

## Constraints Yemeni Undergraduates Face in Subtitling Audiovisual Materials

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© 2020 جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا، اليمن. يمكن إعادة استخدام المادة المنشورة حسب رخصة مؤسسة المشاع الإبداعي شريطة الاستشهاد بالمؤلف والمجلة.

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### Abstract

This study attempted to investigate the potential constraints that the Yemeni undergraduates face in subtitling audiovisual materials. The challenges of English-Arabic subtitling are under three domains; linguistic, technical and attitudinal. University of Science and Technology (UST) is barely the benchmarking academic institution that gives training on subtitling. UST was perceived as an ideal place to carry out the study. A triangulation was the methodology of the paper. A questionnaire along with a test were administered and given to 38 participants. The results of the study declared that the linguistic domain is still taking the lead. The second domain was the technical challenges. The emotive or attitudinal constraints were the least challenging. The paper gave recommendations to overcome these constraints. Conclusion and recommendations of the study can be taken in other countries that undergo similar conditions.

**Keywords:** audiovisual translation, subtitling, UST, Yemen.

## المعوقات التي يواجهها الطلبة الجامعيين في ترجمة المواد السمعية البصرية (السترجة) في اليمن

### الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى بحث المعوقات الكامنة التي يواجهها الطلبة الجامعيين في ترجمة المواد السمعية البصرية (السترجة) في اليمن. وقد صنفت كافة الأسباب للتحديات في هذا النوع من الترجمة بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية تحت ثلاث فئات: فئة الأسباب اللغوية، وفئة الأسباب الفنية، وفئة الأسباب الوجدانية. ويعتقد الباحث أن جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا توفر بيئة مثالية لإجراء مثل هذه الدراسة كونها تكاد تكون الجامعة الوحيدة التي توفر للطلاب تدريب فني في مهارات ترجمة المواد السمعية والبصرية. ولضمان موضوعية الدراسة، فقد استخدم الباحث الاستبانة والاختبار كأداتين لجمع البيانات. وقد خلصت النتائج إلى أن فئة الأسباب اللغوية احتلت المرتبة الأولى من حيث الصعوبة وتأتي بعدها فئة الأسباب الفنية ثم الوجدانية. وبناءً على نتائج هذه الدراسة فإن الباحث قد اقترح حلولاً لتجاوز مثل هذه الصعوبات. يمكن الاستفادة من نتائج وتوصيات هذه الدراسة في المؤسسات والدول الأخرى وخاصة في البيئة المماثلة لبيئة هذه الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ترجمة المواد السمعية البصرية السترجة، ترجمة، جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا، اليمن.

## Introduction

In the wake of media revolution, audiovisual translation (AVT) was believed to play a pivotal role in bridging cultures, ideologies, and countries to become one mosaic nation in both professional circles and scholarly research (Chaume, 2018). This dream is seemingly to come true. Life, nowadays, cannot be imagined without media, and, thus, translation found its way to utilizing audiovisual transfer tools and methods that can contribute to building and enforcing the mainstream of our universal human perspectives and concepts. AVT genres, then is significant albeit challenging. Subtitling, dubbing and voice-over are amongst the main types with which AVT students need to be familiar.

Subtitling consists of introducing a translation of the dialogue of a foreign language film at the bottom of the screen. But subtitles not only include dialogues between actors, but also each text that appears on the screen (letters, signs, newspapers' pages) and the soundtrack (songs) (Juan-Pedro, Reyes, & Blanca, 2015). Subtitling, which is the keyword in this paper, is the widely used technique of AVT. The proliferation of companies requires professional training for subtitlers that requires professional training programs to scientifically diagnose the potential linguistic challenges and technical defects subtitlers may face (Cintas, 2012). Subtitling may be difficult to define due to the technical degree it requires in writing which refers to the conventions that may vary according to the distributors (Fois, 2012). Subtitling, however, is the most widely studied AVT mode (Cintas, 2003). Luyken and Herbst (1991) define subtitling as:

...condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue and are almost always added to the screen image at a later date as a post-production activity (p. 31).

## Review of literature and previous studies

Despite the limited book references that highlight AVT issues, a considerable number of research papers have recently been published to tackle novel issues in this domain.

