Using Modern Standard Arabic in subtitling Egyptian comedy movies for the deaf/ hard of hearing

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Abstract: Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has gained widespread popularity due to various factors, including technology advancement and, more importantly, audience needs. In the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Netflix added Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) subtitles to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic movies. This study investigates how the deaf and hard-of-hearing audience received this service in comedy movies. The script of the movie in the vernacular Egyptian was qualitatively compared to Netflix MSA subtitles. A sample group of 40 deaf and hard of hearing participants was asked to watch an Egyptian comedy movie with MSA subtitles and fill in a 12-item questionnaire of four constructs. Since SDH in the Arab World is still relatively new, the quantitative analysis confirmed the expected conclusion that intralingual subtitling of Arabic movies is a step in the right direction to make audiovisual materials accessible to the DHH and enhance their feeling of social inclusion. The qualitative analysis demonstrated the differences between the MSA subtitles and the vernacular Egyptian utterances regarding the information included, whether linguistic or paralinguistic. The qualitative results also showed that the MSA subtitles had additional information, such as speaker tags, sound effects, and other non-linguistic features that helped more than half of the participants gain better access to the different elements of the movie. The analysis also showed that rendering the dialectal expressions and intentional slips of the tongue into MSA seemed odd and less humorous in some cases. The study findings can be helpful for both translator training programs and industry, especially those interested in subtitling audiovisual materials for people with varying sensorial abilities. In the Arab World, the volume of SDH still lags. Therefore, Arab governments are recommended to impose regulations on TV channels to increase subtitling for this group of community in an attempt to be more just and inclusive.

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1. Introduction

Television and movie media are among the top forms of entertainment worldwide (Brown, 2018). The fact that people spend many hours watching the screen has led many channels to purchase a massive number of foreign programs to attract the audience. New platforms were also introduced, such as YouTube, Netflix, HBO Now, Hulu, and many others, which have ushered in the rapid growth of at-home entertainment. Foreign movies, series, and documentaries are becoming closer to the viewers and more accessible than ever before, thanks to audiovisual translation (AVT). Gottlieb (2005) defines AVT as “the translation of transient polysemiotic texts presented onscreen to mass audiences” (p. 13). The word “transient” means dynamic, while “polysemiotic” involves using various semiotic channels in the same work. These channels vary between verbal audio channel (dialogues, songs, off-screen voices), nonverbal audio channel (sound effects, music, off-screen sounds), verbal and visual channel (subtitles, notes, signs, inscriptions that appear on the screen), and nonverbal visual channel (picture on the screen) (Gottlieb, 1998).

AVT modes can be of different types. A text may be made comprehensible for audiences unfamiliar with the original language in a process known as interlingual AVT. The second type, intralingual, aims at meeting the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) needs, which involves rendering dialogues into written subtitles within the same language. The third type, intersemiotic, involves a shift between channels, and the verbal signs are interpreted by means of signs of a nonverbal sign system (Jacobson, 1959).

Although digital technology has pushed AVT to the fore in Western Europe, it is still underdeveloped in the Arab world, where it seems to be an industry without a profession (M. Gamal, 2007). Although the number of media companies offering AVT services has increased in many Arab states, there was no similar increase in the training opportunities at both the academic and institutional levels or even opportunities to get into the AVT market (M. Y. Gamal, 2019). Likewise, AVT in Arab universities remains outside the scope of most translation departments (M. Y. Gamal, 2019). Where subtitling is involved, foreign films are usually subtitled into Arabic, whereas Arabic films are rarely subtitled into other languages. Foreign dramas, including Mexican, Korean and Turkish, invaded the Arab world over the past two decades, being dubbed into Modern Standard Arabic as well as Syrian and Egyptian dialects (Bilbassy-Charters, 2010). However, the number of Arabic films dubbed into foreign languages is scarce.

The spread of the coronavirus all over the world has had substantial impacts on the different aspects of life (Almahasees et al., 2021; Al-Salman & Haider, 2021a, 2021b; Haider & Al-Salman, 2020). During this crisis, video streaming platforms witnessed a considerable boom as people were socially distancing and staying at home in an attempt to curb the spread of the disease. This made people constantly search for programs to watch on TV. Therefore, there was a massive increase in usage and subscription signings for streaming platforms, one of which is Netflix. The company reported that its biggest gains were made in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, where 16 million customers created accounts in the first three months of 2020 (BBC, 2020).

