

Options for Dubbing English Movie Lyrics into Arabic

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Abstract: Aims & Objectives: Dubbing lyrics presents a challenge in terms of communicating the form and content, which includes rhyme, rhythm, and other musical elements like meaning. The limitations of dubbing as an audio-visual method necessitate the presence of skilled professional translators and dubbers who can reproduce those aspects in the target language. This study examines the Arabic dubs of English movie lyrics and explores the options available to the translator for rendering both the content and the form. **Methodology:** In order to do this, sixteen lyrics were taken from five dubbed movies. Based on the translation options suggested by Franzon (2008), the collected lyrics were divided into various categories. **Findings & Recommendations:** The findings showed that the option of "not translating the lyrics" was used eight times, and the option of "adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic Translation)" was also used eight times. The findings also showed that the options of "translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration," "translating lyrics and adapting music accordingly," and "writing new lyrics to the original music" were not used. The researchers recommend that future studies focus on translation strategies and devote more time and resources to building a more extensive corpus that could include movies from other genres.

Keywords: Audio-visual Translation (AVT), Lyrics, Dubbing, Arabic-English.

خيارات دبلجة كلمات الأغاني في الأفلام الإنجليزية إلى اللغة العربية

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ملخص: أهداف الدراسة: تشكل دبلجة كلمات الأغاني تحديًا ملحوظًا من حيث الحفاظ على الشكل والمحتوى، بما يشمل ذلك من قافية وإيقاع ومعاني موسيقية. ونظرًا لقيود الدبلجة كوسيلة سمعية بصرية، تبرز الحاجة إلى مترجمين ومدبلجين محترفين قادرين على إعادة إنتاج تلك العناصر بدقة في اللغة الهدف. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل دبلجات كلمات الأغاني في الأفلام الإنجليزية إلى اللغة العربية، واستكشاف الخيارات المتاحة أمام المترجم لنقل المعنى والشكل الفني معًا. **المنهجية:** تم اختيار ستة عشر مقطعًا غنائيًا من خمسة أفلام مدبلجة إلى العربية. وقد تم تصنيف هذه المقاطع بناءً على الخيارات الترجيحية التي اقترحتها فرانزون (2008)، بهدف تحليل الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة. **النتائج والتوصيات:** أظهرت النتائج أن خيار "عدم ترجمة الكلمات الغنائية" وخيار "تكييف الترجمة بما يتناسب مع الموسيقى الأصلية (الترجمة الجمالية)"، قد استُخدما على نحو متساوي، بواقع ثماني مرات لكل منهما. في المقابل، لم يُستخدم أي من الخيارات الأخرى، مثل: "ترجمة الكلمات دون مراعاة الموسيقى"، أو "ترجمة الكلمات وتكييف الموسيقى بناءً عليها"، أو "كتابة كلمات جديدة تتماشى مع الموسيقى الأصلية". توصي الدراسة بأن تركز الأبحاث المستقبلية على استراتيجيات الترجمة في هذا المجال، مع ضرورة تخصيص مزيد من الوقت والموارد لبناء مدونة لغوية موسعة تشمل أفلامًا من أنواع مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الترجمة السمعية البصرية، كلمات الأغاني، الدبلجة، العربية-الإنجليزية.

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Background of the Study

Translation of lyrics is not a common research area in translation studies (Hassan & Haider, 2023). Different scholars examined the translation of lyrics from English into Russian, Swedish, Dutch, and Indonesian (Admiati & Hartono, 2019; Åkerström, 2010; Gritsenko & Aleshinskaya, 2016; Reus, 2020). However, translating lyrics from English into Arabic is an under-researched area. To the best of the author's knowledge, studies of translating lyrics are few (Franzon, 2008; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2016).

This study is an extension of a prior study titled "Options for Subtitling English Movie Lyrics into Arabic" (Hassan & Haider, 2024). In that study, the focus is on translating options used in subtitling movie lyrics. However, the present study focuses on dubbing, exploring the options used in rendering lyrics in Arabic while maintaining their function in the source text. The study deliberately focuses on the musical genre, as lyrics play a crucial role in the movie plot.

With this background in mind, this study aims to examine the translation of lyrics from English into Arabic in one of the AVT modes, namely, dubbing, and explore the translator's options in rendering the content and form of lyrics while considering their musical features.

