Strategies of Subtitling Egyptian Idiomatic Expressions and Proverbs into English

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ABSTRACT

Several platforms, such as Netflix, offer subtitles of different works and movies in several languages, including Arabic and English. In this study, the researchers discuss the strategies used to overcome the challenges subtitlers face when translating Egyptian phraseological units, such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs, into English. A parallel corpus of four movies, namely اتيت رهيبة *My horrible grandma,* عسل أسود *Bittersweet,* الباشا تلميذ *The Student cop*, and عمارة يعقوبيان *Yacoubian Building*, was compiled from scratch. The idiomatic expressions and proverbs were identified and analyzed according to Baker's (1992) taxonomies. The translation strategy of "*paraphrasing*" was the most frequently used in translating proverbs. In rendering idiomatic expressions, the subtitlers mostly resorted to the strategy of "*translating by paraphrasing using unrelated words to deal with the non-equivalent expression*". "*Mistranslation*" was detected in some cases, most likely due to the lack of the target culture knowledge and not finding appropriate equivalents. The subtitlers sometimes used literal translation, which distorted the meaning and resulted in unnatural translations. The results also revealed that some expressions that were repeatedly used in the movies were translated differently according to the context. This study can be beneficial to translators and translation students, especially those interested in subtitling movies and translating proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

Keywords: *subtitling; translation strategies; idiomatic expressions; proverbs; Arabic; English*

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process of transferring a text from one language to another, taking into consideration the cultural aspects of the two languages. It is a process of conveying not only words but also the sense of the text. According to Nida and Taber (1974, p. 12), translation is defined as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style."

One of the aspects of translation prosperity is the emergence of some new sub-fields in translation studies. One of these fields is Audiovisual Translation (AVT). AVT is defined as "a specialized branch of translation which deals with the transfer of multimodal and multimedia texts into another language and/or culture" (González, 2009, p. 13). It has become more popular since the film industry has flourished. The film industry has widely developed in different regions with productions in other languages, especially English. This led to a great cultural exchange between different countries and cultures. This study focuses on the Arab and Western cultures and how AV products became available and intelligible to the peoples of different cultures, thanks to audiovisual translation.

Nowadays, there are many platforms, such as Netflix, which offer subtitles in different languages (Al-Abbas & Haider, 2021; Haider & Hussein, 2022; Samha et al., 2023). In the Arab world, the subtitles of foreign movies are now available in Arabic. Similarly, Arabic movies are now subtitled in different languages. In this study, the researchers discuss the challenges faced by subtitlers when translating idiomatic expressions and proverbs in Egyptian movies. In addition, the translation strategies that are used to overcome these challenges are also examined. The present study investigates four movies: "التلميذ الباشا *My horrible grandma*," "رهيبة تيتا دوسأ لسع" *Bittersweet*," *The Student cop*," and "عمارة يعقوبيان *Yacoubian Building*."

II. Research Gap, Significance and Questions

Languages are containers and carriers of cultures. Transferring cultural and linguistic components is challenging due to the incongruence between the target and source cultures' norms (Al-Khalafat & Haider, 2022; Al Saideen et al., 2022). This study investigates how Egyptian idiomatic expressions and proverbs are subtitled in a way that conveys the intended meaning with a minimum loss. Most idiomatic expressions have connotative and implicit meanings, requiring translators to have deep knowledge of Egyptian culture on the one hand and Western culture on the other to deliver the meaning accurately. Phraseological units, such as Idiomatic expressions and proverbs, need special strategies to be rendered appropriately. For example, the Egyptian proverb إن غاب القط العب يا فار, which is translated literally as *when the cat is away, the mouse will play,* is said to show a lack of confidence, i.e., when the person is not present in the place, other people might take the opportunity and do whatever they want.

Several studies have investigated subtitling English movies and series into Arabic (Al-Zgoul & Al-Salman, 2022; Debbas & Haider, 2020; Silwadi & Almahasees, 2022). However, only a few examined the problems and strategies of subtitling Arabic movies into English. In this study, the process of the English subtitling of Phraseological units, such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs in four Egyptian movies, is investigated. Subtitlers have limited space and time to convey the message, so they are expected to develop a translation that suits the spatial and temporal constraints. Georgakopoulou (2009) classified the challenges faced by the subtitler into three categories, namely, technical, textual, and linguistic constraints. Nowadays, many platforms, such as Netflix, offer subtitles in different languages. In the Arab world, the subtitles of foreign movies are now available in Arabic. Similarly, Arabic movies are now subtitled in different languages. In this study, the researchers discuss the challenges the subtitlers face when translating Phraseological units, such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs in Egyptian movies. The translation strategies they resort to overcome these challenges are also examined.

This study investigates the problems subtitlers may face when translating Phraseological units, such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs in some Egyptian movies, into English. Moreover, it discusses the strategies that are used in rendering these expressions in the following four Egyptian movies, namely, "تيتي رهيبة *My horrible grandma*," "عسل أسود *Bittersweet*," "الباشا تلميذ *The Student cop*," and "عمارة يعقوبيان *YYacoubian Building*."

The current study addresses the following questions:

1   What are the challenges that subtitlers face when translating idiomatic expressions and proverbs in Egyptian movies into English?

2   What are the strategies used in translating Egyptian idiomatic expressions and proverbs into English?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the theoretical background related to translation strategies and reviews some empirical studies that discuss the same topic.

Audiovisual Translation and Subtitling

Bassnett (2013) discussed the history of translation studies and how the field has become a necessary academic discipline. She argued that "translation today is an increasingly common human condition, and the rapid rise of electronic media has also served to heighten awareness of the importance of communicating across cultures" (Bassnett, 2013, p. 1). Similarly, Mayoral et al. (1988, p. 2) discussed the challenges that the translator faces when translating "texts in association with other communication media." Chiaro (2012, p. 30) defined AVT as "the term used to refer to the transfer from one language to another of the verbal components contained in audiovisual works and products." In addition, although the word "audiovisual" has two main parts, namely *audio* (something to be heard) and *visual* (to be seen). AVT has many types, such as subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, and audio description. Subtitling is defined as:

"a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)." (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p. 8)

As noted above, audiovisual translation is a sub-discipline of translation that is gaining popularity. It is also referred to as multimedia translation. Pérez-González (2014) discussed that within translation studies, audiovisual translation is the fastest-expanding field. The need for more robust theoretical frameworks to investigate emerging text types is addressed. Moreover, addressing new methodological challenges (such as the compilation, analysis, and reproduction of audiovisual data) and comprehending new discourse communities bound together by the production and consumption of audiovisual texts are also highlighted. AVT is a general umbrella that comprises different modes, mainly subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, and audio description. These modes help people get access to audiovisual materials in different languages.

The focus of this study is on subtitling, which is defined as captions that are usually written at the bottom of the screen. So, subtitlers transfer the spoken code into a written one. According to De Linde and Kay (2016), subtitling is divided into intralingual (closed caption), which allows the viewer to turn on or off the subtitles on the screen, and interlingual (open caption), in which the viewer cannot turn the subtitles off. Subtitling is also known as on-screen translation and film translation. Gottlieb (2004) investigated whether subtitling is considered a type of translation or not and argued that "I will suggest labelling all types of interlingual transfer 'translation,' as they all share one basic quality: verbal messages are recreated in another language" (Gottlieb, 2004, p. 219). The subtitling process is governed mainly by two aspects, namely, spatial and temporal constraints.

Subtitling, which is also known as on-screen translation, is usually no longer than two lines on the bottom of the screen. Dubbing, on the other hand, is a replacement of

the original audio track with a new audio track in the target language (Alrousan & Haider, 2022). Subtitling and dubbing make the cultural exchange easier, and films are part of this cultural exchange (Abu-Rayyash et al., 2023; Haider et al., 2023). For example, monolingual Arab people are now able to watch films in other languages and enjoy them because the subtitles are available. The same applies to foreign non-Arab audiences who can enjoy Arabic films because of the availability of different AVT modes, mainly subtitling and dubbing. Subtitling is generally preferable to dubbing by production companies because it costs less, enables people to learn a new language, and gives people with hearing impairment the opportunity to have access to AV products, to mention a few.

Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) thoroughly investigated subtitling and argued that subtitlers should be able to make three things: spotting, rendering, and adaptation. They emphasized the importance of teaching AVT under the umbrella of translation studies. Moreover, they outlined different translation strategies that are viewed as the best taxonomy for subtitling. These include calque, substitution, lexical recreation, loan translation, explicitation, transposition, compensation, omission, and addition. Diaz -Cintas (2005) highlighted the strong relationship between subtitling and technology. He pointed out that subtitling has many advantages, making it the preferred mode of AVT. The three essential points that characterize subtitling are the fastest mode, the lowest in cost, and the most flexible because it can be used to render almost all kinds of AV programs and movies.

Translating phraseological Units

The study of words and phrases used in a certain language or context is known as phraseology. It includes the study of idioms, collocations, and other fixed or semi-fixed expressions that have a clear meaning that cannot be deduced from the meanings of the words that make up each expression. Phraseology is crucial in disciplines like linguistics, lexicography, translation and language teaching because it can help us better comprehend linguistic usage patterns and enhance our communication abilities.

The study of proverbs, their history, interpretations, and applications is known as paremiology. Proverbs are brief sayings that frequently employ metaphor or analogy to express a universal truth or nugget of wisdom. Paremiology involves investigating how proverbs are employed in modern language and literature as well as the cultural and historical circumstances in which they first appear. Since proverbs are frequently transmitted orally and can disclose a lot about a culture's values and beliefs, this field of study is frequently linked to folklore and anthropology. Paremiology can be used to examine how proverbs continue to influence our communication and worldviews, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of language and society.

Larson (1984, p. 20) defined idioms as "a string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words". In contrast, proverbs are defined as "special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings" (Ghazala, 1995, p. 138). The meanings of idioms and proverbs do overlap. They are considered formulaic sequences. These items may include collocations, idioms, proverbs, and lexical phrases and bundles, to mention a few (Wray & Perkins, 2000). In contrast, Wood (2019) argued that some researchers used "idioms" in a broader sense encompassing slang expressions and proverbs. Corpas Pastor (2013) differentiated between idioms and proverbs are both examples of figurative language that is used frequently in speech. There are some distinctions between them, though, as Table 1.

Table 1. *Differences between idioms and proverbs (Corpas Pastor, 2013)*

Differences	Idioms	Proverbs
Definition	Idioms are expressions that have a metaphorical meaning that cannot be grasped from the literal meaning of the words.	Proverbs are short sayings that represent a universal truth or piece of wisdom.
Origin	Proverbs are typically passed down through generations as a part of a culture	Idioms can be more recent and frequently develop in response to certain cultural or historical events
Structure	Proverbs frequently adhere to a predetermined format and are frequently expressed as whole sentences.	idioms might be shorter and do not always have a comprehensive grammatical structure

Differences	Idioms	Proverbs
metaphorical vs. Literal	Idioms are always metaphorical and cannot be understood literally	Proverbs are frequently intended to be taken literally and offer sound advice
Uses	Idioms are more frequently employed to convey a specific tone or emotion	but Proverbs can be used to offer advice, make a point, or depict a situation
Examples	Pulling someone's leg = To make fun of someone	Actions speak louder than words

As Table 1 shows, idioms, on the one hand, are patterns whose meaning cannot be understood from the meaning of individual words. For example, "*to be fed up with someone*" means to be irritated and annoyed with them. Proverbs, on the other hand, are popular short sayings that express some obvious truth or familiar experience. They carry a moral or practical social message. An example of a proverb is "*those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones*".

Idiomatic expressions and proverbs are essential to any culture (Akbari, 2013). They are used in daily conversations by native speakers of any language. So, when translating them, subtitlers should consider the culture of the two languages, i.e., the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Every language has its idioms and proverbs that make it distinct. Nida (1964) stated that the source language meaning is influenced and incorporated by the cultural context in which it was developed. Given the above, it is evident that there are some differences between the Arab and Western cultures, which made rendering some linguistic and cultural aspects difficult. Therefore, translators need to be aware of such differences to overcome any cultural differences that may hinder the primary purpose of the translated text.

Conveying meanings from one language to another is not an easy task. Moreover, literal translation is not the best solution in all cases. Translation strategies are ways of solving problems that translators face. Some of the distinguishing features of translation for subtitling include condensing and reformulating content (Romero-Fresco, 2009).

Unlike other translation methods, subtitles have a limited amount of space and must be timed to the action on screen, thus, the translator must say the same thing in less time. As a result, subtitle translators must cut down lengthy passages of conversation or text into briefer, easier-to-read words for the audience. They must also take into account the average viewer's reading speed, the language's complexity, and the setting in which the conversation is being used.

In subtitling, content can be rephrased because some cultural or linguistic intricacies could be difficult to translate accurately into another language. This calls for subtitle translators to figure out how to express the dialogue's intended meaning while also taking into account the linguistic and cultural distinctions between the source and target languages. Overall, accurate, succinct, and viewer-friendly material must be condensed and reformulated in order to translate subtitles successfully. This takes a high level of linguistic and cultural competence.

Mughazy (2016) highlighted the importance of studying the translation process from morphemes and words to the discourse level, highlighting translation problems and strategies. He focused on translating Arabic texts into English and discussed different translation strategies, mainly deletion, substitution, morphological unpacking, paraphrasing, and transliteration. Mughazy (2016, pp. 26-43) explained each strategy in detail:

1) **Translation by deletion:** is to leave out some words without translation.

2) **Translation by substitution:** translators resort to substitution when they deal with cases of less-than-perfect equivalence, such as time expressions and units of measurement.

3) **Translation by morphological unpacking**: translators use it when translating morphologically complex words.

4) **Translation by paraphrasing**: it is also called rewording. It is the restatement of the meaning of the passage using other words. Moreover, paraphrasing can be used in cases of ambiguity and with Arabic names that have particular connotations.

5) **Translation by transliteration**: is to write the source Arabic word in English letters.

Similarly, Baker (1992, pp. 26-42) highlighted the need for a systematic approach to translation studies connecting translation difficulties and strategies. Baker provided a solid foundation for professional translation training by finding a balance between theory and practice and suggested some strategies to be used. These include:

- **Translation by more general words (superordinate):** It is one of the most familiar strategies for dealing with non-equivalence, particularly propositional meaning. The main idea of this strategy is to render a hyponym with a more general word or superordinate. For example, *beef* or *lamb* can be translated as لحم (*meat*).

- **Translation by more neutral/ less expressive words:** Translators use it to deal with the differences in expressive meaning. For example, the word زكاة *Zakat* does not have equivalence in English, so it is translated as *obligatory charity*.

- **Translation by cultural substitution:** replacing some cultural terms from the source language with relevant cultural terms in the target language to suit the existing culture of the target language; for example, a sentence that reads "*this man is extremely generous*" can be translated as هذا الرجل كحاتم الطائي (Lit. *This man is like Hatim al-Taei).* The name حاتم الطائي *Hatim al-Taei is* used as a symbol of generosity in the Arab world.

- **Translation by using a loan word or loan word plus explanation:** This strategy is used to translate the cultural-specific item. Loan words alone or with an explanation can be used to overcome this translation problem. For instance, "*a plastic cap*" can be translated as "كاب" أي قبعة بلاستيكية (Lit. *a "cap" is a plastic hat).*

- **Translation by paraphrasing using a related word:** This is used when the source text has a word or expression that has a lexical equivalence in the target language, but in a different form. For example, "*her hair is silky and long*" is translated as شعرها طويل و جميل يشبه الحرير (Lit. *Her hair is long and beautiful, like silk).* According to Ouirk et al. (1985), lexicalizing a term means having a word for it. Lexicalization makes the meaning of the idiom or expression more explicit.

- **Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words** is used to deal with the non-equivalent expression. For example, *"I don't want to be a rat"* can be translated as ال أريد أن اكون خائن/غير مخلص (Lit. *I don't want to be disloyal/unfaithful*).

- **Translation by omission:** Following this strategy, the words that are not vital to the development of the text are sometimes deleted. However, this strategy should be the last resort for translators. For example, sex related words such as fuck and whore are sometimes omitted when they are translated into Arabic.

