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## Subtitling of Jordanian Culture-Specific Expressions in “*The Alley*” Movie

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### Abstract

This study investigates and describes the subtitling strategies used in subtitling Jordanian culture-bound expressions in the Jordanian Movie *The Alley*. In addition, it examines whether the subtitling was Source text oriented or target text oriented, i.e. if the subtitler sacrificed the cultural meanings at the expense of conveying the message to the target audience. The study relied on subtitling strategies of culture-bound expressions suggested by Baker (1992). The sample of the study consisted of 120 authentic examples that are extracted from the movie, only 26 examples were used to avoid repetition. The subtitling was appropriate in most cases and in a few cases, it was not. The most applied strategy in subtitling the movie was translation by paraphrase using a related word with 43.3%, and

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the least was translation by omission with 1.6%. Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation was not used by Netflix subtitle. In addition, the analysis showed that the translation was target-oriented rather than source-oriented. The study concluded that the subtitling was appropriate and served the target audience.

**Keywords:** Subtitling, The Alley movies, Baker's translation strategies, Jordan, Culture-specific terms

## سترجة التعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة الأردنية في فيلم "الحارة"

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## المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة وتصف استراتيجيات الترجمة المستخدمة في ترجمة التعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة الأردنية في الفيلم الأردني "الحارة". وتدرس ما إذا كانت الترجمة موجهة نحو النص المصدر أو موجهة نحو النص الهدف، أي إذا كان المترجم ضحي بالمعاني الثقافية على حساب نقل الرسالة إلى الجمهور المستهدف. واعتمدت الدراسة على استراتيجيات ترجمة التعبيرات المرتبطة بالثقافة التي اقترحتها منى بيكر (1992). وتتكون عينة الدراسة من 120 مثالاً مستخرجاً من الفيلم وتم استخدام 26 مثالاً فقط لتجنب التكرار. وكانت الترجمة مناسبة في معظم الحالات وفي حالات قليلة لم تكن كذلك. كانت الاستراتيجية الأكثر تطبيقاً في ترجمة الفيلم هي إعادة الصياغة باستخدام الكلمة المناسبة بنسبة 43.3%، وأقلها الترجمة من خلال الحذف بنسبة 1.8%. أما استراتيجية الترجمة باستخدام كلمات مستعارة وشرحها لم تستخدم من قبل مترجم نيتفلكس. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، أظهر

التحليل أن الترجمة كانت موجهة نحو الهدف وليس موجهة نحو المصدر. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الترجمة كانت مناسبة وخدمت الجمهور المستهدف.

الكلمات الدالة: المترجمة، فيلم الحارة، استراتيجيات بيكر للمترجمة، الأردن، المصطلحات الخاصة بالثقافة، الفاظ محظورة.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The translation or subtitle of culture-specific expressions can be a challenge for a translator, because these expressions have a cultural or social meaning that can be understood within their cultural contexts. Therefore, the translator needs a background knowledge of the cultural norms of the Source Text (ST) to understand the meanings of these expressions or terms, and how they are used in different contexts. The understanding of these meanings will facilitate the process of translating them into English. For example, the Jordanian expression *ملعون حرسى* /mal'un ħursi/ means a cunning person. If someone is unaware of Jordanian Arabic, s/he will mistranslate it. It is sometimes difficult to find an equivalent for these terms or expressions in English, so the translator will opt for certain strategies to cover the intended meaning to the target readers. The subtitling of Jordanian culture-specific terms into English can be challengeable for a translator unless s/he has a cultural competence in both Arabic and English.

Audiovisual translation (AVT) refers to the translation and adaptation of audiovisual material, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal elements (Gottlieb, 2004). It aims to maintain the effect and the intended meaning of the Source Language (SL) message in the Target Language (TL), and it entails mediation across many languages and cultures. Subtitling has facilitated the process of cross-cultural communication and understanding among people all over the world. In addition, it has raised the percentage of watching and interacting of audience with different types of movies, TV programs or series.

Subtitling plays a crucial role in facilitating the accessibility in the audiovisual industry. According to Chaume (2012), the main method for providing deaf or hard-of-hearing people with access to audiovisual content is subtitling, which helps these people follow the dialogue, and fully participate with the content by providing written language that is timed to the audio.