The present study investigates the dubbed versions of 16 lyrics from five Netflix movies by addressing the following question:

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

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Background: Translation of lyrics is not a common area of research (Riziq et al., 2025). Low (2005) argued that a

translator is faced with specific demands when it comes to options of translating songs compared to other types of translation. Options for translating poetry, songs, and lyrics varied from one scholar to another. For example, Hariyanto (2003) identified three problems in translating poetry. He argued that a translator might face linguistic, literary, aesthetic, and socio-cultural issues. Linguistic problems include collocation and syntactic structure, while literary and aesthetic problems include poetic form, metaphorical expressions, and sounds. The same three issues may occur when translating movie lyrics. For instance, a subtitler or dubber faces problems adhering to the syntactic structure. For example, the dubber should change the order of words to synchronize with the actor's mouth. On the other hand, the subtitler is limited by space and time controls; therefore, shortening the syntactic structure may be necessary.

As for translating songs, Low (2005) argued that to translate a song successfully, a translator should adhere to the methodological framework that contains five criteria: singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme. A translator may face some difficulties transferring all features of lyrics from one language to another due to a translation loss in the process. As Franzon (2005, p. 377) put it, "A song translation that strives to be semantically accurate can hardly be sung to the music written for the original lyrics. A song translation that follows the original music must sacrifice optimal verbal fidelity". Franzon (2008) argued that options for translating songs depend on whether the translation needs to be singable or not. Likewise, the purpose behind the translation is not only to understand the foreign language but also to perform it in another language. This applies to dubbing the movie lyrics. For instance, dubbing the lyrics is part of

the overall outcome of a dubbed movie. Therefore, dubbing the lyrics means not only transferring their meaning but also performing them as original lyrics. Åkerström (2010, p. 29) stated that "translating song lyrics keeping the original sense, the atmosphere and the dynamics of the source texts is a very complex process that requires many translation strategies. He added that translating song lyrics also requires a musical translator, good association skills, a large vocabulary, and good at playing with words".

Arising from song translation difficulties, some scholars suggested a few song translation options. For example, Franzon (2008) proposed five options that a song translator may adopt when translating song lyrics. The first option is leaving the song untranslated, mainly when a translator finds that spoken dialogues are included simultaneously with the song. The second option is translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account. This could be applied when the translator tends to render only the meaning of the lyrics. Another option suggested by Franzon (2008) is writing new lyrics to the original music. In this case, the translator pays more attention to the structure of the music itself. The next option is translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly to preserve the meaning of the lyrics. Adapting the translation to the original music is the last option, in which the translator preserves both the meaning of the lyrics and the music by rendering the meaning of the source lyrics to the target, following the song's original music.

Adding to his song translation options, Franzon (2008, p. 396) reported that "the translator might combine the options outlined above to pursue a particular goal: 'prosody, poetry, and musical sense, or naturalness, phonetic suitability, rhyme or

verbal fidelity.'" Therefore, this study examines the dubbing of movie lyrics according to Franzon (2008) suggested options.

Empirical Studies on Movie Lyrics Translation: Lyrics translation falls under the category of literary works that include songs and poetry. Lyric translation became more important due to the rise in demand for audio-visual materials. Consequently, research on dubbing lyrics became more common. Some empirical research in this area is discussed in this section. Apter (1989) identified a list of difficulties that a song translator may face, especially in the act of dubbing. These include the physical limitations of the vocal apparatus, the metrical rigors of rigidly pre-set prosody, and the need to match verbal sense to musical color. Another study concerned mainly with dubbing lyrics was conducted by Gato (2013), who investigated the process of dubbing song lyrics in musical movies. The researcher provided various insights into some constraints determining the translation for dubbing and subtitling of the musical movie *My Fair Lady*. The researcher asserted that reaching the final product requires knowledge of translation and an understanding of the whole process. The dubbing process, including the translator and the adapter jobs, may sometimes overlap. When dubbing a musical movie, certain constraints must be considered, including rhyme, rhythm, music, content, and visual coherence. However, the researcher found that not all constraints are considered in subtitling a musical movie. For example, a rhyme is generally not respected, music does not interfere with the translation, visual coherence is not as strict as in dubbing, and there is limited spacing.