- **Translation by illustration:** Translators use illustrations when the source expressions lack an equivalent in the target language. For example, الحُكشة *Hushka* can be translated as *"Hockey-like game."*

As mentioned above, idioms and proverbs are part of any culture, so they need special strategies to be conveyed from one language to another without losing their meaning. Ordudari (2007) argued that the connotative meaning of an idiom or illusion in the source language and culture is not necessarily the same in the target language. Accordingly, Baker (1992, pp. 71-78) introduced strategies to overcome problems in translating idioms and proverbs. These strategies are:

o Using an idiom of similar meaning and form to the source language. For example, *"To shed crocodile tears"* can be translated as "يبكي بدموع التماسيح" (Lit. *shed crocodiles' tears*).

o Using an idiom of similar meaning but a different form. For example, "لكل مقام مقال" (Lit. *everything really did have a place*) can be rendered as *"a word in season"*.

o Translation by using paraphrasing is the most common way of translating idioms. For example, *"have no backbone"* is rendered as "ضعيف الإرادة واالشخصية" (Lit. *Weak-willed*).

o Translation by omission is to omit the whole idiom and not be translated into the TL text.

In this study, the researchers mainly use the translation strategies proposed by Baker (1992, pp. 71-78) to examine the translation of proverbs, while the taxonomy proposed by Baker (1992, pp. 26-42) was used to investigate the translation strategies of rendering idiomatic expressions.

Empirical studies

Translating idiomatic expressions and proverbs has attracted the attention of several researchers. For example, Strakšienė (2009) investigated the translation of English idioms into Lithuanian and the obstacles the translator faced during translation. Toury's, Newmark's, Moon's, and Baker's theories were used in the theoretical section. The researcher found that paraphrasing, both stylistic and explanatory, proved to be the most popular translation approach. In the current study, we examine the most commonly used strategies in translating Arabic idiomatic expressions into English.

Likewise, Farghal and Al-Hamly (2015) investigated the semiotic/pragmatic value of using proverbs in Arabic literature and how translators render them in discourse. The corpus consists of 24 proverbs collected from the Arabic novel *"Banat al-Riyadh"* and their English translation extracted from the English version *"Girls of Riyadh"*. The researchers found that omission was the most used strategy, followed by literal and functional translations. Similarly, Thalji and Dweik (2015) examined the difficulties Jordanian beginner translators face when rendering proverbs from Arabic into English and vice versa. Twenty male and female translators were chosen to do a translation test. The test contained ten Arabic proverbs and another ten English proverbs to be translated. The proverbs are based on Speake's (2008) categorization of proverbs. The researchers then interviewed four academic and professional translators to get more information about all the issues related to the translation of proverbs. The results showed that the translators could not render the culture-bound expressions correctly. They did not give an appropriate equivalent in the TL. Moreover, they used literal translation and had mistakes in many aspects, stylistically, grammatically, and linguistically. The results also showed that unfamiliarity with translation strategies and techniques is a serious problem.

In the same vein, Fahmi (2016) examined some common Arabic proverbs and their English equivalents to shed light on the socio-cultural variations. She chose the sample of proverbs based on their thematic categorization. The results of the analysis showed that translators need to be familiar with the SL (Source Language) and TL

(Target Language) cultures, customs, and traditions. Moreover, the translations of proverbs must be carried out systematically and not be rendered literally, keeping in mind the proverbs' cultural, religious, and historical context to maintain the essence of meaning. Likewise, Ali and Al-Rushaidi (2017) investigated the difficulties faced by sixty Omani undergraduate students studying English language teaching and literature when translating idiomatic expressions into Arabic. The findings showed that the students could not find an appropriate equivalent, misunderstood the idiom's meaning, used literal translation, and deleted the entire or some parts of the idiom without compensation.

Moreover, Destaria and Rini (2019) examined the strategies used to translate English idioms in the subtitle of "*Pitch Perfect 3*" into Bahasa Indonesia. They used Baker's taxonomy in analyzing the examples. The research is descriptive and qualitative in nature. After identifying the translation strategies used, they examined whether the meaning of the English idioms is conveyed appropriately in Bahasa Indonesia or not. The results showed that four idioms were rendered using idioms with similar meanings but dissimilar forms. In contrast, forty-six idioms were rendered using the paraphrasing strategy, while the omission strategy was used to translate one idiom. The meanings of thirty-six idioms were transferred accurately, four idioms less accurately, and eleven idioms were classified as inaccurate translations. Likewise, Al-assaf (2019) examined the English idioms and fixed expressions used by Agatha Christie in her novel "*Appointment with Death*" and how these idioms and expressions were rendered into Arabic by Omar Abdulaziz Ameen. Baker's strategies were the basis of the theoretical part of the study. The results revealed that the paraphrasing strategy was the most used in translating the idioms and expressions in the novel. In addition, there is a lack of equivalent idioms in Arabic.

In this section, the researchers highlighted the differences between idiomatic expressions and proverbs and discussed the translation strategies proposed by Baker. Although several studies examined the translation strategies used in rendering idioms across languages, including Arabic and English, little attention has been paid to similar

studies in the context of audiovisual translation. Therefore, this study fills this gap by examining the translation of idioms and proverbs in four Egyptian movies into English.

IV. Methods and Procedures

The researchers analyze the English subtitling of the idiomatic expressions and proverbs that are used in the Egyptian Movies "تيتا رهيبة *My horrible grandma*," "عسل أسود *Bittersweet*," "الباشا تلميذ *The Student Cop*," and "عمارة يعقوبيان *Yacoubian Building*." The researchers watched the movies on the Netflix platform and wrote down the Arabic scripts of the movies in Egyptian vernacular. The English subtitles of the movies were extracted directly from www.Netflix.com. The utterances in the Egyptian vernacular were aligned with their English equivalence and then checked by three MA candidates in Audiovisual Translation. The researchers identified the incidents of idiomatic expressions and proverbs to be further analyzed manually. The parallel corpus of movies including the Arabic script along with the English subtitles was given to MA students enrolled in the "Subtitling and Dubbing" course, which is part of an MA program in Audiovisual Translation to find formulaic sequences including idioms and proverbs. They were also asked to watch the four investigated movies and spot the incidents of formulaic sequences. The researchers' list was compared with the candidates'. The expressions and phrases that were found in the two lists are further investigated in this study.

Netflix Policy of Subtitling

When it comes to subtitling, Netflix has a rigid guideline that covers both spotting and synchronization. While synchronization entails timing the subtitles to coincide with the dialogue or action on screen, spotting refers to the process of deciding when and where subtitles should show on the screen. Netflix's objective is to provide subtitles that are as accurate and clear to read as possible while maintaining the original content's intended tone and meaning. This includes ensuring that subtitles are readable by all viewers by taking into account things like reading speed, line breaks, and font size. In order to

accomplish this, Netflix employs qualified subtitlers and makes use of advanced tools and software to guarantee that the subtitles are accurate and consistent throughout all of its content. To guarantee that subtitles are formatted appropriately and are in time with the audio, subtitlers are given style sheets and instructions. Additionally, Netflix offers subtitles in a variety of languages, demonstrating its international clientele and dedication to making material available to viewers everywhere.

The Selected Movies

Different factors were considered to decide which types of movies to select. These include the movie's genre and revenues. The genres of the four films are drama and comedy. The gross earnings and revenues for the investigated movies were good. Table 2 includes some information about the movies; genre, year of production, duration, and revenues.

Table 2. *Movies' genre, year of production, duration, and revenues*

No.	The name of the movie	Genre	Year of Production	Duration	Revenues
1	My horrible grandma (تيتا رهيبة)	Comedy/ Drama	2012	1h 44m	14,825,470 EGP
2	Bittersweet (عسل إسود)	Comedy/ Drama	2010	2h 10m	15,600,000 EGP
3	Yacoubian Building (عمارة يعقوبيان)	Drama/ Comedy	2006	2h 10m	19,427,000 EGP
4	The Student Cop (الباشا تلميذ)	Comedy/ Romance	2004	1h 50m	7,214,475 EGP

Yacoubian building is a drama movie. It gained worldwide acclaim and was rated by many critics as one of the best films in Arab cinema. *My horrible grandma, Bittersweet, and The Student Cop* are drama/comedy films that attained popular success. They discuss many issues concerning Egyptian society and the Arab community in a comedy way.