When people were under tight lockdown and quarantine in the Middle East, there was an extraordinary surge in viewership. During that period, Netflix provided its subscribers with the service of selecting subtitles in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) of the dialect being spoken on
screen. This feature was added to some popular Egyptian comedy movies to make the dialogues accessible for people with hearing impairment as a kind of support to this minority group (Annahar, 2020). This study investigates how the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) received this service and thus attempts to answer the following two research questions:

(1) How have the DHH audience received the MSA intralingual subtitling of Egyptian Vernacular comedy movies?

(2) What are the differences between the MSA subtitling version and the Egyptian Vernacular original script in terms of the included information and the used expressions?

2. Literature review
This section introduces the different audiovisual types and modes and gives special attention to subtitling for the DHH audience. In addition, it highlights the differences between Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and colloquial Arabic.

2.1. Audiovisual types
Scholars distinguish around ten modes of audiovisual translation. However, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) classify the forms of AVT into two major subgroups: revoicing and subtitling. Revoicing is the replacement of the original audio track by a new version in the target language. It can be further subdivided into the following types: voice-over, narration, free commentary, audio description, and dubbing. In voice-over, “the source language track of an audiovisual text is overlapped with another track on which translated dialogues in the target language are recorded, such that both tracks can be heard simultaneously” (Chaume, 2012, p. 3). Narration is very similar to voice-over but is distinguished for its formal grammar structures or even the use of several voices (Mack, 2001). It does not fully recover the source text but aims at a more faithful translation in the simultaneous mode. Free commentary does not take into account the faithfulness of the target text but is rather free and mostly performed in various modes of translation (Karamitroglou, 2000). Audio description is the transformation of the visual information into spoken language, which can help the blind comprehend the displayed material. This is done by inserting a description of the setting, characters, and action when no information about these visual elements is provided in the regular audio presentation (Vera, 2006). Dubbing is the replacement of the soundtrack of the source language (SL) with a soundtrack of the target language (TL) to be broadcasted in countries where the original language of the material is not their mother tongue. The sounds of the TL and the actors’ lip movements may more or less be synchronized (Díaz-Cintas, 2003). The other subgroup, subtitling, involves introducing the dialogues in the target text on the screen. Since subtitling is the main focus of this paper, it will be discussed in a separate section.

2.2. Subtitling
Since the early days of the silent film industry, the dialogue that was supposedly spoken by actors had to be transmitted to the viewers in some way or another (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998). This was achieved through the insertion of short written texts describing what was happening in the original language between sequences of the movie (J. Ivarsson, 1995). After sound was innovated in the late 1920s, when the movie was taken to a country with a different language, the text was translated and inserted directly into the picture (I. Ivarsson, 2002). However, with the developments in technology, subtitles took the form of texts that are automatically synchronized with the images and inserted on the screen. With the developments in technology, subtitles took the form of texts that are automatically synchronized with the images and inserted on the screen. Subtitles used nowadays in the audiovisual industry are defined as “the translation of the spoken source language text of an audiovisual product, generally movie dialogues, into a written text, which is superimposed onto the image of the original product, usually at the bottom of the screen” (Luyken et al., 1991, p. 31). As mentioned earlier, subtitles can be interlingual when the language is translated into another
Figure 1. Classifications of subtitles based on the linguistic dimension (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p. 14).

language, or intralingual, when the process takes place within the same language (see Figure 1).

Intralingual subtitles aim at substituting the soundtrack with a written text, thus, changing the mode but not the language. This is usually performed for people with hearing impairment or when the dialect of the audiovisual material is not accessible to people who use other dialects of the same language. The intralingual accessible modes include subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, audio description for the blind and visually impaired, respeaking, and audio subtitling (see Figure 1).

2.3. Accessibility

AVT has improved both linguistic and sensorial accessibility to audiovisual media by focusing on audiences who are not familiar with the language and those who are unable to access either the aural or visual content. Advancement in technology and translation services, whether human or automatic, has reduced the gap between different languages and cultures and offered useful means to cross language barriers, thus, promoting intercultural dialogue. To achieve linguistic accessibility in audiovisual media, a variety of transfer modes, such as subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over, are used to provide the content in people’s native language (Matamala & Ortiz Boix, 2016).

