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Immigrant YouTubers' Subtitling: The Role of Foreignisation in Local Culture Visibility and Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract Social media is developing increasingly as an open space for communication across languages and cultures. YouTubers, for instance, use different audiovisual translation strategies to attract more viewers and disseminate their content on a large scale. It is believed that there has been an increase of foreignising strategies by content producers in the last decade. This article explored the role of foreignising subtitles in source/local culture visibility and cross-cultural communication among international viewers, drawing on Venuti's translation theory (1995). To fulfil this, the researchers conducted an inductive thematic analysis of 544 comments from 4 YouTube vlogs. Three themes emerged from the analysis: 1. Awareness, 2. Meaning negotiation, and 3. Affect. The results showed that the foreignisation of YouTube subtitles triggered foreign viewers' curiosity to engage in conversation about language and culture, which raised their awareness of the linguistic and cultural features of the source text. This led to the conclusion that the foreignisation of subtitles fosters cross-cultural communication and the source/local-culture visibility.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural communication, Foreignisation, Local-culture visibility, Social media, Subtitling*

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1. Introduction

The internet revolution has radically transformed how people communicate, connect, disseminate information, and create relationships. Social media platforms, for instance, are integral tools in people's communication practices in today's globalised world, connecting culturally diverse people in a shared virtual space. Since language constraints often impede efficient communication and restrict content accessibility to a small number of viewers, audiovisual translation plays a vital role in providing access to a wider audience. Content producers create videos with subtitles that not only translate the content but also preserve the cultural nuances, idioms, and humor unique to its source culture. Drawing on Venuti's translation theory (1995), this article addresses

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the use of foreignisation in YouTube subtitles, a translation strategy that is meant to preserve the authenticity of the source text (ST) and maintain its foreign cultural nuances in the target text (TT). According to Yonamine (2022), studies on translation patterns in social media between 2004 and 2009 show that domestication was prevalent at this time. However, since 2010, there has been a clear increase in foreignisation in subtitling (2022). In addition, the research focusing on fansubbing shows that the translation strategies are more foreignised, retaining foreign marks and a sense of Otherness, which is more likely achieved through innovative translation techniques not generally accessible to professional subtitlers (Orrego-Carmona, 2015). Most non-professional subtitlers on YouTube, do not adopt foreignisation - or other translation strategies - as an approach that they are aware of, but it is part of their own subjective translation creativity; this stems from what Lee (2021) calls the 'vernacular creativity' trend in the digital media that allows for new expressive cultural practices.

Audiovisual translation (AVT) strategies in social media can be considered 'rebellious' to the official translation standards. AVT refers to the process of translating multimedia content that incorporates verbal, visual, and auditory elements (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007; Gambier, 2003). It encompasses different modes, including subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over, each of which addresses the complex interplay between spoken text, visual imagery, and written text. AVT is not just about translating spoken text but also about adapting the audiovisual experience to fit different cultural and linguistic contexts. Gambier (2003) stresses the significance of AVT in sustaining the multimodal aspect of audiovisual media, in which visual and aural elements work together to transmit meaning. AVT plays an important role in allowing diverse audiences to access and comprehend audiovisual content, facilitating more intercultural interchange (Adams & Díaz-Cintas, 2022). This study focuses on subtitling, which means the process of turning spoken language into written text that is displayed on screen and coordinated with visual and auditory elements. The guidelines for translating content are almost nonexistent in such an open online-space, and subtitlers frequently rely on their subjective judgement (Matielo & Espindola, 2011; Ramière, 2006) to assess how closely the translation should fit with the target audience's culture and language. This results in a variety of translation forms and strategies in subtitles that influence, in one way or another, communication among international audiences. Within this context, the postcolonial theory constitutes the theoretical basis of this study, where foreignisation is seen as a strategy for representing local cultures and a mechanism for resisting the globalised hegemonic culture.

Communication among international audiences often occurs across different languages and cultures; this is called in this study 'cross-cultural communication', which more specifically takes place "when a person from one culture sends a message to a person from another culture" (Adler, 1991, p. 2). This issue has gained more importance recently due to the increased contact between cultures in the digital world (Adams & Diaz-Cintas, 2022). For Garzelli and Baldo (2014), subtitling plays a positive role in communication across cultures. Several scholars stated that social media subtitling is still poorly investigated compared with its fast growth and change as a form of communication (Adams & Diaz-Cintas, 2022; Lee, 2021). Generally, some researchers have focused on how subtitling has enhanced accessibility to content and fostered intercultural exchange (Diaz-Cintas, 2010; Garzelli & Baldo, 2014; Lee, 2021). Other researchers indulged with how fansubbing and 'amateur subtitling' enabled self-representation and the configuration of new transnational networks in social media (O'Hagan, 2009; Orrego-Carmona, 2015; Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012). However, there is still a lack of research on how the viewers interact with different subtitling strategies in social media and how they communicate across cultural differences while reacting to different subtitling strategies.

