

**STRATEGIES AND FACTORS OF
EXPLICATURES IN ENGLISH-ARABIC
SUBTITLES OF THE 'FRIENDS'
SITCOM ON NETFLIX**

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by

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

The thesis utilizes Brills transliteration symbols consistently to offer transliteration for Arabic subtitles. The symbols used are taken from the following source:

https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_static/static_fonts_simple_arabic_transliteration.pdf

Arabic	sAts	Unicode	Arabic	sAts	Unicode	Arabic	sAts	Unicode
ا	a, ā	0101	ط	ṭ	1E6D	ى	ā	0101
ب	b		ظ	ẓ	1E93	ي	ī	012B
ت	t		ع	‘	02BF	و	ū	016B
ث	ṭ	1E6F	غ	ġ	0121	َ	a	
ج	ġ	01E7	ف	f		ِ	i	
ح	ḥ	1E25	ق	q		ُ	u	
خ	ḥ	1E2B	ك	k		آ	ai	
د	d		ل	l		أ	au	
ذ	ḏ	1E0F	م	m		آ	īy	012B
ر	r		ن	n		أ	ūw	016B
ز	z		هـ	h		ة	a, ah, āh, at, āt	0101
س	s		و	w, ū	016B			
ش	š	0161	ي	y, ī	012B			
ص	ṣ	1E63	ء	’	02BE			
ض	ḏ	1E0D						

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHCC	Ad hoc concept construction
AVT	Audiovisual translation
RT	Relevance Theory
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text

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Appendix A All Detected Examples

Appendix B Screenshots

**STRATEGI DAN FAKTOR EKSPLIKATUR DALAM SARI KATA BAHASA
INGGERIS-BAHASA ARAB DALAM
SITKOM ‘FRIENDS’ DI NETFLIX**

ABSTRAK

Menonton karya yang disertakan dengan sari kata sering dianggap sebagai suatu bentuk komunikasi antara penonton sasaran dan teks terjemahan yang dibaca. Untuk memastikan bahawa komunikasi ini mencapai objektifnya, penterjemah teks perlu mengintegrasikan konteks ke dalam teks sari kata, untuk memastikan teks tersebut cukup eksplisit bagi penonton serta meminimumkan kebergantungan kepada terjemahan harfiah seberapa yang boleh. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji faktor eksplikatur dalam terjemahan sari kata bahasa Inggeris-Arab dalam sitkom Friends di Netflix, dengan memfokuskan kepada jenis eksplikatur dan cara jenis eksplikatur itu diutamakan oleh penyari kata, serta strategi terjemahan yang digunakan untuk menyampaikan eksplikatur tersebut, dan faktor eksplikatur yang terlibat di sebalik penyampaian itu. Secara umum, eksplikatur boleh didefinisikan sebagai perkembangan pragmatik ujaran. Dalam konteks penarikataan, eksplikatur mewakili usaha penyari kata mengintegrasikan ujaran pelakon dengan petunjuk kontekstual untuk menjelaskan makna eksplisit suatu ujaran itu. Untuk mencapai objektif kajian, pelbagai kerangka kerja secara teoritikal telah dirujuk termasuk Teori Relevans (RT), tipologi jenis eksplikatur oleh Huang (2007/2014), model Bogucki tentang membuat keputusan dalam penyediaan sari kata (2020), model tentang strategi penterjemahan sari kata oleh Lomheim (1999), dan tipologi kategori eksplisitasi oleh Klaudy (1998). Kelima-lima kerangka kerja ini saling berkaitan dan melengkapi antara satu sama lain. Kerangka pertama iaitu Teori Relevans bertindak sebagai kerangka utama yang

memperkenalkan istilah ‘eksplikatur’ yang menjadi fokus utama kajian ini. Untuk mengkaji tentang cara dan sebab eksplikatur tersebut disampaikan maka kerangka Lomheim dan Klaudy dirujuk, manakala kerangka Bogucki digunakan untuk menilai keberkesanan eksplikatur untuk memperoleh kerelevanan optimum. Kerangka yang telah dipilih amat bernilai dalam kajian ini kerana gabungan antara kerangka tersebut dapat menyediakan analisis yang tuntas tentang cara dan sebab sesuatu eksplikatur itu disampaikan, serta sebab sesuatu jenis eksplikatur itu lebih diutamakan jika dibandingkan dengan yang lain dalam siri sitkom ‘Friends’ musim pertama, sejumlah 629 eksplikatur dalam sarikata telah dikenal pasti. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa perhatian yang tidak seimbang telah diberikan oleh penyari kata untuk menangani pelbagai jenis eksplikatur. Jenis-jenis eksplikatur diklasifikasikan berdasarkan urutan bilangan kemunculannya; ketidaktaksaan (*disambiguation*) (298 contoh), pengkayaan bebas (*free enrichment*) (161 contoh), konstruksi konsep *Ad hoc* (*Ad hoc concept construction* (AHCC)) (90 contoh), resolusi rujukan (*reference resolution*) (78 contoh), dan penepuan (*saturation*) (2 contoh). Fokus yang tidak seimbang terhadap pelbagai jenis eksplikatur menunjukkan bahawa pengekalannya semantik adalah amat penting dan pemerolehan kesamaan (*equivalence*) pada peringkat sari kata dan bukan sekadar peringkat perkataan sahaja adalah paling berkesan melalui penggunaan eksplikatur jenis pengkayaan bebas. Selain itu, AHCC dapat meningkatkan kemungkinan yang jangkauan penonton dapat dipenuhi dengan menyediakan terjemahan yang lebih spesifik atau yang lebih umum sekiranya diperlukan. Resolusi rujukan meringankan tanggung jawab penonton untuk mengingati rujukan yang berkaitan dengan apa ungkapan referensial. Kajian ini memperkenalkan satu tipologi dalam strategi penyarikataan eksplikatur yang merupakan versi yang diubah suai daripada model Lomheim, dengan

