
The Potential Impact of Drama Text Translation on Audiovisual Translation

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to demonstrate some potential similarities between the translation of drama texts and audiovisual (AV) material, particularly subtitling. The study shows major similar elements of playwriting and audiovisual scripts, such as the immediacy and direct contact with the audience/spectator and the use of dialogue; in spite of the difference in emphasis. Situational, social, and/or cultural contexts are important and existent in both the playtext and audiovisual text (particularly audiovisual descriptions, i.e. providing description of the image, sound and dialogue). Informed by the theoretical framework of translation studies, the article focuses on the analysis of drama translation and audiovisual translation (AVT). Analyzing excerpts from the Arabic translations of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar both as a playtext and a subtitled film, the researchers examine aspects of immediacy, register, naturalness and context. The two genres of translation (drama and audiovisual texts) seem to share certain features which in turn help in the selection of potential subtitlers. The paper proposes that a successful translator of drama is more likely to succeed in audiovisual translation because of the above similarities. The study thus attempts to prove this premise or hypothesis, and its outcome can help to set up a potentially successful procedure for institutions and companies to train promising audiovisual translators who have previous experience in translating drama texts.

1. Introduction:

Playwriting and audiovisual writing (mainly for subtitling) share a number of essential similarities. Both of them are dialogue-driven and include various visual elements: scenery in the case of drama and media effects (settings, image and sound) in the case of films and documentaries. These elements contextualise the source text, in such a way that helps the translator with information that is linked to the context of situation and culture. In addition, both types of translations need “performable” dialogues that are governed

by the running time of the play and real-time duration in the audiovisual translation (AVT); in spite of the minor differences in their special technicalities. Informed by the theoretical framework of translation studies, the article focuses on the analysis of drama translation and audiovisual translation (AVT). Analyzing excerpts from the Arabic translations of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* both as a playtext and a subtitled film, the researchers examine aspects of immediacy, register, naturalness and context. The article proposes that a successful translator of drama is more likely to succeed in audiovisual translation. Analysing excerpts from the Arabic translations of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* both as a playtext and a subtitled film, this study attempts to prove this premise or hypothesis, and its outcome can help to set up a potentially successful procedure for institutions and companies to train promising audiovisual translators who have previous experience in translating drama texts.

It is important that the translator of a film/documentary or drama text conveys the original author's concepts, the meaning of the messages within the global units of textual meaning in the Neubert and Shreve's sense (1992: 136). Also, such translators should take into consideration the context of situation and culture, as explained by Halliday and Hasan (1976), taking care of the objects, situations, events, and actions. The two scholars (1985: 11) consider "text as a social exchange of meaning" among participants. It is not only what a text is that the translator needs to render in the target language (TL), but also he/she needs to be aware of the context of situation and culture, which is crucially supported by the scenery and settings.

The context needs to be considered when reading the source text (ST), and reflected in the target text (TT). The context of situation and the context of culture, are vital to the proper comprehension of the text. Context of situation also has to do with the action of the characters; be it verbal or non-verbal. The non-verbality is seen in drama texts and audiovisual texts in the scenery, nonverbal action, setting, image and sound. All these elements are part of the context.

As seen, context is an integral part of both drama text translation and AVT. Analysing excerpts from the Arabic translations of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* both as playtext and as subtitled film, this paper aims to demonstrate some striking similarities between drama translation and audiovisual translation (AVT), such as the immediacy of the experience and direct contact with the spectator/viewer; this is in order to draw lessons from the more established tradition of drama translation to improve on the nascent field of AVT and to help in the choice of AV translators.

2. Aspects of Drama Texts and Audiovisual Material

Peter Newmark (1988) concurs with Eugene Nida (1964) about literary or non-literary four types of text: Narrative, which expresses dynamic sequential events, using mainly verbs; Description, which is ‘static’, and in terms of grammar focussing on the links between certain word classes (i.e. connecting verbs, with adjectives, and adjectival nouns); Discussion, which uses heavily abstract nouns, verbs of thought, mental activity; and Dialogue, which relies mainly on the use of colloquialism and phaticism. Based on Nida’s classifications, we notice that the dialogue type is associated with both drama and audiovisual scripts.