According to Gottlieb (2004), subtitling is a line or more of written text flashed on the screen in rhythm with the original verbal message to translate vocal communication in a filmic medium into another language. Taylor (2002) declares that subtitling includes translating spoken dialogue's features into written style. According to Chaume (2012), clarity for the viewer, cultural sensitivity, and authenticity to the original material in the target language must all be carefully considered while subtitling. The subtitler plays a crucial role in the process of subtitling by making important decisions regarding the translation approach, the condensation of the text, and the synchronization of subtitles with the audiovisual content.

Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) confirm that a subtitler should have strong language skills, knowledge of cultures, solid understanding of the particular constraints and aesthetic norms of subtitling. A subtitler must be able to represent the core of the original conversation while taking into account the subtitles' overall coherence and readability, reading speed, and space constraints. Moreover, subtitlers need to have language and technical proficiency as well as an understanding of the expectations and preferences of the target audience. While keeping the core and impact of the original text, they must take into account things like dialects, slang, and cultural allusions (Daiz-Cintas & Muoz Sánchez, 2018). The subtitler's job is to improve the viewer's comprehension and pleasure of the audiovisual material in addition to translating the spoken words.

Due to the development of artistic works in the Arab world, Arabic movies have gained significant recognition on streaming platforms like Netflix, allowing wider audiences to access and appreciate the rich and diverse cinematic offerings from the Arab world. Netflix has made a deliberate effort to include Arabic movies in its content library, catering to the growing demand for international films. Arabic movies on Netflix not only provide entertainment but also offer a glimpse into the cultural nuances and social issues prevalent in the Arab region.

Subtitling Jordanian culture-specific expressions, such as swearing words, metaphor, slang, and idioms into English can be challenging for Netflix subtitlers. While the subtitling of these expressions sound unnatural, in light of the existence of cultural differences, the possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation could potentially happen. The study's primary objective is to analyze the English subtitling strategies used in translating these expressions in the movie *The Alley*. The study also aims to make an effort to draw attention to the many approaches the Netflix subtitler used to bridge the cultural gaps between English and Arabic, and it assesses the subtitles to determine how successful and effective each strategy was in expressing cultural expression. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the subtitling strategies used in translating Jordanian culture-specific expressions into English in *The Alley* movie?
2. What is the orientation of translation used in *The Alley* Movie?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hashemian and Arezi (2017) investigates the adopted strategies in the translation of idiomatic expressions in two American subtitled movies, namely *Mean Girls* (2004) and *Bring It On!* (2009). They extracted the idiomatic expressions from the original versions of the movies, and then they compared them with the subtitled translations in Persian. They employed Baker's (1992) procedures for subtitling the idiomatic expressions. They concluded that the most subtitling used strategies was translating the SL idioms with omission." In addition, the translation of English idiomatic expressions into Persian is

difficult, and the translators should work hard to provide or maintain the idiomatic meaning for these expressions for the target readers when subtitling movies.

In addition, Robingah (2019) describes the subtitling strategies for slang expressions from English in Bahasa Indonesia subtitles of *Fast & Furious 6* movie. The study employed a qualitative method. The data was collected by categorizing the slang expressions found in the subtitle. The writer used Sumarsono's (2007) theory, and attempted to analyze subtitling strategies. The researcher worked on 109 expressions from the movie, and it is found that the most frequent slang expressions used in the *Fast & Furious 6* movie's subtitle are creativity (66) examples, followed by using existing word (28) examples, acronyms (8) examples, Metaphors (5) examples, and apocopate (1) example. There is no data found for Metathesis.

Furthermore, El-Wifati (2020) generally explores the techniques used in subtitling the American movie *Glengarry Glen Rose* with a special focus on the techniques adopted in translating offensive taboo words and phrases. The data was collected from the movie, and assessed based on Gottlieb's (1992) typology of subtitling strategies. The results showed that euphemisms represent an improved form of expression that is created due to the need to create an acceptable reality.

Further, Abdelaal and Al Sarhani (2021) examine the strategies employed in translating swear words and taboo expressions from English into Arabic in the *Training Day* movie. The objectives of the study were to identify the strategies that are used to translate swear words and taboo expressions as well as assess the quality of translation. The researchers used Pedersen's (2005, 2011) model. The results of the study showed that the subtitler used different strategies to subtitle swear and taboo words and expressions. Two of the most common strategies were found to translate swear and taboo words: euphemism and omission.

