverdance	2
	Vivo	0

Table 7 shows that the option of literal translation is used in subtitling all the lyrics in the movies *Over The Moon* and *13: The Musical*. These two movies are considered musicals, which contain plenty of lyrics that may affect the plot and contribute to the scenario. However, Netflix subtitlers did not use this option in *Vivo*, which is also considered a musical movie. Table 8 shows an example of Netflix subtitling of the lyric “Mooncakes” extracted from the musical movie “*Over the Moon*.”

Table 8. Subtitling the English lyric “Mooncakes” into Arabic

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation option
1	♪ Stuff! Roll! Press! Smack! ♪	أنجع أي شحا	Stuff and knead	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
2	♪ Stuff! Roll! Press! Smack! ♪	Not translating the lyrics
3	♪ Sift the flour, let the eggs crack ♪	، اذه ل خنا فض أو أض يب	Sift this and add eggs	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
4	♪ Knead the dough on every hour ♪	لمود نجا ةعاس لك	Knead always and every hour	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
5	♪ Then we start it all again ♪	لم عن نحن إناقت اب	We work perfectly	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
6	♪ Stuff! Roll! Press! Smack! ♪	أنجع ا شحا	Stuff and knead	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
7	♪ Stuff! Roll! Press! Smack! ♪	Not translating the lyrics
8	♪ Form the dough around the filling ♪	نيجعلا يطغي أوشحلا	The dough covers the filling	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
9	♪ Brush with egg, and please no spilling ♪	نهدي اذه ،ضيب أمهم	Cover it with eggs, this is important	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
10	♪ What a lovely gift they are ♪	زعأل دهيت إناسنإ	A gift to your dearest person	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation option
11	♪ And there's tradition In these Mooncakes ♪	يولح ف رم قلا أهن ج عن	And we need the mooncakes	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
12	♪ And we make everyone with care ♪	بحل لك ب أممتهال او	With love and care	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
13	♪ Then we bake them Full of fondness, sweetness ♪	اهزب بخنو ،دوم ل اب أمود	We always bake it with sweetness	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
14	♪ Wafting through the air ♪	لك يف أم اي أا	All days	Writing new lyrics to the Original Music
15	♪ And there is magic in these Mooncakes ♪	اهدن وع ئلت مت أرحس	then it will be filled with magic	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
16	♪ You can feel it all around ♪	يف هس ملن أراو جلا	We touch around us	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
17	♪ Mooncakes, where the magic is found ♪	رم قلا يولح ي وحت أراسأ	Mooncakes holds secrets	Writing new lyrics to original music
18	♪ We need five more ♪	5 دي رأ	I want 5	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
19	♪ Or maybe twelve Because I've got the cousins coming ♪	يني طع أ نأل ،ةت سد أ يف ويض	Give me twelve because my guests are six	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
20	♪ And you know just how they are ♪	نوي أجي م ه أرم س لل	They come for joy	Writing new lyrics to the Original music
21	♪ They love these cakes ♪	يولح و أرم قلا	And mooncakes	Writing lyrics to the original music
22	♪ So I think\NYou better give me twenty more ♪	لض أ ل أن م ان ي طع ن أ أني ت سد	It's better to give us twenty	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
23	♪ Each one holds a message From the moon above ♪	يولح ل اب ةال سر أهن وجات حت	There is a message in it that you need	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
24	♪ „Cherish life and everything you love“ ♪	دع سن ل ف) بحل ل اب أقا ي حل او	Let's have love and life	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
25	♪ Magic in these Mooncakes ♪	رم قلا يولح أي وحت	Mooncakes have	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
26	♪ Magic in these Mooncakes ♪	رم قلا يولح أي وحت	Mooncakes have	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
27	♪ Hidden in these Mooncakes for you ♪	لصا خ لرحس هنم لك أبي صن	Magic for you	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration

Over The Moon is a musical movie that contains a high number of lyrics. Characters speak for themselves by singing and sharing their ideas through

music. Therefore, the subtitler should be cautious in choosing the option to translate these lyrics.