memperkenalkan strategi pengkhususan makna (*semantic specification*), pengkhususan rujukan (*referential specification*), pengkhususan pelarasan (*adjustment specification*) pengembangan suplementari (*supplementary expansion*) dan pengembangan komplementari (*complementary expansion*) Selanjutnya, versi yang telah diubah suai berkaitan faktor yang mempengaruhi eksplikatur turut dicadangkan dengan memperkembangkan kerangka Klaudy melalui pembahagian faktor pragmatik kepada faktor pragmatik kekurangan kefahaman budaya (*cultural unfamiliarity pragmatic factor*) dan faktor pragmatik sensitiviti budaya (*cultural sensitivity pragmatic factor*). Implikasi daripada kajian ini memperlihatkan tentang pentingnya untuk membuat pengubahsuaian dan penambahan yang sesuai supaya dapat memenuhi jangkauan pembaca dan meningkatkan kepuasan mereka semasa menonton bahan yang bersarikata. Penyari kata harus mengambil masa yang secukupnya untuk membuat pertimbangan tentang bentuk-bentuk yang logik dan tidakterlalu tergesa-gesa melakukan sesuatu terjemahan sarikata.

**STRATEGIES AND FACTORS OF EXPLICATURES IN ENGLISH-ARABIC
SUBTITLES OF THE ‘FRIENDS’ SITCOM ON NETFLIX**

ABSTRACT

Watching a subtitled work is often regarded as a form of communication between the target audience and the subtitles they read. To ensure this communication achieves its objective, subtitlers need to integrate context into subtitles, ensuring they are sufficiently explicit for viewers and minimizing reliance on literal translation whenever feasible. The present study aims to examine explicatures in the English-Arabic subtitles of the sitcom *Friends* on Netflix, focusing on their areas, how they are prioritized by the subtitler, the strategies used for their presentation, and the factors behind their rendition. Explicatures can be broadly defined as the pragmatic developments of utterances. In the context of subtitling, they represent the subtitler's efforts to integrate actors' speech with contextual cues to elucidate meaning on the explicit side of utterances. To achieve its objectives, the study draws upon various theoretical frameworks, including Relevance Theory (RT), Huang's typology of explicature areas (2007/2014), Bogucki's model for decision-making in subtitling (2020), Lomheim's model of subtitling strategies (1999), and Klaudy's typology of explicitation categories (1998). These five frameworks interact and complement one another in that the first, RT, serves as the umbrella framework, having introduced the term 'explicature,' which is the central focus of the study. Huang's framework provides the classification of explicatures. To explore how and why explicatures are rendered, Lomheim's and Klaudy's frameworks are employed, while Bogucki's framework is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the explicatures in achieving optimal relevance. The selected frameworks were valuable to the study, as they together offered a

thorough analysis of how and why explicatures are rendered, as well as the reasons some areas are prioritized over others. In the subtitles of the first season of the sitcom *Friends*, a total of 629 explicatures are identified. The findings reveal uneven attention from the subtitler across different areas of explicatures. Explicatures are ranked in order of occurrence as disambiguation (298 examples), free enrichment (161 examples), Ad hoc concept construction (AHCC) (90 examples), reference resolution (78 examples), and saturation (2 examples). The unequal focus on various types of explicatures shows that preserving the semantic meaning is crucial, and achieving equivalence on subtitles level rather than on word level is most effective through the use of free enrichment. Additionally, AHCC enhances the likelihood of meeting audience expectations by offering either more specific or more general translations whenever possible. Reference resolution relieves viewers of the obligation to remember the referent associated with referential expressions. The study introduces a typology for explicature subtitling strategies, which is a modified version of Lomheim's model, introducing the strategies of semantic specification, referential specification, adjustment specification, supplementary expansion, and complementary one. Furthermore, a modified version of the factors influencing explicature is proposed, expanding upon Klaudy's framework by subdividing the pragmatic factor into cultural unfamiliarity pragmatic factor and cultural sensitivity pragmatic factor. The study's implications highlight the importance of making necessary modifications and additions to meet readers expectations and improve the enjoyment of subtitled works. Subtitlers should take adequate time to consider logical forms before rushing into translation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one of this study serves as an introduction, providing a brief overview of its key elements. It outlines the research problem, lays out specific objectives to be met, and identifies several questions that must be answered. Following a description of the research methodology, some of the study's limitations are stated. This chapter also covers the significance of the study, defines the key terms used, and then wraps up by describing how the entire study will be organized into separate chapters.

