

Analysis of Technical “Foul-ups” with Particular Reference to Arabic-English Subtitling

Analyse des erreurs techniques avec une référence particulière au sous-titrage de l’arabe à l’anglais

Analiza erorilor tehnice cu referire specială la subtitrarea din limba arabă în limba engleză

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Abstract

A cost-effective solution in intercultural communication has been subtitling from English into Arabic for the past few decades. Subtitling stands as one of the most and oldest translation practices in the Arab World. However, the practice is done with blithe disregard for the technical dimension (e.g. space, segmentation, colour, synch etc) and polysemiotic channels (e.g. dialogue, music, picture etc). Results show the “two-bit” technical aspect of subtitling; thus the strategies employed by film subtitle translators are questionable. Therefore, the paper argues that subtitling/translation strategies should be sought within the ambit of technical dimension of subtitling.

Résumé

Une solution rentable dans la communication interculturelle a été sous-titrant les œuvres de traduction de l’anglais vers l’arabe au cours des dernières décennies. Ce sous-titrage se présente comme la pratique de la traduction la plus courante et la plus ancienne dans le monde arabe. Cependant, la pratique se fait avec une négligence claire de la dimension technique (par exemple, l’espace, la segmentation, la couleur, la synchronisation, etc.) et les canaux poly-sémiotique (par exemple le dialogue, musique, photo etc.). Les résultats montrent l’aspect technique de deux bits de sous-titrage, ainsi les stratégies employées par les traducteurs des sous-titres des films sont discutables. Par conséquent, le présent article essaye de montrer la nécessité de chercher les stratégies de sous-titrage/traduction dans le cadre de la dimension technique du sous-titrage.

Rezumat

În ultimele decenii, subtitrarea [filmelor] din limba engleză în arabă constituie o soluție eficientă economic. Subtitrarea este practica cea mai veche și mai frecventă din lumea arabă. Cu toate acestea, este practică cu totală desconsiderare a dimensiunilor tehnice (spre exemplu spațiul, segmentarea, culoarea, sincronismul etc.) precum și a canalelor polisemiotice (de exemplu a dialogului, muzicii, imaginii etc.). Rezultatele arată că aspectele tehnice nesemnificative ale subtitrării și prin acestea, strategiile utilizate de către traducătorii subtitranți pot fi puse sub semnul întrebării. De aceea, lucrarea aduce argumente în favoarea selectării acelor strategii care circumscriu dimensiunea tehnică a subtitrării.

Keywords: *subtitling; technical dimension; strategies; English; Arabic*

Mots-clés: *sous-titrage; dimension technique; stratégies; anglais; Arabe*

Cuvinte cheie: *subtitrare, dimensiune tehnică, strategii, engleză, arabă*

1. Introduction

It is oft-truism that language has been a bread-and-butter matter for *homo sapiens*. The Qur'an says: “And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know”. [1] Such “variations in languages” compel us to find a translator to mediate between languages, ostensibly at variance with one another as is the case with English and Arabic, for instance. Sofer says[2]:

The conscientious Arabic translator is aware of the generic difficulties in working with two languages as different from each other as English and Arabic. [...], there are vast cultural differences between a Western language such as English and a Semitic language like Arabic. One cannot translate these languages without paying attention to these cultural differences.

With such little linguistic and cultural affinity between English and Arabic, immaculate translation is dead-end pursuit. In this regard, Tytler [3] points out that translation is an “evaporation of the beauties of the original.” Likewise, Newmark [4] aptly remarks: “There is no such thing as a perfect, ideal or “correct” translation.”