Drama means a certain production that is done for the theatre and that depends on dialogue. Susan Bassnett-McGuire’s (1978) description of a play (161) can be extended to an audiovisual text. Bassnett-McGuire (1978: 165) remarks that plays in which words (the verbal text) are less dubious than the gestures are less challenging in translation than plays in which a critically balanced tension between words and gestures is maintained. So the non-verbal action is significant, but exists in various degrees and contributes to meaning.

This can be seen in audiovisual environment too since gestures can contribute to the success of the written subtitle, because the actor/actress voices the words based on the gesture and intonation, which gives the verbal action some emphasis – emphasis in English is seen in upper case or italics but such emphasis cannot be done in Arabic as italics and writing the letters in upper case do not exist in the Arabic language system (see Karin Ryding 2005; Fischer 2002; Al-Rājiḥī 1988). Underlining and writing in bold are rarely used in subtitling too in both languages, English and Arabic. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014, 274) define subtitling as

[A] translation practice that consists of rendering in writing, usually at the bottom of the screen, the translation into a target language of the original dialogue exchanges uttered by different speakers, as well as all other verbal information that appears written on-screen (letters, banners, inserts) or is transmitted aurally in the soundtrack (song lyrics, voices off).

To explain, audiovisual materials have been commonly divided into dubbing, voiceover and subtitling, among other types (Karamitroglou 1998: 4). This paper limits its scope to subtitling due to restrictions in time and space. Subtitling “endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards and the like) and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 8).

There are certain characteristics of drama that are similar to audiovisual material. Kelly J. Mays' *The Norton Introduction to Literature* (2013) identifies drama elements as: they are character (e.g. protagonist and chorus), plot and structure (which includes conflict, climax and turning points), sets and setting (including location), theme, and finally tone, language and symbol (Mays 2013: 1180-1189). These elements are not dissimilar to those of audiovisual material. In addition, there is the element of culture which is shared by both drama and audiovisual scripts.

David Howard and Edward Mabley (1993) in their section on "Stage versus screen" draw an interesting comparison between screenwriting and playwriting, but still conclude that they differ the way a cat and a dog (or chalk and cheese) differ from each other. However, they both have the same elements as

[In] a play, the bulk of what is on the page is the characters' dialogue; in a screenplay the balance shifts toward scene description, the actions of the characters, and the visuals the audience sees... a play depends on the words of the characters to carry the weight of the storytelling, while a screenplay (and the film made from it) depends on the actions of the characters. (Howard and Mabley 1993: 6-7)

Most of the text on the page is the characters' dialogue and one needs to define what dialogue is. Cuddon defines dialogue as the conversation of characters. It is this meaning that will be used in this study, along with other types such as monologue, polylogue, and mono-polylogue the last of which is defined as "an entertainment in which one performer plays many parts" (Cuddon 1998: 518).

On the other hand, there are differences between drama and audiovisual material. Unlike drama text, the description of the actors and their setting is not required in intralingual subtitling but is vital in interlingual subtitling, because the latter type of subtitling needs to provide subtitling in context. Moreover, the description of the actors and their setting is more vital still in a play translation. It is also vital to know the context of the ST in audiovisual environment: the situation, location/setting, sound, image and action. They all help in providing extralinguistic aspects to the ST. Exophora is used heavily in subtitling, in the form of deictics or pointing words such as *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. These can only be translated with the help of image and non-verbal action.

Even though Howard and Mabley (1993) show this difference between the two art forms of writing: playwriting and screenplay, the two scholars still agree that both forms have the same elements with varying emphasis: dialogue, action, characters, and audience (in films more on action and in plays more on

dialogue). This fact of sharing these main elements is in itself revealing how close the two genres are. The only limitation in screenplay or an audiovisual script is that of time, which is stricter than that in a drama text. The former genre calculates time in terms of how many frames per second, compared to the latter genre which pays attention to running time on stage. There is also the element of immediacy which Howard and Mabley (1993: 7) talk about in regards to the "intimacy between performer and audience" which exists in the domain of screenplay or film but not as intimate as that relationship between the actors and their audience. This intimacy is also seen in the dialogue used in both drama and audiovisual texts. Dialogue (verbal action) forms part of the character's performance (non-verbal action).