Al-Motlaq (2022), examined how the subtitler behaved when converting Jordanian dialects into English in the TV program *AlRawabi School for Girls*. The researcher employed Gideon Toury's (1995) descriptive approach, which explains the translator's choice in its actual context rather than outlining guidelines for judging translation quality. In light of their social background, the researcher makes an effort to describe and explain how the Netflix subtitler struggled with the lexical and cultural disparities between Arabic and English. The researcher also makes an effort to draw attention to the subtitling techniques utilized by the Netflix subtitler to subtitle dialects from Jordan. Three key conclusions from the investigation that are important for translating Jordanian dialectal idioms into English are as follows: (1) In order to appeal to the Netflix target audience, several dialectical terms are sacrificed or removed in favor of more formal language. (2) various subtitling techniques have been used by the Netflix subtitler, with pragmatic translation being the most popular technique for English subtitles. (3) Although the majority of the cases' subtitles successfully conveyed the desired meaning, the cultural significance and relevance of the original SL have been greatly diminished. The investigation concludes that the Netflix subtitler selected a target-oriented translation, depriving the intended audience of exposure to the local culture and Jordanian dialect characters.

Al-Adwan, Abu-Rayash and Haider (2023) adopted a corpus-assisted approach to explore the translation strategies that Netflix subtitlers opted for in rendering 1564 English swear words into Arabic. It uses a 699,229-word English-Arabic parallel corpus consisting of the English transcriptions of forty English movies, drama, action, science fiction (sci-fi), and biography and their Arabic subtitles. Using the wordlist tool in SketchEngine, the researchers identified some frequent swear words, namely fuck, shit, damn, ass, bitch, bastard, asshole, dick, cunt, and pussy. Moreover, using the parallel concordance tool in SketchEngine revealed that three translation strategies were observed in the corpus, namely, omission, softening, and swear-to-non-swear. The study was qualitative and quantitative in nature, the majority of the analyzed data—66% for drama, 61% for action, 52% for biography, and 40% for sci-fi—was explained by the omission technique for example "*Don't throw another fucking grenade!*" and the subtitler translate it by omission "أخرى قنبلة ترموا ال". The swear-to-nonswear technique, on the other hand, was the least popular, accounting for 21% in science fiction, 16% in biographies, 14% in drama, and 11% in action for example "*Very funny, bitch*", and the subtitler translate it by the swear to non-swear as "مضحكة انت للغاية". Furthermore, the softening technique was used the second-highest number of times across all movie genres, with 39% for science fiction, 32% for biographies, 28% for action, and 20% for drama. Swear words serve a connotative purpose, so deleting them or euphemizing them may slightly alter how the meaning and characters are portrayed.

Reviewing the previous studies, it is clear that there are only one study tackles the challenges of translating Jordanian cultural concepts which is Al-Motlaq(2022). However, the present study is different in terms of methodology and the swearing words or taboos that have been used in this movie. These expressions raise controversial argument in Jordan during the time of broadcasting the movie and there was a lot of media hype around this film. This study is significant because it is undeniable that notions of dialect in translation and subtitling can lead to a number of issues since it is challenging to convey the spirit and culture of the original dialect. As a result, dialect translation calls for translators who are fluent in both languages as well as both cultures. For instance, achieving dialect equivalence requires thorough familiarity with both the source and target languages' cultural contexts. However, there are situations when the subtitler may be unable in locating precise equivalents, particularly when working with dialectal idioms in a language as complex as Arabic. Therefore, this study is significant as it sheds more interest on the Netflix subtitling strategies of Jordanian cultural expressions in *The Alley* movie into English, and to what extent was the subtitler successful in conveying the intended meaning.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Data collection**