Likewise, everyone should have access to information and cultural products. Therefore, making translations accessible to all receptors, regardless of their abilities, is a human right recognized by many international institutions (Neves, 2008). People with disabilities constitute a recognizable segment of the population of any country. Consequently, for an inclusive digital society, media service providers are encouraged to ensure that their services are made accessible to people with visual or hearing disabilities. These services that aim at sensorial accessibility may include programs with accompanying sign language or subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH), in addition to audio description (AD) for blind and visually impaired audiences (Matamala & Ortiz Boix, 2016).

SDH is an AVT mode where the acoustic signs or auditory elements are translated (see Aleksandrowicz, 2020; Tamayo & Chaume, 2017). This does not only include dialogues and lyrics since they are generally translated for hearing audiences watching foreign films. Non-verbal auditory elements that include music, sound effects, and paralanguage are translated and considered peculiar to SDH. However, this mode in many countries, particularly the Arab, is still limited. The deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers may have greater access to foreign programs than those produced in their own languages. Recently, some platforms such as Netflix started providing intralingual Modern Standard Arabic subtitles to some AVT programs that were originally produced in different colloquial varieties of Arabic as a kind of support to people with hearing impairment.
2.4. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Colloquial Arabic (CA)
Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language of the 22 countries that make up the Arab world, with around 300 million speakers. It is used in writing in addition to formal oral interactions such as lectures, public speeches, sermons, and news broadcasting. MSA is not the mother tongue of any speaker but is only taught at school. MSA is always grammatically consistent and is used as a lingua franca between Arabic-speaking populations to make communication easier (Holmes, 2017).

Colloquial Arabic (CA) is the set of spoken varieties that exist in the form of regional dialects (Nassif, 2021). These dialects differ from MSA and from each other in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. CA is spoken at home and between friends in everyday interactions. It is also used in informal written communications, such as text messages and personal letters, and emails (Al Suwaiyan, 2018).

Because of the restricted domains of MSA being mainly used in formal settings, movies and series use CA in most of their genres, such as comedy, action, and drama. It is just not normal to have the characters speak in MSA, especially that the scenarios usually revolve around daily issues. In other genres, such as historical or documentary films, MSA does not sound odd because they are instructive in nature, and people are aware of historical events from history books that are already written in MSA.

Comedy films, and particularly Egyptian, have wide audiences not only in Egypt itself but also in other parts of the Arab world. Egyptians are known as “أوائل النكث، Sons of the Jokes” (Dozio, 2021), and this made their dialect perfectly suitable for humorous purposes in movies. Therefore, translating Egyptian dialect in comedy movies into another language or dialect may not have the same impact on the audience. It may strip the work of many artistic qualities and leave much to be desired. According to Von Stackelberg (1988, pp. 12–13), the translation must ensure that “comical writing remains comical writing in translation just as a tragic text must remain tragic.” Therefore, although conveying the meaning is the core of translation, it is preferable to keep the style adopted in the source text as well.

As mentioned earlier, Netflix used MSA subtitles for some Egyptian movies during the coronavirus crisis. The reason behind this is not only to provide accessible content for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (facilitating sensorial accessibility) but also to make the content accessible to speakers of different Arabic dialects other than the one spoken in the movie (facilitating linguistic accessibility).

3. Research methodology
This study uses a combination of approaches, namely qualitative and quantitative. In the former approach, we compare the MSA subtitles with the original Egyptian dialect to spot intralingual translation problems. In the latter approach, we analyze the responses of a group of deaf and hard of hearing to a 12-item survey.

3.1. Quantitative analysis
3.1.1. Research instruments
The population of the study consisted of 40 deaf and hard of hearing participants. The researchers contacted one of the Centers for Deaf in Jordan and organized ‘movie’ nights, where deaf community members were invited to watch Elly Baly Balak movie on a large projection screen. To comply with the defense orders in Jordan, only 20 members were invited to take part each night.

The researchers developed a questionnaire to elicit the responses of a group of deaf and hard of hearing participants on their experience of watching Elly Baly Balak movie. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections: the first section aimed to collect demographic data on gender, education, literacy level, and age. The second section consisted of 12 items that aimed to collect
data on (1) movie watching habits, (2) language and feeling, (3) technical issues, and (4) attitudes. At the end of the movie, the researchers distributed a paper-form Likert-type questionnaire and asked the participants to fill in and submit it before leaving the hall. It is worth mentioning that the questionnaire was administered in Arabic, being the official language in Jordan (see Appendix 1 for the English Translation). After that, the responses were entered into an Excel file.