Table 8 shows that the subtitles of the lyrics for “Mooncakes” used the option of *Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration* in rendering 20 out of 27 lines. The Netflix subtitler rendered the original text literally without taking into consideration any musical elements; there is no rhyme or rhythm in the target text. In contrast, when compared with the original, the target text is more concise and to the point. Considering subtitling constraints, choosing a literal translation approach seems more appropriate. However, this limits other qualities in the translation. For more clarification, consider line one in Table 10. The original text contains four words, “stiff, Roll, Press, and Smack,” which were rendered into two words, namely “stuff and knead.” The subtitlers condensed the words “roll” and “press” into one word, “knead,” a literal, yet more concise translation. Likewise, line three, “Sift the flour, let the eggs crack,” which rhymed with line one, was translated into “Sift this and add eggs,” without taking into account the musical elements included in the ST.

Other examples are found in lines eight and nine, which have both rhyme and rhythm, which were entirely ignored in the literal translation. Lines 25 and 26 also contain prosody, another musical aspect Franzon (2015) recommended considering. Prosody is the melodic quality of sentences in music. This aspect was lost alongside rhyme and rhythm in the literal renditions. Supardi and Putri (2018, p. 13) stated that “in literal translation, the SL is translated literally and focuses on the form and structure.” Therefore, literal translation is not the ideal option for musical films. Despite adequately maintaining the content, many stylistic features are lost.

Another example to be analyzed is the lyric “That Dark,” retrieved from the movie *Riverdance*. Table 9 shows the subtitling of the lyric “The Dark” with back translation and the option used in each line.

Table 9. *The subtitling of the lyric “The Dark” from Riverdance*

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation Option
1	Where the river foams ♪	ثيحي ثدحي أدب ز رهنلا	Where the river foams	Literal Translation
2	And surges to the sea ♪	مطالوي الرحبالا	And sea crashes	Literal Translation
3	Silver figures rise ♪	رهظت ماسجأ أيةيضف	Silver objects appear	Literal Translation
4	To find me ♪	يوندجتلا	To find me	Literal Translation

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation Option
5	Wise and as daring ♪	ميكح عاجش و	Wise and courage	Literal Translation
6	Following the heart's cry ♪	عبتأ ةخرص ابلقلا	Follow the heart's yell	Literal Translation
7	I am that deep pool ♪	كلت انأ ةكربلا ةققي ممعلا	Am that deep pool	Literal Translation
8	I am that dark... ♪	كلت انأ ةم لظلا	Am that dark	Literal Translation

Riverdance is an animated movie about a boy and a girl traveling to a fantasy world and learning to appreciate life through dancing. The movie is not considered a musical movie. However, it contains plenty of music and dancing. The lyrics contained in the movie are meant to provide joy and render a sense of peace and happiness. They have no dialogue and do not affect the film plot directly.

Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration is a preferable option for translators. The two examples above show that the first used “concise literal translation” without considering musical elements such as rhyme, rhythm, or prosody. On the other hand, the second example extracted from the movie *River Dance* used “Literal Translation” without shortening any words. The analysis suggests that employing this option in *Over the Moon* did not affect the overall meaning but did not reflect the musical aspects of the genre.

Adapting the translation to original music (Aesthetic Translation)

According to Franzon (2008), if the music must be performed as originally initiated, it must be the translator who modifies the verbal rendering by approximating more loosely, by paraphrasing, or by deleting from and adding to the content of the source lyrics. In other words, this option may be the most viable to preserve the musical elements of songs. Here, the translator in this option tries to provide an aesthetic translation of the original lyric, not only by maintaining the meaning but also by adjusting the translation to suit the music.

From the subtitled versions of the collected data, the researchers found that only one movie adopted this translation option in subtitling the lyrics. Table 10 discusses the lyric “Keep the Beat” extracted from *Vivo*.