The corpus of this study is *The Alley* movie, which is set in a neighborhood plagued by gossip and violence in the east of the capital, Amman. The Movie faced harsh criticisms from Jordanians, due to the taboo words that were used by the characters of the movie,

and some accused the movie of being unrealistic and not representing the reality of the Jordanian people, and that these taboo words are not widespread in the way that the movie depicted. The plot of the movie takes place in a neighborhood of Amman where gossip, violence, bullying, unemployment and poverty are prevalent, according to the film's narrative. It sheds light on the story of a young man, Ali, who lives in this neighborhood and works in deceiving wealthy hotel goers in exchange for sending them to nightclubs. Ali does the impossible to be with his girlfriend, Lana, but her mother, Aseel, rejects this relationship. Then, a blackmailer's camera captures a video clip of them in an intimate position. So, the mother secretly resorts to a gang led by a dangerous criminal, Abbas, to put an end to this relationship. The gang leader, Abbas, threatens and beats Ali, warning him not to approach Lana, and prevents him from working in nightclubs. Ali begins planning to take revenge on Abbas, and at the same time escape with his girlfriend to get married away from the neighborhood. Ali actually carries out his plan, steals Abbas's money, disfigures his tongue, and then escapes with his girlfriend to a hotel. But "Lana" refused the theft and lies committed by "Ali", so she returned to her home, and in "Ali's" attempt to bring her back, her mother stabbed him in a fit of anger, so the mother "Aseel" concealed the crime with her ex-husband "Toto". But the crime was also filmed, so a new story begins with blackmail and more than one person trying to control the money that Ali stole.

The movie has been chosen as the corpus of the study because it has sparked controversy among viewers for its audacious and crude language, and because of its high content of difficult-to-translate aspects, such as cultural and linguistic features. The data consisted of 117 cultural expressions, including slang words, cultural expressions, idioms, and swear words. Only 26 examples of social and cultural expressions were used in the study in order to avoid repetition. These expressions have been chosen selectively as the main purpose of the study based on the strangeness of the terms, and the difficulty of translating them into English.

### **3.2. Data Analysis**

The study analyzed the full movie focusing on the cultural expressions that are distinct to the Jordanian culture, some of these expressions were swearing or taboo words. Then, the subtitling of these expressions was analyzed in the light of Baker's (1992, p.26-42) taxonomy of translation strategies (1992) subtitling strategies (see table 1 below). After that, the study identified the strategies utilized to translate the Jordanian cultural expressions in the English subtitles of *The Alley* movie. Next, the subtitling was evaluated in terms of biasedness toward ST or TT.

Baker (1992: 26-42) provides eight strategies that are used by professional translators to solve any problematic issue in translation:

- 1) Translation by a more general word (superordinate).**
- 2) Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word.**

- 3) Translation by cultural substitution.
- 4) Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation.
- 5) Translation by paraphrase using a related word.
- 6) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words.
- 7) Translation by omission.
- 8) Translation by illustration.

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **4.1. Findings**

One hundred and seventeen cultural expressions were extracted from the movie and were analyzed to investigate the subtitling strategy in the Jordanian-Arabic cultural expressions. Some examples can be applicable to more than one strategy. Table (1) shows the most applied subtitling strategies of culture-bound expressions in the Jordanian movie including 1) Translation by a more general word (superordinate).2)Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word.3)Translation by cultural substitution. 4) Translation by paraphrase using a related word.5) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words.6)Translation by omission.7)Translation by illustration. Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation was not used at all.

**Table (1) The frequency of most common subtitling strategies.**

<b>Subtitling strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Translation by paraphrase using a related word.	52	43.3%
Translation by cultural substitution.	37	30.8%
Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word.	13	10.8 %
Translation by illustration.	8	6.6%
Translation by a more general word (superordinate).	5	4.1 %
Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words.	3	2.5%
Translation by a more general word (superordinate).	3	2.5%
Translation by omission	2	1.6%



Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation.	0	0
<b>Total</b>	120	100%

Table (2) shows that the most frequent strategy with the highest percentage (43.3%) was paraphrase, then transfer with (30.8%), imitation with (9.3%), in addition to Expansion, Condensation and resignation with the same percentage (2.5%) and deletion with (1.8%). The rest of the strategies were not applied in the translation of the cultural expressions that have been extracted from the movie. The findings demonstrate that Netflix subtitler was successful in most cases. Furthermore, the subtitler adapted the target-oriented translation more than source-oriented translation considering that he tried to use expressions that fit the target culture and made it look like it's originally in English, although, some expressions were not conveyed adequately because he sacrificed the cultural imprint and generalized them to match the target audience expectations. Additionally, the subtitler applied only seven strategies from Baker's strategies, and Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation was not used by Netflix subtitler. Further, the subtitler missed some meanings or did not comprehend the expressions from the source culture correctly and the desired meaning was lost. Though there were some difficulties in the source text expression that would be so hard to convey so he either chose to delete them or use the same forms. All in all, his translation was successful in most cases.

## 4.2. Discussion

The discussion section includes the analysis of the eight common strategies used by Netflix subtitler in the Jordanian Movie *The Alley*. The subtitler did not employ decimation and transcription strategies.

### 4.2.1. Translation by paraphrase using a related word.

According to Baker (1992,p.37), this strategy is “used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form.” It is a strategy where the translator tends to add some extra words to explain the intended meaning of the Source Text (ST) message. This was the most common strategy used by Netflix subtitler with 43.3%. Consider the following examples:

1. SL: اذا هاظرنلي /*itha haDHa rinili*/  
TL: If you need anything else call me

In example (1), after Ali died, his lies about his job and what he was doing for living were revealed. His best friend knew all his secrets. So, he hired some guys, one of them acted as his boss and some coworkers appeared at the funeral and said that Ali was a good employee. After doing that, they met Ali's friend to get paid. One of them said لى

هاظ رنلي. This phrase is commonly used in Jordan, which literally means (*if so or if that call me*). The intended meaning here is “*if you need anything else call me*”. The expression *انا هاظ* (*if so*) is a culture-specific term in Jordan, so the translator provided a paraphrase using a related word in English.

2. SL: لحد ما تدخل كل دار بالحارة /*laHd ma tudxul kol dar bilHarah/*

TL: And before you know it, it made its way through every alley

In example (2), the narrator was still talking about how the stories spread all over the alley. Therefore, he said that *the story kept spreading until it reached every house in the neighborhood*. The Netflix subtitler used the expansion strategy to cover the intended meaning. The words *لحد ما*, which actually means *until* were translated as *before you know it*. It literally means *very quickly or soon*, and he used it to convey the idea of news, or the stories that spread so fast. The subtitler also used a paraphrase strategy using a related word to give a glimpse into how news spreads quickly among people in the alley. Furthermore, the narrator completes the sentence by saying *تدخل كل دار بالحارة* referring to the stories that reaches every house in the alley very quickly, the subtitler translated it by using the idiom “*made its way*” which conveys the exaggerated meaning of the word *enter*. The story breaks in every house in the alley. In addition, the subtitler used a more general word for the phrase “*every house in the alley*” which is “*through every alley*.”

3. SL: من خبر صغير بتوصلك القصة مستوية /*min xabar Saghi:r btwSalak ilqiSa mistiuyih/*

TL: So by the time it reaches your ears, they spun a web out of it.

In example (3), the narrator was describing how the stories get bigger every time it passes through everybody’s mouth, because everyone has his\her own perspective. The word *خبر صغير* “small news” and *القصة مستوية* (Literally means the story is cooked) were omitted in the subtitling as the literal translation will not convey the intended meaning. The subtitler opted for paraphrase using a related word which is an idiom “*spun a web*” that provides the intended meaning. It means that a lie leads to another lie, and so on until they weave into a web of lies, where if the truth comes out at all, it will be considered as a lie, and with gossiping about small silly situations until it becomes a story that people enjoy talking about.

#### **4.2.2. Translation by cultural substitution.**

Baker (1992,p.31) explains that “this strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader” (p.31). In this case the literal translation will not work properly, so the translator tends to use a near-synonym word or expression in the target language to make the meaning comprehensible for the target audiences. This was the second common strategy used by Netflix subtitler with 30.8 %.

4. SL: اسبوع على هالقعدة /*isbu:3 3ala halqa3dih/*

TL: He's been loafing on the couch for a week

In example (4), Ali was upset about what happened to him when Abbas assaulted him. So, he stayed at home for a while, and didn't go out to work or see his friend. When his friend came to visit him, Ali's mother told him that he had been on this situation for a whole week, she said *اسبوع على هالقعدة*. This phrase is also common in Jordan; it conveys the meaning of someone who is depressed. The subtitler used an idiomatic expression "loafing on the couch" to make the expression easier to comprehend for the target audience. *Loafing on the couch* means to spend time doing nothing.