50 participants in total responded to the questionnaire’s items. The responses of 10 participants were used for piloting, i.e., to examine the questionnaire’s reliability, while the remaining 40 respondents were used in the analysis of the present study.

3.1.2. Questionnaire validity and reliability
The present study questionnaire was given to a jury of three experts in the field of audiovisual translation to collect their remarks and comments on the four constructs and 12 items. The jury’s comments were considered before administering the final version of the survey.

To ensure that the subscales are internally reliable, a Cronbach’s alpha test on a sample of 10 respondents who were not included in the study was used to validate the research instrument’s reliability (Cronbach, 1951). Table 1 shows the results for the questionnaire’s 12 statements and how closely they are related in the four constructs.

Table 1 shows a high level of reliability and reflects a relatively high internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered “acceptable” in social science research (Nunnally, 1978).

3.2. Qualitative analysis
In an attempt to support deaf and hard of hearing people, Netflix has provided its subscribers with the service of selecting MSA subtitles for a group of movies and series during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, people’s reactions to the MSA subtitles of comedy movies were unusual, most likely because MSA is used in formal settings and not typically used to tell jokes. For the purpose of this study, an Egyptian comedy movie, namely Elly Bali Balak was selected for various reasons. First, it is full of comedy scenes; second, it is starred by Mohamed Saad, one of the most famous comedy actors in Egypt and the Arab world; and third, it is among the highest-grossing films in Egyptian Cinema. The subtitles examined in this study were extracted from Netflix. The researchers also watched the movie with the MSA subtitles on Netflix to make sure that the version downloaded from subscene.com were identical to the ones provided by Netflix. The researchers examined the MSA subtitles against the original Egyptian script to spot the differences between the two versions.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Quantitative analysis (questionnaire)
The researchers examined the participants’ responses to the 12 items of the questionnaire (Table 2). In Table 2, the “% agree” column provides the percentage of respondents who either “Strongly
Table 2. “% agree” and the mean and standard error “M (SE)” for the questionnaire’s item

| No. | Item | % Agree | M (SE) |
|-----|------|---------|--------|
| A   | Habits |          |        |
| 1   | I frequently watch subtitled movies from other languages into Arabic. | 67.5% | 3.68 (0.24) |
| 2   | I rarely watch Arabic movies because they are not intralingually subtitled. | 65% | 3.85 (0.18) |
| 3   | I do not watch comedy movies a lot because I find it hard to understand the jokes they contain. | 52.5% | 3.23 (0.22) |
| B   | Language and Feelings |          |        |
| 4   | I could understand all words used in “Elly Baly Balak” movie. | 45% | 3.38 (0.21) |
| 5   | I could feel the “comic” sense of the movie even with the use of MSA. | 50% | 3.35 (0.20) |
| 6   | I enjoyed watching “Elly Baly Balak” movie. | 55% | 3.38 (0.22) |
| C   | Technical Aspects |          |        |
| 7   | The position, font, size, shadow, and background color of the subtitles were good. | 70% | 3.80 (0.18) |
| 8   | Paralinguistic information such as the soundtrack, e.g., telephone ringing, laughter, and applause, was reflected on the subtitles and helped me understand the movie. | 62.5% | 3.53 (0.22) |
| 9   | I had enough time to read the subtitles and process the information. | 47.5% | 3.08 (0.20) |
| D   | Attitude |          |        |
| 10  | I would like to watch more subtitled Arabic comedy movies in the future. | 80% | 4.08 (0.14) |
| 11  | I consider subtitling Arabic comedy movies a step in the right direction. | 60% | 3.63 (0.19) |
| 12  | Having different Arabic movies intralingually subtitled enhances my feeling of social inclusion. | 77.5% | 3.98 (0.18) |

(SE) standard error of the mean.

Agreed” or “Agreed” with the item, while the “M (SE)” column provides the mean and standard error for that item.
Items 1 to 3 of the questionnaire aimed to collect responses about the participants’ habits, whether they frequently watch movies with interlingual and intralingual subtitles, and the type of movies they watch. In responding to item 1, which reads “I frequently watch subtitled movies from other languages into Arabic,” 67.5% either “agreed” or “strongly agreed.” However, the participants rarely watch Arabic movies because they are not interlingually subtitled. With regard to the type of watched movies, and since the focus of this paper is on comedy movies, 52.5% of the participants stated that they do not watch comedy movies a lot because they find it hard to understand the jokes they contain.