Similarly, Leal Esteban (2018) investigated the dubbing of the Disney animated feature film *Beauty and the Beast*. The researcher examined how the translators dealt with dubbing

constraints, considering the five criteria set in Peter Low's Pentathlon Principle for song lyrics translation. It was found that the translators rendered rhythm by recreating the original syllable count and distributing words to provide the same stress as the original soundtrack. As for the translation of rhyme, it was conditioned by the relevance it had in each song. It was also noticed that the translators faced difficulties and maintained naturalness. Finally, Abdilah and Untari (2022) investigated the translation techniques for dubbing song lyrics from English into Indonesian of the movie *Moana* using descriptive qualitative analysis and found that the translation strategies are applicable in dubbing the lyrics, and the outcome of the dubbing process is singable and good.

On the other hand, Hassan and Haider (2024) investigated the subtitling of movie lyrics in 5 movies, exploring different audiovisual translation (AVT) options and providing insights into how lyrics are rendered in Arabic under various constraints. Abu-Rayyash and Haider (2023) also examined the options of subtitling movie lyrics from English into Arabic. Both studies focus on how Netflix subtitlers employ various translation strategies. Using Franzon's (2008) framework, Hassan and Haider (2024) analyze 16 lyrics from five subtitled musical films, while Abu-Rayyash and Haider (2023) expand the corpus to 60 lyrics from 10 musical movies, allowing for a broader examination of subtitling strategies. The studies reveal that literal subtitling, which neglects musical elements, is the most commonly used strategy. Hassan and Haider (2024) found that translating lyrics without considering music was the most frequent approach, occurring in 11 cases. Similarly, Abu-Rayyash and Haider (2023) found that literal subtitling accounted for 60% of the

cases, highlighting a preference for textual clarity over musical synchronization. Other options, such as deletion (not translating the lyrics) and aesthetic subtitling (adapting the translation to music), were used less frequently. Both studies highlight the challenge of balancing fidelity to the original text with audiovisual coherence, underscoring the difficulties subtitlers face in maintaining meaning, poetic structure, and synchronization.

In contrast to previous studies that concentrated on subtitling, this study expands the analysis to dubbing. This study examines dubbing options through empirical analysis, providing a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the effects of these translation options on movie elements.

Methodology

A parallel corpus of 16 lyrics was collected from five English movies that were dubbed into Arabic by Netflix. The researchers detail the corpus of the study and the processes followed in data gathering and analysis in this part.

Source of Dubbed Materials

The chosen movies were dubbed by Netflix translators. According to Abu-Rayyash, Haider, and Al-Adwan (2023), Netflix is the most widely used platform in the Arab world. Interestingly, Netflix is a subscription-based service that enables users to stream movies and TV shows on a variety of devices without interruptions (Al-Abbas & Haider, 2021). It gives users access to the very finest shows, movies, documentaries, and television shows. Members of Netflix have access to any content at any time, without advertisements. The fact that Netflix streams content in more than 30 languages and offers dubbed versions of many of its movies makes it the ideal option for gathering data for our study.

Corpus of the Study

This section describes selecting the films for analysis, ensuring that the study focuses on musical movies with lyrics that directly contribute to the story. The criteria for movies to be included in the corpus were as follows: (1) they had to be dubbed by Netflix, (2) they had

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 lists the names of the chosen movies along with their genre and year of production. The first movie, *Over The Moon*, is an animated musical about a young girl who longs for her mother to come back after learning that her father has started seeing someone else. In order to show her father that he can only love her mother, the young girl chooses to embark on an expedition that involves building a rocket and visiting the moon. A pet, "Kinkajou," goes on a musical odyssey in the animated musical *Vivo*, where he meets new people and rediscovers a new purpose in life.

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 dubbed lyrics were transcribed. The transcription was given to three master's

to have lyrics, (3) they had to be dubbed in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), (4) they had to have a high IMDB rating, and (5) they all had to have a 7+ maturity rating. The researchers chose five movies for this study, as shown in Table 1.

The Secret Life of Pets is an animated movie about two pet dogs who put their differences aside and go to save their master. *13: The Musical* is a musical movie about a 13-year-old boy who struggles after his parents' divorce and has to move from his country, enter a new school, and meet new friends. Finally, *Riverdance* is another animated movie about a boy and a girl living an adventure in a fantasy world to learn to love life and river dance.

In the five movies that were chosen, 16 lyrics were extracted. The titles of the lyrics and the movie from which they were taken are displayed in Table 2.

students in Audio-visual and Mass Media Translation for verification. Their feedback and

suggestions were incorporated before the analysis was conducted.