5. SL *طريق الدنيا ع روسهم /Tarbaq iddinya 3ru:shum/*

TL: Kick their faces

In example (5), Hanadi was leading the group, when Abbas was still couldn't talk and got weaker. She was telling one of the members to go to a certain place and take the cut, and she said to take 350JD, if they refuse *طريق الدنيا ع روسهم* (literally means *to break the world on their heads*). The intended meaning is to bit them and to ruin the place. This phrase is commonly used among Jordanian people, it is usually used in fights or threats, the subtitler used a common phrase used in the target culture which is *Kick their faces*. This phrase was successfully translated, because it conveyed the intended meaning in English.

6. SL: *و بعد فنجان السادة /w ba3id funjan issada/*

TL: After drinking to the agreement

In example (6), the narrator continues to talk about Abbas and his enemy, after he invited him to reach an agreement, and said *و بعد فنجان السادة* (literally means *after drinking a cup of black coffee*). This expression is common in Jordanian Arabic which donates reaching an agreement between two parties. The word *فنجان السادة* means a cup of black Arabian coffee which popular in Jordan and it serves for guest to show that they are welcome. Arabian black coffee is also served on sad and happy occasions, such as engagements, weddings and funerals. In solving dispute, it means that both parties have reached an agreement and all the disputes between them have been solved by drinking a cup of black coffee. The subtitler used a common cultural expression in English which is "After drinking to the agreement" to convey the intended cultural meaning of this phrase. However, it is a general phrase, but it is clearly understood by the target audience.

#### **4.2.3. Translation by illustration.**

According to Baker (1992,p. 42), "this is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the target language refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly if there are restrictions on space and if the text has to remain short, concise, and to the point." That is, the translator tends to illustration to provide the accurate or the

intended meaning of an expression in the target language. This strategy was the third strategy used by Netflix subtitler with 6.6 &.

7. SL: بس لقي لحمها قاسي /*bas laqa laHimha qa:si/*  
TL: But he found her flesh tough to chew

In example (7), the narrator continued talking about Hanadi's story, and the guy who harassed her in the club and she stopped him harassing her. The narrator said *بس لقي لحمها قاسي* (Literally means her flesh is tough). In Jordanian Arabic it means that a woman who will not allow anyone to harass her as she preserves her honor. The Netflix subtitler translated the expression above as *But he found her flesh tough to chew* the subtitler kept the form and rendered the meaning by adding "tough to chew" to explain the idea that it can't be eaten.

8. SL: عريس لقطه /*3ari:s luqTa/*  
TL: He's a catch

In example (8), Aseel and her daughter were talking about a guy proposing to a girl from the neighborhood and describing him as *عريس لقطه*. This expression is commonly used in Jordan, the word *لقطة* is an expression used to describe someone or something that's rare, and can't be found easily. In this situation, they were joking about him, as they said it ironically. The subtitler used transfer strategy using the expression *He's a catch* which is the same form with an adequate equivalent that is used in these cases in the target culture.

9. SL: معلم اصرفلك هالبريزة /*im3alim iSriflak ialbare:zih/*  
TL: Boss, check out this fool.

In example (9), when Baha'a went to the nightclub that Ali used to work for, and sat at the bar, the bartender asked him what do you want to order, and he ordered "A juice". The bartender laughed at him because he didn't order a drink. Then, Baha'a asked about Ali, and the bartender told him you cannot ask about people here, he called his boss and said *معلم اصرفلك هالبريزة* which literally means 'boss exchange this 10 piasters'. However, this is a culture-specific expressions used to make bullying on weak persons or to refer to someone who is stupid or idiot as the case in this context. The subtitler used illustration strategy to render the adequate meaning of the expression as *Boss, check out this fool* and 'fool' means a silly or stupid person who lacks judgment or sense.

10. SL: شوف يا حصتي /*shu:f ya HuSti/*  
TL: Listen, kid

In example (10), when Baha'a was in the nightclub asking about Ali, the bartender didn't like it, and said *شوف يا حصتي* which literally means 'look! my cut'. It is a slang

expression used commonly in Jordan. It is used to refer to someone you admire and defend, and it may be ironically used by using a certain intonation as in this example to indicate a ridicule. The subtitler used “*listen, kid*” which is the intended and adequate meaning of the speaker.

#### 4.2.4. Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word.

It means that the translator tends to narrow or specify the meaning of the message in the target language. The translator tries to provide a near-synonym word in the TL even if it is less expressive, but it conveys an adequate meaning for the target audience. The Netflix subtitler tended for literal translation in certain cases to convey the message in English. However, the translation provided was somehow less expressive in English. That is, it does not have the same emotive meaning as in Arabic.