Table 10. *The subtitling or the lyric “Keep the Beat” extracted from Vivo*

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation Option
1	♪ The plan was get to a bus ♪	بوكركل ةل فاحل ان ططخ	To ride the bus we planned	Aesthetic Translation
2	♪ Next thing you know, the two of us ♪	نحن اهو ان دحو نان ثالا	There we are both of us alone	Aesthetic Translation
3	♪ Are floating, drifting somewhere new ♪	وفطن يل ل فرجنونو ادي دج ناكم	Floating and drifting somewhere new	Literal Translation
4	♪ She said we'd take a shortcut ♪	انن ل تلاق كل سنس اقرط اخرصت خم	She said we are going to take a short cut	Literal Translation
5	♪ I'm trying to be a good sport, but ♪	نأ ل واحأ رم أ ل بقتأ ام ن إو	Am trying to accept this but,	Aesthetic Translation
6	♪ I don't see how we make it through ♪	فيك مهفأ ال احجن سنس	I don't understand how are we going to make it	Literal Translation
7	♪ Remember the size of the world before ♪	مجح ركذتأ نم مل اعلا ال ببق	I remember the size of the world was before	Literal Translation
8	♪ It was you and I, just you and I ♪	تأ نأ انك ان دحو	It was you and I alone	Aesthetic Translation
9	♪ And now the horizon holds so much more ♪	قفأ نأل او لبقت ست سملا امل امأ انل لم ح ةري ثك	And know, the future horizon holds many hopes	Aesthetic Translation
10	♪ And it's do or die ♪	ام او حجن نأ ام ات ومن نأ	It's either we succeed or we die	Literal Translation
11	♪ Yeah, it's do or die ♪	وأ حجن ن، ل جأ ات ومن	Yes, succeed or die	Literal Translation
12	♪ All I can do when the road bends ♪	يننك مي ام لك مام أه لعف ات اب طملا	All I can do to face road bends	Aesthetic Translation
13	♪ Is lean into the curve ♪	لي م نأ وه اه عم	Is to curve with it	Aesthetic Translation
14	♪ And all I can do When the tank's run dry ♪	يننك مي ام لك ني ح هل لعف دفنت ات ا قاطلا	All I can do when the power is done	Aesthetic Translation
15	♪ Is see what's in reserve ♪	ني بتأ نأ وه ي نرظت ني ام	Is to know what waits for me	Aesthetic Translation

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation Option
16	♪ And all I can do When the plans break down ♪	ي ن ن ك م ي ام لك ن ي ح هل عف ل ش ف ت ا ت ا ط ط خ م ل ا	All I can do when the plans fail	Literal Translation
17	♪ Is stay on my feet ♪	ا دم ص ا ن ا وه	Is to survive	Literal Translation
18	♪ And all I can do at the end of the day is play on ♪	ام لك و ي ن ن ك م ي ي ف ا ه ل عف ف ا ط م ل ا ي ا ه ن ا ر ب ا ت ا ن ا وه	All I can do at the end of the journey is to persist	Aesthetic Translation
19	♪ Play on and keep the beat ♪	ا ر ب ا ت ا ع ا ق ي ا ل ا ب و ر م ت س ا	Persist and the beat I keep	Aesthetic Translation
20	♪ I am here Just on another shore ♪	ن كل ، وه ا ن ا ل ح ا س ي ل ع ا ر خ ا	I am him, but on another shore	Aesthetic Translation
21	♪ Always in your corner ♪	ا ك ع م ا م ي ا د	Always with you	Literal Translation
22	♪ Watching you soar ♪	ك م ا ت ا ن ي ق ل ا ت ا ت	I watch you shine	Literal Translation
23	♪ Remember the size of the world before ♪	م ج ح ر ك ذ ت ا ا ل ب ق ن م م ل ا ع ل ا	I remember the size of the world before	Literal Translation
24	♪ Now it's you and I Just you and I ♪	ا ن ح ب ص ا ن ا ل ا ت ن ا ، ا ن ا و ت ا ن ا ا ب س ح و ا ن ا و	now it's just you and me alone	Literal Translation
25	♪ And now the horizon Holds so much more ♪	ق ف ا ن ا ل ا و ل ب ق ت س م ل ا ا م ا م ا ن ل ل م ح ي ا ر ي ث ك	And now the future hori- zon holds us many hopes	Aesthetic Translation
26	♪ And it's do or die ♪	ا م ا و ح ج ن ن ا م ا ا ت و م ن ا ن ا	It's earthier we succeed or die	Literal Translation
27	♪ Yeah, it's do or die ♪	ا و ا ح ج ن ن ، ل ج ا ا ت و م ن	Yes, either we succeed or die	Literal Translation
28	♪ All I can do when the road bends ♪	ي ن ن ك م ي ام لك هل عف ه ج و ي ف ا ت ا ب ط م ل ا	All I can do to face the bumps	Aesthetic Translation
29	♪ Is lean into the curve ♪	ا ه ر ع م ل ي م ا ن ا وه	Is to curve with it	Aesthetic Translation
30	♪ And all I can do When the tank's run dry ♪	ي ن ن ك م ي ام لك ن ي ح هل عف د ف ن ت ا ت ا ق ا ط ل ا	All I can do when the power is done	Aesthetic Translation

No.	Original Text	Subtitled Version	Back Translation	Translation Option
31	♪ Is see what's in reserve ♪	ني بتأ نأ وه أي نرظت ني ام 	Is to know what waits for me	Aesthetic Translation

Vivo is an animated musical movie that follows Kinkajou, a pet who goes on an adventure to reunite with his master. Since the film is a musical, it is filled with lyrics that are sung by the characters to reflect their thoughts and advance the plot.