Translation as a discipline has burgeoned into different modes: interpreting, translation technology, audiovisual translation (AVT) etc, thanks to the age of technology and to the fact that translation is eclectic in nature. Therefore, Translation Studies (TS) virtually leaves no stone unturned in search for a convincing explanation for different linguistic and cultural differences existing in the various languages and cultures of the world. A mode blossomed into an area of study worthy of research in its own right is AVT (see also [5]). It is comprised of different sub-modes, e.g. voiceover, dubbing, subtitling, etc. For the sake of the present study, only subtitling will be discussed. Perhaps it is difficult to frame a rigorous definition of subtitling as several definitions are offered by De Linde and Kay [6], Baker [7], Díaz Cintas [8] (to mention only a few). The most satisfactory definition is offered by Gottlieb [9]:

diasemiotic translation in polysemiotic media (including films, TV, video and DVD), in the form of one or more lines of written text presented on the screen in sync with the original dialogue [...] The term “polysemiotic” refers to the presence of two or more parallel channels of discourse constituting the text in question. In a film, up to four semiotic channels are in operation simultaneously: non-verbal picture, written pictorial elements, dialogue, and music [and] effects.

Although subtitling bears a striking resemblance to translation, it “is not translating. It’s a lot harder, but it’s a lot more fun” [10]. It is a mode with a multitude of channels, concomitant with one another for a maximum communicative thrust. It ensues that the problems are multifarious, and the translators grapple with various constraints, not ubiquitous in other modes of translation.

2. Translation vs. Subtitling Strategies

2.1. Translation Strategies

Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary [11] defines a strategy as “a general plan or set of plans intended to achieve something, especially over a long period.” True, translating from one language into another requires a blueprint for the task at hand. Translation-wise, the translator may (un)consciously devise a way to render a given utterance, no matter how accurate the translation is. More technically, a strategy resides in a stream-of-consciousness. Many translation practitioners who may not believe in translation theory employ translation strategies unconsciously. However, translation strategies are defined as “the steps, selected from a **consciously** known range of potential procedures, taken to solve a translation problem which has been consciously detected and resulting in a consciously applied solution” [12].

Due to innumerable and endless translation problems, appropriate strategies should, or even must, be meticulously devised or selected based on the overall policy by a commissioner: source-orientedness of translation whereby formal translation is adopted, or target-orientedness in which functional translation is sought. In fact, any translation, whatever it is, falls into two categories: formal equivalence-based strategies or functional equivalence-based strategies.

2.1.1. Formal Equivalence-Based Strategies

Farghal and Shunnaq [13] point out that formal equivalence “seeks to capture the form of the SL expression. Form relates to the image employed in the SL expression.” Of these strategies is literal translation and transliteration. Vinay and Darbelnet [14], state that “literal translation occurs when there is an exact structural, lexical, even morphological equivalence between two languages [...] and this is only possible when the two languages are very close to each other.” Nonetheless, Newmark [15] says: “The prevailing orthodoxy is leading to the rejection of literal translation as a legitimate translation procedure.” With regard to transliteration, Newmark [16] says it “relates to the conversion of different alphabets” (see also [17]). The problem of this strategy is that “geographical names and peoples’ names constitute a difficulty in translation because it is difficult, in most cases, to convey their emotive overtones”. [18] The term of address *ash-Shaykh* (“Sheikh”) is a case of formal translation in which the term is transliterated into English “Sheikh” and has then become part of English lexicons, though several connotative meanings disappeared—“A **sheikh** is a male Arab chief or ruler”. [19]

2.1.2. Functional Equivalence-Based Strategies

In contrast, functional equivalence “seeks to capture the function of the SL expression independently of the image utilised by translating it into a TL expression that performs the same function”. [20] Such translation usually takes care of the expectations of the target audience. For the sake of illustration, take the following example:

Original: *umāl wayn Nakir wi-Inkār?* (State Security)
 Subtitle Where are your bodyguards? (26 characters)

The religious culture-bound collocation *Nakir wi-Inkār* (lit. “two guardian angels”) is functionally rendered into “bodyguards”. In Islamic context, the two angels are appointed by Allah to record man’s doings. One sits on the right shoulder and another on the left shoulder. The rendition observes the function of the SL utterance, i.e. sentry although several connotative meanings are lost; yet it is a functional translation.