Immigrant YouTubers, in this study, refer to individual YouTubers who moved from their country of origin to live in another country. These individuals constitute dynamic, influential communities in the digital content production sphere. Being relocated from their homelands to different environments, immigrants use social media platforms to voice their unique perspectives, experiences, and challenges. They often address issues like identity, linguistic obstacles, integration, and cultural assimilation. By doing so, they introduce the complexity of immigrant life to larger audiences in addition to giving other immigrants a feeling of community and belonging. These YouTubers act as

mediators in the social media space, bridging cultural divides and encouraging empathy and understanding among diverse audiences.

This study scrutinises the use of borrowing and literal translation techniques (foreignisation) by Arab-American YouTubers in subtitles and the viewers' reactions to them in the comments section. It is guided by two main objectives: 1. to examine the role of foreignising YouTube subtitles in cross-cultural communication among viewers, and 2. to determine whether the foreignised subtitles make the source/local culture visible to international viewers in social media. The researchers sought to explore the way in which consumers of YouTube vlogs engage in interactions across cultures through the platform's comment feature, which is typically accessible across most posts. Throughout this inquiry, emphasis is placed on elucidating the viewers' reactions to foreignised subtitles and how this translation strategy makes local cultures observable to international viewers, which is referred to as 'local culture visibility' in this article.

The significance of this study lies in its theoretical and practical implications to advance individual researchers' and institutions' (social, political, economic, and educational) understanding of the complex relationship between the use of different translation strategies in social media and cross-cultural communication in a contemporary globalised society. This article goes beyond the common assumptions of professional subtitling, revealing the wide possibilities that non-professional AVT activities can offer in the openweb. It emphasizes how media prosumers, such as YouTubers, use not just their language abilities and cultural knowledge but also their subtitling creativity to express their local-individual subjectivities.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Translation and Immigrants' Culture: Between the Global and the Local

Immigration has always been a major driver of cultural diversity and dynamism in societies across the world. In such a globalised world, the use of audiovisual translation by multicultural communities of immigrant-YouTubers plays a significant role in communicating their local cultures. These people, who literally reflect the 'fluidity' of our modern age (Bauman, 2000), act within dynamic, heterogeneous, and interrelated communities, creating their unique 'imagined worlds' (Appadurai, 1990). According to Appadurai (1990), 'deterritorialisation', or being cut off from established territorial links, is a major force in the tense interaction between the local and the global, the static and the dynamic, and the South and the North. He argues that the global flow of people, technologies, and ideas has weakened the coherence of the North's globalisation ideology and its conceptual apparatus. In each environment, individuals within distinct contextual conventions use concepts in different ways, giving them new local meanings.

Approaching translation from a postcolonial viewpoint, scholars argue that the linguistic and cultural exchange between the South and the North is unequal (Asad, 1986; Jacquemond, 1992; Venuti, 1995). Asad (1986) focuses on language inequalities in the context of cultural translation. He investigates the power dynamics in translation, distinguishing between 'strong' and 'weak' languages. For him, "the languages of the third world societies [...] are 'weaker' in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English)" (1986, p. 157). This leads the dominant culture to submit the other's linguistic-cultural structures and perspectives to its own structures and worldviews, resulting in distorted representations of the weaker. In this regard, the political economy of translation is necessarily connected with the broader context of the political economy of intercultural exchange (Jacquemond, 1992). Jacquemond (1992) emphasizes the uneven character of North-South translation, with economic domination reinforced by cultural hegemony (p. 139). Given this, we can say that translation is a key factor in global dynamics and plays a major role in communication and sociopolitical connections among diverse international communities.