1.2 Research Background

The world has seen unprecedented growth in the consumption of audiovisual content over the last few decades. Digital life has become a ubiquitous reality, with audiovisual works expanding and experiencing a boom like never before to cover a wide range of forms and settings. Video streaming platforms have been at the forefront of elevating audiovisual materials to new heights. This can be ascribed to a multitude of factors, with the foremost being the practice of releasing complete seasons of television programs in one go, thereby enabling audiences to binge a whole season rather than adhering to a daily broadcast schedule on traditional television channels. Furthermore, the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic has had a crucial impact on amplifying the expansion of audiovisual production, rendering it more prominent and discernible. For example, before the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, Netflix's expansion in the United States had exhibited a deceleration trend (Vlassis, 2021). However, as per one of its published reports (Netflix, 2020), the company observed a

surge in its global subscriber base, with 26 million new users subscribing in the first half of 2020. This figure is close to the number of subscriptions recorded in 2019 (28 million), which is largely attributed to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals resorted to utilizing audiovisual materials as a means of keeping themselves entertained during periods of quarantine or when they were restricted from departing their homes.

Given the exponential growth of audiovisual communication, the concurrent surge in the volume of audiovisual translation (AVT) is unsurprising. To meet the high demand for audiovisual works, there was a pressing need for this content to be globally translated. As a result, AVT has become not only a practice for translating audiovisual content from one language to another but also one of the most dynamic branches of translation studies and a focus of translation research (Agost, 2011; Bogucki, 2020; Díaz- Cintas, 2009; Pérez-Escudero, 2018; Peromingo, Martin & Rianza 2014).

Being one of the most common techniques of AVT, subtitling has also seen remarkable progress in the last decades. It is receiving increased attention in research due to its importance in making many works accessible to a wider audience, including people who speak different languages, as well as the deaf and hard of hearing (Al-Abbas & Haider, 2021). The task of subtitlers is a complex and challenging one, as it involves the conversion of spoken language into written form, the selection of appropriate channels or mediums for conveying meaning, the condensation of the ST, and the synchronization with visual images (Hatim & Mason, 2000).

The task becomes even more challenging and difficult when there is a substantial cultural and linguistic disparity between the source and target languages (James, 2002), especially when languages have little in common, as is the case while

translating between English and Arabic (Tanjour, 2011). Roth (1998) posits that the translation of a text into another language and cultural milieu is the most formidable task, as it requires interlingual and intercultural conversion. According to Baker (2018), the translator/subtitler must not only consider the semantic meaning of words and expressions, but also their contextual and cultural value in order to generate a target text (TT) that is almost equivalent to the Source text (ST).

In practice, it appears that the constraints of subtitling, in addition to the linguistic and cultural differences, have impacted the caliber of subtitles, and English-Arabic subtitles are no exception. The satisfaction of the target audience may be compromised in instances where the subtitles fail to meet their anticipated standards. There is a growing trend among viewers to express dissatisfaction with certain subtitled productions due to perceived inadequacies (Al-Jabbad, 2019). As Nornes (1999, p. 18) said, “All of us have, at one time or another, left a movie theatre wanting to kill the translator. Our motive: the movie’s murder by ‘incompetent’ subtitle.” According to Alkadi (2010), the Internet has made it possible for viewers to express their opinions. Using Alkadi’s (2010, p. 6) own words, “Angry bloggers raise the issue of the many scandals that take place in subtitling and dubbing into Arabic, such as exaggerated censorship, including cuts, and the inability of MSA¹ to reflect the different registers and humor.”

Accordingly, subtitlers often try to make subtitles explicit in an effort to reduce subtitling deficiencies or failures and help target viewers overcome any comprehension hurdles (Erguvana, 2015). This can be achieved by adding the contextual information required to render an explicit subtitle (Perego, 2004). An

¹ MSA stands for Modern Standard Arabic

example would be when the subtitler of *Friends* sitcom translated ‘good hand’ as *jadd qawijjah* ‘strong hand’ from English into Arabic in one of season seven’s scenes. In this context, the speaker expresses dissatisfaction with her roommate’s decision to bring an unpleasant painting of a woman with an outstretched hand into their shared living space with the intention of displaying it on the wall. In an attempt to convince him to dispose of the painting, she asserts that the woman depicted in the painting becomes animated at night, and with her one ‘good hand’ reaches up to the legs of the apartment’s occupants with the sinister intent of causing their demise. The subtitler provides this translation specifically for this context to help the audience understand the meaning by relying primarily on what the word ‘good’ means in this specific context. Retaining the adjective ‘good’ in the Arabic subtitle would imbue readers with a positive connotation, whereas the intended meaning of the adjective in this context is to convey negative connotations pertaining to the woman’s physical capabilities that enable her to lethally employ her ‘good hand’. Although dictionaries do not list ‘strong’ as one of the adjective senses for ‘good,’ it is used in place of ‘good’ due to its contextual appropriateness.

Based on the importance of context in subtitling, the current study looks into ‘explicatures’ to underline the role pragmatics plays in facilitating comprehension of the explicit side of utterances. Explicatures are inferential developments of utterances articulated in communication (Carston, 2004). In the case of subtitling, these developments take place by adding contextual information to what was uttered by actors to guarantee they are clear enough for the audience. The additional contextual information does not spell out what was meant to be inferred by the source audience, but it provides the audience with the necessary details to comprehend the utterance and draw inferences when required. In short, the thesis explores the role of pragmatics

in enhancing comprehension through the utilization of explicatures. More precisely, it examines how subtitlers employ contextual information to clarify the explicit aspects of utterances, with a focus on the subtitles of the sitcom *Friends* as a case study.