Functional strategies may first include transposition which refers to naturalisation at structural level, and this strategy may be opted for when it comes to remote languages; for example, English and Arabic cut linguistic reality in a different way as the following example may show:

Original: *fī kalām* *muhim* ‘*aiz ‘agūla* (State Security)
 Prep. Phrase **Adj.** **SV**
 (“in speech”) (“important”) (“want-I say-it”)
 Subtitle: I have important things to tell you about. (42 characters)

The Arabic structure (Prepositional Phrase + Adjective + Subject + Verb) is entirely changed into (subject + complement) to make the translation as natural as possible. Second, “paraphrase” which, in the words of Newmark [21], is “the last translation procedure which simply irons out the difficulties in any passage.” “This is an amplification or explanation of the meaning of a segment of the text. It is used in an “anonymous” text when it is poorly written, or has important implications and omissions”. [22]. Third, adaptation is the “use of a recognised equivalent between two situations” [23] in which a different situation is used to express the message. The translation of utterly religious collocation *Nakir wi-Inkīr* into free-religious compound noun “bodyguards” is a case in point. Finally, modulation refers to a shift in cognitive categories or point of view between the Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL). [24] In the above example, *Nakir wi-Inkīr* is a heavenly matter whereas ‘bodyguards’ is a worldly one - clearly two separate points of view.

2.2. Subtitling Strategies

The aforementioned discussion *vis-à-vis* translation strategies is relevant insofar as subtitling strategies are concerned. Bartrina and Espasa [25] speak of three priorities in subtitling: (1) synthesis whereby reduction can be partial (condensation or concision) or total (elimination or suppression) [26]; (2) readability which can be considered the basis for fluency in this kind of translation. In this regard, James [27] says: “subtitling is a skill which demands a great deal of time, effort and meticulous work in order to produce subtitles which are accurate, credible, easy to assimilate and which flow smoothly”; and (3) orality - “Written subtitles should be made to ‘sound’ like their spoken equivalents”. [28] To do subtitling the best way possible, Gottlieb [29] suggests ten strategies: expansion; paraphrase; transfer; imitation; transcription; dislocation; condensation; decimation; deletion; resignation. Subtitling-wise, reducing strategies (e.g. condensation, decimation, and deletion) are noticeably adopted: “The other semiotic modalities providing meaning on the screen or through the soundtrack (music, sounds, etc)”. [30] This tendency is motivated by the fact that “[a] screen adaptation of a 100, 000 word novel may keep only 20, 000 words for dialogue, leaving semantic load of the remaining 80, 000 words to the non-verbal semiotic channels - or to deletion”. [31] Obviously, foreignising strategy is adopted in subtitling as Danan, [32] “that subtitling, by virtue of its preservation of the [SL] soundtrack, is a quintessentially foreignising type of translation.”

3. Technical Competence

The term “competence” has been inextricably related to translation since many centuries, and it is as old as translation profession itself. It is usually linked to knowledge, skills, awareness and expertise. There is a consensus among translation theorists that language competence is the point of departure for the translator [33], [34], but it is not in itself sufficient. Besides language competence, cultural competence is deemed indispensable in the course of translation; it refers to “hands-on experience of living and breathing the way of life of another culture”. [35]

Yet the other important competence is technical which is defined [36] as “the ability to deal with the sheer practical demands of the job as it appears to most working subtitlers: use of software, line breaks, positioning on the screen, time and space restrictions, use of italics, etc.” De Linde and Kay [37] argue that “the amount of dialogue has to be reduced to meet the technical conditions of the medium and the reading capacities of non-native language users.” Therefore, skills required for subtitling are a far cry from those for translation. The difference “lies in the very technical aspects of subtitling” as Kruger [38] explains. Kruger [39] further adds that not only should the subtitler have: the skills that other modes of translation require in terms of text analysis, subject expertise, language, awareness of context, quality control and so forth, but [he/she should] be able to apply

these skills within very rigid constraints of time and space, while adhering to specific conventions of quantity and form.

3.1. Technical-Related Problems in Subtitling

Subtitling as a translation mode varies drastically from literary translation [40], [41], [42], [43], [44], [45], [46], [47] argues that technical constraints are: (1) “*Space*. In the limited space allowed for a subtitle there is no room for long explanations. Two lines of text are usually the norm”; (2) “*Time*. The length of a subtitle is directly related to its on-air time. Accurate in and out timing is very important and the text in the subtitles should always be in balance with the appropriate reading time setting”; and (3) “*Presentation*. Subtitles can take up to 20% of screen space.” For more details on technical-related problems insofar as Arabic is concerned, see Thawabteh. [48] In what follows we shall discuss other problems of technical-related areas in Subtitling.

3.1.1. Typeface and Distribution

Karamitroglou [49] states that subtitled texts should be legible. “Typefaces like Helvetica and Arial are qualified. Proportional distribution rather than Monospace distribution (usually used on typewriters) saves the space required to fit the desired 35 characters into a subtitle line” (ibid.). By the same token, Schwarz [50] says: “The fonts used in sub-titles are often not of fixed width, as is the case with Courier.” It ensues, therefore, that the use of font with a sansserif typeface would be typical of well-established subtitle on the screen.



Figure 1: Sansserif Typeface and Distribution (State Security)

The two-line subtitle in Figure 1 above seems to be unobtrusive on the screen, but legible enough for the target audience to read.

3.1.2. Segmentation

Segmentation is an important factor for good subtitles as they are normally “read far less efficiently than printed texts”. [51] “Even appropriate line breaks within a single subtitle can facilitate comprehension and increase reading speed if segmentation is done into noun or verb phrases, rather than smaller units of a sentence or clause”. [52] More precisely, Karamitroglou [53] states:

When we segment a sentence, we force the brain to pause its linguistic processing for a while, until the eyes trace the next piece of linguistic information. In cases where segmentation is inevitable, therefore, we

should try to force this pause on the brain at a point where the semantic load has already managed to convey a satisfactorily complete piece of information.

Schwarz [54] points out that units must not be divided include: (1) subject and verb; (2) verb and object; (3) article and noun; (4) adjective and noun; (5) preposition and the rest of a phrase; and (6) conjunction and the remainder of the sentence. Ill-segmentation as shown in Figure 2 below may have deleterious effects on readability.



Figure 2: Ill-segmentation (State Security)

As can be noted, line-break of the idiomatic adjective “due to” may pose challenges and problems in subtitle readability, giving rise to subtitle comprehensibility. A suggested segmentation may be something like “You were tried 7 times,|due to violent acts in jail” whereby each line creates a separate semantic load on its own so easily.

3.1.3. Short Line First

“Distribution of the text [...] affects the legibility for the viewer. Sub-titles which run over two lines are generally more difficult to read if line lengths are very uneven. For example, a very short first line is followed by a full second line”. [55] Subtitle(s) distribution on the screen may be conducive to (il)legibility of the subtitle(s). Figure 3 is illustrative of uneven distribution of subtitles, other things being equal.



Figure 3: Uneven Distribution of Subtitles (*State Security*)

With reference to the above discussion, suggested presentation on the screen may be “and finally,|sentenced to death for killing a cell mate.”

3.1.4. Number of Characters per line

Each subtitle line should allow around 35 characters. “An attempting to fit over 40 per subtitle line, reduces the legibility of the subtitles because the font size is also inevitably reduced”. [56]

3.1.5. Spellings

Thawabteh [57] claims that “alternative spelling with a hyphen tends to be a space-consuming as a hyphen is a character”; the recommended spelling for “cell mate” in Figure 3 above may be “cellmate”, rather than “cell mate” or “cell-mate”, for instance.

3.1.6. British and American English

Following what has been said above, spelling may be different in British and American English. Take this example:

- I want to work with you.
- This would really honor us. (*State Security*)

Opting for American English spelling “honors” is recommendable as Thawabteh [58] argues: the “use of American English rather than British [English] seems to save extra characters thus giving a chance for more polysemiotic factors to come to the fore” (ibid.), a point we do not fully agree with as the following example shows:

Mr Minister is pleased with you
And ordered a big reward| and a flat for you. (*State Security*)

We have no qualms about recommending the four-character British “flat” rather than the nine-character American “apartment” in the above example.

4. Methodology

4.1. Significance of the Study

AVT has played a pivotal role audiovisual products (movies; documentaries; soap operas; sitcoms among many others) in bridging the cultural hiatus between cultures. It is true that “subtitled films attract people due to their potential for narrowing the cultural gap in a linguistically diverse audience share, and the film cognoscenti are more or less assumed to be a culture-ophile of other traditions. In terms of better intercultural exchange, one can assume that what politics cannot do, films can do”. [59] The present paper sheds some light on one of the many problems that may hinder intercultural communication in subtitling, namely the technical aspect of subtitling. Although voluminous scholarly research addresses the technical dimension in subtitling [60], [61], [62], [63], [64], [65], [66] scant attention, to best of my knowledge, has been paid to the issue in Arab Translation Studies. Hopefully, some implications may be made to help both novice and fully-fledged translators.

4.2. Data Used in the Study

The present paper consists of an English subtitled version of an Egyptian film entitled *'Amn Dawlah* [67] subtitled by ART (1998) as State Security. A transcription of the dialogue is first made followed by English subtitles. For the purpose of the study, a sample of 10 examples was chosen. In the film, the protagonist Samiha was assumed to serve life sentence because of a murder charge. With fears she may have bitten off more than she can chew, she is finally set free. She should work with the state security police to help capture some fleeing terrorists. The reason beyond recruiting her is that she almost looks like Farid’s wife, Soad— almost identical twins. Farid is the mastermind behind a number of terrorist attacks in Egypt. Samiha got her name changed into Soad onwards.

5. Discussion and Analysis

Thus far, the theoretical framework established requires that we examine some examples in order to make a strong argument. Let us examine a few illustrative examples to see how a decision-making regarding translation strategy is made by the film subtitle translator, and whether he/she caters for the technical dimension of subtitling. Consider Text 1 below:

Text 1

Original: *iḥna bashar sīdna ash-Shaykh.*
laḥm wdam wlina aḥāsīsna (State Security)

Subtitle We’re humans, Sheikh.
We are flesh and blood| [68] We have feelings! (39 characters)

In this sequence, Soad is employed as an agent provocateur by the Egyptian state security police first to infiltrate into the rogues’ gallery of an international terrorist group which has launched a number of horrific terrorist atrocities in Egypt and some Arab countries, and then to make appropriate dragnet for some terrorists. In the exchange with the leader, a member has kept making insinuating remarks that Egyptians are tortured and maltreated and even killed by the Egyptian government. The subtitler employs a number of translation strategies. The Arabic term of address *sīdna* (‘Your Excellency’) often used to address a higher-status person, like a Moslem spiritual master of a mystic order, has been deleted. The other term of address *ash-Shaykh* (‘Sheikh’) transliterates ‘Sheikh’, a male Arab chief, a translation for which the target audiences’ eyebrows may go up. As a socio-cultural object, ‘Sheikh’ may have a number of illocutions with more than one perlocutionary act— a pragmatically multipurpose term, indeed. It may have a religious connotation for a pious Moslem who follows in Prophet Mohammed’s footsteps. It may also have political connotations as a title for some leaders of the Gulf states (e.g. Qatar and UAE). The pragmatic context of situation is crucial to decide on which is which. In Text 1, it is used as an honorific title for religious leaders.

Technically, the second two-line subtitle is segmented at highest syntactic node, thus offering the target audience a good readability chance. The number of characters is also suitable for ample reading by target viewers. Apparently, condensation subtitling strategy is successfully utilised by the translator whereby *sīdna* ('Your Excellency') is left untranslated. For more illustrative examples, take Text 2:

Text 2

Original: *ana illī kunt ba'ūm bi-kul 'a'mālu wit-ti'alātu ya'ni ana kunt drā'ū il-yamīn.* (State Security)
 Subtitle I handled all his works and contacts,| that's I was his right hand. (65 characters)

Soad cooks up a convincing explanation that she was Farid's partner in jihad, [69] helping out in his works and contacts, that is, she is his chief assistant. Odd as it may sound, the Arabic idiom *ana kunt drā'ū il-yamīn* (lit. 'I was his right arm') has been rendered literally into unidiomatic 'his right hand', instead of gender sensitive English idiom 'right-hand man', thus jeopardising 'orality'. It is safe to argue that the translator's obdurate adherence to subtitling conventions is likely to give rise to an awkward translation. Reduction and condensation strategies are observed in Text 2 above—the elliptical pronoun in 'his works and (his) contacts and truncated version of 'that's' instead of 'that is'. These strategies may help to save more and more space on the screen, thus offering other polysemiotic channels to emerge.

In the sequence of verbal sparring in Text 3 below, the views of the members of the terrorist group converge with those of the speaker, i.e. to send Soad to a base in Egypt to fight against the Egyptian regime. The Arabic metaphor *ish I'abābīr* (lit. 'wasps' nest'; roughly means 'the enemies') is rendered into English metaphor as 'lion's den'.

Text 3

Original: *winti ish-shakhaṣ il-wahīd illī mumkin ndakhlu 'ish I'abābīr.* (State Security)
 Subtitle You're the only one I can send| into that lion's den! (51 characters)

Technically, the subtitle text is not segmented at the highest syntactic node in which the phrasal verb 'send into' is not broken at natural linguistic breaks, thus leading to disintegrated linguistic units over the two-line subtitle.

Text 4

Original: *bas illī 'aib 'a'akda 'inna jama'itna malhash 'ay yad fi il-'ādith il-mu'lim illī 'a'al da* (State Security)
 Subtitle I assure you that our group has| nothing to do with it (52 characters)

The functional strategy employed to render the Arabic utterance *malhash 'ay yad fi il-'ādith da* (lit. 'a serious accident that happened', roughly means 'keep our noses clean') is quite successful. A reducing strategy is opted for translating the utterance into the pronoun 'it'. When it comes to subtitling, however, it is not suffice to adopt the right strategy for rendering an utterance. To put it on the screen within the ambit of technical dimension is crucial too. To make the point clearer, consider Text 5 below:

Text 5

Original: *lāzim 'ashuk bikil 'ājah wila 'anrū' kulina fi shurbit mayyah lāzim 'at'akad minh ail-'aw* (State Security)

Subtitle If I am not we’d all be ruined!| I’ve to be sure of her first (59 characters)

The Arabic utterance ‘*anrū’ kulina fishurbit mayyah* (‘we’ll be in trouble’) has been functionally translated ‘we’d all be ruined’, though a formally-based strategy is still valid, something like ‘in ruins’. That is to say, an Arabic idiom can be functionally and/or formally rendered into an equivalent idiom in English. The spatial parameter is quite helpful, thereof. Perhaps decimation strategy is out of place. Yet another functional translation can be sought, e.g. ‘between the devil and the deep’, but with great caveat in mind. Technical constraints may be difficult to cope with in Text 5. This proverb is over-lengthy with 84 characters on the screen, to the point that it is perhaps too much for the target audience to keep up with the speedy flash of the subtitle on the screen, up for six seconds.

Text 6

Original: *intī ḥat ‘īshī ma ‘na im ‘azzazah imkrramah* (State Security)

Subtitle You’ll stay with us here and will| be treated like royalty (sic).
(57 characters)

Text 6 above merits close investigation. The Arabic collocation *im ‘azzazah imkrramah* (‘treated with decorum and respect’) is rendered formally. With such a strategy, the subtitle may flow communicatively unless ill-segmentation is recorded. Ill-segmentation is observed, however. The segmentation on each of the lines does not coincide with the highest syntactic node. It should also be noted that the spatial parameter could have influenced decision-making, that the translator has selected a lexical item, i.e. ‘royalty’ with fewer characters than ‘decorum and respect’, for instance. For more elaboration on the problems of technical limitations, take Text 7 below:

Text 7

Original: *Samī’a i ‘na shughlina ymis ‘amn id-dawlah wil-‘ajat di mafihash li ‘b wala hzār* (State Security)

Subtitle There’s no room for amateurishness| nor feelings. (47 characters)

Obviously, Text 7 the appellation *Samī’a* (Samiha) was dropped in the English subtitle in view of the semiotic channels of the scene, a strategy that is good enough for the target language audience because such deletion simply provides legibility and readability for the subtitle in question. Nevertheless, the film subtitle translator should be cautious about selecting lexical items. The choice for a 14-character item ‘amateurishness’ seems not to have come to his/her rescue at all although the total number of characters for the subtitle is 47. Nonetheless, the translator takes the problem of lexical choice in his/her stride as Text 8 below shows:

Text 8

Original: *dil ma ‘lūmāt ili gātina min masr* (State Security)

Subtitle This is the info we got from Cairo (34 characters)

In this dialogue, the members discuss information gleaned from different sources, to be used as a bargaining chip to wage attacks in Egypt. Opting for shortening ‘info’ rather than ‘information’ is a subtitling-bound translation strategy. Orality seems to have been preserved, i.e. Egyptian dialect is rendered into informal English. It is clearly motivated by the technical dimension, that words with fewer characters are highly recommended as long as the semantic content is maintained. Similarly, condensed one-line subtitle with 26 characters is observed in Text 9.

Text 9

Original:	<i>'an khaṭ sayr il-mukib</i>	(State Security)
Subtitle	About the parade direction	(26 characters)

Following the same dialogue, a member suggests to draw police officers into an ambush. Bearing in mind that space on the screen may not be conducive to a maximum communicative channel, abbreviations and shortening forms are preferable in subtitling to let polysemiotic channels, other than the subtitle *per se* on the screen, come to the fore. Text 10 shows the contracted form 'We've'. In addition, the subtitle is split over two lines though the number of characters is 37.

Text 10

Original:	<i>ybga lāzm inḥuṭ kamā'in</i>	(State Security)
Subtitle	We've to make ambushes at these points	(37 characters)

6. Concluding Remarks

We should take cognisance of the pivotal role of the technical dimension in determining the most suitable translation strategy. The strategy should be a painstaking decision-making process, that would cater for transference of meanings across languages, and take the technical constraints into full consideration. The foregoing analysis has shown that translation strategies may be successfully opted for by the film subtitle translator, but the subtitle(s) are still fraught with peculiar perils. The following conclusions can be made: (1) segmentation problems may have impact on the practicability of translation strategies; (2) the subtitles show no respect for short-line-first convention, so, regardless of the suitability of the strategy employed, the communicative thrust of the subtitle may run risks because of the target viewer's inability to successfully read the subtitle(s) on the screen within the allowed time period; (3) the data shows no difficulty in adherence to the number of characters allowed on the screen; (4) typefaces and proportional distribution are very important in conveying the intended meaning of the SL; (5) the most appropriate subtitling strategies are condensation and deletion; and (6) translation strategies and subtitling strategies have much in common, but due to the technical limitations, subtitling strategies may serve better than translation strategies.

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