Venuti (1998), in the same way, highlights the role of translation in the global economy, emphasizing an imbalanced cultural exchange that exploits foreign media while marginalising and stereotyping foreign cultures. He also discusses the establishment of a hierarchy between major and minor languages, as well as hegemonic and subordinate cultures (p. 165). On this basis, Venuti (1995)

coined the terms domestication and foreignisation. Domestication refers to adapting the ST to the TT to make it a 'clear', 'transparent', and 'fluent' text (English text) for the receiver. Whereas foreignisation means adapting the TT to the ST regardless of how 'clear' or 'fluent' it is for the receiver, it gives more importance to retaining the linguistic and cultural aspects of the ST in the TT. Venuti (1995) believes that the idea of 'foreignization' versus 'domestication' is not just a matter of preference but an ideology. He argues that foreignization is a valid and ethical choice for translators and that the choice between the two approaches involves balancing how much a translation should conform to the target language and culture versus how much it should reflect the cultural differences between the source culture and the target one.

In this context, the expression 'local-culture visibility' is used in this study to mean the way the linguistic and cultural features of the ST (local culture) become noticeable in the TT through the foreignised subtitles. Venuti (1995) criticises domestication as it entails submitting the source culture (local) to target one (global). According to him, this approach causes a loss of the cultural and linguistic features of the ST. Instead, he advocates preserving the foreignness of the ST in the TT, which allows the readers to notice the cultural differences and nuances present in the ST. This form of minority language maintenance can be seen as a form of identity preservation through language preservation (Hariyanto et al., 2023).

2.2. Social Media Subtitling and Communication across Cultures

Due to the advance of technology, people gradually engage in "computer-mediated forms of production, distribution, and communication" (Manovich, 2001, p. 19). This technological turn in communication has opened more opportunities for 'self-mediation' (Chouliaraki, 2010) and the exchange of cultural experiences and perspectives in the digital world. Inspired by their desire to join a global community, international audiences -including minority groups- may now appropriate, annotate, and create original media material by taking advantage of technology (Jenkins, 2004). According to Pérez-González (2014), the ramifications of this growing media production might be expressed in terms of two opposing but complementary trends: 1. The growing number of channels for the dissemination of content, and 2. The increasing fragmentation of content consumers and users. As a consequence, there has been an increasing consolidation of alternative media corporations.

> Amateur videos that directly address the Internet audience are common within YouTube. This globalisation of the intended audience may be a distinguishing feature of amateur online video. The presence of the Internet has added a new intent to the impulse behind home videography – the intent to speak to a global community. (Strangelove, 2010, p. 45)

As a video sharing platform, YouTube promotes a wide variety of languages and cultures beyond geographical boundaries. It allows viewers to enjoy a wide range of audiovisual materials. Vloggers often embrace a conversation-driven style in their videos, creating a space and atmosphere that naturally encourages audience interaction (Burgess & Green, 2018). This participates in the creation of diverse online communities that are "determined more by the idiosyncratic digital choices that Internet users make than by any mechanistic social or technological determinism" (Yergaliyeva et al., 2022). YouTube platform enables YouTubers to engage with their audiences and exchange cultural symbols, ideas, and feelings through different communication channels: direct interaction, likes and dislikes, and by sending emojis in the comments section.

This online 'culture brokering' phenomenon enriches communication across cultures. Culture brokering is defined as "the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change" (Jezewski, 1990, p. 497). Immigrant-YouTubers in the diaspora often create culture-brokering vlogs through which they negotiate and represent their cultural identity by connecting their native local culture to the places they have immigrated to (Chang & Chang, 2019). Culture-brokers use their language skills, like speaking their native language or the language of the country they live in, to create videos about their personal experiences, their interests, and daily routines.

Different AVT strategies play a vital role in the process of cultural mediation. According to Ulrych (2000), subtitling enables more cultural transfer for viewers than dubbing. This technique involves writing captions that show up on the screen to represent conversation or other sounds in a video, and it is usually either typed manually by the video producer or automatically by using speech recognition software. Due to the technological impact on the subtitling practice, the traditional expectations from a translator - his knowledge of the subject matter and linguistic competence, for instance- have changed to a great extent. Today, subtitlers are required to have high technical competence, adaptability to the news, and a wider global awareness of their international audiences (Diaz-Cintas, 2010b). On the other hand, the concept of receiver or audience has been redefined with the interactive web. As Cronin (2010) has envisioned, the audiences are not passive viewers, but they take part in interaction, translation, and the dissemination of the content. O'Hagan (2009) calls this phenomenon the 'user-translator'. This means that it is not just up to the content producer and the translator to decide how to translate a movie or TV show for the audience; instead, the audiences themselves create their own ideas of what they want the translation to be like based on their own preferences and needs. This has changed the traditional idea that there is someone doing the translation and someone else receiving the translation (Cronin, 2010).