Data Collection and Corpus Compilation

A parallel corpus of the four movies was compiled and analyzed manually. The researchers watched the movies on Netflix, and then extracted the English subtitles from www.Netflix.com. The researchers wrote down the scripts of the movies in Egyptian vernacular. Using an Excel sheet, the researchers aligned the Arabic source texts in Egyptian vernacular with their English subtitles. The idiomatic expressions and proverbs were identified to be further analyzed, as Table 3 shows.

Table 3. *Aligning the Arabic texts, including idioms and proverbs, with their English subtitles*

Source Text (Egyptian Vernacular)	Target Text (English)
حضرتك يعني يخلق من الشبه أربعين كل الناس بتقول كده ولا لأ	**A lot of people look alike.** People say that, right?
سالي مش ممكن تنسجم إلا مع كلب ألماني زيها، الدم بيحن	Sally would only like a German dog like her. **Blood is thicker than water.**
قال إيه اللي رماك عالمر!	**Ask about what made us do that!**
حضرتك أنا ولعت صوابعي العشرة شمع وما فيش فايدة	**I did everything I could do** but to no avail.
وبعدين الراجل اللي ملوش كرش ما يسواش قرش	Besides, **a man is worth his beer belly.**
صدق اللي قال ارقص للقرد في دولته	The saying is true: **dance for the monkey when it rules.**
هذا الشيل من ذاك الأسد	**The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.**
أعلى ما في خيلك اركبو	**Do whatever you want**
رؤوف مش ابني، حفيدي، و زي ما بقولوا أعز الولد ولد الولد	They always say: "**you'll love your grandson more than you love your son.**"

Table 3 shows examples of the Arabic scripts aligned in an Excel sheet with the English subtitles. The first column (to the left) contains the source text in Arabic, while the second includes the target subtitles in English.

Each Arabic movie with English subtitles is watched, and the scenes that contain culture-bound expressions are identified. The examples to be investigated are categorized into two thematic groups. These include proverbs and idiomatic expressions. To ensure that the categorization is accurate, the researchers asked three university lecturers, who are native speakers of Arabic, specializing in applied linguistics and translation studies, to check the classification based on the definition of Wood (2019, pp. 30-34) discussed above. If two of them shared the same comments, their feedback would be considered and incorporated. The researchers also consulted Arabic sources to verify the classification. Table 4 shows that the total number of examples in this study is forty-six.

Table 4. *Number of examples*

Name of movie	Proverbs	Idiomatic Expression	Total
My Horrible Grandma	7	12	19
Yacoubian Building	2	8	10
The Student Cop	3	7	10
Bittersweet	2	5	7
Total	14	32	46

The researchers compared the idiomatic expressions and proverbs in the Arabic movies with their English equivalents. We examine the challenges and problems that the subtitlers faced while translating idiomatic expressions and explore the translation strategies used to render these expressions. In this study, the researchers provide a literal translation of the Arabic script into English to make things clearer for non-Arabic readers, as Table 5 shows.

Table 5. *Literal translation of the Arabic source texts, including idioms and proverbs in English*

Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
بلاش تواضع يا إبراهيم، ده إيدو تتلّف فحرير	Don't be modest, Ibrahim; his hand should be wrapped with silk.	Don't be modest, Ibrahim. **He's too sweet**
على رأيك إن بعض الظن إثم	As you said, some thoughts are considered sinful actions	You're right; **we shouldn't judge**
و إن الضيق بعدو فرج بإذن الله	Distress is followed by relief, if Allah wills	**After the rain comes the sun.**
صوابعك مش زي بعضها	Not all your fingers are the same.	**Not everybody is the same**
بقلك إيه أنا عفاريت الدنيا بتنطط في وشي	Listen, all the demons in the world are jumping in front of my face	Listen. **I'm not in the mood.**
دي كانت عزومة مراكبية	It was a false invitation	**I didn't really mean it**
ابلع ريقك شوية	Swallow your saliva	**Stop talking**, Okay?
ده خلى رقبتنا زي السمسمة	He made our neck like a sesame seed.	He **brought us humiliation!**
قعدت مع أخوها و قرينا الفاتحة	I met her brother, and we read Al-Fatiha.	I met her brother, and **we agreed**

As mentioned above, idioms are frozen patterns of language, and their meanings cannot be drawn from the meaning of their constituents. This is why idioms cannot be translated literally. Similarly, proverbs are cultural elements, and subtitlers need to be aware of the differences between the source and target cultures to produce appropriate translations.

Study Procedures

The procedures and steps that are followed in this study are:

- Selecting Arabic movies: four Arabic movies were selected, namely "تيتا رهيبة *My horrible grandma*," "عسل أسود *Bittersweet*," "البشا تلميذ *The Student cop*," and "عمارة يعقوبيان *Yacoubian Building*."
- Watching the four movies with Netflix subtitles.
- Writing down the scripts of the movies in Egyptian vernacular.
- Extracting the subtitles of the movies from www.Netflix.com.
- Aligning the source texts in Egyptian vernacular with English subtitles.
- Spotting the idiomatic expressions and proverbs.
- Comparing the idiomatic expressions and proverbs in the Arabic movies with their English equivalents.
- Examining the challenges and problems that faced the subtitlers while translating idiomatic expressions.
- Exploring the translation strategies used in rendering these expressions.

V. RESULTS

Egyptian vernacular is full of idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Regardless of their educational level and social class, people use these expressions without being aware of their source and origin. Such expressions have various indications; some are used to express remorse, others are resorted to at the time of disasters or for appeal. Due to their geographical proximity and common cultural, linguistic, and religious features, most Arab countries share similar customs and traditions. This is why many proverbs are widely spread and frequently used by most Arab peoples. The subtitles of Egyptian movies are categorized and then compared with their English equivalents. Then, the translation strategies used to render these idiomatic words and expressions are examined. The researchers classified the compiled data into two groups: proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

Results Pertaining to Question 1: Translation Strategies Used in Rendering Proverbs

Subtitlers may face many challenges when they render vernacular Arabic movies into English, where proverbs are frequently used. Proverbs reflect the experiences of nations and people and have more impact on people than any other words or expressions (Honeck, 1997; Meider, 1985; Norrick, 2011).

"Paraphrasing" was the most frequently used translation strategy, with 38% of the incidents. Subtitlers have applied the strategy of using "an idiom of similar meaning but a different form" to 32% of the proverbs. 20% of the proverbs were rendered literally. Finally, "mistranslation" was observed in 10% of the cases. Figure 3 illustrates the percentages of using the translation strategies in rendering the investigated proverbs.
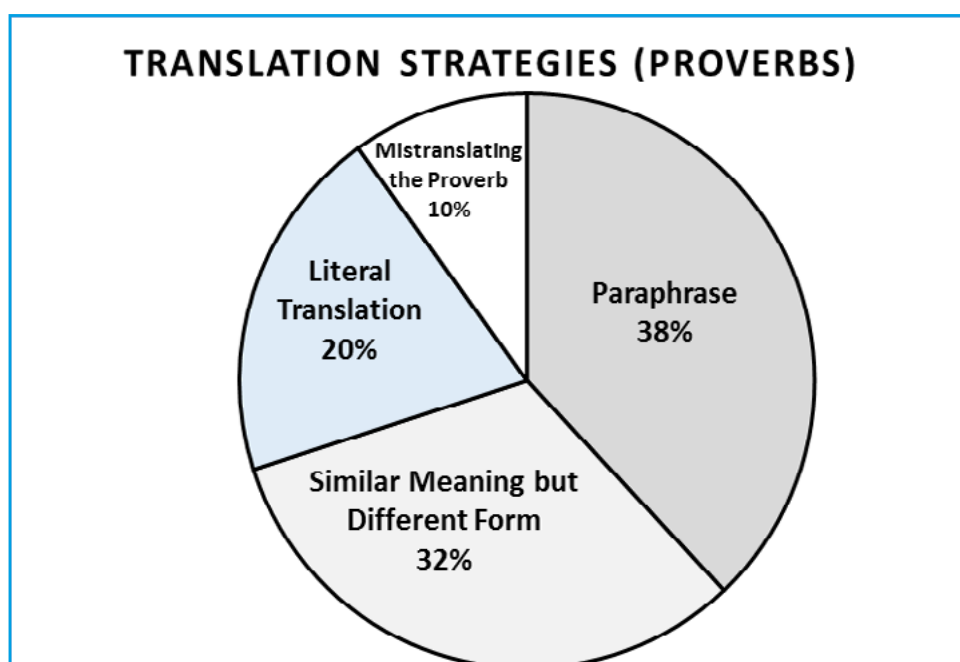

Figure 1. *Percentage of the translation strategies used in rendering proverbs into English*

Table 6 shows examples of the translation strategies used in rendering 11 proverbs mentioned in the investigated movies.