In the construct titled “Language and Feeling,” the participants’ responses to items 4 through 6 of the questionnaire aimed to elicit responses on whether the participants could understand all words in the movie and enjoyed watching it. 55% of the participants appeared to have problems in understanding the MSA subtitles. Though so, half of the participants could feel the “comic” sense of the movie, as item 5 shows. Similarly, the participants’ responses to item 6 show that 55% of them expressed their enjoyment while watching the movie. It is worth noting that the word “enjoy” in item 6 does not mean finding the movie funny. It is rather used to investigate whether or not the participants got the pleasure of the overall experience of watching the intralingually subtitled movie.

With regard to the technical aspects of the subtitles; temporal (duration), spatial (length), and inclusion of paralinguistic information (Items 7–9), the findings showed that only 70% of the participants are satisfied with the position, font, size, shadow, and background color of subtitles. 62.5% of the participants agreed that the paralinguistic information was reflected on the subtitles and helped them better understand the movie. This suggests that the intralingual subtitles provided by Netflix are fair and relatively satisfactory; however, providing such information seems to hinder the participants’ ability to read and process the information provided in the subtitle lines, where only 47.5% agreed to the statement that they “had enough time to read the subtitles and process the information.”

The last section consists of items 10 through 12, which aim to collect responses about the participants’ attitudes towards this experience, and whether they recommend subtitling more movies in the future. Item 10 indicates that 80% of the participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement that reads “I would like to watch more subtitled Arabic comedy movies in the future.” This indicates that subtitling Arabic movies intralingually is welcomed by a significant number of the participants who expressed their willingness to watch more Arabic comedy movies. 60% of the participants considered this a good step in the right direction, and this indicates that subtitling Arabic movies into MSA is here to stay. This has a good impact on the participants’ feeling of inclusion in the Arab society bearing in mind that only a small portion of Arabic multimedia material is intralingually subtitled.

4.2. Qualitative analysis
The DHH audience has access to the visual content of the movie, but the spoken words and non-verbal features remain inaccessible, and therefore, any relevant sound effect not immediately obvious from the visual action must be subtitled. This section presents the different categories of the information contained in the subtitles, including paralinguistic and linguistic information. In addition, it evaluates how humor is rendered in MSA. Each category is followed by examples that do not represent the totality of cases found in the movie. For space constraints, a few selections are used to clarify the points under discussion, especially that most incidents classified under each category serve similar functions.

4.2.1. Paralinguistic information
Paralanguage or paralinguistic information refers to the elements of spoken communication that do not involve words (see Table 3). According to Sheth (2017, p. 72), such information “involves the various fluctuations in one’s voice, such as tone, pitch, rhythm, inflection, and volume. These cues can have a powerful effect on communication.” Paralanguage can add emphasis or shades of
Table 3. Examples of information referring to vocal non-linguistic features

| No. | MSA                                      | English Translation                      |
|-----|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1   | مين؟ [الرجل الاطارز] أنا [A man knocking]   | Who? [The man knocking] me.              |
| 2   | صوت مذبذب [رادار] [A female TV presenter]| [A female TV presenter] As usual,       |
|     | [A female TV presenter] As usual,       | our dear viewers ...                     |
| 3   | يصرخون! [دمره، هزازه الرؤوس] [Shouting]| [Shouting] Stop! Set down here,          |
|     | ! [Shouting] Stop! Set down here,        | you disgusting.                         |
| 4   | نسمو! أحبها! أحبها! [Whispering]          | Whispering] I love her, Lembali.         |
|     | أحبها! أحبها! [Whispering]               | I love her so much.                      |
| 5   | يصرخون! [صريح، أب، مريح] [Angry]       | [Angry] Hey buddy! You are dead          |
|     | [Angry] Hey buddy! You are dead anyway! | anyway!                                  |
| 6   | موسیقی خوب [Comic music]                | [Comic music]                            |
| 7   | زامور شریام [Truck horn]                 | [Truck horn]                             |
| 8   | صورخی سی [Door squeak]                 | [Door squeak]                            |
| 9   | غریبی وطنی؟ [Comic]                    | This “Hani” is weird. [Laughing]        |
| 10  | این آدمی؟ [Crying]                      | Who am I? [Crying]                       |

meaning without relating to the formal systems of language. Therefore, in SDH, it is important to include such details as they may deliver part of, if not the entire meaning. They can be classified into different types, including information referring to the speaker (1–2), information referring to vocal non-linguistic features (3–5), information referring to music and sound effects (6–8), and examples of information referring to non-verbal signs (9–10).