Following data retrieval, the English script was adjusted to match the Arabic dub versions. The information in English and Arabic was copied and put into an Excel document. A sheet with two columns was used to save each lyric. The English source text is located in the first column, and the Arabic target text is found in the second column.

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

For the purposes of this study, the 16 collected lyrics were divided into various groups based on the translation suggestions made 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 dubbing options for the 16 investigated lyrics.

Table (3): Classification of lyrics based on their translation options.

Movie	No.	Lyric Title	Dubbing Options
Over The Moon	1	Change's	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
	2	Mooncakes	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
	3	Fly Away	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
	4	Rocket	Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)
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	Not translating the lyrics
	10	Wait until you're	Not translating the lyrics
	11	Opportunity	Not translating the lyrics
	12	Lame set place on earth	Not translating the lyrics
The Secret Life of Pets	13	Fiver	Not translating the lyrics
	14	Dinga	Not translating the lyrics
Riverdance	15	The Dark	Not translating the lyrics
	16	Apart from you	Not translating the lyrics

According to the classification of lyrics outlined in Table 3, the researchers counted the

number of times each option was used, as shown in Table 4.

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

Translation Option	Movie	Dubbing
Not Translating the Lyrics	Over the Moon	0
	13: The Musical	4
	The Secret Life of Pets	2
	Riverdance	2
	Vivo	0
Translating lyrics without taking the music into consideration	Over The Moon	0
	13: The Musical	0
	The Secret Life of Pets	0
	Riverdance	0
	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

Translation Option	Movie	Dubbing
Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic Translation)	Over The Moon	4
	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

Table 4 shows that only two options were used in translating the dubbed version of the investigated movies, which are *Not translating the lyrics (Deletion)* and *Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic Translation)*. The dubbed version of the movies used the first option in the movies *13: The Musical*, *The Secret Life of Pets*, and *Riverdance*. However, it was concluded that not translating the lyrics in the dubbed version of the movies could have created a kind of ambiguity for some viewers, especially since the target audience of any dubbed movie includes blind, elderly people or children who prefer to listen to the dialogue in their own language. *Not translating the lyrics* may also affect the filmic plot. For example, lyrics in musical movies contain dialogues, thoughts, and ideas. Therefore, not translating them would affect the final product. This is with the understanding that Netflix guidelines regarding dubbing music state that:

‘In content where songs are required to be dubbed, the ideal expectation is for the dubbing actors to be able to perform the songs. However, when voice actors are not able to sing, our guideline is to cast a singer that matches the dubbing actor to make sure there is voice consistency between the dubbed dialogues and the songs’.

The researchers found that the procedure taken by Netflix in these movies is to go back to the original soundtrack, which also results in

providing weak and unprofessional outcomes. The second option used in dubbing lyrics is *Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic)*, as the examples in the next section show.

Qualitative Analysis

The researchers conducted an analysis of the dubbed version of the lyrics included in the five movies extracted from Netflix.

Not translating the lyrics (Deletion): Table 5 shows that the option of deleting the lyrics was used frequently in the dubbed versions. It was also noticed that the lyrics in the dubbed version of *13 The Musical* were kept untranslated. However, this may cause ambiguity to the viewer watching the dubbed version, especially those having knowledge of the source text.

In principle, there are many factors a translator should consider when resorting to the option of *not translating the lyrics*. According to Franzon (2008), this option is frequently used by many translators. Netflix dubbers use this option frequently while maintaining the original version of the lyric. However, some questions stand out here. These include ‘Is using the option of deletion a good choice in all cases?’ ‘Is it common with some AVT modes compared to others?’ ‘Does the use of this option affect the plot of the movie?’ To answer these questions, a detailed analysis of lyrics is provided in Table 6, which shows the dubbing

options for rendering the lyric titled “13”
retrieved from *13: The Musical*.

Table 5: Dubbing the English lyric “13” into Arabic.