1.3 Problem Statement

It is taken for granted that understanding communication, whether in real life or in films, necessitates the acquisition of what aids in obtaining both explicit and implied meaning (Dessilla, 2012). To aid the target audience's comprehension of the audiovisual work, the subtitler must ensure that the subtitled utterances are explicit enough to be deciphered by the audience (Erguvana, 2015). To guarantee this, translators/subtitlers need to look for pragmatic processes to explicate and enrich the meaning, resulting in the rendition of 'explicatures' (Jarrah & Al-Jarrah, 2023; Murtisari, 2013). According to Dessilla (2018), there is a lack of scholarly research on the application of pragmatic models to the analysis of audiovisual texts, and the potential connections between the fields of pragmatics and AVT have not been adequately examined.

A number of studies have emphasized the significance of explicatures in the context of written translation (see Al-Jarrah et al., 2018; Jarrah & Al-Jarrah, 2023; Yus, 2012). These studies have established a consensus that it is not advisable for translators to provide logical forms (the linguistic forms produced by writers) in translations, as these forms function merely as templates that necessitate further elucidation. Translators are required to convey explicatures that facilitate the comprehension of the readers. The practice of prioritizing rendering explicatures over logical forms is motivated by the recognition of the gap between the words people write and the meaning they intend to convey (Smith, 2002). The aforementioned

studies consider translation as a gap-filling activity using some pragmatic areas. According to Yus (2012), comprehending the meaning of a joke requires the utilization of pragmatic areas to transform the logical form of the joke into a contextualized and relevant proposition (explicature). This transformation enables the audience to deduce an interpretation that conveys the humorous intent. According to Jarrah and Al Jarrah (2023), the incorporation of explicatures in translations results in optimal clarity, as explicatures aid in reinstating the deficient logical forms of a sentence. They confirmed that “Translating the explicature of the utterance, rather than the utterance itself, exempts the audience from more processing efforts which, if not simplified, might hinder (or possibly twist) their understanding of the original context” (P. 8).

In the field of subtitling, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, certain studies have referred to explicatures, albeit in a theoretical and peripheral manner, often while examining another subject, or have concentrated solely on explicatures’ involvement in conveying humor (for further elaboration, see Section 2.5). Studies entirely dedicated to investigating explicatures in subtitling have not been identified. Explicatures refer to the process of integrating contextual information into verbal or written expressions to ensure their explicitness. However, upon examination of academic works exploring the significance of context in subtitling, it has been found that the majority of research focuses primarily on issues that arise from cultural disparities, such as cultural-specific terminology, humor, slang, and taboos (see, for example, Alharthi, 2016; Furgani, 2016; Geoghegan, 2019; Ruuttula, 2018).

However, research in subtitling did not give enough attention to the significance of providing contextual information for other parts of utterances that do not necessarily have one of the aforementioned cultural issues. For example, in the sitcom *Friends*, there is an example where Joey, Ross’s friend, helps him move to his

new apartment. During this process, Ross decides to keep some belongings and get rid of others. When Joey says, “done with the bookcase,” the statement is translated into Arabic as *ʔintahajtu min tarkeeb xazanat ʔalkutub* which translates into English as “done with assembling the bookcase.” This translation excludes other alternative interpretations that could have been inferred from the context, such as “I disposed of the bookcase.” The addition of the word ‘assembling’ to the translation reduced the cognitive load on the target audience, and the intended message becomes more precise.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the fact that certain studies were carried out specifically to examine the efforts made by subtitlers to explicate the intended meaning for the target audience, these studies primarily concentrated on two aspects. The first one is the incorporation of cohesive devices into the TT that were not present in the ST. The reason for this is that cohesive devices are readily observable in the text, rendering them more amenable to empirical investigation (Blum-Kulka, 1986; Marco, 2012). It is widely recognized that utilizing cohesive devices as the sole criterion for determining a text’s explicitness is unreliable, as readers may comprehend the text and make inferences even in the absence of connectives (Hadla, 2015). The second aspect pertains to the exploration of the factors behind the explicitation of subtitlers. While understanding these factors is undoubtedly crucial, it alone does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the explicitation process. Comprehending the pragmatic areas employed by subtitlers in generating explicit subtitles is imperative, as the significance of pragmatics cannot be understated in attaining a successful translation (Jarrah & Al-Jarrah, 2023).

To sum up, the current study aims to investigate ‘explicatures’ within the domain of subtitling. Prior studies have indicated the significance of explicatures in augmenting text comprehension in written translation. However, the existing body of

literature on subtitling has predominantly concentrated on incorporating cohesive devices to explicitly convey meaning, and elucidating culture-specific terms and their diverse manifestations. The present research endeavors to investigate the ways in which explicit linguistic structures can be integrated with contextual cues to enhance comprehension via five pragmatic areas: disambiguation, reference resolution, free enrichment, saturation, and ad hoc concept construction (AHCC).