11. SL: انت بتسواش نعله كندرة /?inta bitwash na3ilit kundarah/  
TL: You aren't worth the muddy sole of shoes

In example (11), Aseel killed Ali by mistake, and tried to cover up the murder with the help of her ex-husband. At that time, the blackmailer filmed them, and reached out to Aseel and blackmailed her for money. Aseel and her ex-husband were talking about how they can handle this problem. He started to blame her, and said this is all your fault, and you get me into this trouble, so she replied to him انت بتسواش نعله كندرة which literally means “*Not worth a shoe heel*”. It means someone who is a *despicable man*, and nobody respect him because of his bad behavior. The subtitler used a more neutral and less expressive translation in English “*You aren't worth the muddy sole of shoes*”.

12. SL: ما بتعرف راسه من قفاه /ma bi3rif ra:suh min qafa:h/  
TL: I can't tell his head from his ass

In example (12), Aseel and her daughter were mocking and making fun of the guy who proposed to a girl in the alley, she said ما بتعرف راسه من قفاه (*Literally means he does not know his head from his ass*). This expression is common in Jordan, and it refers to someone who is stupid and silly. The subtitler used a literal translation which is less expressive and somehow impolite for the target audience. He should translate using the strategy of cultural substitution as “*know one's head from a hole in the ground.*” This idiom is common in English and it is more expressive.

13. SL: فكلي جيبتك /fukili ja:btak/  
TL: Loosen your wallet.

In example (13), when Ali got some customers to the nightclub he worked for, the owner was paying Ali a percentage for that, but Ali was not satisfied with the payment, so he told him فكلي جيبتك (*literally loosen your pocket*). It means you “*should pay me more*”. The subtitler provided a neutral word “*wallet*” for the word “*pocket*” which is less expressive in the target language. The subtitler should use the strategy of translation by illustration to make the translation more comprehensible and natural for

the target audience. In the following examples, the subtitler used translation by more neutral or less expressive words in translation to facilitate the process of understanding for the target readers:

14. SL: اخو قح...  
TL: son of a bitch
15. SL: لا العن تعري...خوا....  
TL: before I pimp out your sisters
16. SL: ايش الخر... هاظ  
TL: Get this fucking thing off me
17. SL: الله يفض... امك  
TL: Son of a bitch
18. SL: اخو الشر...  
TL: son of a bitch
19. SL: ابن القح...  
TL: son of a bitch
20. TT: مني...  
Motherfucker

All these taboos or swearing expressions were used several times in the Alley Movie by the actors in different settings in the movie, and by different characters. The expressions (1,4,5,6) are translated the same as “*The son of a bitch*”. However, they have different meanings in Arabic, for example: In example (1) and (5), it means “the brother of a whore”; in (4) “may Allah dishonor your mother”; in (6) “the son of a whore”. In (2), it literally means “I will damn the honor of your sisters”. In (3), “what is this crap?”. The subtitling of these expressions was appropriate and understandable for the target readers. That is, the subtitler used the more general expressions that convey nearly the same effect in the target language.

#### 4.2.5. Translation by a more general word (superordinate).

According to Baker (1992), this strategy is used to deal with many types of nonequivalence, especially the “propositional” or the intended meaning contained in the source text. Sometimes it is impossible to convey the message using literal translation. Therefore, the translator uses a more general word that make cover a part of the meaning.

21. SL: يغص بالك /yughuS ba:lak/  
TL: Whatever

In example (11), Ali was searching for customers for the club, and when he saw some rich guys, he pretended to speak on the phone. He pretended that he was upset because his friend did not want to go out with him to see some girls, and said the unreal person on the phone يغص بالك. This expression literally means “*chocking your mind*” in Jordanian Arabic, it is a swearing word used to curse someone who tells bad news or something unfavorable. It does not have an equivalent in English, so the

subtitler used a more general word “*Whatever*” as a translation for it, which used to dismiss a previous statement and express indifference.