Table 6. *Examples of strategies used in translating proverbs*

Strategy	No.	Source text (Arabic)	Literal Translation (English)	Target text (English)
Using an Idiom of Similar Meaning but a Different Form	1	هذا الشبل من ذاك الأسد	**This cub is from that lion.**	**The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.**
	2	و إن الضيق بعده الفرج بإذن الله	**Distress is followed by relief** if Allah wills	**After the rain comes the sun.**
	3	ياللها عيش و ملح ، عبد ربه	Come on, **bread and salt**, Abd Rabbuh	**Let's break bread**
Translation by Using Paraphrasing	4	حضرتك يعني **يخلق من الشبه أربعين** لك الناس بتقول كده والا أل	**Allah creates forty people who look the same,** your honor. All people say so, don't they?	**A lot of people look alike.** People say that, right?
	5	حضرتك وانا ولعت **صوابعي العشرة** شمع وما فيش فايدة	Your honor, I **lit my ten fingers candles** to no avail.	**I did everything I could do**, but to no avail.
	6	الظاهر إن **انا سيبتلكم الحبل** عالغارب	It seems that **I slacken the reins.**	It seems I was too lenient
	7	دي كانت عزومة مراكبية	Yeah, **a false invitation**	**I didn't really mean it**
Literal Translation	8	في عندنا مثل بقول اللي طلع البغل المدنه هو بس اللي يقدر ينزلو	We have a proverb that says **whoever puts the mule above in the minaret is the only one who can get it down.**	Know the saying? **Whoever put the mule in the minaret can get it down.**
	9	طيب انا هديك الفرصة، اللي بشيل قربة مخرومة على ظهر بتختر ورهض	I will give you a chance; **who carries a perforated bag will trickle on his back.**	I'll give you a chance. **If you hold a leaky bottle on your back, it will trickle on you.**

Strategy	No.	Source text (Arabic)	Literal Translation (English)	Target text (English)
Mistranslation	10	عنك ما طفحت اللي بياكل على ضرس بينفع نفسه	As you want, don't eat, he **who chews on his own molar is self-sufficient.**	I don't care. **You know better**
	11	ياما جاب الغراب لأمه ياخوي	**What a crow brought to his mother**, my brother.	**This means nothing**, man

Table 6 shows that three proverbs were rendered using an idiom or proverb of similar meaning but in a different form. Proverb 1, which is هذا الشبل من ذاك الأسد was rendered as *"the apple doesn't fall far from the tree."* People use this Arabic **proverb** if they want to praise someone's son and, at the same time, praise the father too. This proverb is used to say that a son usually has similar good characteristics or traits to his father because he behaves the same way. The literal translation of the proverb is *"this cub is from that lion."* It is well-known that Arab people consider the lion as a symbol of power, bravery, and intelligence, so the proverb carries a positive connotation. However, the translation provided on Netflix is appropriate compared to the literal translation simply because the English equivalent is commonly used in Western culture, and the literal translation might not be understandable to the target audience. Another equivalence that could be used is "a chip off the old block." To evaluate the quality of the translation, it can be argued that the Arabic proverb and its English counterpart convey the same positive connotative meanings.

In Example 2, the proverb و إن الضيق بعده الفرج was rendered as *"after the rain comes the sun"* following the cultural substitution strategy. The literal translation of the proverb is "**Distress is followed by relief.**" The Arabic expression has a religious connotative meaning derived from the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. The Arabic expression means relief will definitely come after a hard time or problem. The translation is appropriate as long as it delivers the implicit meaning.

In Example 3, the expression شيع و ملح was translated as *"Let's break bread."* The literal translation of the Arabic expression is *"bread and salt."* This proverb is used in almost all Arab countries to express that when people eat together, their relationship will improve, and the emotion of brotherhood and friendship will strengthen. Moreover, Arabs use the expression when two men fight, and people try to reconcile and remind them that they have eaten together. In Western culture, they use "*break bread*," which means more than just eating. It is when you share a sense of brotherhood with someone or a group. Thus, the translation is appropriate and conveys the same positive connotative meaning.

Paraphrasing is the strategy that was used the most in translating proverbs. The concept of paraphrasing indicates rewording the idiom or proverb to convey the intended meaning to the target audience. Subtitlers sometimes render the implicit meaning of the proverb, maybe because there is no equivalence in the target culture.

The proverb in Example 4 يخلق من الشبه أربعين is rendered as *"a lot of people look alike."* People often express astonishment when they see two or more people with remarkable similarities, especially if they are not relatives. The similarity may be in behavior, lifestyle, or facial features. We often see people who resemble famous personalities as presidents or public figures. The literal translation of the proverb is "**Allah creates forty people who look the same.**" The number أربعين *Forty* in this proverb is of Persian origin and indicates a large number. Moreover, in the past, Arab people have used the number أربعين *Forty* as evidence of abundance and exaggeration. Thus, this explains the presence of many proverbs in the Arabic language that contain the number أربعين *Forty*. In Example 4, the subtitler uses the paraphrasing strategy, and the connotative meaning is successfully conveyed. In the scenes, some factors such as the image, context of the events, and the actors' body language would also help the viewers better understand the texts and the translation.

Example أنا ولعت صوابعي العشرة شمع was translated as *"I did everything I could do."* The literal translation of the proverb is, *"I lit my ten fingers candles."* Literal translation is usually not recommended because idioms have implicit meanings. Further, the

proverb may sound weird and odd to the target audience. The Arabic proverb is used when someone does everything to satisfy another person but to no avail. The translation by paraphrasing in this example is appropriate, as the implicit meaning of the SL proverb became explicit.

Example 6, which reads عالغاربر الحبل متكتبيس can be translated literally as *"It seems that I slacken the rope on the hump."* The subtitler rendered it as *"I was too lenient."* The SL expression is an authentic Arabic idiom that expresses absolute freedom and leniency. In the past, Arabs used to let the camel graze freely alone by throwing the rope on its hump, and this is where the expression came from. So, the expression is used when you give someone absolute freedom to do whatever they want, and then they become negligent. The expression is used to scold oneself for letting someone act freely. Hence, the SL expression is not lexicalized in the TL. However, the provided translation could be appropriate since it conveys the implicit meaning of freedom. In addition, there are some better ways to translate the SL idiom, such as "*To give a free hand to someone*", "*Give free rein*", or "*Give vent to.*"

In Example 7, the Arabic proverb عزومة مراكبية *false invitation* is rendered as *"I didn't really mean it."* The proverb is used when you invite someone to dinner, for example, but you don't mean it, i.e., you only do it out of courtesy. This saying is used a lot in Egypt. However, the provided translation conveys the implicit meaning. A better equivalent could be *"Barmecide feast."* The origin of this proverb goes back to the famous Baramkeh family, a Persian family in the history of the Abbasid state. According to The Thousand- and One-Night Tales, a Barmecide prince had offered a beggar a fake feast, where the dishes he offered were empty while he claimed they contained food and started eating. Accordingly, "Barmecidal" means fake or false.