The present study endeavors to bridge the gap in the pertinent body of literature by tackling the dearth of research on English-Arabic subtitling. Additionally, the study attempts to identify the strategies employed by *Friends*' subtitler to deliver the explicatures as stated in the study's second objective below. Doing this is deemed important since it demonstrates not only the subtitler's ability to identify the pragmatic areas for rendering explicatures, but also their skill in presenting these areas visibly for the viewers. Furthermore, the assumption made by the researcher in the present study is that explicatures have not been subject to investigation in the context of subtitling. Consequently, there exists no subtitling typology that is specifically designed to handle explicatures. Therefore, it would be of interest to investigate whether existing subtitling typologies are applicable for subtitling explicatures, or if they require adaptation. In essence, this study seeks to formulate an updated subtitling typology tailored to proficiently handle explicatures.

Considering the present study's descriptive nature, a mere examination of the strategies employed in subtitling to convey explicatures would be inadequate. While investigating these strategies is crucial, it does not suffice as the sole focus of investigation. Descriptive studies, by their very nature, serve as exploratory tools as they aim to elucidate 'how' and 'why' a given phenomenon functions within a specific context (Mohajan, 2018; Polkinghorne, 2005). As this study explores the phenomenon

of ‘explicatures’ in subtitling, investigating the strategies (the how aspect), and the factors (the why aspect) of explicatures is imperative if a thorough study is pursued as stated in the study’s third objective. Moreover, investigating the factors might give indications about differences/ similarities between source and target languages and cultures (Klaudy, 2003; Nohovec, 2015). For instance, Bagheri and Nemati’s (2014) study aims at examining the factors that prompt subtitlers to engage in explicitation. The study found that the most significant motivation for subtitlers in the English-Persian language pair to make subtitles explicit is the divergence in syntax and semantics between the source and target languages. This illustrates the significant disparities between the grammatical structures of English and Persian. It serves as a cautionary note for scholars who plan to undertake future research in these languages, emphasizing the need to consider these linguistic distinctions. Hence, a study into the factors of generating explicatures in the English-Arabic language pair could potentially provide valuable insights for scholars specializing in this particular language pair.

Addressing this research gap is essential as it highlights the benefits of explicating aspects of subtitles beyond just cultural references. This would yield concrete results that resonate with viewers, helping them concentrate on what is genuinely important. By tackling this gap, the study would demonstrate how rendering explicatures can improve the overall quality of subtitled works, thereby enhancing their credibility and boosting audience engagement. This enhancement could lead to a wider audience appreciating subtitled content, making it more accessible and meaningful to them.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To identify the areas of explicature prioritized by the subtitler.
- 2- To analyze the strategies used to render explicatures in terms of achieving ‘optimal relevance’ for the viewers.
- 3- To investigate the possible factors that motivate the subtitler to incorporate explicatures in subtitling practices.

1.5 Research Questions

This thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the areas of explicature prioritized more often by subtitlers over others?
- 2- How does the subtitler render explicatures in the subtitles to effectively achieve optimal relevance?
- 3- Why does the subtitler render explicatures?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The study draws on Relevance Theory (RT) which was set forth by Sperber and Wilson in 1986 and is credited with coining the term ‘explicatures’. It proposes that individuals tend to prioritize information that is expected to yield the highest increase in knowledge while incurring the least processing cost (Yus, 2006). RT comprises two principles. The first is the cognitive principle which stipulates that “Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance” (Sperber &

Wilson, 1986/1995, p. 260). The second is the communicative principle which assumes that “Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995, p. 158).

The researcher adopts RT as the theoretical foundation for this study since the theory sees communication as an inferential activity in which the meaning of an utterance is not solely understood based on the language forms used by the speaker. In fact, the linguistic form is merely a schema in RT, which the receiver enriches with background knowledge and context to understand the speaker’s intended meaning. This means that RT makes communication’s interpretation context-based rather than linguistic form-based (Wilson, 2016).

To achieve objective number one, the study is based on Huang’s (2007/2014) classification of explicatures. Huang relied on the explanations made by Sperber and Wilson on how to generate explicatures to classify explicatures’ areas into the following: disambiguation (selecting one of two or more potential senses of words), reference resolution (attaching the appropriate contextual value to a referential or anaphoric expression on the explicit side), saturation (filling the slots in the linguistically decoded forms with inferential meaning), free enrichment (conceptual enhancement of linguistic forms), and AHCC (modification of the meaning a concept renders in the decoded linguistic form). More details about the different areas of explicatures are provided in Section 3.3 of this study. The researcher adopted Huang’s typology since Sperber and Wilson did not show this classification into five categories even though they discussed them in detail in many of their works.

To achieve objective number two, the study draws on Lomheim's (1999) typology for subtitling strategies. The researcher believes this typology is appropriate for the objectives of this study because it generally addresses subtitling strategies, as opposed to other typologies that focus on particular subtitling challenges, like Pedersen's (2005), which was created to address the subtitling of culture-specific terms. Lomheim offered the following six strategies for subtitling: omission, compression, expansion, generalization, specification, and neutralization (for further details, see Section 3.5).

Moreover, to achieve objective number two, the study employs Bogucki's (2020) model which was proposed to give guidelines about decision-making related to achieving optimal relevance in subtitling. Bogucki (2020) emphasizes the importance of providing contextual information that pertains to the settings surrounding the actor's utterance, which is named by Bogucki as the small context. He warned, however, that doing so is not sufficient when the source and the target audiences have different background knowledge. In the latter case, some contextual information that enhances the target audience's knowledge is required to enable them to understand the meaning without expending extra effort. This second type of context is called the large context. Bogucki's model aims at satisfying the expectations of the target audience by both prioritizing the context and adhering to subtitling constraints (for more details, refer to Section 3.4 of the study).