**Information referring to the speaker:** Such information is included when there is more than one speaker in the same scene or when the viewers can only hear the voice of someone talking without their images being displayed on the screen. As examples (1 & 2) show, including information about the speaker when there are different voices in the same scene, is necessary to avoid confusion. When one character is showing on the screen, and another is talking in the background, it may be hard for the deaf audience to link the subtitle with the right person. Most countries follow certain “official” guidelines to do SDH. According to Diaz-Cintas and Remael (2014, p. 15), the actors’ dialogues are converted into written speech and “generally change color on television depending on the person who is talking or the emphasis given to certain words within the same subtitle.” However, the feature of changing colors was not observed in Netflix’s subtitles of the movie. Therefore, including such information is helpful to understand the turn-taking in the conversations.

**Information referring to vocal non-linguistic features:** These features relate to the way something is said. Speakers’ tone may be high or low, indicating different moods. Crying, whispering, and shouting may also convey different intentions. As can be seen in examples (3–5), paralinguistic features can convey additional meanings based on the circumstances. In examples (3) and (4), the information included between the square brackets refers to characteristics of volume. Shouting may indicate anger, and whispering is used to indicate a secret. In examples (5), the tone of voice is referred to, indicating that the words are said with anger.

**Information referring to music and sound effects:** Most movies have music that achieves a number of functions, such as establishing the setting, calling attention to certain elements, reinforcing narrative developments, and creating emotions. Moreover, everyday sound effects like
footsteps, squeaky doors, breaking glass are used to enhance the auditory experience of the movie and create a sense of reality within the scenes. Therefore, it is important to compensate for this part in SDH. As the examples (6–8) demonstrate, the sound effects indicated between square brackets may be helpful in mimicking the actual sound source in the movie.

Information referring to non-verbal signs: Although the viewers can see what is going on the screen, the subtitlers added such information in their translation, as can be seen in examples 9 & 10. The examples show that the additional information is not really necessary to include in SDH as viewers can simply see the actors’ expressive movements. Including details that are already accessible to the viewers may affect some technical constraints, such as the screen space available and the viewer’s reading speed.

4.2.2. Linguistic information (code-switching)
When different languages are used in the same scene or in the dialogue, intralingual subtitlers should make a decision on what to be subtitled and how. Although the movie under study is mainly produced in Arabic, it happens that the characters sometimes code-switch to English. This mainly occurs on the occasions when the characters want to be associated with the high social class. In comedy films, in order to evoke the audience’s laughter, characters might use a foreign language in a funny way, i.e., illiterate characters might use English to show that they are knowledgeable. The authors found 18 subtitles, including English words, but since all the incidents serve the same function, and due to space constraints, only three examples of subtitles involving English expressions are discussed in Table 4.

In examples (11–13), the use of English expressions by the actors was intended to create humor. The main character in the movie does not understand English at all, and getting him involved in situations where English words are used, is meant to elicit the audience’s laughter. He gets confused each time he hears English words but later repeats them in other situations to show others that he is educated and belongs to a different class even though they are always mispronounced. Table 4, however, demonstrates that the English words were lost in the MSA subtitles, as they were replaced by Arabic equivalents preceded by a note between square brackets that this word was originally said in English. Although some people may not understand English, simple words like these are not crucial to the pragmatic communication of the scene, and therefore, are not translated even for normal viewers.

4.2.3. Rendering humor
This category includes three main subsections, namely: Rendering humor to non-humor, rendering dialect-dependent humor, and rendering humor based on misuse of language.

Rendering humor to non-humor: Some expressions may sound meaningless if translated literally into another dialect or language, and therefore, they are rendered into their equivalents in the target variety even if this necessitates a change in meaning, as can be shown in examples (14–18) as Table 5 shows.