Caimi (2009), for instance, presented a pragmatic prescription to requirements that pose difficulty to subtitlers:

Subtitles must be concise and easy to understand and the text must be carefully edited and split the spoken word directly transcribed usually exceeds the space and time available, since subtitles should not stay on the screen for longer than six seconds. Yet, they should convey the relevant information and linguistic nuances contained in the original dialogue to satisfy second language audience needs (p. 241).

To tackle these challenges and constraints, we need to refer to previous experiences that may bring authenticated common constraints that average subtitlers may face. These constraints have been, positively or negatively, adopted or adapted from previous literature so that they may suit the surrounding conditions of the study of questionnaire items which were either attached or even detached from the questionnaire administered. Other items were induced from undergraduates' assignments as well. For the sake of objectivity of the study, the constraints resulted, and the researcher declares, do not overwhelmingly represent other case studies under different conditions. Georgakopoulou (2009) mentioned some of these common constraints.

As this is a relatively young industry, it goes without saying that the underlying rules and additional constraints for creating template files make this subject wide open to further research on a global scale in order to refine current practices and produce even better quality subtitle files. Such research would inevitably require practitioners from all over the world to play a central role in order to ensure that the language files produced will conform to the appropriate subtitling style of each country (p. 34).

## **Common Subtitling Constraints**

Georgakopoulou (2009) and Cintas (2012) highlighted the major linguistic and cultural constraints that subtitling practitioners usually face. The study, therefore, included these challenges within a wider range of constraints; such as the technical and attitudinal as mentioned in the items of the questionnaire and a reference through which students' assignments were assessed.

## **Technical Constraints**

Juan-Pedro et al. (2015) presented a variety of technical constraints related to the subtitles display.

- Space: subtitles should not exceed two lines through deletion of redundant words, both linguistic and situational, which are not stylistically intended and do not affect discourse predictability. Words should have a strong link to the visual scene of the intended show.
- Time: subtitles should be in balance with the reading time; that is, it will be a failure if viewers do not have enough time to read the subtitles. Besides, the words or phrases should correspond with viewer's education, age etc.
- Presentation: Subtitles should take no more than 20% of screen space. Subtitlers should bear in mind the size of the characters, their position on screen (Juan-Pedro et al., 2015).
- The author, however, did not pinpoint other technical challenges such as the software-based constraints.

## Textual Constraints

One of the most challenging constraints that face subtitles is the textual constraints. Georgakopoulou (2009) highlighted the textual constraints that are relevant to target language (TL) display on the TV monitor;

- Mode: Subtitlers should bear in mind the mode transfer that operates across two modes, from speech to writing, i.e. from the soundtrack to the written subtitles (Georgakopoulou, 2009).
- Oral to aural processing: the viewer of a subtitled show has to focus on two different types of information: the action on the screen, and the subtitles. On the part of viewers, this makes it difficult to focus on both. To make the subtitles successful, it needs to preserve the 'sequence of speech acts ....' in such a way as to relay the dynamics of communication' (Mason, 1989).

A few rough rules are, usually, observed by subtitlers to help minimize the potentially negative effects of these extra processing demands made by the viewer:

- (a) When the visual side is important to understand a particular scene, subtitles should be limited to the most basic linguistic information, leaving the viewers free to follow the visual actions.
- (b) When important information is the soundtrack, not the images, subtitlers should produce the fullest subtitles possible, to guarantee that the viewers are not left behind.

The visual information often helps viewers process the subtitles, and to a certain extent this compensates for the limited verbal information they contain. For example, aspects of interpersonal communication may be found in intonation, rhythm and the facial and kinesic movements that accompany the dialogue which are, to an extent, universal (Nir, 1984, p. 90).

- (c) The presentation of the subtitles should enhance readability through a simple language and grammar.
- Change in mode: The shift from speech to writing is a challenge that the subtitler needs to encounter. Spontaneous speech, like tongue slips, speech pauses, false starts, unfinished ungrammatical sentences, dialectical and idiolectal expressions are difficult to be reproduced in writing. The use of transliteration to reproduce a regional or social dialect in the subtitles, for instance, would not be helpful as it would hinder the readability of the text through adding to the reading time of the subtitle, and hinder the comprehension of the message by obscuring the style.

## Linguistic Constraints

Cintas (2003) has clear contributions to the recent subtitling studies. He suggested the reduction as a key factor for a successful subtitling.