No.	Source Text	Dubbed Version
1	♪ Picture me: Just another cool kid ♪	-----
2	♪ In NYC, Near the park and the Met ♪	-----
3	♪ Got my crew. Everything was great ♪	-----
4	♪ And I never knew Just how bad it would get ♪	-----
5	♪ Who'd have guessed Dad would ruin everything? ♪	-----
6	♪ Mom's depressed, And her lawyers are mean ♪	-----
7	♪ Now I'm stressed. Life is a disaster. ♪	-----
8	♪ And I'm cracking from the strain, Going totally insane ♪	-----
9	♪ And I'm just about to turn, Just about to turn, just about to turn ♪	-----
10	♪ Thirteen! ♪	-----
11	♪ Everything switches ♪	-----
12	- ♪ Thirteen! ♪ ♪ Everything turns around ♪	-----
13	#NAME?	-----
14	- ♪ Thirteen! ♪ ♪ Hideaway underground ♪	-----
15	♪ Thirteen! ♪	-----
16	♪ Can I get through it? ♪	-----
17	- ♪ Thirteen! ♪ ♪ Life'll change overnight ♪	-----
18	- ♪ Thirteen! ♪ ♪ How do I do it? ♪	-----
19	- ♪ Thirteen! ♪ ♪ Nothing is going right ♪	-----
20	♪ The best and the worst And the most and the least ♪	-----
21	♪ And the crazy and the scary. And I'm standing on the edge! ♪	-----

Table 5 shows that the dubber opted not to translate the lyrics. Of course, opting for this translation option is not recommended, one reason for this is related to the type of movie being investigated. According to the example provided in Table 5, the movie “*13: The Musical*” is an American musical film about a 12-year-old kid forced to move from New York to Indiana, affected by his parents’ divorce. In this movie, all lyrics have contributed to developing the plot. Therefore, it is more practical to translate the lyrics rather than deleting them. Considering that the content of the lyrics adds much value to the filmic plot, it is recommended to include them in the dubbed version. Hence, Netflix, being one of the most popular movie platforms worldwide, should avoid such a practice. Not reflecting the lyrics of a musical movie in the dubbed version may disappoint and dissatisfy some viewers who opted for this AVT mode.

Notably, when opting not to translate the lyrics in the movie *13 The Musical*, the Netflix dubber kept the original soundtrack. Another procedure that is followed by Netflix when not dubbing the lyrics is allowing viewers to see the translated subtitles of the lyrics on the screen. However, the said procedures adopted by Netflix may result in losing the primary goal of producing a fully-dubbed version of any movie, namely, naturalness. When returning to the original soundtrack in a dubbed movie, the product will most likely become weak and lack naturalness.

Another case of using the option of *Not translating the lyrics* occurred in *The Secret Life of Pets*, a family/ comedy movie about a pet dog named Max who was not pleased when his master brought home another dog named Duke. However, they put their differences aside when they knew that their master was in danger. Table 6 shows the dubbing options for rendering the lyric “Dinga” retrieved from *The Secret Life of Pets*.

Table (6): Dubbing the English lyric “Dinga” into Arabic.

No.	Source Text	Dubbed Version
1	We go together Like rama lamalama ka di nga da dinga dong	-----
2	Remembered forever	-----
3	As shoo-bop sha wadda wadda yippity boom de boom	-----
4	Chang chang changitty chang sha-bop	-----
5	That's the way it should be	-----
6	Wha-oooh, yeah!	-----
7	We're for each other Like a wop ba-ba lu-bop and wop bam boom.	-----
8	Just like my brother is	-----
9	Sha-na-na-na-na-na-na-na yippity dip de doom	-----
10	Chang chang changitty chang sha-bop	-----
11	We'll always be together, Ah!	-----
12	Wha-oooh, yeah!	-----
13	We go together Like rama lama lama ka dinga da dinga dong	-----

Table 6 is an example of *not translating the lyrics* in a non-musical dubbed movie. Considering that *The Secret Life of Pets* is not a musical movie, the researchers found that the lyrics of the movie did not add much value to the filmic plot. For example, the lyric *Dinga* in Table 6 addresses the values of working together, having fun, and being good friends. Although the primary purpose of adding this lyric to the movie was to provide a sense of joy and happiness that the dogs Max and Duke are now working together to save their master, no dialogue or valuable information was included in the lyrics. Therefore, using this option in this movie did not affect the filmic plot. However, it significantly affected the naturalness of the dubbed version of the movie. Hence, returning to the original soundtrack means ignoring all the musical elements of the lyrics. Gato (2013) explained that dubbing music requires more attention to musical elements such as rhyme, rhythm, content, and visual coherence. Therefore, *not translating the lyric* “Dinga” in the dubbed version of the movie will hinder providing a natural full movie in the target language to the target audience.