Table 10 shows that the subtitlers used the option of *Adapting the translation to the original music*, which can be described as “Aesthetic Translation” in 17 out of 31 lines. By examining the remaining 14 lines, it was noticed that the other option used by the subtitlers was “Literal Translation.”

In the source text, lines one and two contain an end rhyme as both lines end with the syllable “us”. This poetic feature was compensated in the Arabic renditions as the lyrics contain an end rhyme as well. However, the rhyming syllable became “na.”

According to Almuhareb et al. (2013), traditional Arabic poetry adheres to a relatively rigid rhyme scheme. Each stanza in a given poem must have the same last letter. As previously mentioned, lyrics in the movie *Vivo* directly affect the film plot. Therefore, using aesthetic translation is an excellent choice to render the meaning along with musical elements, and rendering the stylistic features of the text is very important. For example, line 25, “And now the horizon holds so much more,” was translated as “ةريثك الام انل لمححي لبق تسم لا قفأ نأل او.” The subtitlers used the strategy of addition in order to render the stylistic feature of the original text. They translated “horizon” as “future horizon,” and the phrase “much more” was rendered as “much more hopes.” Ghazala (2018) considered stylistic translation a reflection of the various elements and purposes of the style of the source and target texts from the viewpoints of the author, translator, audience of the target text, and target language style. Thus, it is clear that style initiates and guides translation and stylistic translation is mainly used in literary works such as songs and lyrics.

Writing New Lyrics to the Original Music

In his five-option approach to translating songs, Franzon (2008) described this option by saying that a rewriter in a target language might pay far more attention to the music than the lyrics. This would be the case if the music made up most of the overall package and is considered a translational action, even if it is not translated in the traditional sense of the word. It was found that none of the investigated lyrics used this option fully. Franzon (2008, p. 9) argued

that “this option is probably most widespread in certain genres within popular music”; however, in the compiled data, the option of rendering new lyrics to the original music was not used except in limited lines of some lyrics. For example, the lyric “Mooncake” of the movie *Over the Moon*, contained particular lines that were translated using the option of *creating new lyrics to the original music* (see Table 11).

Table 11. *The subtitling of lines 13- 21 of the lyric “Mooncake”*

No.	Original Text	Subtitling	Back Translation	Translation option
13	♪ Then we bake them Full of fondness, sweetness ♪	اهزبخنو ،ةدوملاب مود	We always bake it with sweetness	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
14	♪ Wafting through the air ♪	لك ي ف ام ا ل ا	All days	Writing new lyrics to the original music
15	♪ And there is magic in these Mooncakes ♪	اهدنعو ئ ل ت م ت س ر ح س	then it will be filled with magic	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
16	♪ You can feel it all around ♪	ي ف ه س م ل ن ا ر ا و ج ل ا	We touch around us	Translating Lyrics without taking the music into consideration
17	♪ Mooncakes, where the magic is found ♪	ر م ق ل ا ي و ل ح ي و ح ت ا ر ا ر س ا	Mooncakes holds secrets	Writing new lyrics to original music
18	♪ We need five more ♪	5 د ي ر ا	I want 5	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
19	♪ Or maybe twelve Because I’ve got the cousins coming ♪	ي ن ي ط ع ا ن ا ل ، ة ت س د 6 ي ف و ي ض	Give me twelve because my guests are six	Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration
20	♪ And you know just how they are ♪	ن و ئ ي ج ي م ه ر م س ل ل	They come for joy	Writing new lyrics to the original music
21	♪ They love these cakes ♪	ي و ل ح و ر م ق ل ا	And mooncakes	Writing lyrics to the original music