'Amateur subtitling' (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012) - which, with all its negative aspects, including credibility and accuracy - is, however, "playing a crucial role in the configuration and consolidation of new transnational networks of media content producers and consumers in the era of the digital culture" (2012, p. 171). According to Lee (2021), this relatively open access to content translation has participated in the creation and growth of 'social media cultural communities'. Desilets (2007) accounts for the ongoing 'wikification' of translation in terms of the revolutionary changes in content production and consumption that multilingual collaborative sites -such as Wikipedia, YouTube, and Facebook- have brought about. In another study, Perrino (2009) refers to the 'user-generated translation' as the use of digital services to make content available in different languages. This has shown to be especially fruitful in assuring the non-Western news and viewpoints' representation in the world's news media (Salzberg, 2008). Overall, this 'freedom' of social media subtitling can help content creators engage with larger audiences, which can promote diversity and inclusivity among different people while communicating across cultures.

2.3. Foreignisation in Social Media and Communication across Cultural Differences

Social media communities are built not only on the similarity of opinions among their members but also on the active process of communicating across differences (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In its essence, cross-cultural communication entails diverse interpretations of cultural codes. Yet, while this communication can be smooth and lead to understanding, it also implies higher risks of misinterpretation and misunderstanding (Adler, 1991; Hall, 1989) due to the convergence of different cultural perceptions. For Johnson et al. (2018), "As individuals use new media to build relationships across cultural lines, intercultural conflict within these relationships is inevitable" (p. 173).

In this context, disagreement and conflict are actually part of meaning-making and cultural awareness. Intercultural conflict is defined as "the implicit or explicit emotional struggle or frustration between persons of different cultures over perceived incompatible values, norms, face orientations, goals, scarce resources, processes, and/or outcomes in a communication situation" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 181). He adds, "intercultural conflict in and of itself is not necessarily bad" (p. 181); rather, it can be beneficial as long as it remains within the process of meaning negotiation to reach a common ground between heterogeneous, interdependent parties. Given this, cross-cultural disagreement can draw attention to cultural differences and lead to further cultural exchange. When, for example, misinterpretation or misunderstanding takes place, it might be an indicator that individuals from different cultures interact and comprehend the world in quite different ways. Generally, cultural misinterpretation and disagreement in social media may prompt audiences to ask questions and seek more clarification, which may lead to a better understanding of one another's cultural perspective.

The foreignisation of subtitles, in our research context, is at the core of communication across cultural differences. While subtitling their content, YouTubers generally adopt various translation strategies to appeal to their culturally mosaic audiences and create a space for them to communicate and

understand each other. These YouTubers use 'foreignisation' translation in their subtitles even if they are not aware of it as a translation strategy. For Alpysbayeva and Ashymkhanova (2021), there are different reasons for choosing between domestication and foreignisation, including keeping the artistic and cultural specificity of the source text. Based on Venuti (1995), the foreignized text causes a feeling of 'foreignness' among audiences, encouraging them to leave the comfort of their local lingua-cultural experience and embrace the new space of cultural negotiation. In Homi Bhabha's terms (1994), this is a 'third space', a common ground where different individuals meet. It is a space between one's own culture and the Other's culture. It is natural that this space may involve some cultural ambiguity, misunderstanding, or even conflict. Foreignisation strategy helps create such a cross-cultural space for communication among international audiences.

Seryun Lee (2021, p. 8) argues that "YouTubers as content-creators cum translators have leeway for their own media production, including translation. Therefore, YouTubers can utilise innovative translation that lacks accuracy and fidelity as a means of self-expression and social networking". Depending on their cultural backgrounds, viewers may understand the foreignised words and expressions; otherwise, they ask about their meanings and seek explanations from other viewers in the comments section. In many cases, many native viewers try to bridge the cultural gap and reduce misunderstandings. The comments section remains an open space for all the viewers to participate and/or learn from the discussion; it is a space where viewers from various cultural backgrounds can interact on similarities and differences.

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

For the objectives of this study, 9713 comments were extracted from 4 vlogs using API Python. These comments were scraped from 4 well-established entertainment YouTube channels between January 1st, 2024, and April 20th, 2024. Five hundred forty-four comments were selected for analysis; these were only the comments of viewers who reacted clearly and directly to the foreignised words/expressions in the subtitles. In addition, the NVivo platform was used to facilitate the coding process and the thematic analysis.