Not translating the lyrics in dubbing is not a recommended option. 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. Unlike Aleksandrowicz (2019, p. 175), who argued that “this option is applied mostly in subtitles when the translator prioritizes the content over the form,” the current study's findings showed that Netflix deleted the lyrics in the dubbed versions.

Adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic Translation): Gato (2013) lists three aspects to take into account when dubbing songs: repetitions, like rhyme and intratextual markers of significance; equivalences, like universal and cultural references; and technical aspects. These three factors are related to the option of *Adapting the translation to the original music* because they aim to reflect the meaning held by the lyric along with the musical elements of a song such as rhyme, rhythm, and melody. Finally, the technical aspects are related to the dubbing constraints pertaining to lip synchrony, fades, breathing and gestures, and naturalness. Table 7 discusses the dubbed version of the lyric “Change’e” extracted from the movie *Over the Moon*.

Table (7): The dubbing of the lyric “Change’e” extracted from *Over The Moon*.

No.	Original Text	Dubbed Version	Back Translation
1	♪ Long ago, an ancient story ♪	الاسطورة كانت بتقول	The legend used to say
2	♪ Beautiful and kind Change ♪	عن حلوة اسمها (تشانج اه)	About a beauty named (Chang ah)
3	♪ And a handsome man named Houy Were in love ♪	وعن واحد اسمو (هووي) وقعو أوام	And about someone called (Houy) and directly
4	True love?	في غرام	Fell in love
5	♪ True love ♪	في غرام	Fell in love
6	♪ But she took a magic potion ♪	شربت الخلطة مسحورة	She drank a magical potion
7	♪ Giving immortality ♪	عايزه تحقق الخلود	She wanted to be immortal
8	♪ Then she floated, leaving her true love ♪	ثم وصلت لقمر السما	Then she reached the sky
9	♪ And she waits for him On the moon above ♪	مستنيه هناك .. تحلم باللقا	Waiting for him. dreams of the meeting
10	♪ Longing, hoping for her one true love ♪	عايشة تحلم بالامل البعيد	She lives dreaming of far hope
11	♪ Now, she waits for him on the moon above ♪	اللي فيه الحبيب .. يجي من جديد	Where her lover comes again
12	♪ Forever? ♪	للأبد!	Forever
13	♪ Forever ♪	للأبد!	Forever

Table 7 is an example of using the option of *Adapting the translation to the original music* in rendering the dubbed version of the lyric "Chang'e" extracted from *Over the Moon*. As mentioned earlier, *Over the Moon* is a musical movie about a girl who travels to the moon on her rocket to prove to her father that true love never fades and that he should love her mother even if she dies. Furthermore, lyrics in the movie are significant and carry a direct meaning that affects the filmic plot. This means that the lyrics should be fully rendered in the dubbed version. Table 7 shows that Netflix dubbers used the option of *adapting the translation to the original music* in the rendering of the entire lyric. Examining the back translation, it can be found that the translation was close to being aesthetic, as the translator kept the connotative meaning of the original text and added some musical elements to produce a singable lyric. For example, line three, "And a handsome man named Houy Were in love," and line four, "True love?" were translated as "وعن واحد اسمو (هووي) وقعو أوام" and "في غرام." The translator used the same syllable in the last word of each line, "/am/," producing an open vowel ending with a bilabial

consonant, which together creates a rhyme. The translator also used a bilabial consonant to adhere to the dubbing constraints regarding lip-syncing. It can be noticed that in the original and the target language, the two sounds, namely, "/v/ and /m/," are labio-dental and bilabial, respectively. Therefore, the final product of the dubbed version would have a singable lyric that maintains the original text's meaning and a well-synchronized speech with lip movement.

Gato (2013) argued that rhyme is the most crucial element of songs, as it needs time and creativity. Another example of this lyric is found in line eight, "Then she floated leaving her true love," and line nine, "And she waits for him On the moon above." The two lines are rhymed and written in a stylistic manner with imagination and creativity. They were rendered as "مستنيه هناك. تحلم باللقا" and "ثم وصلت لقمر السما" using "Aesthetic Translation," where the overall meaning that she traveled to the moon and waited for meeting her love was maintained. The dubbed version of these two lines also rhymes, using the same final open vowel in the last syllable of each. It was also noticed that the translator had to replace the

phrase "floated leaving" with one word, "reached," to adhere to lip synchronization constraints. The researchers found that using this option in the lyric "Chang'e" is the best choice for a translator to make. The translator used aesthetic translation to provide an exciting final dubbed version of the movie, whereas using any other option may cause a larger loss in translation. For example, using literal translation will not maintain the musical elements of the lyric, and the final product will

probably lose the most crucial aspect to be considered in dubbing, which is synchronization. Moreover, using another option rather than "Adapting the translation to the original music" or (Aesthetic Translation) may affect the filmic plot.

Another example of using this option was found in dubbing the lyric "One More Song" extracted from the movie *Vivo*, as Table 8 shows.

Table (8): The dubbing of the lyric One More Time extracted from *Vivo*.

No.	Original	Netflix Dubbing	Back Translation
1	♪ I thought the songs would never end ♪	ظننتها لن تنتهي	I thought it would never ends
2	♪ Now it's so quiet ♪	الصمت خانق	Silence is
3	♪ All I wanna do... Is play again with you, my friend ♪	كم اريد ان اعرف معك من جديد	How much I need to play with you again
4	♪ You fell asleep humming music ♪	غلبك النوم بعد الغناء	You fell asleep after singing
5	♪ The sun came up, you stayed at rest ♪	سطعت الشمس ولم تنهض	Sun raised, and you didn't wake up
6	♪ Now, here I am ♪	ها انا الان	Here I am now
7	♪ All I have left is one request ♪	لم تتركلي سوى امنيته	You left me with only one wish
8	♪ One more song, just one more ♪	اغنية اخيرة	One last song
9	♪ Give us an encore, don't go away ♪	اعد البهجة ولا ترحل	Bring the joy back, and don't leave
10	♪ We still have music to play ♪	موسيقى لا تنفذ	Music never runs out
11	♪ Hey! I said one more, son. Just one more ♪	مهلا قلت اغنيته اخيره	Hey! I said one last song.
12	♪ All that I long for, give me a sign It's not too late ♪	صارت مسعاهي فالترشدني	It became my goal, so lead me
13	♪ It's not too late ♪	لم يفت الوقت لم يفت الوقت	It's not too late, it's not too late
14	[crowd] ♪ One more song, one more song ♪	اغنية اخيرة	One last song
15	♪ One more song, one more song ♪	اغنية اخيرة	One last song
16	♪ One more song, one more song ♪	اغنية اخيرة	One last song
17	♪ If you live on, It's through your music ♪	تبقى حيا عبر الموسيقى	You remain live through music
18	♪ One more song, one more song ♪	اغنية اخيرة	One last song
19	♪ A song for someone else to hear ♪	الفتها من اجل الحبيب	I wrote it for the loved one
20	♪ One more song, one more song ♪	اغنية اخيرة	One last song
21	♪ So I'll take it home where it belongs ♪	لذا يجب ان اوصلها	So I need to drive her
22	♪ One more song, one more song ♪		One last song
23	♪ All I have to do Is sing louder than my fear ♪	ساغني بصوت اعلى من خوفي	I will sing higher than my fear
24	♪ I need you here for one more song ♪	احتاجك في اغنية اخرى	I need you in another song
25	♪ Just one more. You need an encore. I need to go ♪	علي ان اصل في الميعاد	I have to arrive on time
26	♪ Get there in time for the show ♪	وقت العرض على الابواب	The show time is on the doors
27	♪ Let everybody know There's one more song ♪	سائشر ان هناك اغنية اخيرة	I will spread about a new song
28	♪ Just one more Time to be strong for the journey ahead ♪	اغنية اخيرة رحلتي تحتاج مني قوة	One last song.. my journey needs me to be strong
29	♪ Sing through the doubt Sing through the dread ♪	عبر الشكوك وعبر الرهبة	Through doubts and through fear
30	♪ With a scream and a shout, Break through the fear ♪	ساكسر القيود بارادتي	I will break the chains with my will
31	♪ Like the sun through the clouds ♪	لك شمس وسط غيوم	Like a star in the middle of clouds
32	♪ Like you're still here No crying allowed ♪	انت تحميني البكاء ممنوع	You protect me; crying is not allowed
33	♪ I'll try to get out I'll try to be strong ♪	علي الخروج بعزم وهمة	I have to go out with determination and endeavor

No.	Original	Netflix Dubbing	Back Translation
34	♪ Yes, I'm moving on ♪	سأهزم المحنة	I will beat the crisis
35	♪ It's time for one more song ♪	من أجل الاغنية	For the song

Table 8 shows an example extracted from *Vivo* and rendered by adapting the translation to the original music (Aesthetic Translation). *Vivo* is an animated musical movie with a considerable amount of lyrics, i.e., the film's scenario and plot are expressed through music. Therefore, music is the most significant part of the movie's elements, so the translator should concentrate on choosing the most suitable translation option when rendering the lyrics. Adapting *the translation to the original music* (Aesthetic Translation) is the best choice for translating this lyric. Considering the original text, the lyric contains many metaphors, similes, and specific phrases linked to the movie's core plot. For example, in line nine, "Give us an encore, do not go away," the main character who performed this lyric "the Kinkajou" is talking about his friend who died, wishing that he can give him a sign or signal that somehow he is still around him. The metaphorical expression used in this line to express an impossible wish may not be rendered literally. Therefore, the dubbed version was "اعد البهجه ولا ترحل". The word "encore" literally means "to appear," which may not provide the intended meaning if used. Therefore, the dubber used the word "joy" and provided an aesthetic translation to maintain the rhythm of the lyric and render the connotative meaning without manipulating the plot.

Another example where the translator used aesthetic translation to render the original text is line 30, which reads, "With a scream and a shout Break through the fear". In rendering this line, the translator used paraphrase to maintain the original text's connotative meaning. The back translation, "I will break the chains with

my will," may seem completely different from the original. However, the intended meaning that Kinkajou defeated his fear during his journey was delivered in the target text, and the dubbing constraints related to lip-synching were considered. The translator used an open Arabic vowel in the word "ارادتي," producing the sound "/i/" to synchronize with the long open vowel "i" in the word "fear" of the source text. Chaume (2004) reported that to speed up the dubbing actor's synchronization task, the dialogue writer should change the words that do not phonetically coincide with the screen actors' lip motions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The process of dubbing English movie lyrics into Arabic requires careful attention to lexical nuance (Ammari & Al-Ahmad, 2023), pragmatic strategies across cultures (Ja'afreh, 2023), and semantic accuracy (Meqdad, Al-Bayyari, & Al-Taher, 2023). Based on the analysis of the dubbed version of the lyrics, only two options were used in translating the dubbed version of the lyrics extracted from the investigated movies: *Not Translating the Lyrics* and *Adapting the Translation to the Original Music*. Due to the nature of dubbing, the target text needs to be fully synchronized with the actual actors' lips performing the source language, and it also needs to fulfill the objective of a song. The translator should consider all musical elements, or at least the most vital. Therefore, Netflix decided to either provide a well-performed dubbed lyric in the target text or not translate it at all. The researchers also found that Netflix used the option of not translating the lyrics eight out of 16 times, representing 50% of the dubbed data.

This means that Netflix did not provide a fully dubbed version of the movies that contained lyrics.

It is noteworthy that the procedure that Netflix decided to adhere to when not translating the lyrics is to return to the original soundtrack. Such a solution is not recommended, especially in the case of a well-known platform like Netflix. Moreover, the viewer may lose interest in the movie when switching between languages. Such a procedure may result in distraction, ambiguity, and loss of the filmic plot, because viewers will most likely lose track of the story. Musical elements are also negatively affected, i.e., *not translating the lyrics* means ignoring all musical elements, and viewers will only listen to the original soundtrack without understanding what it is about or whether this music is essential or not. The excitement of the movie is also negatively affected. *Not translating the music* may cause viewers to lose interest in the movie, especially in the case of dubbing, when the viewers keep watching the movie in Arabic and suddenly go back to the original soundtrack, which is English.

In contrast, the second option used by Netflix translators, namely *adapting the translation to the original music*, is recommended when dubbing lyrics. This option is very similar to aesthetic translation, which combines the connotative meaning with the musical elements of a song, producing a singable, meaningful lyric in the target language. It is worth mentioning that the genre of the two investigated movies, in which the option of *adapting the translation to the original music* was used, is musical. Therefore, it is important to provide an aesthetic

translation of the lyrics in order to keep the flow of the filmic plot.

It is recommended to examine more expansive and diverse dubbing options not employed in this study, which could further enhance the results and constraints found in dubbing movie lyrics. Future studies could investigate different approaches that focus on a single movie. Further research could examine movies in which translators employ creative solutions rather than conventional methods that prioritize balancing meaning, rhythm, and audience preferences. Exploring new strategies would increase the options available to dubbers and subtitlers.

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