For subtitlers, reduction is obviously the most important strategy in subtitling. The question, however, is 'what are the elements of speech that are commonly omitted or edited in subtitles?'

According to Kovačič (1991), there is a three-level hierarchy of discourse elements in subtitling:

- The indispensable elements (that must be translated) which are all the plot-carrying elements of a film; they carry the experiential meaning without which the viewers would not be able to follow the action.
- The partly dispensable elements (that can be condensed).
- The dispensable elements (that can be omitted). There are also a number of linguistic elements that many subtitlers in the profession would omit even if the spatio-temporal constraints of subtitling did not apply (Kovačič, 1991).

To avoid the boring routine of subtitling timing and synchronization, that takes a considerable span of time, and technical defects that may occur in the course of subtitling, world studios, such as Hollywood, have come up with universal templates which are subtitled files in source language (SL) (referred to as the genesis file or the transfile), to be used as the basis for translation into other languages.

Financially, the template has introduced economy of costs and time into the subtitling industry, whereby the greater the number of languages involved in a project, the larger the cost-savings to be made.

## Subtitling from English into Arabic

Practically, subtitling into Arabic has been done for a long time. Subtitling as a field of study, however, has emerged recently. This explains the scarcity of AVT studies and research (Thawabteh, 2011a). Thawabteh (2011a) conducted a study on two MA translation batches to declare that the students had faced several linguistic, technical and cultural challenges that may jeopardize the message to be delivered to audience. In a later study, Thawabteh (2011b) highlighted the lexical problems that MA students faced in Al-Quds University.

## Subtitling in Yemen

Yemen is a poor country. This statement gives the reader an impression that the business of subtitling is not a top priority to the country. As part of the Arab world, sharing one language, which is Arabic, and having similar cultural heritage such as religion, customs and traditions, Yemen does not, always, need to subtitle the foreign materials. Professional subtitlers in other Arab countries with further-experiences and better potentials such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordon and UAE, carry out the subtitles of most of the non-Arabic audiovisual materials (Gamal, 2008; Izwaini, 2017). The dark side of this privilege is that because of over-reliance on these Arab countries, Yemen did not have any infrastructure for subtitling except in some poorly equipped public institutions such as the television station without highly qualified cadre.

The situation in the Yemeni Universities, in general, is no exception. As far as academicians are concerned, Yemeni public and private Universities do not include a course that focuses on AVT. Even if some of them do so, they do not include AVT topics such as subtitling and dubbing so far in the course description. This is due to the lack of qualified cadre and proper infrastructure that requires financial and technical potential. It is worth noting that, at personal level, some immature individuals experienced subtitling and dubbing for personal and group purposes.

University of Science and Technology (UST) can be an exception in this regard. For roughly six years (up to the year of conducting this study), UST has been giving training to its undergraduates on the principles of AVT with local potentials and primitive software such as Subtitling Workshop, MS Movie Maker, and Camtasia. UST undergraduates have received some knowledge and acquired skills for subtitling and dubbing. During the course, the undergraduates were asked to subtitle materials that are mostly their choice.



Many students have expressed their admiration to the interactive nature of the course because it, as they claim, brought them out of the routine of the other courses.

Compared to professional subtitlers, subtitling freshmen such as translation undergraduates and practitioners are expected to face some challenges and difficulties in getting along with a tech-centered technique such as subtitling. As a matter of fact, the researcher does notice this in undergraduates' performance in doing the subtitling. Subtitling trainers and instructors refer the difficulty of teaching and giving training in subtitling to the nature of the subtitling process per-se, which requires technical, linguistic and cultural competences all together. The process represents a challenge before students who to a great extent lack the competences mentioned earlier. AVT is said to have its in/dependent realm. The new sets of challenges may establish AVT fully as a discipline (Guillot, 2019). This trend may have encouraged translation academies and media institutions to open AVT programs at postgraduate level.

This study investigates the challenges of English-Arabic subtitling that undergraduates of UST face in doing subtitling. Moreover, the study pinpoints contributions of Arab scientists who investigated the linguistic challenges, the cultural constraints along the psychological hindrances of subtitling of non-Arabic (mostly English) such as Gamal (2008), and Izwaini (2017). The study tries to tackle these challenges to help the academic institution, the instructors/trainers and the students/trainees to come up with solutions that overcome these challenges. To delineate them, these constraints were sub-classified under three fields: linguistic, technical and attitudinal. Thus, the study aimed to investigate:

1. the potential constraints that UST translation undergraduates in particular in Yemen might face.
2. the reasons that stand behind these constraints.

## **Methodology**

### **The tools of the study**

The researcher used triangulation in investigating the subtitling constraints through a twofold tool; a questionnaire and a practical subtitling test for the participants. This assisted in bringing about a more vivid picture and concise statistical figures, referring that to its multi-faceted nature of yielding results and conclusions and providing a better understanding of research

problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007, as cited in Horbačauskienė, Kasperavičienė, & Petronienė, 2016).

### • Questionnaire

The questionnaire encompasses two main sections: section one enquires about the solid background of the language and computer skills related to some reasons of the constraints; the second section includes the three-domain constraints (linguistic, technical, and attitudinal), in addition to a space provided at the end to add any other comments.

A twenty-item questionnaire was administered to include the previous potential constraint domains mentioned in the theoretical part of the study as well as from the undergraduates' assignments and in-class practical sessions of succeeding academic years (2014 -2015 and 2015- 2016). The items of the questionnaire cover three significant domains that are crucially important for the task of subtitling: attitudinal, linguistic and technical. The first domain (eight items) is linguistic which represents the raw material of the process of subtitling from and into which the subtitling is carried out. Since the language in part in parcel of the culture, the linguistic domain includes the cultural constraints as well. The second domain (eight items) is the technical, which composes procedural constraints face trainee subtitlers. The attitudinal hindrances (four items) represent the third domain that reflects the psychological emotional/instrumental disincentives that hinder subtitlers from taking this career, and, in turn, negatively affect the other areas, especially the technical. It is worth noting that three vacant rows were added for further potential constraints the participant may add with the degree of agreement on which s/he decides.

The population of the study is level-four undergraduates of translation in UST of the academic years 2014 -2015 and 2015 -2016 who are respectively 26 and 23 undergraduates. After excluding the poorly answered and blank papers, the net numbers of respondents of the study were just 20 and 18 respectively. The net number of the respondents of the two academic years, therefore, is 38. Since it is a case study, the results of this study do not overwhelmingly represent the population of translation undergraduates and trainees in Yemen or overseas. It, in some aspects, however, is an important reference to students and trainees who are under similar circumstances.

Before reaching the respondents, the questionnaire received some modifications from two professors: an ELT associate professor for the attitudinal and the linguistic areas and an IT assistant professor for the technical area of the study.

### • Test

The study, in essence, does not exclusively count on the questionnaire due to; (1) the relatively impressionistic nature of the questionnaire where the respondent may, then, become positively or negatively biased to his beliefs and opinions when answering with the questionnaire items; and (2) the ignorance of all de facto constraints on the part of both parties, namely: both the examiner and the examinee. The test, therefore, may manifest the constraints that were not mentioned in the questionnaire which, heavily, relied on foreign experiences.

A fifteen-minute subtitling assignment of an audiovisual material was scheduled to be handed in within 30 days. Three follow-up sessions were declared to guarantee that students are working themselves through questions about their achievements and problems they might face. Notes were taken, during the follow-up sessions and after submission, about the most frequent constraints they faced. It is worth noting that this type of evaluation may not cover some items such as attitudinal and other non-behavioral constraints.

### Data analysis

A (1 - 5) value scale was used to, statistically, determine the value of agreement of the questionnaire items that were not radically answered, (either "agree" or "disagree"). Value (1) represents the extreme disagreement (the least difficult), whereas -value (5) represents the extreme agreement (the most difficult), i.e., the lower the value is, the less difficult the constraint is, and the higher the value is, on the other hand, the more challenging the constraint gets. The value (2.5) then, represents a neutral answer where the respondent is in between the two sides.

With respect to the test, tallies were used to count the linguistic problematic chunks (grammar, spelling, diction, punctuation and mode) and technical mistakes, errors and inappropriate chunks (formats, synchronization of time, space, font size and color, etc...). The test has displayed two types of mistakes. The first type, which is taken seriously in the study, is the systematic mistake that more frequently occurs. The paper did not directly use a taxonomy

due the nature of these taxonomies, as Ramiere believes (Horbačauskienė et al., 2016) which are merely strategies that are not measurable to give quantifiable scale. The paper rather indirectly referred Pedersen's Taxonomy (Pedersen, 2011) was used to pinpoint culture specific items (CSI). The second type, which is unsystematic, occurs because of misprinting or forgetting some letters of words. This type is not tackled in the study due to its poor frequency. Attitudinal constrains could not be objectively measured in the test due to their psychological nature which may be, subjectively, inferred. Attitudinal domain, therefore, was excluded from the test. This domain was explicitly reflected on the linguistic domain. During the rewriting process, expressively manipulated vocabulary were adopted and adapted due to factors such as ideology and culture (Lefevere, 1992 as cited in Kruger, 2012). The frequencies of the linguistic and technical problems have tremendously contributed to expounding the questionnaire data.

## Findings and Discussions

### Firstly: Subtitling Constraints

1. Statistically speaking, the level of significance is (0.034) which is less than (0.05) level. This figure gives the study a high significance. The mean of the means of all the constraints mentioned in the questionnaire is (2.968), with a standard deviation of (1.0157) which is of normal dispersion.
2. There is a kind of homogeneity between the outcomes of both the questionnaire (section 2) and the test (Tables 1, 2, 3). This homogeneity is clear in both linguistic and technical constraints. The study previously mentioned the difficulty of measuring psychological aspects from a technical test.

**Table 1: Means of questionnaire and freq. of constraints in the test of the three main domains**

Constraints	Questionnaire		Test
	Mean	St. Dev.	Prob. Freq.
Linguistic	3.20	1.041	865
Technical	2.856	1.0511	689
Attitudinal	2.7233	0.955	-

3. The linguistic constraints take the lead with a mean (3.20) which means that the language is still a difficulty. The technical constraints take the second position with a mean (2.85). The test frequency of linguistic problems and technical challenges (865) and (689) respectively confirms this result. It is worth noting that the mode is a techno-lingual criterion i.e., the inappropriate

rendering from a normally translated text to a subtitle translated text may be reflected, technically, on the limited space on the screen. Being a foreign language makes English more difficult. If the study is carried out in a country where English is spoken as a second language, the researcher claims, the result of the study might be different.

4. The attitudinal domain has the least mean (2.72). This reflects the relatively positive attitude towards subtitling. Undergraduates, generally, find this translation tool pleasant. They like this interactive tool of translation. Practically, the enthusiasm of the students during the follow-up sessions and submission was remarkably noticed. The relatively high mean, however, may be referred to the psychological barrier that was created due to some deficiencies of the translation and language mastery, and incapacibilities in some technical complications, especially when the reader learns that most of the undergraduates think they do not lack the basics of computer skills.

### **In-depth analysis**

Tables (2- 4) show the three categories of constraints (linguistics, technical and attitudinal) thoroughly. In Tables (2 & 3), the first column mentions the constraint of English-Arabic subtitling. The second column displays the number of participant in every questionnaire item. The third column displays the mean of scale of agreement to the questionnaire item (from 1 to 5) and the fourth column shows the standard deviation that gives a vivid dispersion of participants values. Finally, the fifth column displays the number of undergraduates whose test has constantly reflected that grammatical or technical constraints. Table (4) presents the means and the standard deviation the attitudinal constraints.

### **A) Linguistic Constraints**

1. Readers may notice that the first five elements in Table (2) are non-linguistic or cultural constraints. Compared to the questionnaire, the test gives similar results except the punctuation constraint.
2. The results of the data collected by the questionnaire indicated that the language per se is not as challenging as connotative and cultural complications. The values given in the questionnaire put the proper linguistic challenges after the cultural ones.
3. Both the results of the data gathered through the questionnaire and the test indicated that standard Arabic is the least challenging item. The instructor refers the relatively high value of this item to the classical words that are no longer used in our daily language, and thus, to rendering them to the proper English equivalent.

**Table 2: Means of the linguistic constraints in the questionnaire and their frequencies in the test**

Constraints	Questionnaire		Test
	Mean	St. Dev.	No. of test items
I cannot translate cultural expressions properly.	3.73	0.902	61
I cannot understand local English dialects.	3.54	1.045	59
I cannot understand English natives.	3.44	1.104	61
I cannot understand English varieties.	3.33	0.933	60
I cannot subtitle non-linguistic signs.	3.27	1.247	57
I cannot use punctuation marks properly.	2.83	1.129	59
I cannot understand non-native speakers.	2.79	0.936	45
I cannot write standard Arabic adequately.	2.67	1.032	39
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.041</b>	<b>55.125</b>

## B) Technical Constraints

1. As in Table (3), Technical constraints come at the second level of the challenge of subtitling.
2. The professional subtitler may refer tempo-spatial challenges to a techno-linguistic reason. The participants faced a difficulty of rendering potential meanings to be projected within tempo-spatial limits.
3. Undergraduates cannot handle subtitling easily. They did not take computer courses. They depend on themselves to use the computer for personal purposes. None of them can type professionally. All of these giving reasons explain the situation of their computer skills.

**Table 3: Means of the technical constraints in the questionnaire and their frequencies in the test**

Constraints	Questionnaire		Test
	Mean	St. Dev.	No. of test items
I cannot specify enough time and place for fast speech.	3.71	0.941	45
I cannot handle subtitling easily.	3.38	0.906	38
I cannot distinguish between subtitling extensions, such as: (.srt) and (.zeg).	3.29	1.124	27
I cannot differentiate between subtitling and dubbing.	3.06	0.998	7
I am not familiar enough with subtitling software.	3.00	0.984	53
I do not have enough experience in subtitling.	2.98	1.129	48

**Table 3: Continued**

Constraints	Questionnaire		Test
	Mean	St. Dev.	No. of test items
I cannot distinguish formats such as: (.mp4), (.avi), and (.vob).	2.68	0.997	34
I cannot deal with PC is easily.	2.29	1.128	46
I doesn't know subtitling technically.	2.11	1.259	23
I cannot type efficiently.	2.06	1.045	51
<b>Mean</b>	2.856	1.051	37.2

### C) Attitudinal Constraints

1. The attitudinal domain as shown in Table (4) has the least means. The first item i.e. instrumental motivation "rewarding" takes the lead as the highest mean because the business market of subtitling is not rewarding yet, due to the absence of subtitling businesses.
2. The other two items represent the personal motivation. The interactive nature of subtitling attracts the undergraduates to bring them out of the boring routine in the other courses.

**Table 4: Means of the attitudinal constraints in the questionnaire**

Constraints	Mean	.St. Dev
Subtitling is not rewarding.	3.32	1.013
I do not like subtitling.	2.44	0.980
I believe subtitling is boring.	2.41	0.873
<b>Mean</b>	2.723	0.955

#### Secondly: Reason of the Constrains

According to the data collected through the questionnaire, the majority of the participants are under the limit (level 1B) that the university has specified. Twenty-four participants (63% of the sample) have not exceeded level (1B). Eleven participants (approximately 30%) have barely taken that level. Besides, only three participants (7.8%) have exceeded level (1B) to higher levels. Table (5) which reflects a right-tailed curve is in conformity with Table (6) which shows that twenty-one participants (55.2%) believe that their writing performance is less than good (see Table 6).

**Table 5: Participants' Levels of English Courses**

None	basic A	basic B	L1 (A)	L1 (B)	L2 (A)	L2 (B)	L3 (A)	L3 (B)	L4 (A)	L4 (B)	more
18	3	2	1	11	-	1	-	-	1	-	1

**Table 6: Participants' opinions on the levels they deserve at writing**

Poor	Not bad	Good	V. good	Excellent
16	5	11	4	2

5. A more obvious distribution is noticeable in Table (7) displaying students' performance in writing skills. The table, however, does not give a diagram of a bell-shaped curve that reflects a balanced linguistic performance in writing skill during the assessment of the assignments. The instructor refers the relative variance with Table (6) to the dissatisfaction of the undergraduates with the speaking skill that is not directly involved in the process of subtitling.

**Table 7: Participants' grades in writing**

Failed	Pass	Good	V. good	Excellent
5	15	8	7	3

6. Similar to the English courses, twenty-one participants (55.2%) are under PASS level. Moreover, (41.2%) of the participants have not enrolled themselves to ICDL training program yet. It is worth noting that UST provides the undergraduates with this program in fulfillment of the course named Computer Skills. Table (8) provides a score report from ICDL center at UST.