To achieve objective number three, Klaudy's (1998) typology is adopted. This typology was originally designed by Klaudy to classify explicitations based on their motives. Hence, the researcher considers it appropriate to be used for explaining the possible factors that motivated the subtitler to explicitate. Klaudy (1998) proposes four

categories of explicitation: obligatory, optional, pragmatic, and finally translation-inherent explicitation (for further details, see Section 3.6).

1.7 Methodology

This study is a product-oriented descriptive one. According to Holmes (2000), product-oriented descriptive studies involve analyzing existing translations that can be used to gather data for conducting surveys on larger collections of translations. Product-oriented studies analyze individual translations (as is the case in the current study), or conduct comparative analyses of multiple translations of a specific text in one or more languages (Aldbashi, 2021). The present study looks into the rendition of explicatures in Arabic subtitles of the first season of the American Sitcom *Friends* on Netflix. This particular sitcom was used given that it is a rich research material as all different areas of explicatures can be manifested. The sitcom exhibits a wide range of topics and situations that gives rise to a diverse use of utterances, including the use of culturally specific terms and linguistic expressions that subtitlers may enrich for the Arab audience who is unfamiliar with American culture and its linguistic forms. Given that each season offers a comprehensive depiction of explicatures and since analyzing every season is beyond the purview of this research, the sitcom's first season was chosen using a simple random sample technique, as will be further discussed in Section 3.7.3. The first season of the sitcom has a total of 24 episodes, each of which has been subjected to analysis in order to identify and examine the explicatures they have.

The first step in data collection is to listen to actors' utterances and to read the Arabic subtitles. Next, the researcher compares the Arabic subtitles to the actors' original English statements to determine if the subtitles were translated literally or changed using any of the five pragmatic areas mentioned in Huang's (2007/2014)

typology. If no changes are observed, the utterance is disregarded; however, if any pragmatic area is detected, the subtitle is regarded as an explicature and is selected for analysis. After identifying explicatures in all 24 episodes, the order of explicature areas is determined based on the number of detected examples. Following that, the subtitler's employed strategies are identified using Lomheim's (1999) typology, and the attempt to reach optimal relevance is analyzed based on Bogucki's (2020) model. The potential factor(s) for delivering explicatures are eventually investigated using Klaudy's (1998) model.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The current study investigates the rendition of explicatures in Arabic subtitles of the popular American sitcom *Friends* on Netflix. To achieve this goal, the study is limited to identifying and analyzing explicatures only in the sitcom *Friends*, specifically in season number one. This is attributed to the fact that trying to identify explicatures in all ten seasons of the sitcom is beyond the scope of this study. In order to ensure comprehensive coverage of all five areas of explicatures in the research, a thorough investigation was conducted on each subtitle of season one to avoid overlooking any examples and to maintain objectivity in the study's conclusions. The study is also limited to analyze the rendition of explicatures found in the subtitles of *Friends* only on Netflix, since Netflix's subtitles, released in 2015, represent the most recent ones for this sitcom.

The study primarily aims to analyze existing subtitles rather than delve into the decision-making processes of individual subtitlers. Consequently, direct interaction with subtitlers might not be in line with the study's goals. Maintaining objectivity is crucial, and avoiding potential biases that could arise from such interactions is

essential. Analyzing existing subtitles enables a more neutral and unbiased examination of the linguistic and contextual choices made by subtitlers.

One additional limitation comes from the fact that explicature areas include the process of disambiguation. In order to enhance the clarity of the analysis, it would be beneficial to explicitly present all available meanings of ambiguous words. Nevertheless, due to spatial constraints, it proved challenging to do this task for every instance, especially in cases when ambiguous words have a considerable number of different meanings.

As this study is limited to the subtitles of *Friends* on Netflix, there is a potential bias stemming from Netflix's specific subtitling guidelines, which could influence subtitlers' decisions in rendering explicatures and may restrict the range of strategies employed. Furthermore, since this is a product-oriented descriptive analysis, it only examines the existing explicatures within *Friends* subtitles. This means the study lacks insight into the perspectives of Arabic-speaking viewers, leaving a gap regarding how well the subtitles convey meaning and whether viewers are satisfied with the level of explicitness. This limitation suggests that future research should consider audience feedback to offer a more holistic assessment of subtitling effectiveness and its influence on comprehension and viewer satisfaction.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for a number of reasons. It is possibly among the first studies entirely dedicated to the investigation of explicatures and their role in facilitating comprehension of the original work in the field of subtitling. In fact, the study delves deeply into the five areas of explicatures and investigates how they are

handled in subtitling between two different languages and cultures where providing contextual information to the target audience is critical.

The study's findings would have significance for both the practice of subtitling and related academic research. The study's findings could offer valuable guidance for training courses and workshops for subtitlers. These findings would suggest that subtitlers should incorporate explicatures into their subtitles in order to enhance the clarity of meaning and naturalness of structures. Moreover, the study introduces researchers to the importance of explicatures in the analysis of subtitling studies. It draws their attention to the significance of various contexts stemming from different sources in determining suitable linguistic choices for subtitles.