The selected vlogs enjoy a well-established status within the digital domain, creating a large community that ranges between 9.31 million subscribers (e.g., Keemokazi) to 2.32 million (e.g., Karim Jovian). As posited by Walther (2017), the cultivation of online relationships often necessitates an extended, timely investment. Hence, it was deemed imperative to scrutinise comment-based interactions within the context of well-established YouTube channels, ones exhibiting robust potential for sustained engagement in the foreseeable future.

3.2. Procedure

3.2.1. Data Collection

To select these vlogs, the researchers conducted a broad search on the most popular Arab-immigrant YouTubers in the US. Following a Google search on the most influential channels of Arab-American YouTubers between 2010 and 2024, 15 channels were selected at first based on their ranking as top-ten in 4 electronic journals: ARAB-America.com, Scoopempire.com, Tubefilter.com, and Promoty.io. The selection of the vlogs was based on a set of criteria: 1. These vlogs are produced by Arab immigrants living in the USA. 2. They tackle Arab-American cultural topics. 3. The vloggers speak both Arabic and English. 4. They use Arabic-English subtitles. 5. They have well-established channels and a high number of viewers and subscribers (2 million subscribers at least). 6. They allow open access to all the content and comments.

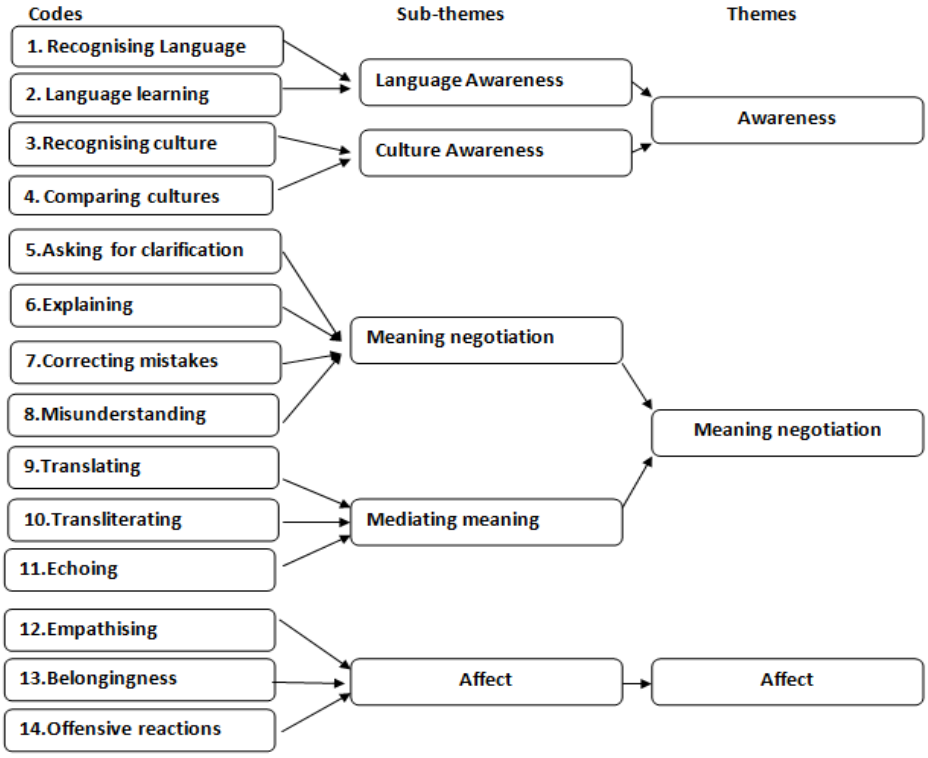
The top 4 vlogs, which met the criteria above, were selected for analysis. The temporal scope of the posts under study ranged from the year 2011 to 2023. Within the selected sample, the number of comments varied from 1511 to 5793 across the videos. Using API python, the comments were extracted from YouTube and put in a separate Word file. From a total of 9713 comments, 544 comments were selected for analysis; these are only the comments that reacted clearly and directly to

the foreignised words/expressions in the subtitles. These comments were then anonymised and uploaded into the NVivo 12 platform for coding and analysis.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

The researchers adopted a coding reliability approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021), conducting an inductive thematic analysis of qualitative data. This method has been used because it allows a more flexible and open-ended exploration, where the researchers in this study did not have any specific themes or categories in mind before starting the analysis. The first researcher started with a reading and familiarisation with the data and then moved to the generation of the initial codes using the NVivo platform. The codes underwent verification by the second researcher, who took a sample of 50 comments and coded them simultaneously with the main researcher. Then, the codes were discussed and edited before creating the last version.