3. Translation of Drama and Audiovisual Texts

Drama translation is relatively different from other forms of literary translation. The main reason is that a playtext is intended to be performed on stage. Carlson in "Problems in Play Translation" 1964: 55) says, "the translator of a play should be able to fashion language that is *actable*" [*emphasis in the original*]. He calls drama translation a special kind of language, with problems pertaining to the length of speech, literalness, and the relationship to acting (Carlson 1964: 55). One main problem, he adds, is the running time, or the time for the action to happen on stage. "Running time is governed by two factors: the length of speeches – the actual number of words the playwright has used; and the rate of delivery – the speed at which the actor reads the lines" (Carlson 1964: 55). Isochrony (to an extent used in subtitling but more so in dubbing), i.e. matching exactly the duration of the original dialogue with the duration of subtitles, is important in subtitling (Khuddro, 2018: 2). The reading speed of the subtitles by the audience also dictates how short each subtitle needs to be in order to give time for the audience to enjoy the image and non-verbal action too, and not just the reading of subtitles.

Similar to Carlson's emphasis on "actable" language, in her discussion, Aaltonen has divided translation of drama texts into three categories, but specified that all of them, particularly "performance or spectacle translation", are intended in the main "to be received audio-visually". So, to reinforce the immediacy nature of the theatre experience, Aaltonen adds, "Translators can, however, use idiomatic expressions of the standard or colloquial varieties of a particular language for the sake of fluency and readability. They will also need to take a stance in whether to retain all the original names of the characters, places and objects as they are or transplant them to a particular context" (Aaltonen: 6-7). So, readability and fluency are two elements that are required with regards to drama translation.

Mary Snell-Hornby (2007: 106) discusses the conflict between “faithfulness” and “performability” of the play translation, in particular with reference to its dialogue, “the question of the faithful scholarly translation of dramatic dialogue on the one hand and the 'actable', 'performable' stage text on the other”. Snell-Hornby (2007: 107-108) describes one feature of the drama text, unlike other literary texts as “multimedial.” What is meant by “multimedial texts”, she adds, is “film scripts...and drama texts”. This is not dissimilar to AVT where the verbal text plays “one part of a larger and complex whole” as it is attached to other “non-verbal forms of expression”; the latter plays a major part in the production of the AVT. “Performability” or “speakability” needs to be seen not only in stage translation but also in AVT. The end-product itself needs to be ‘readable’ by the viewer, i.e. the subtitles need to be fluent; so the subtitler should keep ‘readability’ in mind too.

Harley Granville Baker (cited in Anderman 1988:71-74) points out that the entire textual meaning of a play can only be realized in performance. Makon stresses, “A play that cannot be staged is like an imaginary world, a scheme lying in a drawer. It will be read and reread but not lived. It will never be a moment of shared life” (cited in Che 2011: 262). This can be said about subtitling too; any subtitled text cannot be produced let alone checked and proofread without being previewed on screen, i.e. seen along with the sound and image, and therefore it will not be ‘lived’, i.e. viewed, enjoyed and assessed for its high quality. Subtitles need to be readable, i.e. easy for the viewer to comprehend.

At the level of translation, what Peter Newmark (1988) states about translating a drama text can be applied to AVT too. He points out that the main purpose of translating a drama is to make it easy to be performed and be successful. Newmark (1988: 112) uses the adjectives "dramatic" and "concise". Then Newmark (1988: 112) remarks that there is an estimate of five words in a play for 25 lines in a novel and this indicates the importance of shortening (Khuddro, 2018), a characteristic often underestimated by new subtitlers in their treatment/translation of the original audiovisual texts. Occasionally, for the purpose of shortening the audiovisual text Catford's translation shifts (unit, level and category shifts) are necessary; this technique is used so long as the meaning of the original is unchanged. These shifts could be related to word class, translating an adjective into a noun, or even to localisation or the change of character names (see Hussain and Khuddro, 2016: 26) in order to create the same effect and response from the target audience as those towards the original.