**Table 8: Participants' grades in Computer skills**

Not yet	Failed	Pass	Good	V. good	Excellent
16	5	8	4	3	2

7. Undergraduates' perspectives about their abilities with the computer, relatively, seem in conformity with the distribution in Table (8). The computer trainers refer the high figure at good level in Table (9) to the superficial understanding of computer utilizing. To most of the participants, playing mp3 and netsurfing primitively seem to participant a satisfactory mastery of personal computer. The instructor has noticed that a significant number of participants have poor skill to start doing subtitling. Table (9) gives a clear account of the participants' technical constraints.

**Table 9: Participants' opinions about the grades they deserve**

Poor	Not bad	Good	V. Good	Excellent
10	5	14	7	2



Based on the collected data analysis of the test and the questionnaire (especially section 1), the study refers the subtitling challenges to the following reasons:

1. Undergraduates of translation programs are still suffering from linguistic difficulties in both English and Arabic languages i.e. understanding SL or recomposing the meaning into TL.
2. Likewise, undergraduates find it difficult for them to understand cultural expressions such as similes, metaphors, idioms, proverbs, etc...
3. Undergraduates use their vernacular Arabic more than the standard Arabic.
4. Undergraduates use the computer poorly.
5. Some computers are out-dated.
6. Till now, there is no a multimedia computer laboratory specified only for the translation program.
7. There is only one course that focuses on translation tools in general which is not enough.
8. Some undergraduates do not have enough aptitude to, seriously, deal with translation in general and translation technology in particular.

## Recommendations

In the light of the subtitling constraints that undergraduates face, the following recommendations are suggested to help surmounting these constraints.

1. Undergraduates need to take enough English courses to master the language satisfactorily. This proficiency can be attained through either a foundation year or raising the level of language required before students are enrolled to second year.
2. Undergraduates need to receive enough emersion to the other cultures in general and English culture(s) in particular. This can be attained through (out) class activities that help students approach these cultures. Instructors and trainers of skills and literature courses need to pay attention to the cultural factor as well.
3. Undergraduates need to receive enough training to understand English varieties and local dialects. They, then, need to be encouraged to listen to multi-ethnic varieties of English dialects and idiolects through skills and literature courses in particular.
4. Undergraduates need to have access to several reading genres to enrich their vocabulary in different aspects of life (daily, political, economic, legal, etc...). This can be achieved through the English language skills, literature and translation courses as well as through encouraging students to read

different types of texts in their open reading activities and assignments (newspapers, journals, tabloids, encyclopedias, etc....).

5. Undergraduates need to reinforce their Arabic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as their Arabic grammar, word diction and style. Arabic professors should play the role of trainers more than lecturers or instructors to enhance students' productive skills.
6. As a pre-requisite for electronic tools, undergraduates need to take the computer training courses more seriously. They should receive a better training in typing.
7. The university should equip the English Department with a computer lab in which undergraduates carry out and practice their interactive assignments for most of the courses especially electronic tools of translation.
8. Translation program needs to reconsider adding another course to cover all the topics of translation technology so that more training sessions on AVT can be prescribed.
9. Prior to practical training sessions, undergraduates need to receive more theoretical information about translation tools and strategies in general and AVT in particular.
10. Translation program needs to hire a qualified translation tools cadre to handle the technical installation and support for translation and interpreting.
11. Prior to the enrollment to English Department in general and translation program in particular, English Department needs to hold a clear, detailed orientation session with the undergraduates so that they can willingly decide on their career choice.
12. Translation program should follow-up the undergraduates' attitude and aptitude to guarantee sound pursue of their translation career.

## Conclusion

This study investigates the potential constraints that may cause set-backs in AVT in general and in subtitling in particular. The three domains, linguistic, technical and attitudinal have encompassed most of, if not all, these challenges of English-Arabic subtitling. The dominance of the linguistic domain provokes academicians and trainers to give priority to the language acquisition and practice. The bright side, on the other hand, is attitudinal domain which brings a clear picture that undergraduates have the aptitude toward subtitling. This positive attitude can be a foundation stone on which undergraduates subtitling skills can be improved. The elicited reasons can give the reader a clear picture when diagnosing the problems on which the study brings about suggested solutions.

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