Examples 14–18 show a wide discrepancy between the used expressions in the original utterances and their renderings in MSA, where some examples involved omissions while others involved changing words. What made the Egyptian comments relatively humorous is that they included

| No. | MSA | English Translation |
|-----|-----|---------------------|
| 11  | بلافانيركدة مميتة | [In English] Impossible—Do you talk to him this way? |
| 12  | بلافانيركدة انسى [In English] Hero | [In English] You are my hero. |
| 13  | بلافانيركدة [بالنفع] | [In English] Absolutely. |
unusual metaphors. In example (14), the prisoners were compared to a fruit being squeezed, resulting in smaller prisoners. Also, the beautiful lady in the movie was compared to a bulb that is about to light up, in example (15). Example (16) likened the face of children who keep sniffing the glue with the car wheel. In example (17), the unstable life of the main character was compared to Couscousi, which is an Algerian dish of small steamed balls of crushed durum wheat. Example (18) shows how the main character, who is a very simple man, believes in his achievements to the extent that he finds himself worthy of having his picture on the Egyptian pound, just like the historical figures. The MSA subtitles, however, do not include any metaphorical implications and are simply rigid statements with formal language.

Rendering dialect-dependent humor: Verbal humor may sometimes be funnier when said in a certain dialect. According to Zabalbeascoa (1996, p. 253), some jokes rely upon “features of natural language for their effect.” Therefore, rendering comical expressions from one dialect into another may not always have the same impact as can be shown in examples 19–21 in Table 6.

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**Table 5. Rendering humor to non-humor**

| No. | MSA | Translation | MSA | English Translation |
|-----|-----|-------------|-----|---------------------|
| 14  | سأتمزك أرأي، سأتمزك أرأي جحصك تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | I will squeeze you until you bring down small prisoners! | سأتمزك أرأي، سأتمزك أرأي جحصك تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | I will tear you to pieces. |
| 15  | يدي البلي تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | She needs two volts to light up | يدي البلي تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | She almost shines like a torch. |
| 16  | يدي البلي تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | He keeps sniffing intensely until his face turns like a tire. | يدي البلي تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | And he continues to inhale the glue until his face reddens. |
| 17  | ليني البلي تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | You are the one who turned my life upside down and made me like a Couscousi dish. | ليني البلي تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في | You are the one who turned my life upside down. |
| 18  | للبلي! هل تعلم قصصك طريقه سرحنا الاحترافي في | Al-Lembi! He needed only two days for his photo to appear on the Egyptian pound. | للبلي! هل تعلم قصصك طريقه سرحنا الاحترافي في | "Al-Lemby"? If the destiny gave him some time. |

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**Table 6. Rendering dialect-dependent humor**

| No. | MSA | Translation | MSA | English Translation |
|-----|-----|-------------|-----|---------------------|
| 19  | أولئك أوجه التحفيز إلي أن يذكروا أنهم أنفسهم من شرودة! | First of all, I would like to thank this son of Adam who was speaking a little while ago. | أولئك أوجه التحفيز إلي أن يذكروا أنهم أنفسهم من شرودة! | First of all, I would like to thank this human who was speaking a little while ago. |
| 20  | جحصك تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في ! | I told myself, you are white, and I am too, how do we give birth to this piece of date? | جحصك تريل سرحنا الاحترافي في ! | I told myself, you are white, and I am too, how do we give birth to that date fruit? |
Examples 19-20 show great similarity between the original Egyptian utterances and their MSA translation. However, the used expressions in the subtitled version sound odd as they are mainly intended to mock someone. This may be due to the fact that MSA is mainly used in formal settings when compared to the Egyptian dialect, which is strongly connected with humor being used in the most popular comedy movies in the Middle East. This is in line with Yahiaoui et al. (2020), who found that Vernacular Egyptian is used to better render satire than MSA, which is regarded as the High variant of the Arabic language.

Rendering humor based on misuse of language: Misusing language represented in intentional slips of tongue or mispronunciation of certain words may be a source of laughter (Schwarz, 2009) as examples (21–25) in Table 7 show.