1.10 Definition of Concepts

Audiovisual translation (AVT): the practices, processes, and products involved in or resulting from the transition of multimodal content across languages and/or cultures (Pérez-González, 2019).

Subtitling: a written translation that appears in the lower portion of the screen and aims to render the original dialogue as well as all other verbal information that is transmitted visually as letters and text messages, or aurally as songs (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021).

Explicatures: what is explicitly said, often supplemented with contextual information, using some pragmatic processes. An assumption communicated by an utterance is an explicature if it is a development of a logical form encoded by that utterance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

Explicitation: stylistic translation technique which consists of making explicit in the target language what remains implicit in the source language because it is apparent from either the context or the situation” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 342).

Relevance Theory (RT): a pragmatic theory of human communication first proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in 1986 based on the work of Paul Grice and developed out of his ideas (Yus, 2006). It contends that human cognition is geared toward what is relevant.

Logical Form: “a syntactically structured string of concepts with certain slots of free variables, indicating where certain contextual values (in the form of concepts) must be supplied” (Carston, 2002, p. 64). The utterance “I will meet you then” is a logical form, whereas “I will meet you tomorrow” is an explicature of that logical form.

Ad Hoc Concept Construction (AHCC): the pragmatic modification of a lexical concept that must be inferred based on and for the specific occasion of use (Barsalou, 1983). Simply put, AHCC involves selecting a meaning for a linguistic unit not because it is inherently part of the language system, but because it is the meaning that best fits the intended message in a specific context.

Areas of explicatures: the domains where pragmatic processes are generally involved in transforming and enhancing logical forms into propositional forms (Huang, 2014).

Disambiguation: the pragmatic process that entails selecting one of two or more potential senses provided by the linguistic system (Huang, 2007/2014).

Free Enrichment: a pragmatic process in which concepts are enhanced, where this process is motivated entirely by the assumption that the utterance will meet a certain standard of communicative relevance (Huang, 2007/2014). In simple terms, free enrichment is a voluntary pragmatic process applied to spoken or written expressions to make their meaning clearer and more explicit.

Reference Resolution: attaching the appropriate contextual value to a referential or anaphoric expression on the explicit side in a way that establishes a link of connection with some preceding expression in the same sentence or discourse through the addition of background assumptions (Huang, 2000).

Saturation: a pragmatic process in which a given slot, position, or variable in the linguistically decoded logical form is filled or saturated (Recanati, 2004). In other words, saturation is a pragmatic process used to complete utterances or written forms that are syntactically complete but lack full semantic meaning.

Optimal Relevance: optimal relevance refers to the situation when an input, like an utterance in a communication, achieves the highest relevance possible in terms of effort and effect. “An ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience iff: a. It is relevant enough to be worth the audience’s processing effort; b. It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator’s abilities and preferences” (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 614).

1.11 Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into seven chapters starting from this introduction that sets the scene, provides background information on the topic, sheds light on the existing gap in the literature, sets the objectives of the research, states the questions it

seeks to answer, and discusses the study's limitations and significance before finally defining the research's key concepts.

Chapter two starts with a general overview of AVT, then reviews subtitling in terms of its definition, constraints, and previous studies. The chapter then reviews RT in subtitling, explicatures, explicitation, subtitling strategies, and subtitling factors. The chapter concludes by defining sitcoms and reviewing the sitcom *Friends* in subtitling research.

Chapter three serves to introduce the theoretical framework and show the methodology of this research. It elucidates the theoretical frameworks utilized in the study, namely Sperber and Wilson's RL (1986/1995), Huang's (2007/2014) typology of explicature areas, Bogucki's (2020) model for subtitling decision-making process, Lomheim's (1999) subtitling strategies, and Klaudy's (1998) typology of explicitation types. The chapter also covers the corpus of the study, and finally the methodology employed in data collection and analysis of the study.

To enhance the clarity and simplicity of the study's findings and discussion, each of the three questions of the study is addressed in a separate chapter. Chapter four focuses on the analysis of the first research question, which examines the identified areas of explicatures and their order based on the number of examples detected. The chapter includes several illustrative examples that would improve the clarity of the raised points.

Chapter 5 focuses on analyzing the data related to the second research question, which addresses the strategies employed by the subtitler in rendering explicatures in Arabic subtitles. This chapter examines Lomheim's typology of subtitling strategies and provides an overview of the strategies related to each identified area, accompanied

by illustrative examples. The chapter explores the additions that might be added to Lomheim's typology in order to cover the five pragmatic areas. Additionally, the chapter explores the achievement of optimal relevance through the rendition of explicatures.

Chapter six analyses the factors that motivate subtitlers to render explicatures instead of logical forms. This chapter utilizes Klaudy's (1998) typology of explication types. Additionally, chapter 6 explores additional factors that may contribute to explicatures, which are not covered in Klaudy's typology.

Chapter seven provides a comprehensive overview of the study's findings, highlights significant implications and conclusions, reflects on the study's contribution, and offers valuable insights for potential avenues of future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an extensive examination of the subject matter of explicatures in subtitling by providing a thorough review of the relevant aspects. It begins with a brief overview of AVT before looking into subtitling in terms of meaning, constraints, and key topics in previous studies. The chapter then reviews previous works that employ RT. It also addresses the topics of explicatures and explicitation, reviews the current typologies on subtitling strategies, examines the factors of explicitation, and culminates with a revision of prior academic research pertaining to the sitcom *Friends*.