22. SL: لا يفكروننا صحاب: /la yfakru:na SHa:b/  
TL: You really abuse our friendship.

In example (12), when Ali went to his friend’s salon for a haircut, then his friend was teasing him, so Ali said لا يفكروننا صحاب which literally means “*don’t let them think that we’re friends*” which is an expression that is used among young people in Jordan, and it is a kind of joke, it is like a bullying among friends. This expression does not have an equivalent in English, so the subtitler used a more general expression “*You really abuse our friendship*”. This phrase means that someone causes harm or distress, the translation was unsuccessful because it was way far from the conveyed meaning.

#### **4.2.6. Translation by omission**

The translator may omit a particular item or expression if it does not provide important information for the readers and it will not affect the process of understanding the message by the target readers (Baker,1992). That is, the deletion of these words or expressions will in anyway influence the sense of the translated text. The subtitler works to create concise subtitles to make it simpler for viewers to avoid distracting their attention.

23. SL: شابين ع كيف كيفك /shabe:n 3ala ke:f ke:fak/  
TL: A couple

In example (16), Ali went to the hotel, he met his friend who worked with him. He asked him about worthy or rich customers, his friend said شابين ع كيف كيفك (literally means two gentle young men). In this situation, it means those two young men are a good prey for you. The subtitler translates it as a ‘*couple*’ as one general and unrelated word. There is a loss in translation here due to omission parts of the main utterance. It should be translated as “*A very rich young men.*”

24. SL: بدى اشلفط /bidi ?shalfiT/  
TL: Not translated

In example (17), Aseel went to Abbas to stop the blackmailer who filmed her daughter with her boyfriend, Abbas had his own way to put an end to it, so he was going to send a voice message to the blackmailer, and said Close your ears بدى اشلفط (literally means I want to curse or to use swearing words). This word is not lexicalized in Standard Arabic. This is a swearing word and it is a culture-specific word which is used by gangs in Jordan. The subtitler did not translate it at all. This utterance should be translated as “*I’m about to use taboo words*”.

#### **4.2.7. Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words.**

According to Baker (1992, p.38), “if the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts.” That is, when the word is not used in the target language with the same meaning as in the source language, the translator tends to use the paraphrase strategy with unrelated word or expression. Consider the following example.

25. SL: بعد ما اختفى اللي اختفى /ba3id ma ixtafa illi ixtafa/  
TL: After the ghosts vanished

In example (18), the narrator was giving the final speech about how life in the alley became, and what’s going to happen next. He said *بعد ما اختفى اللي اختفى* which literally means “*after who disappeared, disappeared*”. This expression refers to what happened to the amin characters of the alley, as some of them were disappeared or got killed. The subtitler used a paraphrase strategy with unrelated word “*ghosts*” referring to the main characters., and the whole expression conveyed the intended meaning.

26. SL: يخرب بيتك /yixrib be:tak/  
TL: Hell

In example (19) , Ali confessed all his secrets and lies to his friend Baha’a, and Baha’a was shocked when he heard all that, he said *يخرب بيتك* which literally means “*May God ruin your house*”. This expression is commonly used in the Arab world, it is used to express a shock or surprise when hearing something unusual or shocked. Sometimes, it is used as a joke. This expression is a culture-specific, so the subtitler used a paraphrase with unrelated word “*Hell*” but the meaning is successfully conveyed in English. This is no equivalence for this expression in English and literal translation may lead to misunderstanding. Another suggested a more expressive translation could be “*damn it*”.

## **5.CONCLUSION**

The study found that the Netflix subtitler used a variety of subtitling strategies to convey the SL meaning in the TL. The subtitling was successful in most cases and in few cases it was not. The most applied strategy in the subtitle of the movie was translation by paraphrase using a related word with (43.3%), then Translation by cultural substitution with (30.8%), translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word with (10.8). Then, translation by illustration with (6.6%), translation by a more general word (superordinate) with (4.1%), translation by paraphrase using unrelated words and translation by a more general word (superordinate) with (2.5%). The least used strategy was translation by omission with. Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation was used by



Netflix subtitle in the movie. The Netflix subtitle mostly succeeded in rendering the culture-specific terms or expressions in English. However, some culture-specific terms or expressions are removed or sacrificed by replacing them with Standard English to fit the Netflix target audience. The Netflix subtitle chose to sacrifice the cultural reference for the sake of the naturalness of the meaning in the target language. Therefore, the Netflix subtitle succeeded in delivering the desired meaning in most phrases and has biased in favor of the target audience, so he used phrases from the target culture, so the desired meaning could be achieved and make it sound like it was originally in English.

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