The researchers have added "literal translation" strategy to Baker's taxonomy of translating idioms and proverbs. From the researchers' point of view, it is not recommended to translate proverbs or other idiomatic expressions literally because the target audience may not understand the intended meaning. Example 8, which reads اللي طلع البغل المدان هو بس اللي يقدر ينزله was translated as *"whoever puts*

the mule in the minaret can get it down." This means that only the one who helps another person wins a prize, succeeds in the election, or gets a higher rank in the job, for example, can fail him or get him down with no benefit. It is originally a Syrian proverb; however, it is used in other Arab countries. As mentioned above, the meaning might not be apparent to the target audience, and at the same time, there is no direct equivalence in their culture. Hence, it would be better to explain the proverb explicitly rather than translating it literally by saying, for example, "*The one who helps you to success is the only one who can fail you*".

Example 9 اللي بيشيل قربة مخرومة بتخر على ضهره was rendered as "***if you hold a leaky bottle on your back, it will trickle on you.***" The SL proverb indicates that anyone is responsible for his decisions and the results of his actions. This happens when the person carries a leaky bottle on their back, and water leaks on them. An English equivalent that suits the target culture might be "***carry the can.***"

Some proverbs were mistranslated. In Example 10, اللي بياكل على ضرسه بينفع نفسه was translated as "***You know better.***" This translation did not convey the intended meaning appropriately. Although there is an equivalent in the English language that has the same meaning, which is "***he who chews on his own molar is self-sufficient***" and "***God helps those who help themselves***". However, the SL proverb indicates that whoever serves himself without asking others to help will benefit himself. The one who eats with his teeth will benefit from the food. It indicates that the self-reliant one will not be exposed to harm from anyone. Subtitlers should be as faithful as possible when translating any text. Moreover, they have to make an effort to convey the closest meaning of the ST to the TT.

In Example 11, the proverb اماي جاب الغراب لأمه was rendered as "***This means nothing.***" The literal translation is "*what has the crow brought to his mother?*" The Egyptians sarcastically repeat this proverb when someone surprises them with something they do not want or do not like. However, why "the crow", not other kinds of birds, is being referred to! Some research on the behaviour of crows revealed that they pay attention to things that shine in the sun and keep things in secret places. They have a hole in

a tree or a wall. Some researchers could reach one of the secret stores of crows and discovered things of no value, such as pieces of a broken mirror, a cup's hand, and a piece of metal (Harvey, 2021). As a result, a person who offers something of no value is like a crow. Concerning the quality of translation, the researchers think that if there is no equivalence in the TL, it is better to resort to paraphrasing the proverb's meaning to make the hidden meaning explicit.

The analysis above showed that literal translation is not a suitable solution to resort to when translating proverbs. Furthermore, the analysis also showed that literal translation did not fully convey the intended meaning, and the target audience may not understand the implicit meanings of the proverb. Proverbs are related to culture, so subtitlers should try to find the closest natural equivalent of the SL proverb in the TL culture. This is consistent with Nida (1964), who stated that the translator's role is to ease the transmission of the message from one language to another and provides an equal response to the recipients. However, if the subtitler does not find an appropriate equivalent, it will be better to use the 'paraphrase' strategy to render the connotative meanings of the proverb, not its literal translation. By doing so, the implicit meaning of the proverb becomes explicit and easier to be understood by the target audience. This is in harmony with Baker (1992), who stated that the strategy of paraphrasing is used when there is no TL idiomatic equivalent for the SL proverb or if the target language's style differs from the SL. In addition, based on the examples above, this study showed that 'paraphrasing' is the most used translation strategy when rendering proverbs. Such a finding is in line with the result of Al-assaf (2019), who examined the translation of idioms from English to Arabic based on Baker's taxonomy of translation strategies of idioms and proverbs and found that paraphrasing strategy was frequently used in translating English idioms into Arabic.

Results Pertaining to Question 2: Translation Strategies Used in Rendering Idiomatic Expressions

In this section, the researchers explore which translation strategy is the most frequently used in rendering idiomatic expressions. The most used strategy is "*translating by*

paraphrasing using unrelated words to deal with non-equivalent expression," with 41%. *"Translation by paraphrasing using related words"* was applied to 21% of the idiomatic expressions, followed by *"Cultural substitution"* with 20%. *"Literal translation"* was used in 6% of the cases. Mistranslation was observed in 6% of the cases. Finally, *"translation by more general words"* and *"omission"* were equally used, with 3% each. Figure 2 shows the percentages of translation strategies in rendering the investigated idiomatic expressions.
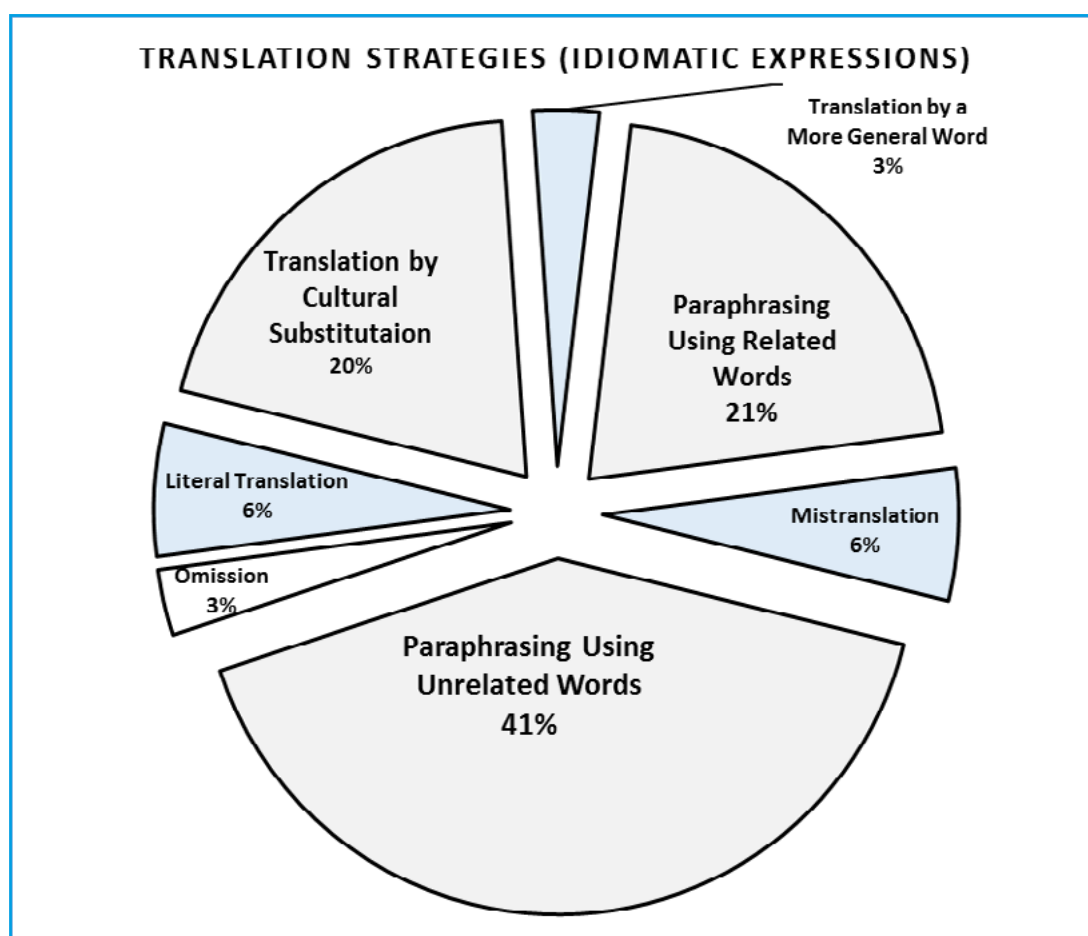

Figure 2. *Percentage of the translation strategies used in rendering the idiomatic expressions*

The researchers discuss another critical part of any culture and language, which is idiomatic expressions. Moreover, the researchers examine the strategies used when subtitling such expressions (see Table 7). An Idiomatic expression is a phrase whose whole meaning is not understood merely by understanding the meanings of its words

individually. Instead, it is understood by combining these meanings. Accordingly, it could be challenging for subtitlers to find an appropriate and accurate counterpart in the TL. It is noteworthy that when rendering such expressions, the equivalent in the TL must carry a similar connotative meaning to the SL expressions. The idiomatic expressions compiled in this category are analyzed according to Baker's taxonomy of translation (Baker, 1992, pp. 26-42).

Table 7. *Examples of translation strategies used to render idiomatic expressions*

Strategy	No.	Source text (Arabic)	Literal Translation (English)	Target text (English)
Translation by a more general word	12	هات هالدبلة عارفة إنها معانا و ما تعملش نفسك **عبد الحليم حافظ.**	Give me the ring. I know it is with you. **Don't act like Abdul Haleem Hafez**	Give it to me. Don't be so **melodramatic**
Translation by cultural substitution	13	**عالبركة**	**Blessings**	**Perfect** **Great** **It's a deal**
	14	سالي مش ممكن تنسجم إلا مع كلب ألماني زيها، **الدم بيحن**	Sally can only get along with a German dog like her. **Kin-blood makes people closer**	Sally would only like a German dog like her. **Blood is thicker than water**
	15	الأول بنبتديها **بقراية فاتحة** كده مثلاً على عند مينى.	Initially, we start by **reading Al-Fatiha** in the presence of a few people in Mini's house	We'll start with **a small proposal** at Minnie's house, for instance
	16	عايز أقلك إن انا عايز أرتبط بيكي **على سنة الله و رسوله.**	I want to tell you that I want to marry you **as per the principles of the Holy Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet**	I want to tell you that I want to **legally marry you**

Strategy	No.	Source text (Arabic)	Literal Translation (English)	Target text (English)
Translation by paraphrasing using related words	17	راجل محترم و زبون إيد**ه فرطة**	He is respectful, and his **hand is spread out wide**	He's respectable and **generous**
	18	إحنا بالصلاة علينبي كده ه**نقرأ الفاتحة** قبل ما يحرحت الموضوع تطلع	We will start by praying upon the prophet **reading Al-Fatiha** before news spreads	Let's pray and **agree** before people get wind of it
Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words to deal with non-equivalent expression	19	ده خلى **رقبتنا** زي السمسمة	He made **our neck like a sesame seed.**	He **brought us humiliation!**
Omission	20	**ابن حلال** يا ابراهيم كنت عايز فك كلمتين.	**Legitimate son,** Mr. Ibrahim. I wanted to talk to you	**I meant to talk to you**. I wanted to talk to you
Literal Translation	21	و هل يخفى القمر؟	**Does the moon hide?**	**The moon never hides**
	22	سعادتك موافق؟ **نقرأ الفاتحة**	Do you agree, sir? Shall we **read Al-Fatiha**?	Shall we **read Al-Fatiha**?
Mistranslation	23	كفاية نوم يا غُم نوم	Enough sleeping, you **Sleepyhead**!	Wake up, already!
	24	بلاش تواضع يا ابراهيم، ده إيد**ه تتلف فحرير**	Don't be modest, Ibrahim; **his hand should be wrapped with silk**	Don't be modest, Ibrahim. **He's too sweet**

'*Translation by a more general word*' strategy is one of the most used strategies for dealing with non-equivalence, particularly propositional meaning. The main idea of this strategy is to render a hyponym with a more general word or superordinate. Example 12, ما تعملش نفسك عبد الحليم حافظ is rendered as "*Don't be so **melodramatic**."*

The literal translation of this expression is, *"Don't act like Abdel Halim Hafez."* This expression is widespread in Egypt as they consider Abdel Halim Hafez a symbol of romance. Abdel Halim Hafez is a famous Egyptian singer known for his romantic and emotional songs. His sensitive personality characterizes him. Accordingly, when someone says, *"don't act like Abdel Halim Hafez,"* he means that you should not be sensitive and over-emotional. The meaning of a **melodramatic person** is someone who makes a big deal out of little issues. Thus, the translation is relatively appropriate and conveys the intended and suitable meaning to the target culture using a general word.

Table 7 contains four examples where *'translation by cultural substitution'* was applied. Following this strategy, the subtitler replaces some cultural terms from the source language with relevant cultural terms in the target language to suit the target language's culture. Example 13 includes the word عالبركة, which is repeatedly used in Egyptian movies, and it was translated differently according to the context. The implicit meaning of the word عالبركة is to ask **Allah to bless the deal, marriage, contract, etc**. Since عالبركة is related to the Arabic culture, the subtitler resorted to cultural substitution to bridge the cultural gaps. It was translated as **"perfect,"** which was mentioned in a context where the shop owner asked the employee about the work. Then, the employee said that everything was good, so the owner responded happily with the Arabic word عالبركة. The second translation, i.e., **"great,"** was also said in a shop where a girl was dealing with the shop owner to employ her. He agreed and said عالبركة. The last translation was, **"it's a deal."** It was used in the context when a car dealer asked his son about their contract with a Japanese company. His son responded that the agreement was good and the deal closed. So, the dealer said عالبركة. The three translations were relatively appropriate as they convey the intended meaning that suits the target culture.

Example 14, which is الدم بيحن **Kin-blood makes people closer,** was rendered as *"Blood is thicker than water."* People use this expression to emphasize that family relations are always more important than any other type of relationship. The translation of the Arabic idiom is appropriate since it delivers the intended meaning. The Arabic

expression, as well as its equivalent in English, holds a positive connotation. The expression is used in a scene where a woman with a dog meets her friend, who also has a dog of the same species. When the ladies saw the two dogs playing, one of them used the idiom to express that the two dogs are in harmony because they are of the same German origin.

There are many ways to ask a girl for marriage, and they differ from one culture to another. Native speakers of any language may prefer the use of specific utterances or formulaic sequences over others in marriage proposals. For example, English speakers may convey the message using 'I want to marry you' (Pawley & Syder, 2014). The difficulty that the subtitler may face is related to the differences in marriage rituals between the Arab and Western cultures. Therefore, such terms need profound knowledge in both SL and TL. In Example 15, the clause فاتحة نبتدي بقرايةه was translated as *"start with a small proposal"* using cultural substitution. It can be translated literally as *"we will start by reading Surat Al-Fatiha"*. In this strategy, the subtitler replaces the SL cultural term with a relevant cultural term in the TL. It is known that a "proposal" in the context of marriage refers to the act of asking a girl for marriage. The translation is appropriate since it delivers the meaning that suits Western culture. Example 16, which reads, على سنة الله و رسوله is related to the Muslim society and Islamic law of marriage. It was rendered as *"legally marry you."* Its literal translation is *"I want to marry you as per the principles of the Holy Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet."* The majority of the target audience may not understand the literal translation of the SL expression. Thus, the subtitler successfully substituted the SL expression with a more appropriate term for the TL.

Translation by paraphrasing using related words is used when the source text has a word or expression that has a lexical equivalence in the target language, but in a different form. Examples 17 and 18 were rendered applying this strategy. Example 17, which reads إيدو فرطة, was rendered as *"generous."* The literal translation is "*his hand is **spread out wide**.*" The Arabic expression indicates that the person is excessively generous. Hence, the translation is, to some extent, appropriate as it conveys the

general meaning. However, it is better to render it as *"he is generous to a fault,"* which means generous much more than needed to convey the meaning of the exaggeration of generosity intended in the Arabic expression. Example 18, نقرأ الفاتحة was rendered as *"Agree".* It literally means "*to read Surat Al-Fatiha.*" In the Arab world and, more specifically, the Muslim societies, when a person wants to sign a contract or make a deal, they read "*Surat Al-Fatiha*" to give the project a kind of blessing. In engagement or marriage proposals, the first thing people do when the girl's family gives their consent, they read "*Surat Al-Fatiha.*" This is a tradition related to the Arab culture because people believe that when they read Al-Fatiha, Allah will bless this marriage. So, reading Al-Fatiha is an indication of approval to consummate the engagement. Hence, it seems that the subtitler used a '*neutral expressive word'* to make it clear and suitable for Western audiences and cultures. This strategy is one of the most commonly used ways of dealing with various types of non-equivalence. The provided translation conveyed the general meaning in a neutral way.

Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words is used when the source text has a word or expression that has no lexical equivalence in the target language. In Example 19, the expression الخ رقبتنا زي السمسمة can be translated literally as *"He made our neck like a sesame seed."* The subtitler rendered it as *"He brought us humiliation!"* The expression is used to express a situation where a person does a shameful or embarrassing thing, making his parents/friends feel humiliated. Thus, it is well-known that "sesame seed" is tiny, so it is used metaphorically to express humiliation. In light of this explanation, the translation is appropriate and delivers the meaning of the SL expression.

Concerning the strategy of omission, the subtitler deletes an element or more when translating from the SL to the TL. Sometimes, translators resort to omission when they come across taboo words, if there is no equivalent, or if there is redundancy. On the other hand, some translators use this strategy randomly without paying attention to the importance of the conveyed information or the context. Generally speaking, omission is not a recommended strategy and should be the last to use or resort to. In

Example 20, the expression ابنحلال "*Ibn Halal*" was not rendered. The literal translation is a "*legitimate son*". The subtitler omitted the expression instead of paraphrasing it or using a word that carries the closest connotative meaning to the SL, such as **a decent person** or **respectable man.**

Some examples in the investigated data were rendered literally. However, literal translation is not recommended in translating idiomatic expressions because idioms cannot be understood by translating their components individually. In Example 21, the expression و هل يخفى القمر؟ is rendered as **"The moon never hides."** The literal translation of the SL expression is **"Does the moon hide?"** Basically, it is a line from an old Arabic poem. It is a rhetorical question to express exclamation and negation. This expression indicates that a person is famous and there is no need to introduce himself, just like the moon at night. However, the subtitler translated it as a statement that did not fully convey the intended meaning. As a result, the target audience is unlikely to understand the idiom. Therefore, it is better to be translated as **"S/he needs no introduction" or "S/he is already well-known"** since they carry the same meaning. Example 22, نقرأ الفاتحة was rendered as **"read Al-Fatiha"**. The subtitler chose to translate the SL expression literally and transliterate the word الفاتحة. It does not seem that literal translation is an appropriate choice since the SL term does not exist in Western culture. Therefore, it would be difficult for the target audience to understand the translation bearing in mind that not all people in the Western world are interested in or familiar with our culture.

Some idiomatic expressions were mistranslated. This may happen because the subtitler is not sufficiently familiar with the SL and TL cultures. In Example 23, the idiom اي مخ نوم was rendered as **"Wake up, already!"** This idiom describes a person who loves to sleep and spends his time sleeping. It is clear that the provided translation did not convey the meaning appropriately. The subtitler mistranslated it, although there is an equivalence to the SL idiom in the target language, which is "sleepyhead." In Example 24, the idiomatic expression إيدو تتلف فحرير was rendered as **"he is too sweet."** The literal translation is, **"his hand should be wrapped with silk."** The SL expression

is a metaphor that shows the skill of a person whose hand is like a jewel that can be wrapped in silk to preserve it. It is said to a skillful person who masters his work. The provided translation is relatively incorrect. The best translation could be "*a great craftsman*" or "*skillful man.*"

The findings of this research study are in line with Ali and Al-Rushaidi (2017), who conducted a study of the difficulties of translating idiomatic expressions and found that the major problems are related to finding appropriate equivalents, misunderstanding the idiom's meaning, using literal translation, and deleting the entire or some parts of the idiom without compensation. The current study confirmed such findings, especially the part concerning mistranslating the idioms because of not understanding the SL expression, not being familiar with the TL culture, or not finding an appropriate equivalent. The current study found that cultural expressions related to customs, traditions, and culture are challenging to subtitlers. Examples of these expressions include قراءة الفاتحة and علی سنة الله و رسوله. Such expressions are not lexicalized in the target language, and this is, according to (Baker, 1992), one of the common problems of non-equivalence. This is also consistent with Dweik and Suleiman (2013), who examined the problems faced by sixty MA graduate students from three Jordanian universities translating cultural expressions from Arabic into English. One of their results was that one of the challenges is related to the translators' inability to meet the equivalent in the target language. Moreover, the researchers believe that one of the solutions for such cases is to use the "cultural substitution" strategy. This finding is in line with Mughazy (2016), who suggests that substitution could be one of the best translation strategies when coming across expressions that have cultural connotations.

This study can help subtitlers improve their skills in rendering idiomatic expressions. Subtitlers should be well-versed in both the source and target cultures. They should make an extra effort when translating culture-bound expressions such as proverbs since these types of expressions demand the subtitlers to find appropriate equivalence in the target language. Subtitlers should try their best to avoid the strategy of omission, especially if the language pairs have similar syntactic and semantic structuring. For

example, instead of omitting ابن حلال the subtitler could have rendered it as *"a decent person."* It is worth noting that the strategy of omission is sometimes resorted to by translators when a phrase is socially acceptable in language A but not in language B or gives the whole statement a different ring.

Finally, it is observed that idiomatic expressions are repeatedly used in most movies, so it is suitable for subtitlers to work on creating an appropriate and special glossary for that. This study can be beneficial to translators, particularly those interested in subtitling movies. It can also be helpful for translation students who are keen on translating proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The study of translating idioms and proverbs is not a common research area in the context of audiovisual translation studies, a gap that this study attempted to fill. Examining the translation of proverbs and idiomatic expressions in one study is also novel. In this study, the researchers investigated the subtitling of a group of idiomatic expressions and proverbs extracted from four Egyptian movies into English. It examined the difficulties subtitlers encounter while translating idiomatic expressions and proverbs.

Two questions were raised in this study, to which the researchers now return:

1 What are the challenges that subtitlers face when translating idiomatic expressions and proverbs in Egyptian movies into English?

2 What are the strategies used in translating Egyptian idiomatic expressions and proverbs into English?

The findings suggested that the main obstacles were connected to cultural differences, misunderstanding, and difficulty in finding an appropriate equivalent. The differences,

discrepancies, and incongruences between languages and cultures pose an inevitable loss in translating. Subtitlers can overcome this challenge by acquainting themselves with the SL and TL cultures before beginning the translation process, bearing in mind that all cultures share many proverbs and idioms. On the other hand, misunderstanding the underlying meaning of proverbs and idiomatic expressions is owing to a lack of information. As a result, subtitlers should make further investigations into the explicit and implicit meanings of proverbs and idiomatic expressions under study. Finally, the problem of finding an appropriate equivalence can be alleviated by employing proper translation strategies to render natural and close equivalents. The current study also examined the translation strategies used in subtitling idiomatic expressions. The subtitler utilized "*translation by paraphrasing*" strategy to translate 38% of proverbs. Similarly, "*translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words*" was the most used strategy in translating idiomatic expressions, with a percentage of 41%. It is worth noting that the written version of the speech in subtitles is usually a reduced form of the oral. Some may argue that the use of subtitles could totally invalidate this result, as paraphrasing is a feature of this modality of audio-visual translation. It is important to note that different strategies may be used at different points depending on the specific requirements of the text being translated. So, subtitlers may resort to deletion/omission, cultural substitution, transliteration, or other strategies depending on the context.

Idiomatic expressions are considered fixed expressions that cannot be translated by looking up the meaning of each word individually. However, the subtitlers resorted to literal translation in some cases, which sometimes distorted the meaning and resulted in odd and unnatural translations. The difficulty of finding an appropriate equivalent may justify resorting to literal translation while rendering proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Similarly, mistranslation was noted, most likely due lack of SL and TL cultural knowledge and not finding an appropriate equivalent. On the other hand, the results revealed that some expressions repeatedly used were translated differently according to the context and the paralinguistic features.

This study discussed subtitling idiomatic expressions and proverbs from Arabic into English. Future research can investigate the subtitling of other formulaic sequences, including collocations, lexical phrases and lexical bundles, to mention a few. In addition, this study examined the Egyptian dialect; further studies can be conducted to examine other Arabic dialects and different language pairs. Furthermore, other researchers can investigate other movie genres, such as action, tragedy, and thrill, to mention a few.

Another limitation is related to the size of the data. In this study, only forty-six examples were analyzed. Other researchers can examine more examples and analyze the data based on other translation theories.

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