Table 11 shows an example of a case where the option of *Writing new lyrics to the original music* was used in a few lines of the lyric. The full lyric is largely translated using “Literal Translation,” as indicated above. However, lines 14, 17, 20, and 21 were the only four translated by creating new lyrics to the original music. The translation kept the rhythm and meaning related to the lines before and after. However, the translation is entirely different from the original text. In line 14, the original text “Waiting through the air” is subtitled into “All days,” which is in harmony with line 13, translated as “we always bake it with sweetness.” Lines 20 and 21, on the other hand, were rendered as new rhymed lines. The researchers noticed that using this option in limited cases would not

affect the overall meaning of the lyric but instead produce a stylistic and rhymed translation. This option may not be recommended in subtitling musical movies. Therefore, it was never used in any lyric of this study. If such an option is used in a complete lyric, it may change the overall meaning, content, and film plot, which these lyrics are meant to produce initially.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The researchers examined the examples extracted from the five movies: *Over the Moon*, *Vivo*, *13: The Musical*, *The Secret Life of Pets*, and *Riverdance*. The five movies were subtitled by Netflix. Upon analyzing the corpus of data, it was concluded that Netflix translated the lyrics using three options that Franzon (2008) proposed. These are: (1) *Not translating the lyrics*, (2) *Translating the lyrics without considering the music*, and (3) *Adapting the lyrics to the original music*.

After examining the above corpus of subtitling lyrics extracted from Netflix movies, it was concluded that not all five options were used in translating lyrics. It was also noticed that the subtitler usually preferred to use the same option in a particular movie. This is sometimes related to the translator's style or other factors, such as the movie's theme and plot.

Not translating the lyrics is not recommended when the movie is musical. Translating the lyrics without considering the music (Literal Translation) is the most used option in subtitling the investigated lyrics. On the other hand, creating new lyrics is not used to render any lyrics fully investigated in this study. However, the translator used a few lines to keep the meaning flowing. "Aesthetic Translation" is a preferable option to use, as it keeps the sense of music along with the meaning. It makes the movie more exciting, and the viewer is likely to enjoy reading rhymed subtitles while seeing and hearing music at the same time. Furthermore, subtitling lyrics does not need to be singable because the viewers can access the foreign product in which they hear the song and absorb the joy and feel of the music. The film plot, musical elements, excitement, and the connotative meaning behind the lyrics are usually the most vital factors in movie production.

It was noticed that the first option, *not translating the lyrics*, which was used in subtitling the lyrics extracted from *The Secret Life of Pets*, had a neutral effect on subtitling. Not translating the lyrics in subtitling was the easiest choice to make. However, it may have affected the film plot and connotative meaning, especially in the case of musical movies, for they contain much crucial information. *Vivo*, *Over The Moon*, and *13 The Musical* movies are considered musical movies. The lyrics which these movies contain are all expressive and informative. Therefore, the researchers found that it is not recommended not to translate musical movie lyrics. However, in the case of *The Secret Life of Pets*, which is considered a non-

musical movie, the lyrics were added to give the viewer a sense of excitement and joy for entertainment purposes, so it is considered acceptable.

The second option was used in subtitling 11 lyrics: “subtitling the lyrics without taking the music into consideration” or “Literal Subtitling.” The researchers came to the conclusion that this was the most common option in subtitling the lyrics. It was found that Netflix used this option as the most suitable one for adhering to the subtitling constraints. It was clear that translating the lyrics without considering the music would help produce well-spaced and timed subtitles.

As for the excitement of the movie, considering that the film plot was not affected, the excitement of the movie will be the same, and the same neutral effect applies to the connotative meaning.

Moving to the third and last option used only in *Vivo*, *Adapting the lyrics to the original music*, it was found that using this option in subtitling the lyrics could be the most suitable choice by Netflix. This option had a positive effect on all the film factors. As described in the previous examples, the researchers noticed that this option would provide a meaningful, singable, and technically sound translation. Current research findings showed that this option balances the subtitling constraints along with musical elements. However, using this option requires creativity to maintain the content and form of a song and then squeeze it into subtitles. Here, the researchers found that “adapting the translation to the original music” can be described as “Aesthetic Translation.”

The findings of the current study showed that a translator might not subtitle the lyrics on certain occasions, such as “Non-Musical Movies.” Netflix used three options in subtitling the lyrics; the most used option was “translating the lyrics without taking the music into consideration.” This study found that the most affected factors in movies when translating lyrics are the film plot, musical elements, excitement, and connotative meaning. Therefore, the effect of not translating the lyrics depends on whether the movie is considered musical or non-musical. On the other hand, subtitling the lyrics without taking the music into consideration has an adverse effect on both the film plot and musical elements. However, it neutrally affects the excitement factor and the connotative meaning. As for “Adapting the translation to the original music,” the researchers concluded that this is the most suitable option for subtitling lyrics because it balances between the subtitling constraints and the musical features. The researchers also concluded that in translating lyrics, the most important factors are the format and stylistic aspects. However, the researchers suggest that cultural aspects may be taken into consideration in further studies.

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