Timing (or rather the running time) has an important role in the duration of a play as well as a film but it is more restrictive in AVT as the subtitler attempts to produce a text which is measured in terms of seconds and frames. Each subtitle should not be displayed on screen for no more than 6 seconds maximum in a documentary, for instance, and no less than 1 second and 2 frames minimum. Such technical requirements are set on the subtitling software itself (software such as Spot and Wincaps).

As for the language register, Newmark (1988:172) proposes that drama in particular should be translated into the modern TL if the translators intend to have the characters appear 'live', and the modern TL covers a span of some 70 years. If one character in the play speaks in an old-fashioned manner in the original, with a language written hundreds of years ago, he/she should have his/her speech in an equally old-fashioned manner in the translation. That is, a corresponding differences of education, register, social class, temperament in particular should be preserved for each character. Consequently, the dialogue stays dramatic, with no concessions for the sake of his/her potential viewers or audience.

Naturalness is also important. In his discussion of 'natural translation' Nida (1964 cited in Venuti 2000: 132) appropriately referred to Max Beerbohm (1903) who realised the major fault of translators of plays into English, which is lack of naturalness in expression, thus making the reader "acutely conscious that their work is a translation... For the most part, their ingenuity consists in finding phrases that could not possibly be used by the average Englishman" (cited in Venuti 2000: 132). So, naturalness in expression in AVT is vital; that is, to choose the lexis which is used by the average spectator, viewer or audience. This naturalness needs to be present in AVT too, and the AV translator needs to use as Nida in 1964 in his article "Principles of Correspondence" (reprinted in Venuti 2000: 134) has remarked, "natural and easy form(s) of expression" (in addition to the other three basic requirements "making sense", "conveying the spirit and manner of the original", and "producing a similar response") in an attempt to ease subtitle reading and message comprehension by the average viewer.

Verbal and nonverbal combinations as discussed by Zabalbeascoa (2008: 11) show the nature of the audiovisual text and its parameters, as seen not only in audiovisuals but also in drama texts, and it is appropriate for the translator to address them when providing the end-product. Furthermore, Ian F. Roe (1995: 376) points out that in drama text there is verbal and visual communication where the image and sound are part of it. That is, this combination of the verbal and visual is essential in drama translation, just as it is in AVT. In addition, AVT has more focal elements, such as semiotic complexity (Zabalbeascoa 1996) which are manifest in verbal and non-verbal communication, multilingualism, multimodality (audio

description, dubbing, subtitling...etc.). Moreover, the AV translator needs to be aware of both the semiotic complexity of AV material and the verbal dimension in order to add such semiotic event to the meaning of the TT, and to avoid translation loss that might occur during the transfer process. Sound, image, gestures and text all contribute to the context of the original and therefore contextual translation relies on the semiotics of audiovisual texts (Chiaro 2009; Chaume 2012).

In short, one can see the striking similarity between the translation of drama and AVT. These similarities are in terms of immediacy, language register, naturalness, verbal and visual communication, and the use of image and sound. That is, natural dialogue and action (movement) accompanied with sound and image are used both in drama and audiovisual text.

4. Application

One translator of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, for instance, if exposed to an audiovisual text, is likely to find the task of subtitling it easy and readable, with no obvious errors, save for the restriction of shortening subtitles for the purpose of achieving a comfortable reading speed by viewers, 180-220 words per minutes for adults and 120-140 words per minute for children. That speed is set to match the tempo of the movie. In a play, the time and place is highlighted but not as strictly as those in audiovisual environment. It is evident that the dialogue (one of the types of texts discussed by Nida/Newmark) constitutes most of the playwright's work; whereas in a movie it also takes most of the real-time duration of the feature film. Therefore, a competent and efficient translator of a play is likely to be a subtitler or dubber in the making. Emotions expressed in the play are acted on the theatre stage, and the same can be said about those emotions expressed in a film, with the sound of music accompanying the scene in both the play and the film. So, language, image and sound are used in the two genres, and the latter two are exophora as they are outside the written text in both audiovisual and theatre environments. It is worth noting here that the unusual feature of audiovisual text is that its scenes and settings can change quickly within one single minute. This creates yet another challenge for subtitlers and dubbers that cannot be seen or felt in drama texts, as the play cannot move from one scene to the other in such a short time of one minute or even less. This superfast shot-changes and other shifts and turns in the audiovisual text make the task of the audiovisual translator tougher, as the contexts of situation and culture are relied upon heavily in order to reach an appropriate TL equivalent.

This analysis will compare between parts of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* both as playtext and as subtitled film. Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* is thought to have been written in 1599.

There were several attempts to place it on stage whether in England, in theatres such as in Stratford-upon-Avon, or on Broadway. In terms of movie adaptation, we prefer to refer to *Julius Caesar*'s film adaptation, directed in 1953 by Joseph Mankiewicz, starring Marlon Brando as MARK ANTONY, Louis Calhern as Julius Caesar and James Mason as Brutus. Also, we refer to the Arabic translation of Hussein Ahmad Amin. The reason a Shakespearean play has been chosen is that because such type of text is usually rendered in classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA); this saves us from going into the discussion of which colloquial dialect of Arabic to use and perhaps further studies can investigate that. As for the Arabic subtitles of the movie adaptation we refer to the website www.Egy.Best. Following the Arabic translation, the English back-translation will be provided in square brackets.



The opening scene of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, between the tribunes FALVIUS and MARULLUS, along with two commoners, shows how the translator/subtitler dealt with the issue of timing and duration as important aspects of the performative nature of both media. Below is a comparison between the English text (ST), the Arabic translation of Amin (TT1), and the subtitles of the movie (TT2).

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (ST)

FLAVIUS

Hence! Home, you idle creatures get you home:
Is this a holiday? What! Know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

Amin's translated playtext (TT1)

فلافيوس : تفرقوا! إلى بيوتكم أيها الكسالى .. عودوا إلى دياركم ! هل اليوم يوم
عطلة ؟ ألا تعلمون أنه من المحظور على أفراد الطبقة العاملة أن
يخرجوا في أيام العمل دون أن يحملوا معهم ما يدل على
صنعتهم؟ .. تكلم أنت ! ما صناعتك ؟

[FLAVIUS: Disperse! To your homes, you lazy people.. Go home! Is today a holiday? Don't you know that members of the working class are not allowed to go out on working days unless they have proof of their profession? .. You, speak up! What is your profession?]

Arabic subtitles of the movie (TT2)



تفرقوا! عودوا إلى بيوتكم أيها الكسالى
ارجعوا إلى دياركم!

[Disperse! Go back to your homes, lazy people,
Go back to your houses!



هل هذا يوم عطلة؟
ما هي مهنتك؟

Is today a holiday?
What is your profession?]

We can notice that the Arabic translation is quite faithful to Shakespeare's original ST both in meaning and in line length. Now, as for the subtitles, apart from having to divide the conversation onto different shots, the actual translation happens also to be very close to the Arabic translation, possibly due to the fact that Shakespeare's text is itself divided into beats of lines that can easily be divided onto different screen shots. One main difference is that the movie director chose to delete two complete lines from Shakespeare's original:

Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign

Drama text translation appears to be very similar to subtitling in this case, except for shot division and liberties with deletion. Deletion in this case was mostly the decision of the movie director rather than the subtitler.

Looking at the language register of both the translated play and the subtitles shows no great variance. Newmark had suggested to use modern TL to appear "live", unless the work is intended to be old-fashioned. Of course, Elizabethan English is not an informal language register. To render it in Arabic, both translations

were quite similar and they opted for the choice of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is a modernized version of Classical Arabic (*fusha*) and yet is more accessible to most audiences because it is simpler and it does not adopt any of the colloquial dialects (*'amma*). Again, we must conjecture that the language register in this case has been informed by the text's type. Most translators prefer to render Shakespearean texts either in Classical or Modern Standard Arabic to maintain the grave and serious tone. However, should the text have been a modern play or a children's program, we would expect a more informal register that caters to the region the work will be presented in. Howard and Mabley (1993) agree that one of the similarities between a playtext and a movie script is the audience. So, in both the case of the playtext and AVT, the audience is taken into consideration and this would mostly dictate the register of the translation. It is possible that in both translations, the translators also were seeking a certain level of "Naturalness," as referred to by Nida and Venuti.

In addition, throughout the play stage directions have not been translated in the subtitles. *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*'s playtext translation, and as an example in Act III, Scene I, the description of the situation and action is provided as stage directions both at the beginning of the scene and in between the polylogue. This is part of the conventions of playwriting. However, such description can do away with in AV material as it will be shown on screen whether it is an activity or action done by the characters. Such information provides the context of situation, in terms of the participants, location and events taking place:

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (ST)

Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting above.

A crowd of people; among them ARTEMIDORUS and the Soothsayer. Flourish. Enter CAESAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POPILIUS, PUBLIUS, and others.

In the movie, the stage directions are mostly deleted because they are replaced by the visual clues that already describe the situation. If we look at the following shots, the stage descriptions are replaced by the actual entrance of the characters.



To add, most importantly in the same Act and Scene, the dramatic action is also seen when Caesar is stabbed by various characters including Brutus, his closest friend. This action is described in the following:

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (ST)

CASCA first, then the other Conspirators and BRUTUS stab CAESAR.

Again in the movie, the visual action is seen in the following shots:

Arabic subtitles of the movie (TT2)



- ألم يركع (بروتس) أمامك؟

- فلتتكلم إذن نيابة عني!

[- Did (BRUTUS) not kneel to you?

- Then talk on my behalf!]

The action replaces the stage directions and there was one dialogue subtitled as part of the body of the text and not related to the visual action. It must be noted that eponyms of people and places are put within brackets; a technique often used in Arabic in order to separate them from other Arabic words to avoid obscurity. Some names could have spellings similar to other Arabic lexical items.

In addition, dialogue as one of the text types outlined by Nida/Newmark can be noticed to be a prevailing mode both in the playtext and the subtitles. If we observe the previous excerpt, all the description and action in the scene can be seen on stage in the play or on screen in a film. This scene stretches over approximately 11 pages in the translation; and the same can be said about the original (13 pages and only few sentences as stage directions). This means the description of situation and action makes a minor part of the playtext. These numbers prove that the dialogue takes most of the script in the play. The same can be said about a feature film whose description is shown on screen but certainly helps to grasp the text and context in order to produce a crispy TT. The scene of murdering or stabbing Caesar takes long with no dialogue whatsoever. Obviously, the limitation of time is even narrower on screen than on stage, but the text is still the same with

roughly the same number of words uttered by actors or characters. In movies, the context and action are which make the storyline move forward, but more so via the dialogue of the characters.

Not only is the immediate environment important in the comprehension of a text but also the whole cultural background, as Halliday and Hasan point out. In *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, as a footnote to the playtext is mentioned on the first page of the body of the text; it goes: “PERFORMANCE COMMENT. The crowd scenes in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* are important for framing the political implications of the action” (p.1695). Such is the significance of the immediate environment in comprehending the ST by the translator of this play, but this is just as significant in the translation of a film on screen. The importance of contexts whether cultural, social or situational needs to be emphasized in translation, as contexts play a major part in understanding the ST; an extremely important task which translators are aware of, no matter which translation approach they opt for between the literal and functional spectrum. In fact, whether the task of the translator is to translate an ST that is full of audio-description (i.e. which includes all audio sounds, including music, song play, footsteps, noise in the street, an airplane taking off, a bomb blast, etc.), a field in its own right in audiovisual industry, or to produce a TT what has visual-description, they both (audio- and visual-descriptions) are part of the playtext which the drama translator needs to be aware of and produce too in order to make the TT. A good example is in the drama text a scene is set, “Enter CAESAR, ANTONY... after them MURELLUS and FLAVIUS”, such information about the scene is translated. Similar information in the audiovisual field is provided by the visual-descriptor, and therefore needs to be translated too.

Other examples are available:

Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (ST)

“(LUCIUS returns with wine and a candle)” (ACT 4, Scene III, 1734); “(Music and LUCIUS singing)”; “(BRUTUS takes a book to read) What’s this?”; “[Exit Ghost of CAESAR]” (ACT4, Scene III, p.1741).