Misusing language may take different forms. In example (21), incorrect pluralization was used represented by the word /mabaseet meaning happy; however, an MSA word for happy, namely /hadd adaa/ was used. In example (22), epenthesis was used where the sound /k/ was inserted in the word /sum to become /sukm/ that is meaningless in Arabic; however, it is used to rhyme with the word that follows. Metathesis was also used in example (23) where the sounds /l/ and /l/ were transposed in the word /telhauq/ meaning to be able to resulting in /telhauq/ meaning to shave. Example (24) also involved the change of the last letter /b/ in /ha aqab/ that means to comment into /ml/ making it /ha aqam/ meaning to sanitize. Only in few examples like (24) retained the change of sounds, and no additional information was provided to explain that the misuse was intended and not a mere typo. Such examples may indicate inconsistency in rendering misused linguistic elements as it is not clear why the subtitler sometimes chose to keep the word as is as in example 24 and other times used the correct forms as in 22 and 23. Reading the provided subtitles proves that these misuses of language are likely to lose humor when rendered into correct MSA forms.

5. Conclusion

This study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the efficiency of intralingual subtitling in providing DHH individuals with a means to better understand and enjoy the media content they consume. A group of 40 DHH participants was asked to watch an Egyptian comedy movie with MSA subtitles and fill in a 12-item questionnaire. The qualitative analysis demonstrated the differences between the MSA subtitles and the vernacular Egyptian utterances in terms of the information included, whether linguistic or paralinguistic, and the expressions used in rendering humor. Since SDH in the Arab

| No. | MSA                                                                 | Translation                                                                 | MSA                                                                 | English Translation                                                                 |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21  | وارعد أن أجل ليلتي | And I want to make everyone in prison happy like me.                     | وأرعد أن أجل ليلتي | And I want to make everyone in prison happy like me.                      |
| 22  | جعلته بين يديك وصلى عليه | Put it in your pocket and keep it a secret. Keep it a secret?             | ضعها في جيبك والخليط النسيم. أنت محرر؟ | Put it in your pocket and keep it a secret. Keep it a secret?                 |
| 23  | جاء يوم غياب عُمَر وبكر وبدأوا بتهرب وروحوا | Come on so we can shave our beards … manage to escape to come back early | جاء يوم غياب عُمَر وبكر وبدأوا بتهرب | Come on so we can run away and come back early                              |
| 24  | وأول مرة أرى لبا جمعه | And I want to tell him I’m going to sanitize on two points.              | وأول مرة أرى لبا جمعه | And I want to tell him I’m going to sanitize on two points.                |
World is still relatively new, the quantitative analysis confirmed the expected conclusion that intralingual subtitling of Arabic comedy movies is a step in the right direction to make audiovisual materials accessible to the DHH and enhance their feeling of social inclusion. The qualitative results showed that the MSA subtitles included additional information, such as speaker tags, sound effects, and other non-linguistic features that helped more than half of the participants gain better access to the different elements of the movie. However, a few incidents demonstrated that this was sometimes done excessively that non-verbal signs which are already accessible were also included in the subtitles. This might, in turn, affect the screen space available and the viewer’s reading speed, but since the number of these cases was limited, it did not affect the overall quality of the subtitles. The analysis also showed that rendering the dialectal expressions and intentional slips of the tongue into MSA seemed odd and less humorous in some cases.

One of the limitations of the present study is that it only applies to the Arab audience and Arabic comedy movies and is recommended to be replicated on different movie genres and in other countries to confirm the validity and generalizations of the conclusions. The number of the subjects included in the study was relatively limited due to the social distance measures imposed by the government during the Covid-19 pandemic. This made the process of collecting the data time-consuming as no more than 20 respondents could watch the movie at a time. Therefore, future studies are recommended to engage a larger number of DHH individuals. In the qualitative analysis, only a few examples representing each category were discussed for space constraints. Moreover, since subtitles involve semiotic modes other than the spoken one, such as the mode of sound effects, moving images, and music, other studies are recommended to follow a multi-modal approach to SDH.

SDH is undoubtedly developing at present, thanks to the pressuring groups who campaign for the interests of this sector of the audience. In fact, many countries started obliging TV channels to broadcast a certain percentage of their programs with SDH. For example, the BBC pledged to broadcast 100% of their programming with subtitles for the DHH by 2008, and the Global Television Network in Canada has been subtitling all its programs since 2005 (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014). In the Arab World, however, the volume of SDH still lags behind. By subtitling a number of Egyptian Arabic comedy movies into MSA, Netflix has taken a step ahead towards increased visibility to the issue of accessibility to audiovisual content. Arab governments are recommended to impose regulations on TV channels to increase subtitling for this group of community in an attempt to be more just and inclusive.

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