2.2 Audiovisual Translation (AVT)

AVT is not only a branch within the field of translation studies, but also an indisputably prominent and dynamic one that owes its acceptance to the advent of digital technology which has steered society away from traditional paper-based media and towards multimedia, thereby amplifying the need for AVT (Alharthi, 2016). The existence of a considerable amount of publications, conferences, and associations exclusively dedicated to AVT is indicative of this fact (Gambier & Ramos Pinto, 2018).

Given its dynamic nature, various terms for the AVT field have been suggested over the years, including ‘constrained translation’ (Titford, 1982), ‘language conversion’ (Reid, 1986), ‘film translation’ (Delabastita, 1989), ‘screen translation’ (Gottlieb, 2004; Mason, 1989), ‘(audiovisual) language transfer’ (Dries, 1995),

‘Audiovisual translation’ (Orero, 2004), and ‘(multi)media translation’ (Gambier & Gottlieb, 2001). All terms mentioned above are limited to specific types of AVT and overlook other facets. Moreover, the disparity in terminology reflects the shift and changes in the field’s nature.

Regardless of the names used to refer to it, AVT is commonly defined as the practices, processes, and products that arise from the translation of multimodal material across languages and/or cultural contexts (Pérez-González, 2019). Gottlieb (2005, p. 13) defines AVT as “the translation of transient poly-semiotic texts presented onscreen to mass audiences”.

When examining the concept of AVT, it is crucial to clarify the definition of multimodal content. According to Chaume (2020), multimodal content is a semiotic structure of various codes that operate cohesively to generate meaning. The meaning generated can be conveyed through auditory means, including linguistic, paralinguistic, and musical codes, as well as through visual means, such as photographic and montage codes. As posited by Baldry and Thibault (2006), the creation and comprehension of multimodal content is contingent upon the use of a varied range of semiotic resources, commonly referred to as multi-modal modes.

Although AVT is a relatively recent field, it can be broadly classified into two fundamental approaches. The first is re-voicing, which involves substituting the original dialogue audio with a version in the target language. This can be achieved through various techniques, including interpreting, voiceover, narration, dubbing, fandubbing, and audio description. The second approach pertains to timed-text, which involves the conversion of the soundtrack into a written text that appears on the screen. This includes subtitling, surtitling, deaf or hard-of-hearing subtitling (Carrillo

Darancet, 2020; Chaume, 2020; Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2014, 2021; Matamala, 2018; Perego, 2018; Vera, 2006).

As previously stated, there has been a noteworthy surge in the expansion of AVT in recent times.² Notwithstanding this surge, it is imperative to remember that further groundwork and additional research in the respective field remain necessary (Bogucki, 2016; Gambier & Ramos Pinto, 2018; Orero et al., 2018). The diverse terminologies employed to refer to AVT, coupled with the proliferation of its areas of inquiry and subdisciplines, attests to the significance of this field and underscores the demand for further investigation into its techniques, particularly in the contemporary digital era where translation takes a ubiquitous role in all spheres of human activity. In countries where Arabic is predominantly spoken, there is a prevalent inclination towards subtitling as opposed to dubbing. According to Gamal (2007, p. 79), “subtitling has been the preferred form of AVT in the Arab world.” Qasim and Yahiaoui (2019) assert that nowadays subtitling is the favored AVT method in the Arab world, specifically for the English-Arabic language pair. The practice of subtitling is commonly favored for English-language films, television programs, and series, whereas dubbing is typically preferred for animated content aimed at children as well as Turkish and Korean series. The present study focuses exclusively on the English-Arabic language pair, so it aims to provide insights into the practice of subtitling, as opposed to dubbing. Section 2.3 thoroughly explores subtitling in terms of its definition, types, and constraints.

² According to ProQuest database, as of May 31, 2023, there were 8,376 publications on AVT in various academic sources such as journals, books, conference papers, and dissertations within the last ten years (<https://www.proquest.com/results/A883C99E4DB64C26PQ/1?accountid=27719>)

2.3 Subtitling

Subtitling is possibly the most predominant technique employed for translating audiovisual content among the various techniques available, and it has been instrumental in driving recent developments in the field (Díaz-Cintas, 2013). Subtitling is classified as a subset of timed text, in contrast to re-voicing as delineated in Section 2.2, and it has been defined from diverse perspectives. Considering subtitling as a process, Shuttleworth and Cowie's *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (1997, p. 161) defines it as "the process of providing synchronized captions for film and television dialogue". According to O'Connell (2007), subtitling is briefly defined as the process of enhancing the original audio soundtrack through the inclusion of written text displayed on the screen. On the other hand, subtitling as a product has been the focus of other researchers. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021), Gottlieb (2004), and VÖge (1977), a subtitle is a written translation that is situated in the lower section of the screen and aims to convey the original dialogue along with any other visible verbal information, such as letters and text. Luyken et al. (1991, p. 31) define subtitling 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". These definitions of subtitling prioritize formal attributes, thereby exhibiting a product-centric approach. Several scholars endeavored to formulate a user-centric definition, as opposed to a product- or process-centric one. Gracia (2020), for example, presents a definition of subtitling as follows: