
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Subtitling Islamic Cultural Items: A Cross-Genre Analysis of Arabic Films Subtitled into English

Safaa Al-Shloul¹✉, and Moneerah Alkhomayes²

¹Independent Researcher, PhD in Translation/Swansea University, UK

²PhD Candidate, Swansea University, UK) & Lecturer, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Corresponding Author: Safaa Al-Shloul, **E-mail:** ALSHLOOLSAFAA@GMAIL.COM

| ABSTRACT

This study investigates the applicability of Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy of subtitling strategies for Islamic cultural items (ICIs) across various film genres beyond documentaries. The taxonomy, which includes nine strategies—loan, literal translation, substitution, transposition, addition, compensation, dummy compensation, omission, and condensation—has been applied exclusively to Arabic documentary films subtitled into English. To expand the scope of this taxonomy, the study examines ICIs in drama, comedy, and action films. A corpus of 15 films (five from each genre), subtitled into English and available on major video-on-demand platforms, was analysed. The study specifically addresses the density of ICIs in the source text (DST), genre-specific patterns in DST, and the subtitling strategies used and evaluates the effectiveness of Al-Shloul's taxonomy in reflecting cultural nuances across these genres. The findings highlight how genre influences the selection of subtitling strategies, offering valuable insights into the broader applicability of the taxonomy. This research contributes to the field of audiovisual translation by exploring the genre-specific challenges of preserving cultural meaning and ensuring linguistic accuracy in subtitling.

| KEYWORDS

Audiovisual Translation, Subtitling, Islamic Cultural Items, Film Genre.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Subtitling serves as a vital mechanism for transcending linguistic and cultural barriers in audiovisual media, enabling global audiences to access and engage with content from diverse cultures. This process becomes particularly intricate when dealing with ICIs, which are often deeply embedded in religious, social, and historical contexts. Such cultural items are not merely linguistic expressions; they embody the essence of Islamic traditions and values, making their accurate and effective translation a complex endeavour. Misinterpretation or omission of ICIs in subtitles risks diminishing the authenticity of the source material and alienating target audiences.

Recognising these challenges, Al-Shloul (2023) developed an innovative taxonomy of nine subtitling strategies—loan, literal translation, substitution, transposition, addition, compensation, dummy compensation, omission, and condensation—specifically designed to navigate the subtitling of ICIs in Arabic documentary films translated into English. This taxonomy marked a significant advancement in audiovisual translation by systematically addressing the unique demands of subtitling ICIs. However, while this taxonomy has been applied effectively in the context of documentaries, its broader applicability to other film genres remains unexamined.

This research seeks to fill this critical gap by investigating the applicability of Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy in subtitling ICIs across three distinct genres: drama, comedy, and action films. These genres differ significantly in tone, narrative structure, and audience

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expectations, presenting unique challenges for audiovisual translators. By analysing a corpus of 15 films—five from each genre—this study evaluates how genre influences the choice of subtitling strategies and examines whether Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy can accommodate the diverse subtitling demands of these genres. In doing so, this research contributes to the field of AVT by exploring genre-specific subtitling practices and shedding light on the challenges of preserving cultural nuances in a multilingual and multicultural media landscape.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Islamic Cultural Items (ICIs) as Culturally Specific Items.

Drawing on Nida's work (1961), Newmark (1988, p.95) categorises cultural terms into the following groups: ecology, material culture, social culture, gestures and habits, and organisations, customs, and ideas (Al-Shloul, 2023). In the "ecology" group, Newmark includes terms related to plants, animals, mountains, winds, and plains. The "material culture" group encompasses food, housing, clothing, transport, and communication. The "social culture" group covers concepts linked to work and leisure. "Organisations, customs, and ideas" involve legal, social, artistic, political, historical, and religious elements. The final category, "gestures and habits," addresses behaviours unique to particular cultures, such as greetings, which may involve a handshake in some cultures or a kiss in others. In this framework, religious (Islamic) terms and concepts are classified under "organisations, customs, and ideas."

According to Al-Shloul (2023), to define ICIs, it is important to reference Nida's classification of 'religious culture' (1961). Nida (1961) defines 'religious culture' as encompassing supernatural beings, terms of revelation, moral and ethical standards, eschatology, specific religious activities, religious figures, religious structures, religious groups, religious artifacts, and religious events, which are often considered the most sensitive aspects of any culture. Building on Nida's classification, Quranic texts (including verses, parts of verses, or any utterance from the Holy Quran), Hadith (the prophetic traditions, sayings, teachings, and reports on the life of the Prophet Muhammad), and other Islamic cultural expressions (such as *Aladhan*, the call for prayer) all fall under the category of ICIs. In this study, ICIs refer to any linguistic elements with Islamic connotations in the source culture, whether the speaker intends to use them as religious terms or simply as part of their everyday language. For instance, السلام عليكم (peace be upon you) is an Islamic greeting commonly used among Muslims, even if they do not intend to invoke its religious meaning, as it has become part of their daily language and culture. Translating and subtitling ICIs pose challenges for translators and subtitlers when adapting them to the target culture.

Moreover, Al-Shloul (2023) classifies the studies conducted on the translation of ICIs into four categories based on either the strategies used or the quality assessment of the target text (TT):

- Studies focused on the translation of the Quran and Al-Tafseer, such as Dastjerdi and Jamshidian (2011).
- Studies examining the translation of Hadith, including the Prophetic traditions, sayings, teachings, and reports on the life of the Prophet Muhammad, such as Mohsen et al. (2017).
- Studies exploring ICIs in specialised Islamic discourse, such as religious programs and sermons, such as Alajlan (2016).
- Studies investigating ICIs in everyday discourse or other genres, such as novels and news, such as Al-Hejin (2012).

These categories differ not only in terms of their target audience but also in the proportion of ICIs relative to the overall content (Al-Shloul, 2023).

In the field of subtitling, studies focusing specifically on ICIs are limited. Most existing research addresses the subtitling of cultural items in general, with religious or Islamic elements treated as part of broader cultural contexts, such as Mujaddadi (2017), Al-Kharabsheh and Yassin (2017), Alsharhan (2020). However, studies that specifically examine the subtitling of ICIs are rare, such as Elgebaly (2012), Moll (2017) and Al-Shloul (2023). This highlights the need for more targeted research to explore the unique challenges posed by subtitling Islamic cultural references in audiovisual translation.

2.2 Taxonomies in Subtitling

There are four widely recognised taxonomies of subtitling: Gottlieb (1992), Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Pedersen (2005; 2007), and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014). These frameworks have made substantial contributions to the field of audiovisual translation, particularly in addressing the challenges of subtitling cultural items. Gottlieb's (1992) taxonomy provides a general framework for subtitling, while the other three focus more specifically on strategies for dealing with culturally bound elements. However, none of these taxonomies explicitly address the subtitling of ICIs or religious content. Building on these established frameworks, Al-Shloul developed a specialised taxonomy tailored to the subtitling of ICIs, drawing extensively on the widely recognised strategies proposed by the aforementioned scholars. This study adopts Al-Shloul's taxonomy as a foundation, applying it to explore its robustness and adaptability across various film genres, thereby contributing to the ongoing evolution of subtitling strategies for Islamic cultural content. Below is a brief introduction to each taxonomy.

2.2.1 Gottlieb (1992)

Gottlieb (1992, p.166) outlines ten subtitling strategies based on his professional experience: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation. While the first four strategies are common across all forms of translation, the latter six are more specific to subtitling. Notably, resignation occurs across various types of verbal transmissions, while decimation, deletion, and resignation often lead to a loss of semantic and stylistic content. Gottlieb (1992) highlights condensation as the defining strategy of subtitling, focusing on reducing word count without compromising semantic meaning. Importantly, these strategies are not exclusive to culturally specific items.

Table 1

Gottlieb's Subtitling Strategies (1992, p.166)

Type of strategy	Character of translation	Media specific type?
1) Expansion	Expanded expression, adequate rendering (culture-specific references etc.)	No!
2) Paraphrase	Altered expression, adequate rendering (non-visualized language-specific phenomena)	No
3) Transfer	Full expression, adequate rendering ('neutral' discourse - slow tempo)	No
4) Imitation	Identical expression, equivalent rendering (proper nouns, international greetings etc.)	No
5) Transcription	Anomalous expression, adequate rendering (non-standard speech etc.)	Yes
6) Dislocation	Differing expression, adjusted content (musical or visualized language-specific phenomena)	Yes
7) Condensation	Condensed expression, concise rendering (normal speech)	Yes
8) Decimation	Abridged expression, reduced content (fast speech of some importance)	Yes
9) Deletion	Omitted expression, no verbal content (fast speech of less importance)	Yes
10) Resignation	Differing expression, distorted content ('untranslatable' elements)	No

2.2.2 Nedergaard- Larsen (1993)

Nedergaard-Larsen (1993, p.207) presents a typology of strategies for subtitling culture-bound elements, which she terms extralinguistic cultural elements. These strategies range from verbatim transfer to culturally neutral explication, paraphrase, and target-language adaptation. Drawing on theoretical insights into translation and culture, Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) highlights the similarities between subtitling challenges and those faced in other forms of translation.

She defines subtitling as a "special type of language transfer," characterised by condensed, written translations of spoken originals. Her proposed strategies are based on identifying subtitlers' challenges and offering practical solutions. Key challenges include the transitory nature of subtitling, requiring condensed translations under time and space constraints, and media-related factors such as visuals, soundtracks, gestures, facial expressions, and textual elements (e.g., signs). These distinct features make subtitling a unique and complex form of translation.

To address the challenges and problems associated with subtitling, subtitlers employ the following strategies as outlined by Nedergaard-Larsen (1993, p.14):

1. Transfer/loan: (identity/exotism and imitation)
2. Direct translation
3. Explication
4. Paraphrase
5. Adaptation to TL-culture: (situational adaptation and cultural adaptation)
6. Omission

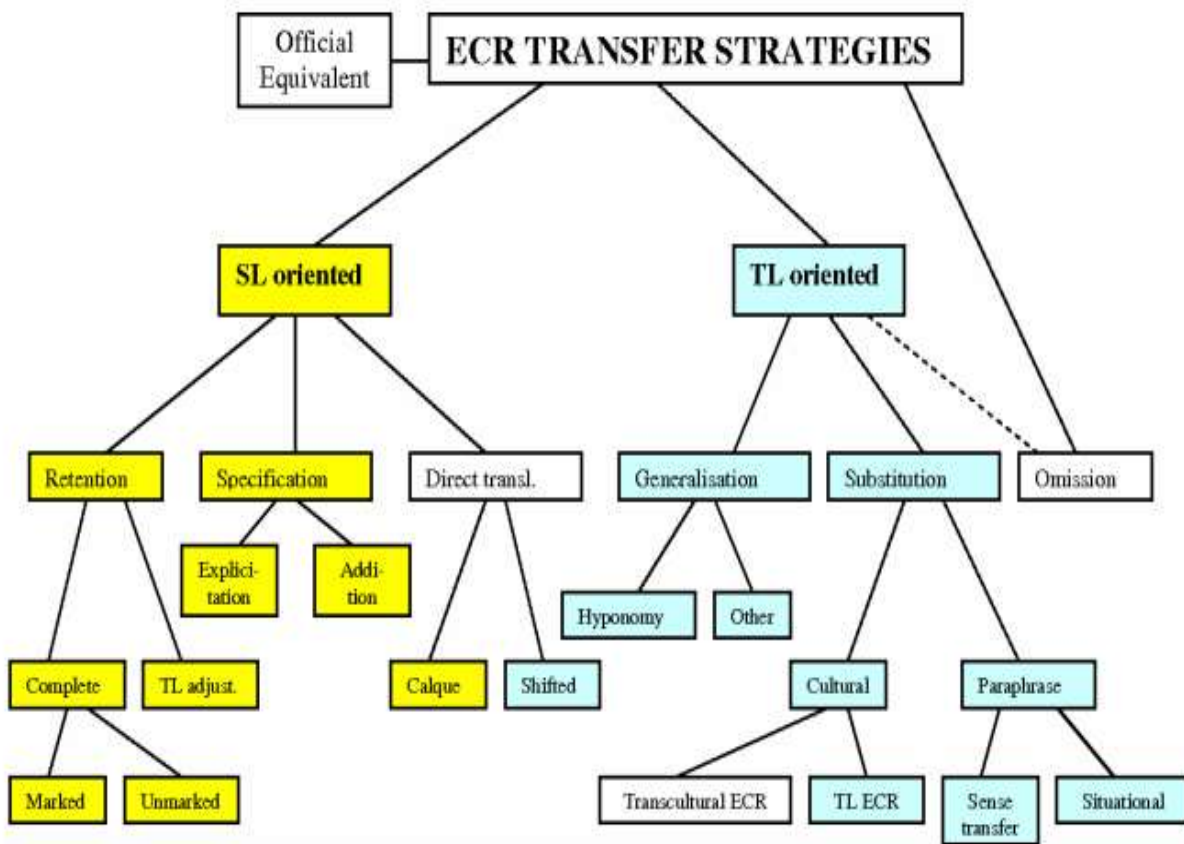
According to Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), several factors influence subtitlers' choice of strategy for a particular utterance. These factors fall into three categories: general factors related to the film, such as its genre, fidelity to the original, and audience expectations; cultural factors, including the function of cultural items in context, their connotations, and the audience's ability to understand them; and media-related factors, such as redundancy and feedback effects.

2.2.3 Pedersen (2005)

Pedersen (2005) presents a taxonomy of strategies for rendering extralinguistic cultural references, applicable to both general translation and subtitling. He notes that his framework shares similarities with Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993) taxonomy but introduces finer distinctions. The strategies are categorised into source-text-oriented (ST-oriented) and target-text-oriented (TT-oriented), as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 1

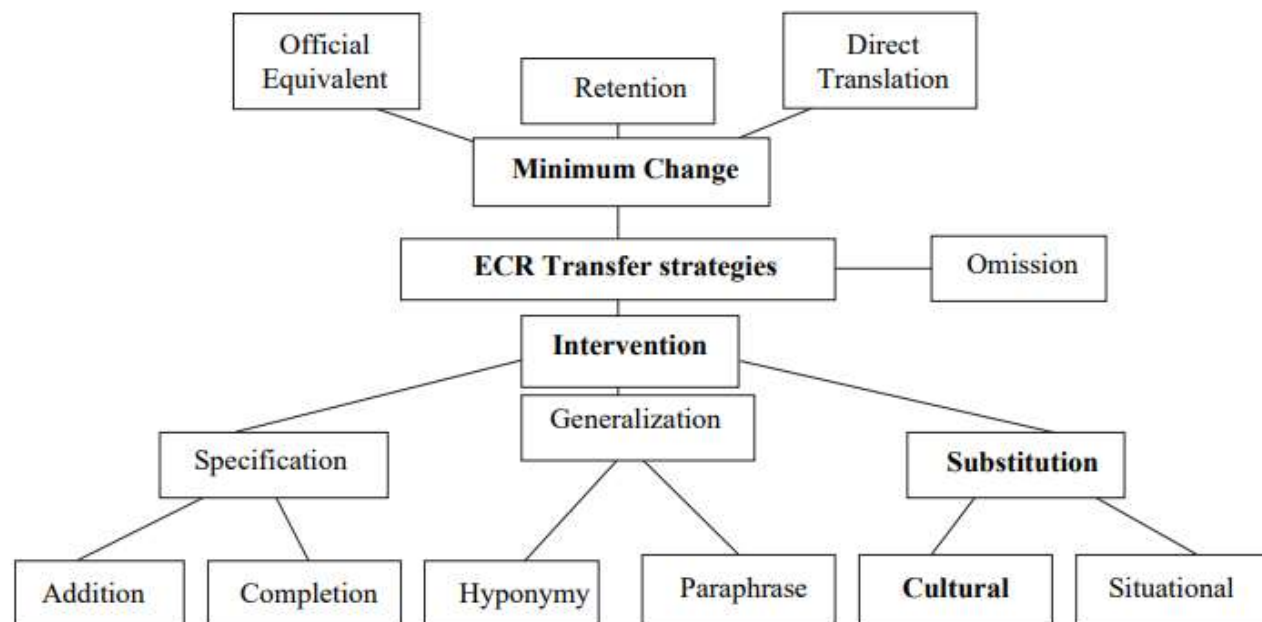
Pedersen's Taxonomy of ECR Transfer Strategies (Pedersen, 2005, p.4)



It is important to note that Pedersen (2007, p.31) offers an additional classification of his subtitling strategies. This classification illustrates the extent to which cultural references undergo change after subtitling, as depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Taxonomy of Subtitling Strategies (Pedersen, 2007, p.31)



1. Official Equivalent: the "Official Equivalent" strategy is distinct from others as it relies on official decisions made by authorities, rather than linguistic factors, to render cultural references (Pedersen, 2005).

2. Retention: this strategy is the most SL-oriented, where translators/subtitlers adapt cultural references slightly or fully to fit target language conventions, often applied to proper nouns (Pedersen, 2005).

3. Specification: this strategy involves leaving the cultural reference untranslated but may include addition or explicitation to clarify or make the implicit meaning explicit. The addition adds latent material to the cultural reference, while explicitation is used to clarify acronyms or abbreviations (Pedersen, 2005).

4. Direct Translation: Pedersen (2005) explains that this strategy is used for rendering proper names, firms, or official institutions, maintaining the cultural reference's original meaning without modification. It includes Shifted and Calque (literal translation), which can appear exotic to the target audience.

5. Generalisation: Pedersen (2005) describes this strategy as replacing a specific cultural reference with a more general one, such as using hyponymy. It is considered a TT-oriented strategy.

6. Substitution: Pedersen (2005) defines the substitution strategy as replacing a ST cultural reference with a TT cultural one (cultural substitution) or using a paraphrase, either by "reduction to sense" or a "situational paraphrase" that fits the context. This strategy is considered the most domesticating, often applied to cultural references such as official institutions or titles.

7. Omission: the omission strategy involves deleting the ST cultural reference without rendering it in the TT. This decision may stem from various factors, not just subtitler laziness. According to Leppihalme (1994), as cited in Pedersen (2005), omission can be a responsible choice after rejecting other strategies, or an irresponsible shortcut to avoid unfamiliar material.

Furthermore, Pedersen (2005) observes that subtitlers frequently combine strategies, such as explicitation and direct translation, though he does not assign a specific term to this approach. In contrast, Al-Shloul (2023) formalises this concept by coining the term "*Subtitling Couplet*" to describe the deliberate combination of two subtitling strategies to address complex translation challenges effectively.

In a later study (Pedersen, 2010), he addresses subtitlers' strategies for rendering unknown cultural items. These include specification (adding information), replacement (substituting a known item), paraphrasing or generalisation, and retention (using an official equivalent). If the cultural item is familiar to the target audience, no intervention is needed. Pedersen (2007) outlines three ways audiences might know culturally specific items: encyclopaedically, deictically, or through the subtitlers' mediation.

Pedersen (2005) also builds on Nedergaard-Larsen's (1993) factors affecting subtitling decisions, identifying seven factors: transculturality, extratextuality, centrality of reference, intersemiotic redundancy, co-text, media-specific constraints, and paratextual considerations. These factors work together, aiding or obstructing subtitlers in their task.

2.2.4 Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014)

Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) discuss subtitling culture-bound terms, which are extralinguistic references tied to a country's culture, history, or geography, posing significant translation challenges. These terms, also known as cultural references or ECRs, are crucial in discourse and require careful subtitling. They highlight the importance of these terms in film subtitling, using the metaphor of a film's "propensity to travel," meaning cultural references within the story are widely shared. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) propose a list of common strategies for subtitling such culture-bound terms.

- Loan: this strategy involves incorporating the ST utterance into the TT without translation, as the SL and TL use the same word or phrase, making translation unnecessary.
- Calque or Literal Translation: both calque and literal translation involve transferring words directly from one language to another. In this approach, words are subtitled individually and out of context, using their closest equivalents in the TL. This strategy is similar to Newmark's (1988) approach of literal translation for culturally specific items.
- Explicitation: In this strategy, "the subtitler aims to make the ST more accessible by meeting the target audience halfway, either through the specification with a hyponym or generalisation with a hypernym or superordinate" (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p.203). This approach is similar to Gottlieb's (1992) "expansion." Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) note that hypernyms are used more frequently than hyponyms in subtitling, as generalisation/hypernyms typically serve an explanatory function, whereas hyponyms narrow the meaning. Examples of hypernym use include subtitling brand names or abbreviations for institutions or concepts. The explicitation strategy is typically used when there is sufficient space to explain the ST terms.
- Substitution: This strategy involves replacing the closest equivalent of the ST word or phrase in the TT with a different lexical item from the TT. "It is used when spatial constraints prevent the insertion of a longer term, even if such a term exists in the target culture, meaning that a hypernym or hyponym is not necessarily required" (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p.204).
- Transposition: according to Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014), this strategy involves replacing a ST cultural concept with a culturally accepted equivalent in the TT when no exact lexical equivalent exists. Subtitlers use this approach when the TT audience might not recognise the ST cultural item, and explicitation is not possible due to space constraints. This strategy works best when the ST and TT concepts are similar, such as adapting measurements or currencies to the target culture's system. It is a domesticating strategy, though it may cause confusion when applied to local names or brands, as the pronunciation might differ. Furthermore, subtitlers must carefully decide when to use this strategy, as the expected cultural knowledge of the audience varies by country.
- Lexical Recreation: According to Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014, p.206), "lexical recreation" involves creating a new word in the target language, often when the ST uses made-up terms. The neologism is placed in quotation marks in the subtitle. Unlike loanwords, which are borrowed directly from another language, lexical recreation refers to new terms that are semantically close to the source language. This distinction lies in the fact that loanwords enter the language without modification (or through naturalisation), whereas lexical recreation involves creating entirely new expressions.
- Compensation: it refers to "making up for a translational loss in one exchange by over translating or adding something in another" (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p.206). However, this strategy can be impractical due to the coexistence of oral and visual elements in SL and TL. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) caution against deviating too much from the soundtrack if the target audience is familiar with the content. Compensation is most effective when there is no lexical equivalent in the TT, and other strategies are unsuitable, especially in humorous films.
- Omission: omission or deletion involves removing culturally specific items from the TT due to factors like technical constraints, lack of equivalents, or the inapplicability of other strategies. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) classify this as part of text reduction, a common strategy in subtitling due to time and space limitations. They distinguish between partial reduction (condensation) and total reduction (omission). Condensation involves concisely rendering the ST, while omission completely removes lexical items. Díaz-Cintas and Remael stress that such decisions should not be made arbitrarily, as even small changes can impact the overall context and meaning of the scene.
- Addition: additions occur when cultural references may cause comprehension issues but are crucial for understanding the program. In these cases, information is added, always as a form of explicitation (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014).

According to Al-Shloul (2023), those scholars have proposed various classifications of strategies for translating culturally specific terms, though these categories often overlap (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014). For instance, Pedersen (2005; 2007) has presented two

versions of his classification, highlighting the evolving nature of this field and the need for further research, particularly in subtitling cultural references. Using one classification does not negate others, and different approaches may suit specific cultural items.

2.2.5 Al-Shloul's (2023) Taxonomy for Subtitling ICIs

Studies in literature typically treat religious content as a subset of cultural elements, applying general subtitling taxonomies to examine cultural items, including religious ones. However, this broad approach often overlooks the unique characteristics of religious language, which sets it apart from other cultural elements. Addressing this gap, Al-Shloul (2023) conducted an empirical study to analyse subtitling strategies for ICIs, drawing on data from nine documentary films. Using an abductive approach, Al-Shloul (2023) developed a taxonomy tailored to the specific challenges of subtitling Islamic content, building on existing frameworks by Gottlieb (1992), Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Pedersen (2005; 2007), and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014).

It is crucial to mention that the concept of Addition in Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy of subtitling strategies for ICIs differs significantly from that described by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014). According to Al-Shloul (2023), Addition involves the inclusion of new ICIs, specifically in the form of transliterated words, into the TT, even when these transliterations are absent from the ST. In contrast, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) define Addition as the process of inserting additional information into the TT, particularly in passages with cultural references that may cause comprehension difficulties but are crucial for understanding the programme. They note that such additions serve as a form of explicitation, aimed at enhancing clarity (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p.207).

While Al-Shloul's (2023) framework marks a significant advancement in audiovisual translation, its application to genres beyond documentaries remains unexplored. To address this limitation, the present study evaluates the taxonomy's robustness and adaptability across other Arabic film genres, including drama, comedy, and action, to better understand its effectiveness in subtitling ICIs. Below is the outline of Al-Shloul's taxonomy.

Table 2

The Taxonomy of Subtitling Strategies of ICIs (Al-Shloul, 2023, p.340)

Subtitling Strategy	Description
Loan	Transferring the ST word into the TT by using the TL alphabet (i.e., transliteration/naturalisation).
Literal Translation	Literally translating the ICI (word by word) into the TT that has a semantically identical equivalent.
Substitution	Replacing the closest TT equivalent of the ICI with another TT lexical item.
Transposition	Rendering an ST cultural concept expressed in the form of an ICI into its cultural accepted equivalence of the concept in the TT.
Addition	Adding a new ICI to the TT that is not mentioned in the ST at all.
Compensation	Makeup of the loss of the ICI translation by providing a general description that is relevant to the ICI either in terms of function or meaning.
Dummy Compensation	Makeup of the loss of the ICI translation by providing irrelevant information to what is uttered in the film (i.e., compensating the TT with mock substitutes that are not relevant to the ICI in the ST either in terms of function or meaning).
Omission	Completely omitting the ICI.
Condensation	Partially omitting the ICI(s).

The following table provides examples illustrating the application of Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy to subtitling ICIs.

Table 3

Examples of Applying Al-Shloul's (2023) Taxonomy to Subtitling ICIs

S	ST	TT	Subtitling Strategy
1	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"As-salamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh."	Loan
2	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you".	Literal Translation + Loan (Allah)
3	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"What's up?"	Substitution

4	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"Hello" or "Hi".	Transposition
5	-	"As-salamu alaykum"	Addition
6	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"Islamic greeting."	Compensation
7	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"Speaking Arabic".	Dummy Compensation
8	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	-	Omission
9	السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته	"Peace be upon you."	Condensation = (Omission + Literal translation)

It is vital to mention that the number of subtitling strategies employed does not necessarily correspond directly to the number of ICIs in a film. Some ICIs require a subtitling couplet, where two distinct strategies are applied to a single ICI, showcasing the complexity of the subtitling process (Al-Shloul, 2023). Additionally, the condensation strategy for a single ICI inherently involves two strategies: omission and another, such as literal translation, to effectively convey meaning. Furthermore, condensation can encompass multiple ICIs that occur consecutively within a film. In such cases, only one of the ICIs may be subtitled while the others are omitted, consolidating their cultural significance into a single subtitle. This highlights the efficiency and pragmatism often necessary in subtitling, as well as the nuanced challenges faced by subtitlers when navigating Islamic cultural content. For example, example 9 in Table 3 above shows condensation functioning as a subtitling couplet, omitting parts of an ICI while employing literal translation for the remainder. Example 2 demonstrates the combination of literal translation and loan to subtitle the phrase السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته. These approaches, as detailed in Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy, underline the intricate balancing act required to preserve cultural meaning within the constraints of audiovisual translation.

In summary, the exploration of subtitling taxonomies has highlighted the diversity of approaches scholars have developed to address cultural specificity in audiovisual translation. While these frameworks offer valuable insights, they often lack the specificity required to tackle the unique challenges posed by subtitling ICIs. Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy provides a significant advancement in this regard by building upon established models to offer a specialised framework tailored to the subtitling of ICIs. This study extends Al-Shloul's (2023) work by testing its applicability across diverse film genres, offering a comprehensive evaluation of its robustness and adaptability. This foundational understanding of subtitling taxonomies underscores the importance of developing nuanced strategies to navigate the complexities of cultural translation in audiovisual media.

2.3 Genre and Subtitling

Film genre plays a crucial role in shaping subtitling strategies in audiovisual translation, necessitating tailored approaches to ensure both linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. It directly influences linguistic choices, which in turn affect translational decisions due to its significant impact on rhetorical and pragmatic strategies (Malavasi, 2002, cited in Bruti & Perego, 2008). Al-Shloul (2025) highlights, media genres significantly shape subtitlers' strategies, particularly in handling religious and culturally sensitive content. The ability to adapt to genre conventions is crucial for preserving meaning while effectively engaging the target audience.

One keyway genre affects subtitling strategies is through tone and language adaptation. Al-Shloul (2025) notes that documentaries demand a factual and respectful tone, whereas comedy requires heightened sensitivity to humour and cultural nuances. Comedic content and humour present unique challenges due to wordplay, idiomatic expressions, and culturally specific jokes that may lack direct equivalents in the target language (Chiaro, 2010; Dore, 2019). Subtitlers often employ domestication or creative adaptation to maintain comedic effect without compromising cultural sensitivity. Similarly, Pedersen (2011) highlights how extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) require retention in formal genres but may be adapted or omitted in informal ones.

Feature films often feature varied dialogue styles, including formal speech, slang, and dialects, requiring subtitlers to adopt diverse strategies to maintain coherence and audience engagement (Al-Shloul, 2025). Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014) emphasise that feature film subtitling demands a balance between readability and fidelity to the original meaning, often necessitating condensation to accommodate screen time constraints.

Comedy represents one of the most complex genres to subtitle, as it relies heavily on timing, wordplay, and cultural references. Subtitlers must skilfully adapt humour to the target culture using strategies such as explicitation (clarifying ambiguous humour) and compensation (adding humorous elements elsewhere) to ensure accessibility for diverse audiences (Zabalbeascoa, 2005). Cultural allusions and puns often require replacement with locally relevant equivalents to maintain comedic impact, as direct translation may result in loss of humour or incomprehensibility (Chiaro, 2008).

Other forms of genre, such as educational videos and social media content, further illustrate genre-specific subtitling strategies. Educational videos prioritise clarity and accessibility (Al-Shloul, 2025), aligning with Gottlieb's (1992) assertion that didactic content demands precise, unambiguous language to support learning. In contrast, social media content favours brevity and informal language to match digital communication norms, posing challenges in maintaining linguistic accuracy and viewer engagement.

These genre-specific requirements underscore the necessity for subtitling strategies that are not only linguistically accurate but also culturally adaptable. While a one-size-fits-all approach is impractical, the application of a specialised taxonomy, such as Al-Shloul's (2023) framework for ICIs, can offer valuable insights. Genres like drama, comedy, and action may require further refinement of this taxonomy to address the varied demands of subtitling across these diverse narrative forms.

The interplay between genre and subtitling strategies highlights the complexity of audiovisual translation and the critical importance of tailoring approaches to meet the expectations of diverse audiences. Further research into the influence of genre on subtitling practices, particularly in relation to culturally specific items, remains essential for advancing the field of audiovisual translation.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the overall density of ICIs in the ST across the analysed film genres?
2. How does the density of ICIs vary across different film genres (comedy, drama, action, and documentary), and what does this reveal about the embedding of ICIs in cinematic discourse?
3. What are the predominant subtitling strategies used for ICIs in each genre, and how do genre-specific factors influence the choice of strategies?
4. How effective is Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy in categorising and analysing the subtitling of ICIs across different genres, and to what extent does it account for genre-specific challenges in audiovisual translation?

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Corpus Selection

A corpus of fifteen Arabic films subtitled into English was analysed, with an equal distribution across genres: five dramas, five comedies, and five action films. These films were randomly selected to assess the extent to which ICIs are embedded in film discourse, which, in turn, reflects the degree to which filmic representations align with everyday discourse in Arabic-speaking contexts. By examining ICIs within cinematic narratives, this study explores how cultural elements are integrated into audiovisual storytelling and how they mirror real-life linguistic and cultural practices.

To ensure a diverse representation of Arabic cultural and linguistic variations, the researchers selected films produced in different dialects, encompassing a range of Arab countries. These include the Gulf Arabic dialect, as spoken in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; the Levantine Arabic dialect, as used in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria; and the Egyptian Arabic dialect. This approach captures the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Arabic-speaking world, offering a more comprehensive analysis of subtitling strategies. Additionally, the selection criteria prioritised films available on widely accessible video-on-demand platforms, specifically Netflix and Amazon Prime, ensuring their relevance and broad international reach.

This corpus is then compared with the documentary film corpus analysed in Al-Shloul's (2023) study, which consists of nine documentary films. This comparative perspective allows for a deeper understanding of how subtitling strategies vary across different genres and contexts.

Moreover, it is important to mention that the subtitles used in this study are those provided on the broadcasting platforms, Netflix and Amazon Prime. The researchers cannot confirm whether these subtitles were created by the subtitlers employed by the platforms themselves or by the subtitlers associated with the film production company that distributed the film. Additionally, it is important to note that not all films explicitly mention the subtitlers in either the opening or closing credits, which further complicates the identification of the original subtitling source.

The following table provides an overview of the investigated films, detailing their genres, broadcasting platforms, and the Arabic dialect of the film discourse.

Table 4

Overview of the Investigated Films: Their Genre, Broadcasting Platforms, and the Arabic Dialect of the Film Discourse.

s	Films	Film Genre	Broadcasting Platforms	Arabic Dialect of the Film's Discourse
1	<i>The Humans and the Mongoose</i> (2021, dir. Sharief Arafah)	Comedy	Netflix	Egyptian Arabic
2	<i>One Second</i> (2021, dir. Akram Fareed)	Comedy	Netflix	Egyptian Arabic
3	<i>A Stand Worthy of Men</i> (2021, dir. Ahmad Aljindi)	Comedy	Netflix	Egyptian Arabic
4	<i>Marry me again?</i> (2021, dir. Ahmad Aljendi)	Comedy	Netflix	Egyptian Arabic
5	<i>Uncle Naji 2</i> (2022, dir. Ahmed Zain)	Comedy	Netflix	Gulf Arabic
6	<i>The Matchmaker</i> (2023, dir. Abdulmohsen Al-Dhabaan)	Drama	Netflix	Gulf Arabic
7	<i>Khorfakkan</i> (2022, dir. Maurice Sweeney & Ben Mole)	Drama	Amazon Prime	Gulf Arabic
8	<i>Tesbah Ala Khir</i> (2017, dir. Mohamad Samy)	Drama	Amazon Prime	Egyptian Arabic
9	<i>Jadou Machakel</i> (2020, dir. Wael Al Roumi)	Drama	Amazon Prime	Egyptian Arabic
10	<i>Wanted</i> (2019, dir. Nibal Arakji)	Drama	Amazon Prime	Levantine Arabic
11	<i>Mousa</i> (2021, dir. Peter Momi)	Action	Netflix	Egyptian Arabic
12	<i>The Spider</i> (2022, dir. Ahmad Nader Galal)	Action	Amazon Prime	Egyptian Arabic
13	<i>The Prisoner</i> (2023, dir. Mahmoud Kamel)	Action	Amazon Prime	Gulf Arabic
14	<i>Houroub</i> (2017, dir. Ahmad Khaled Moussa)	Action	Amazon Prime	Egyptian Arabic
15	<i>Minak Ent</i> (2018, dir. Nadim Mhanna)	Action	Amazon Prime	Levantine Arabic

4.2 Analytical Framework

The nine strategies from Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy served as the foundation for the analysis. The frequency and contextual usage of each strategy were examined first within individual films and then across genres. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating quantitative analysis (frequency counts) with qualitative insights (examples of translation strategies).

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Density of the ICIs in the Source Text

The Density of Islamic Cultural Items (DST) is a key metric that provides valuable insight into the extent to which a film incorporates cultural elements. This measure, which calculates the ratio of ICIs to film duration, serves as a comparative tool for assessing the prominence of ICIs across different film genres. Notably, this equation—determining the ratio of ICIs to film duration (i.e., the number of ICIs in a given film divided by the film's duration in minutes)—is adopted from Al-Shloul (2023), who, in turn, adapted it from Pedersen (2011), originally formulated for analysing cultural references in audiovisual contexts.

The DST values in this study, encompassing films from various genres, including comedy, drama, action, and documentary, are essential for understanding the role of cultural items within the broader subtitling context. Specifically, they highlight how the frequency and significance of ICIs differ across genres. Table 5 presents the average DST values for the films in the current study corpus, while Table 6 summarises the average DST values for the documentary films corpus from Al-Shloul's (2023) research.

Table 5

Analysis of the Investigated Films: ICIs, Subtitling Strategies, Duration, and DST

s	Films	Duration of the Film (in Minutes)	No. of the ICIs in Each Film	Density of the ICIs in the ST (DST)	No. Of the Subtitling Strategies Utilised
1	<i>The Humans and the Mongoose</i> (2021, dir. Sharief Arafah)	120	127	1.1	143
2	<i>One Second</i> (2021, dir. Akram Fareed)	88	39	0.4	39
3	<i>A stand worthy of men</i> (2021, dir. Ahmad Aljindi)	112	96	0.8	96
4	<i>Marry me again?</i> (2021, dir. Ahmad Aljendi)	99	115	1.2	117

5	<i>Uncle Naji 2</i> (2022, dir. Ahmed Zain)	124	412	3.3	425
6	<i>The Matchmaker</i> (2023, dir. Abdulmohsen Al-Dhabaan)	81	16	0.2	16
7	<i>Khorfakkan</i> (2022, dir. Maurice Sweeney & Ben Mole)	102	105	1.0	126
8	<i>Tesbah Ala Khir</i> (2017, dir. Mohamad Samy)	96	79	0.8	82
9	<i>Jadou Machakel</i> (2020, dir. Wael Al Roumi)	91	61	0.7	62
10	<i>Wanted</i> (2019, dir. Nibal Arakji)	89	57	0.6	57
11	<i>Mousa</i> (2021, dir. Peter Momi)	101	27	0.3	27
12	<i>The Spider</i> (2022, dir. Ahmad Nader Galal)	126	52	0.4	53
13	<i>The Prisoner</i> (2023, dir. Mahmoud Kamel)	83	68	0.8	68
14	<i>Houroub</i> (2017, dir. Ahmad Khaled Moussa)	104	71	0.7	73
15	<i>Minak Ent</i> (2018, dir. Nadim Mhanna)	96	35	0.4	35

Table 6

Analysis of Documentary Films: ICIs, Subtitling Strategies, Duration, and Density in Al-Shloul (2023)

s	Documentary Films	Duration of the Film (in Minutes)	No. of the ICIs in Each Film	Density of the ICIs in the ST (DST)	No. Of the Subtitling Strategies Utilised
1	<i>Born in Syria</i> (2016, dir. Hernán Zin)	86	27	0.3	31
2	<i>The White Helmets</i> (2016, dir. Orlando von Einsiedel)	40	75	1.9	76
3	<i>Cries from Syria</i> (2017, dir. Evgeny Afineevsky)	111	105	0.9	108
4	<i>Aleppo: Notes from the Dark</i> (2014, dir. Michal Przedlacki & Wojciech Szumowski)	87	275	3.2	309
5	<i>7 Days in Syria</i> (2016, dir. Robert Rippberger)	74	100	1.4	115
6	<i>Sky and Ground</i> (2018, dir. Talya Tibbon & Joshua Bennett)	84	41	0.5	44
7	<i>The Ruins of Raqqa</i> (2018, dir. Matt Brown)	43	17	0.4	18
8	<i>For Sama</i> (2019, dir. Waad al-Kateab & Edward Watts)	100	112	1.1	119
9	<i>Syria's Torture Machine</i> (2011, dir. Julie Noon)	51	38	0.7	43

As shown in Tables 5 and 6, all the films contain a list of ICIs in their ST discourse, with an average density of ICIs across all the films analysed in this study of 0.96 per minute. This figure underscores the prevalence and significance of ICIs in cinematic discourse, reflecting their integral role in everyday life and cultural narratives portrayed in the films. The presence of such items indicates that films are not merely forms of entertainment, but also powerful vehicles through which cultural values, traditions, and expressions are communicated. As films often mirror the lived experiences and discourse of the people they depict, the embeddedness of Islamic cultural references within these narratives highlights their deep-rooted presence in the social fabric of the societies portrayed.

The substantial frequency of ICIs found in this corpus emphasises the need to investigate how these cultural expressions are rendered into the target language through subtitling strategies. As ICIs can carry significant cultural and contextual meaning, understanding the subtitling strategies employed to translate these expressions is critical in preserving their essence while ensuring accessibility for audiences unfamiliar with the source culture. The subtitling process, therefore, plays a pivotal role in bridging cultural divides and enabling a deeper understanding of cultural nuances within the target language audience.

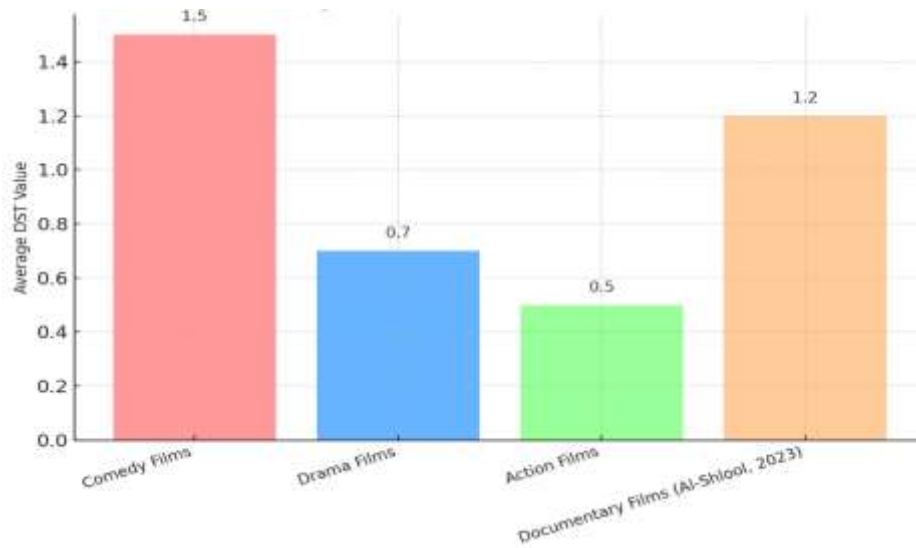
Finally, the prominence of ICIs in the films analysed demonstrates that these cultural items are not isolated to niche genres such as documentaries but are prevalent across a wide range of cinematic genres, including drama, comedy, and action films. This finding extends the relevance of subtitling strategies beyond the traditional scope, suggesting that an effective subtitling approach is essential for the accurate representation of cultural specificity in a variety of film genres. In turn, the importance of subtitling strategies becomes evident, as they contribute to the preservation of the original cultural meaning and assist in fostering intercultural communication.

5.2 Genre-Specific DST Patterns

The DST values presented in Figure 3 below reveal significant variations across the film genres, and the trends suggest that the genre of a film can substantially influence the density of ICIs in the ST.

Figure 3

The Average DST Value Across Different Film Genres



This relationship between genre and DST warrants a closer examination, as it provides valuable insights into how cultural elements are embedded and maintained in different narrative contexts.

1. **Comedy Films Corpus (DST = 1.5):** Comedy films exhibit the highest average DST value (1.5), indicating that they contain a greater density of ICIs compared to other genres. This finding is particularly significant, as comedy is inherently known for its reliance on humour. The prominence of ICIs in comedy films suggests that Arabic discourse is deeply infused with Islamic cultural expressions, reinforcing their natural integration into everyday communication. This also underscores the robustness of Arabic discourse, where Islamic cultural elements are not merely supplementary but are woven into the very fabric of linguistic and social interactions. Moreover, the significant presence of ICIs in comedy films highlights an important challenge in audiovisual translation. Given that humour is deeply rooted in cultural context, subtitlers should navigate the complexities of translating these references while maintaining their comedic impact. This often requires careful adaptation strategies to balance linguistic accuracy with cultural authenticity. The extent to which subtitlers succeed in this task can determine how well the humour resonates with the target audience, making the study of subtitling strategies in comedy films particularly crucial.
2. **Documentary Films Corpus (DST = 1.2, Al-Shlool, 2023):** The DST value for documentaries, derived from Al-Shlool's (2023) study, falls slightly lower than that of comedy films but remains quite high. Documentaries are typically more focused on presenting factual information and real-world contexts, often aimed at educating audiences about particular cultures, societies, or historical events (Nichols, 2017). The relatively high DST value of 1.2 in documentary films indicates a significant inclusion of ICIs. This result corroborates the idea that documentaries inherently present a denser array of ICIs due to their focus on authentic representation.
3. **Drama Films Corpus (DST = 0.7):** Drama films, with an average DST value of 0.7, show a noticeable decrease in the density of ICIs compared to comedy and documentary genres. This suggests that while dramas may explore culturally relevant themes, the frequency of ICIs is generally lower. The nature of drama films often prioritises emotional engagement and universal themes over a strong emphasis on cultural specificity. As a result, the subtitling of ICIs in drama films may focus more on conveying the narrative and emotional depth rather than highlighting cultural elements. Additionally, subtitlers may prioritise fluency and accessibility for a global audience, which could contribute to the reduced visibility of specific cultural items.
4. **Action Films Corpus (DST = 0.5):** Action films exhibit the lowest average DST value at 0.5, suggesting that ICIs are relatively sparse in this genre. The action genre is primarily driven by fast-paced, universal storytelling centred around thrilling plotlines, physical action, and often broad character types. Given the genre's focus on action and spectacle, cultural specificity may be downplayed to ensure a more widely accessible and commercial appeal. Furthermore, action films often appeal to a broad international audience, where cultural references may be less central to the narrative. As a result, subtitling tends to focus on clarity and continuity of action, leaving less room for the inclusion of ICIs.

In summary, the DST values in this study underscore the impact of film genre on the representation of ICIs. By analysing these patterns, we gain insights into how subtitling strategies should adapt to genre-specific demands. The findings highlight that the genre of a film is not merely a stylistic choice but plays a crucial role in determining how cultural items are embedded, preserved, or adapted in the subtitling process. Understanding these differences contributes to the broader applicability of Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy and enhances our understanding of the challenges faced by audiovisual translation in preserving cultural nuances across genres.

5.3 Subtitling Strategies & Genre-Specific Observations

The findings presented in Table 7 and Figure 3 below highlight significant genre-specific variations in the application of subtitling strategies for ICIs across comedy, drama, and action films, as well as in comparison with Al-Shloul's (2023) observations of documentary films. These variations offer valuable insights into the complex relationship between genre conventions and the subtitling strategies used to convey cultural content, thereby contributing to the field of audiovisual translation.

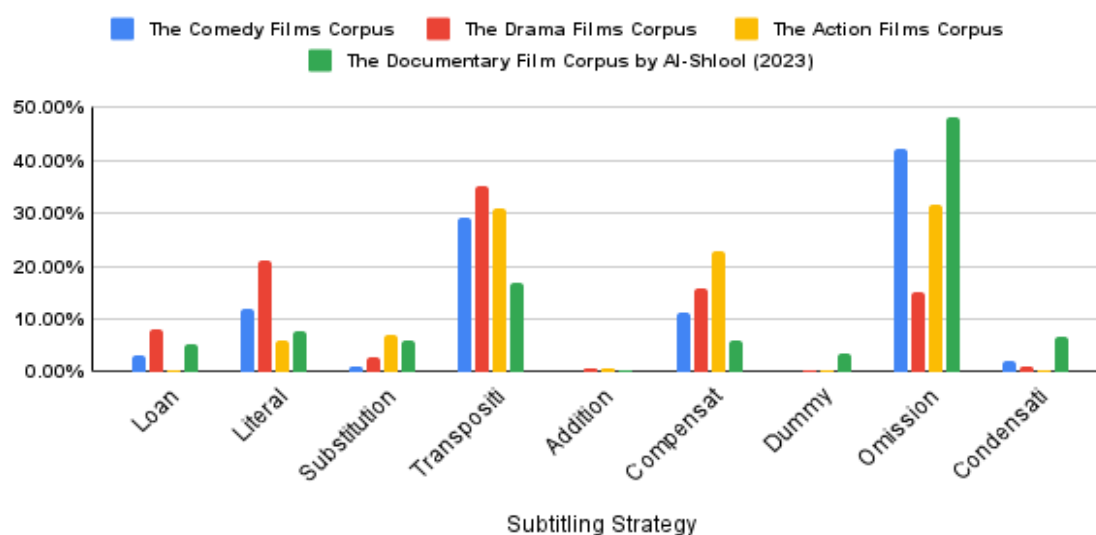
Table 7

Distribution of Subtitling Strategies Across Film Genres: Utilisation Percentage by Genre

Subtitling Strategy	The Comedy Films Corpus	The Drama Films Corpus	The Action Films Corpus	The Documentary Film Corpus by Al-Shloul (2023)
Loan	3.20%	8.20%	0.40%	5.10%
Literal Translation	12.10%	21.00%	5.80%	7.70%
Substitution	0.90%	2.90%	7.00%	5.80%
Transposition	29.10%	35.30%	30.90%	16.80%
Addition	0%	0.60%	0.80%	0.20%
Compensation	11.20%	15.70%	22.70%	5.80%
Dummy Compensation	0%	0.30%	0.40%	3.60%
Omission	42.30%	15.10%	31.60%	48.30%
Condensation	2.10%	0.90%	0.40%	6.70%

Figure 4

Percentage of the Subtitling Strategies Employed Across Different Genre Corpora



Loan Strategy

The use of the loan strategy is markedly higher in drama films (8.20%) compared to comedy (3.20%) and action (0.40%). Drama, as a genre, often seeks to preserve cultural authenticity, reflecting its tendency to engage with nuanced themes and profound

narratives. In contrast, the minimal use of the loan strategy in action films indicates a prioritisation of universal accessibility over cultural fidelity, particularly in high-paced, visually driven narratives.

Literal Translation

Literal translation emerges as a prominent strategy, particularly in drama films (21.00%), followed by comedy (12.10%) and action (5.80%). The preference for literal translation in drama reflects the genre's commitment to maintaining the cultural and linguistic integrity of ICIs. Conversely, the reduced application of this strategy in action films may result from the need to streamline content for immediate comprehension, ensuring that subtitles do not disrupt the fast tempo.

Substitution

Substitution is most frequently observed in action films (7.00%), where the strategy aids in adapting culturally specific elements to globally recognisable terms without compromising narrative coherence. The limited application of substitution in comedy (0.90%) and drama (2.90%) suggests these genres aim to retain the original cultural context to support humour and thematic depth, respectively.

Transposition

The transposition strategy dominates across all genres, particularly in drama (35.30%), action (30.90%), and comedy (29.10%). This trend highlights the strategy's flexibility in rephrasing ICIs while preserving their core meaning. Drama's reliance on transposition aligns with its focus on narrative and character development, where cultural adaptations must seamlessly integrate into dialogue. Similarly, in comedy, transposition ensures that cultural references are adapted for humour while retaining their essence, supporting Dore's (2019) perspective on translating humour. In action films, the strategy facilitates swift cultural adaptation, maintaining narrative clarity amidst dynamic plotlines.

Addition

The addition strategy is sparingly utilised across all genres, with its highest occurrence in action films (0.80%). The marginal use of this strategy reflects a cautious approach, ensuring that content is not added without justification. In this context, addition refers specifically to the inclusion of ICIs in the form of transliteration in the target text, even when they are entirely absent from the ST. The limited use of this strategy is expected, as the motivations for employing it are restricted. According to Al-Shloul (2023), addition in subtitling was primarily observed in cases of ideological manipulation within the data analysed. However, this does not imply that the approach is entirely absent; rather, it remains an infrequent yet notable phenomenon that may occur for specific reasons.

Compensation

Compensation sees its highest usage in action films (22.70%), followed by drama (15.70%) and comedy (11.20%). This strategy appears integral to balancing cultural loss from omission or substitution, particularly in action films, where brevity is essential. The study suggests that the application of compensation in action films can contribute to preserving cultural nuances within constrained formats. In comedy and drama, the lower frequency of compensation suggests that these genres prefer strategies like transposition or literal translation to maintain cultural integrity.

Dummy Compensation

Dummy compensation is almost absent in all three genres, with marginal occurrences in drama (0.30%) and action (0.40%), compared to its relatively higher usage in documentaries (3.60%). This reflects the unique characteristics of documentaries, which, as Al-Shloul (2023) noted, prioritise informational fidelity and often employ strategies uncommon in fictional narratives. Dummy compensation is typically used when subtitlers perceive that the ST content is not essential to the plot, allowing them to omit it while still maintaining visual coherence by filling the space with generic placeholders. For instance, instead of rendering Quranic verses, subtitlers may use a vague descriptor such as "man speaking." This strategy may be employed when the omitted content is deemed non-essential to the storyline, when it is considered difficult to translate, or in some cases, as a form of ideological manipulation, as observed in certain instances in Al-Shloul's (2023) study.

Omission

Omission emerges as the most frequently applied strategy in comedy (42.30%) and action films (31.60%), highlighting a genre-specific tendency to simplify cultural content for accessibility and pacing. In contrast, omission is less prevalent in drama (15.10%), where preserving cultural nuances may be integral to the narrative. Al-Shloul's (2023) observation of omission's high frequency in documentaries (48.30%) further highlights its role in simplifying dense cultural content for clarity.

Condensation

Condensation is infrequently applied across all genres, with its highest occurrence in comedy (2.10%). This limited usage may stem from the challenges of condensing ICIs without significant loss of meaning. The lower frequency in drama (0.90%) and action (0.40%) suggests a preference for other strategies, such as transposition or omission, to address subtitling challenges. This observation aligns with Gottlieb's (1998) view that condensation is less favoured when cultural fidelity is prioritised.

To sum up, the analysis demonstrates the profound influence of genre on the selection of subtitling strategies for ICIs, revealing distinct preferences shaped by the narrative, stylistic, and audience expectations of each genre. Drama favours strategies that preserve cultural integrity, such as loan, literal translation, and transposition, reflecting its emphasis on authenticity and thematic depth. Comedy prioritises omission and transposition to balance humour with accessibility, while action films utilise substitution and compensation to streamline cultural adaptation within high-paced narratives. By extending Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy beyond documentaries, this study contributes to the broader understanding of AVT, highlighting the dynamic relationship between genre and subtitling practices.

5.4 Evaluation of the Taxonomy

Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy of subtitling strategies for ICIs has demonstrated its applicability across multiple genres beyond documentaries. However, the findings of this study indicate that certain strategies exhibit genre-dependent variations, necessitating adaptations to account for differences in narrative style, pacing, and audience expectations.

One notable observation is the increased prominence of condensation in comedy and action films compared to documentaries. This trend highlights the influence of genre-specific constraints, particularly the need for brevity and rapid information processing in fast-paced genres. In comedy, condensation is often employed to maintain humour while ensuring that subtitles remain concise and accessible. Similarly, in action films, where visual storytelling and swift dialogue transitions dominate, condensation helps streamline cultural references without overburdening the subtitles. In contrast, documentaries tend to prioritise informational accuracy, which explains the lower reliance on this strategy in that genre.

Additionally, strategies such as omission and substitution were more frequently utilised in action and comedy films than in drama, reflecting the necessity for increased accessibility and audience engagement in entertainment-driven genres. Conversely, drama films exhibited a higher tendency to retain ICIs through strategies like literal translation and loan, reinforcing their commitment to cultural authenticity and thematic depth.

While the findings reveal that certain strategies vary in prominence across genres, they ultimately suggest that all strategies within Al-Shloul's taxonomy remain applicable in different cinematic contexts. The variations observed across genres highlight the adaptability of the taxonomy rather than its limitations, demonstrating its robustness in capturing diverse subtitling approaches. Given its proven applicability to ICIs, future research could extend its use to other religious cultural items, such as those related to Christianity or Judaism, to further test its validity and explore its potential for broader cross-cultural and interreligious audiovisual translation studies.

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study validates the broader applicability of Al-Shloul's (2023) taxonomy in subtitling ICIs across multiple film genres, demonstrating its adaptability to different cinematic contexts. However, the findings also highlight the necessity of flexibility in applying the taxonomy, as genre-specific constraints influence the choice and frequency of certain subtitling strategies. The study underscores the importance of considering audience expectations, cinematic style, and genre conventions when rendering ICIs in subtitles. By shedding light on the interaction between genre and translation strategies, this research contributes to the growing field of audiovisual translation, particularly in the area of cultural representation in subtitled films.

One of the key limitations of this study is its focus on four main film genres: comedy, drama, action, and documentary. While these genres provide valuable insights into how ICIs are handled in various narrative styles, the study does not explore other significant genres such as adventure, epics/historical, and horror. Each of these genres possesses distinct linguistic, cultural, and narrative conventions that may shape the selection and application of subtitling strategies in unique ways. Future research could extend the analysis to these additional genres, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural elements are rendered in audiovisual translation.

Additionally, while this study focuses on the English subtitles of Arabic films, further research could investigate the applicability of Al-Shloul's taxonomy in other language pairs. Examining how ICIs are subtitled into different languages, particularly those with varying cultural and linguistic distances from Arabic, would provide deeper insights into the challenges and adaptations involved

in cross-cultural subtitling. Finally, future research could incorporate viewer reception studies to explore how audiences from different cultural backgrounds perceive and interpret subtitled ICIs. Such studies would offer a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of different subtitling strategies in preserving cultural meaning and engaging international viewers.

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ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2100-0654>)

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