Figure 1
The Coding of Cross-Cultural Communication Aspects in YouTube Comments



The researchers identified 14 codes, which emerged from 544 comments. This step allowed us to identify 5 sub-themes (Figure 1). These sub-themes were reviewed to identify 3 main themes at the end of the coding process: 1. Awareness, 2. Meaning Negotiation, and 3. Affect.

4. Results

Theme 1: Awareness

The theme of Awareness refers to the recognition and understanding of the similarities and differences between the source languages and cultures and the target ones. This includes being aware of shared linguistic structures, vocabulary, and communication norms across different cultural contexts, as well as recognizing and respecting the unique cultural practices, beliefs, and values that shape communication patterns and behaviours.

Code 1: *Language Awareness*

It is the most recurrent code in this category, with a total of n = 97, which constitutes 17% of the comments. This code is reflected through a discussion of language in the comments section, where a foreignised word or expression in the subtitles attracted some viewers' attention, and they reacted to it in different ways. As an example:

> "I like how you are teaching me Arabic words [...]. So far, from your vid, I've learnt tamam, Azooma, shahee, Aseed, magnoona, and KHALAS !!! yay!! THANKS! xx"

This comment shows how the foreignised words attracted the viewer's attention towards the Arabic language and how it helped them not only become aware of the source language but even learn some vocabulary words.

Code 2: *Cultural Awareness*

In many instances, viewers showed their awareness of the local culture by reading the subtitles. For example:

> "I know they are from Yemen because they said beyuni (i am watching you), which a lot of Yemenite ppl in US say"

> "hahahahahahahahaah u guys from yemen right?!! :D i do know Aseeda XD Lol ╔╗129"

These two separate comments show how the words 'بعيون' /Be'yu:ni/ (expressing the anger of someone who is doing something irritating) and 'عصيدة' /A'si:da/ (a Yemeni meal), which were subtitled as /Beyooni/ and /Aseeda/ triggered the viewers' attention to the Arab-Yemeni culture. This code occurred n = 69, which made up 12% of the comments.

Code 3: *Showing Differences*

Showing differences entails viewers engaging in introspection regarding their cultural milieu and discerning disparities in language or cultural practices. Some viewers considered the word 'black' as funny, as they noticed its strange use in a non-Arab context. Some viewers took the interpretation further, referring to the Arabic-English translation problem and showing that the English language is itself 'confused' when translating some Arabic words.

> "Hey Mona why are you so black hhhh (@_@) English is confused all the time"

This viewer, for instance, noticed the cultural differences and showed a certain level of awareness of both the source language/culture (Arabic) and the target one (English). Such responses occurred in n = 12 comments, which made up 2.21% of the comments.

Code 4: *Showing Similarities*

Showing similarities means that the viewers are triggered to compare -due to reading the foreignised subtitles- their language and culture of origin with the source language and culture of the foreignised subtitles to discover similarities. For example:

> "hywan is really similar to the malaysian word 'haiwan'... means animal too!"

> "This started to sound like Uzbekistan or azberjan real quick lol"

> "Haywan ... is also frovr8 words so many Indians, Pakistani use ... 😂😂😂😂😂"

This act occurred in n = 26 comments, which made 4.78%.

Theme 2: Meaning Negotiation

This theme is about how viewers interpreted and discussed the meanings of subtitles, and how Arabic speakers mediated meaning and clarified cases of lack of understanding and misunderstanding among viewers.

Code 5: *Asking for Clarification*

As many commenters as n = 32 (5.88%) expressed a lack of understanding and asked for clarification of a foreignised cultural expression. For example:

> "Do you have any idea why when he said that (beyooni) he put his hand on his eye? I was lost at that part."

Code 6: *Explaining*

In many instances, viewers asking for an explanation receive a direct reaction and explanation from a speaker of the source language. As an example:

> Beyooni in Arabic means something like (I am watching you) I think, It's funny how he performed it."

This type of response occurred in n = 59 cases, which made 10.84%.

Code 7: *Misunderstanding*

The foreignised subtitles caused some misunderstanding among some viewers. In vlog 4, for example, the vlogger is calling his girlfriend/future wife: "مونة يا مونة انت ليه كده سودة؟" which appears in the subtitle as "Mona! Hey Mona! why are you so black?". The YouTuber translated the sentence literally from Arabic into English, keeping the same syntactic structure as the ST. This has triggered an intense and rich cultural discussion in the comments section. Throughout the process of discussion, some non-Arabic-speaking viewers interpreted it as a racist expression. This type of comment was repeated n = 9 (1.65 %).

> "Calling her Black is racist"
>
> "Isn't he a racist?".

Code 8: *Correcting Mistakes*

In the process of discussion in the comments section, some viewers intervened to correct mistakes; either a mistake in the subtitles, such as: "Hamar means donkey not a cow", or to correct a misinterpretation, such as: "This word, in the Egyptian-Arabic dialect (سوده: black or dark), has a physical meaning (colour) and a moral meaning (mood). When we say, for example, 'يا نهار اسود!' : /yae nhar eswed!/, (what a black day!), it means that it is a misfortunate or catastrophic day.

This type of response occurred in n = 21, which made 3.86% of the comments.

Code 9: *Translating*

Foreignised subtitles push some viewers to translate and retranslate words and expressions. This is mainly to help non-Arab viewers to understand the cultural nuances of the expression. For example:

> "Beyooni: I'm going to get you"
>
> "Beyooni in Arabic means something like (I am watching you) I think, It s funny how he performed it."

The act of translating occurred n = 40 (7.35 %).

Code 10: *Transliterating*

The viewers have not only translated difficult words but also transliterated them. This strategy helps non-Arabic speaking viewers learn how to pronounce Arabic words, which makes them closer to Arabic language and culture: one of the viewers wrote: "['āzeema] عزيمه, [dayef] ضيف, [dyoof] ضيوف". Transliteration occurred n = 21 (3.86 %)

Code 11: *Expressing Understanding*

Some viewers expressed their understanding directly like:

> "I know some Arabic and I understand what you said, look nobody is writing it for me: حبيبي"

> "I understood only 'shukran' means thank you"

Whereas other viewers just repeated the foreignised expression while adding a laughing Imoji, LOL, or a laugh (hhh). This is considered a way to show understanding. This code occurred n = 76 (13.97 %).

Theme 3: Affect

This theme is about the different emotional reactions of the viewers to foreignised words/expressions.

Code 12: *Empathising*

Some viewers expressed their empathy even when they did not understand well: "I didn't understand well, but I love Arabic".

It is about expressing positive emotions: "I LIKE THE PART WHEN YOU SAY Beyooni".

This pattern has been repeated n = 44 (8.09%).

Code 13: *Belongingness*

This means that a viewer shows that he belongs to the same linguistic or cultural community, for instance:

> "I am from Iraqi origins, I can relate to the family problems with Azooma 100% accurate"

Or as some foreigners, for example, express their belonging to the linguistic or cultural community:

> "I know Aseed too, i know some Arabic"

The total number of viewers who expressed their belongingness was n = 31 (5.7%)

Code 14: *Offensiveness*

The viewers have also expressed their negative feelings, sometimes hatred, towards Arabic words and/or the Arab culture as a whole. As an example: "Stop speaking Arabic in US we speak English", another one: "you racist Arab". However, the number of this type of comment remained small: n = 7 (1.29 %).

5. Discussion

The data analysis and the results above show that the foreignised subtitles attract a large number of viewers and trigger their curiosity toward the source language and culture. For example, code 1 and 2 show how some viewers learned the word 'عزومة' /A'zu:ma/ (guests) from the foreignised subtitles, or how another (code 2) became aware of Arabic cultural nuances, like the Yemeni word 'بعيوني' /be'yu:ni/ (I'm going to get you), etc. Subtitling, as Diaz-Cintas (2010b) argues, enables viewers to interact, acquire language, and learn about different cultures. It also fosters creative interaction and self-representation among individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Thumim, 2012), making the more authentic depiction of local cultures possible in a globalised online space.

The data show that non-Arabic speakers in the comments section interact within a playful linguistic context and participate with different perspectives on the semantic and pragmatic meanings of the foreignised subtitles. On the one hand, the Arabic speakers' explanation of the foreignised words shows their care and willingness to communicate in a respectful and inclusive manner with foreign viewers. On the other hand, the discussion of the foreignised expressions by non-Arabic speaking audiences shows awareness and acceptance of the local language and culture perspective. We can

deduce that in addition to increasing the foreign audiences' awareness of the source language and culture, foreignisation strategy contributes to fostering linguistic diversity at the expense of a mono-lingual/cultural hegemony.

Foreignised words such as 'بعيوني' /Be'yu:ni/ (I'm going to get you), 'حبيحي' /habibi/ (my dear), or 'سوده' /Su:da/ (black or misfortunate) express a meaning that does not exist in English, which has pushed a large number of viewers to engage in 'inter-cultural' conversations to negotiate linguistic and cultural meanings; ask for clarification, explain, translate, or transliterate words, etc. In many cases, the discussion does not stop at the foreignised words themselves but extends to discussing the Arabic language and culture, and in many other cases, the viewers' discussion becomes 'intra-cultural', digging deeper into discussing the differences between the Arabic dialects and cultures. The comments above demonstrate how viewers from various language communities supplement and amplify translation-mediated content. As Lee (2021) argues, the cooperative process of content translation in the comments section allows more communication across cultures.

In the process of meaning negotiation, misunderstanding occurred in a few cases (e.g., code 7). This misunderstanding, according to Johnson et al. (2018), is inevitable given the global reach of social media and the diversity of cultural conventions among audiences. However, when handled positively, it can lead to deeper communication, cultural exchange, and understanding among viewers. The YouTuber and his Arab audiences -as shown in code 7- used the comments section to provide relevant cultural background to help clarify the misunderstandings raised by the foreignised words and create a suitable environment for further communication across cultural differences. Generally, foreignised expressions trigger discussion and enable the foreign audience to observe and recognise cultural differences.

Furthermore, foreignisation influences the receiver's affect (Koskinen, 2012); this is reflected in this study in the viewers' positive and negative emotional reactions to the foreignised subtitles. Many viewers' expressed their appreciation and understanding of the cultural context depicted in the content (e.g., codes 12 and 13). Positive emotional responses, such as laughter or empathy, can indicate that viewers are able to connect with and appreciate cultural differences portrayed in the subtitles. For example, interaction in the comments section led some non-Arabic speakers to express their understanding and admiration for the Arabic language: e.g., "I didn't understand well, but I love Arabic". Even when some viewers did not understand the deep cultural nuances; they expressed their positive feelings towards the source language and culture.

The emotional reactions of the viewers to foreignised subtitles can have significant implications for cross-cultural communication and audience engagement. These subtitles (as codes 12 and 13 show) could evoke empathy and a sense of connection between viewers from different cultural backgrounds. Many viewers felt more emotionally invested in the content, leading to enhanced engagement and enjoyment. A very small number of viewers reacted offensively, mainly due to misunderstanding and/or inherent ideological reasons that our research is not meant to delve into.

The domestication of 'local stories' into a dominant language (English) contributes to a continuous cultural 'invisibility' of the ST and consequently participates in a lack of awareness of 'minority' cultures. Looking from Venuti's (1995) perspective, this article considers non-professional translation by immigrant social media prosumers as a form of resistance to the domestication of local text/story into a global one that takes place in official mass media. The rise of foreignisation in social media in the last decades (Yonamine, 2022) has participated positively in depicting local cultures more authentically. The data analysis and the results showed that YouTubers foreignisation of content into English triggered discussion in the comments section on the source language and culture, which pushed diverse audiences to interact with cultures and become aware of differences and similarities. Foreignisation in social media creates a more equal ground for communication, where the 'local' culture can become visible within the ´global' one.

This study can be considered as an inaugural attempt to systematically examine the role of immigrant-youtubers' foreignisation of subtitles in communication across cultures, and so, it certainly has several limitations. Focusing solely on posted comments, factors such as mandatory user registration, the

vlogger's ability to modify the content appearing on their platform, or their discretion in moderating or deleting comments can skew the representation of the readers' feedback. Consequently, publicly available comments may not encapsulate the entirety of the viewers' responses. To deepen our understanding of these dynamics and the impact of comment moderation, and to extend the findings of this preliminary investigation, alternative investigative approaches are warranted. For instance, conducting interviews with both vloggers and their audiences could provide valuable insights. Additionally, an avenue ripe for further exploration is the frequency of individual commenters' engagement with the vlog. Given that readers typically use their own names or pseudonyms, discerning whether multiple comments originate from the same individual is challenging, especially when only partial identifiers like first names are utilised, potentially leading to inaccuracies in data analysis. Despite acknowledged limitations, the study underscores avenues for further inquiry, offering prospects for expanding scholarly comprehension of these online interactions and their potential to foster, sustain, and deepen social ties within mediated environments.

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