Amin’s translated playtext (TT1)

“(يعود لوسيوس بالنبيذ وشمعة)” (الفصل الرابع، المشهد الثالث، ص.127)؛ “(موسيقى ويغني لوسيوس)” (الفصل الرابع، المشهد الثالث، ص.133)؛ “(يتناول بروتوس الكتاب ويقرأ) ما هذا...؟” (نفس الصفحة)؛ “(يخرج شبح قيصر)” (الفصل الرابع، المشهد الثالث، ص.134).

Even though these examples are taken from *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, such drama texts are not unfamiliar in audiovisual descriptions, and therefore are part of AVT. Similar information can be seen in

audiovisual material; the audiovisual texts are linked to the image, sound, and action of the audiovisual material. So, the dialogue in a film is similar to a dialogue in a play. The playtext is important in drama texts, and sound, image and action are also important in audiovisual texts.

Conventions of each genre play a role in how it is presented though the dialogue is carried more or less in a similar way between the playtext and the subtitles. In plays, the dialogue is usually written following the characters' names because the reader does not see the character while reading. On the other hand, in a movie, the characters are in front of the spectator and there is no need to repeat their names; only to mark a conversation by means of a "dash". The following shot shows a conversation between Caesar and Antony on screen.



- (أنطوني)

- (قيصر)، يا سيدي؟

[- (Antonio)

- (Caesar), Sir?]

Similar to a play, the subtitles are mostly in dialogues. They are also "performable" as Bassnett said about drama; or "actable" as Carlson said. AVT is not different from any dialogue in a play, with tempo suitable for character. It is, however, different in being divided into the different shots as characteristic of subtitling. Another difference between a play and audiovisual material is that here there could be a cut to a different shot or shots.

The findings show that subtitling here is more challenging to the translators than translating a scene in a play. All these clips have no voice over narration even, so they rely heavily on dialogue, the same as the scene from Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. The choice of play here is random but still shows how heavily dependent playwriting is on dialogue. As for the translation of the audiovisual materials, it is no different to that used in the drama text above since both drama and audiovisual texts rely heavily on dialogue, save for scene changes. The challenging part for the subtitler as opposed to the playwriting

translator is the recurrent scene changes with few minutes of each other and the stricter limitation of timing in subtitling.

It is important to note that when we provide an audiovisual translator/candidate with the text of the film, i.e. with the dialogue and narration, that is any human voices, but not with the image and sound or music of the film; his/her TT is bound to be incomplete because the social, cultural and situational contexts are missing, including the gender issue. Another discrepancy between an audiovisual text which translated alongside the image and sound and that without these two elements, is the pronouns ‘we’, ‘they’, which can be either plural or dual in English but are clearly differentiated in Arabic. In a drama text, the translator is provided with the names of the characters, Casius or Brutus. He/she is also provided with some emotional elements, i.e. whether the scene is sad or happy, embarrassing or encouraging. Such information is not provided in subtitling but still these are contextual information which should be taken into account in translation.

5. Conclusion

Informed by translation studies with focus on drama translation and AVT, and having analyzed such translations in terms of, immediacy, language register, naturalness, dialogue, context and visual communication, one can conclude that playwriting is similar in its characteristics to writing a screenplay; the latter used in the production of audiovisual texts – characteristics such as characters, heavy use of dialogue, location and setting in the main. This means that the translation of a play is also similar to that of an audiovisual material. Apart from a few technical differences, both types of translations can be considered quite similar. Subsequently, experienced translators of plays are likely to be good candidates who can do subtitling and dubbing, save for the fact that they need still to enhance their technical skill, train themselves on certain subtitling software. This study has shown that drama text translators are exposed to texts that require translation but are not dissimilar to audiovisual translators who are exposed to audiovisual templates. Drama texts provide playtexts which provide contexts, i.e. immediate environment and social and cultural background, and therefore these playtexts help the drama translator to gain deep comprehension of the ST and subsequently provide a successful end-product. Audiovisual templates, STs, also provide information surrounding the dialogue and narration, and this information is in the form of image and sound or music, and is extremely important as it gives the immediate environment and social, cultural background which are fundament to the successful production of the TT in both types of translations.

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