

## **Audiovisual Translation in the Arab World (v 0.4): Mapping the Field**

Muhammad Y Gamal Ph.D.

### **Abstract**

Translation remains one of the most complex issues in modern Arab culture, thought and development. Despite the collective efforts of individuals, organisations and government policies the results continue to be modest and stop short of the desired target. In addition to the well-known issues that contribute to the translation crisis in the Arab world, digital technology has changed the rules of the game almost entirely. Translation, in the traditional sense is no longer accessed through paper and books but via screens and online. This is the world of audiovisual translation. This paper continues a study that began in 2007 that examines the status quo of audiovisual translation in the Arab world. Specifically, this work analyzes the challenges of localizing audiovisual translation, and unpacks some of the limitations in both policy and pedagogy that the field is currently facing.

### **Introduction**

Digital technology has changed the way information is created and accessed. Traditional print translation is no longer viable in a world that is increasingly reliant upon smart technology. Today, translation is created and consumed via screen. Traditionally, the academic area of translation studies has been concerned with the social phenomenon of cross-cultural communication with its epistemological issues, contexts, process, product and pedagogy. Digital technology, which relies on screens as the interface point, has pushed audiovisual translation to the fore. Audiovisual translation (AVT) in the Arab world remains outside the scope of translation departments at a time when there is an obvious need to espouse the concept, localize the discipline and invest in the training of specialists in Arabic audiovisual translation studies. Recent events, both political and cultural, underscore the numerous missed cultural and historical opportunities (Al-Sultani 2014) and the resulting cost due to the lack of audiovisual translators and adequate Arabic content online. As the Arab world today is divided between those experiencing the changes brought about by the Arab Spring and those who are relatively unaffected, the concept of audiovisual translation, though not entirely foreign, remains distant. In this paper, I intend to reflect on some developments that build on my previous research on Audiovisual translation in the Arab world (Gamal 2007, 2008a, 2013a) pointing to the importance of localizing the discipline of audiovisual translation studies and the immediate issues involved.

Perhaps one of the first priorities is to highlight the significance of the concept of AVT within the Arabic context, which will help uncover its intricacies and map out its complex and changing landscape. The significance lies in ensuring that the concept is seen through Arab eyes, in a way that examines the real questions and proposes relevant solutions that address the immediate problems and challenges. Failure to do so would further label audiovisual translation studies as a

foreign discipline, which would in turn frustrate efforts to localize the concept and prevent it from taking root in the Arab world and in Arabic. There are valuable lessons to be learned from other disciplines such as Egyptology and medicine. The former took many years until it became Egyptianized (Saeed 1999) and taught in Arabic, whereas the latter remains foreign and taught entirely in English or French.

### **The landscape of audiovisual translation in Arabic**

In order to appreciate the seriousness of audiovisual translation it is perhaps important to bear in mind the significant role translation plays in contemporary Arab culture. There is, however, a need for a clear, concise and comprehensive definition of audiovisual translation in Arabic. This is required in order to successfully promote the concept that will, eventually, help in its localization. The need for the definition is evident in light of the reluctance of academic and professional institutions to espouse the new branch of translation two decades after the launch of the first program in teaching screen translation in the Arab world (The American University in Cairo in 1995). Since then international academic research, conferences and publications have been pointing to the rising significance of the discipline. Yet, in Arabic the lack of interest continues despite events and developments that show the relevance of the issue.

Also, a definition of AVT for the Arab world is required as the situation is different from Western Europe, where the concept of specialization in audiovisual translation was born, and remains in the lead today. The field of audiovisual translation looks at how translation is created for consumption via screen. In 2003 a special issue of the journal *The Translator* was dedicated to Screen Translation marking the rise of the academic pursuit (Gambier 2003). In this respect it differs from print translation and its applications are much more numerous. As a specialization it covers subtitling, dubbing, audio description, subtitling for the hard of hearing and visually impaired, and live subtitling. Unlike traditional translation, which is consumed via paper and closely associated with the printing industry, AVT is closely related to digital technology and presupposes a professional technical knowledge of software and smart technology applications. While this definition could be said to apply to all languages the point here is that the definition must be closely linked to the Arabic cultural context, which is complex and must be taken as a whole. In other words, the definition must not be separated from its context otherwise it will remain a theory at best or at worst, a foreign concept.

Both the linguistic and cultural contexts show that audiovisual translation is catering to a region of 300 million Arabic speakers. The population is youthful with almost 60% under the age of 25 (World population review) of whom 29%, or 97 million persons, are illiterate (ALECSO 2014). At the same time, the common language is under pressure, if not attack (Al-Jabry 2013). Arabic is diglossic and local vernacular is on the rise, particularly in the written form as a response to the way the young speak and write online. Furthermore, English is infiltrating Arabic at such a fast rate that the incidence of lexical borrowing has reached a record level in both the spoken and written forms of Arabic (Asfour 2007 p. 207). This is a psycholinguistic issue that is outside the scope of this paper. The Arabic language context is also characterised by an education system that is burdened with neglect, lack of resources and investments particularly in Egypt, the most populous country in the Arab world (Abdelrahman 2014) and the result is graduates who lack basic scientific knowledge. This particular deficiency is partly responsible for several problems

varying from the spread of diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity to road fatalities, and even extremism. Each one of these issues can be attributed to an education system that has failed the Arab nation at large, notwithstanding some exceptions such as private international universities and the tertiary education system in some wealthier Arab countries.

In this context, audiovisual translation is meant to perform in a way that is different from the old system of translation and its outmoded policies. Despite the rhetoric of how important translation is to modernisation, moderation and progress, translation movements have contributed little to society. Most translation policies are elitist (Wazen 2010) and lack long term vision (Al-Batly 2010). Mathews quotes the founding director of the Higher Translation Institute in Algeria, Inam Bioud, who sees “a dire need to make up for the huge deficit in scientific books in Arabic if a serious attempt is made to replace English and French as the language of instruction in Arab universities” (Mathews 2014). Likewise, Egypt’s former chief translation policymaker and the current minister for culture Gaber Asfour expressed his doubts about the effectiveness of the current translation policies in the Arab world in a private meeting in early 2007 in Cairo. Later in the year, he published an article in the Emirates in which he candidly stated his position:

I am still unoptimistic about the future of the translation movement in the Arab world despite all the relevant optimistic factors. These include the increasing number of translation organizations all over the Arab world, including universities that have now begun publishing translations and lastly, the recent translation prizes offered by these organisations. Such could be seen as optimistic signs but only at the surface. However, should we look deeper; we would find insurmountable problems that will make the road too long and without optimism. (Gaber Asfour: 2007. Author’s translation)

What makes the road too long for the traditional translation policies is the fact that the mode of print translation i.e. books and paper is being challenged by a different format. Screens, be it the computer, tablet or smart phone, are fast replacing the book as the preferred format for accessing information. What audiovisual translation promises is to address the needs and to provide solutions that are manageable, affordable and accessible. AVT means that information can be translated and presented in a way that is attractive to the youth. The new concept of merging information and entertainment together i.e., *Infotainment* can educate and entertain at the same time. Yet the concept is being resisted by parents, and seen by officials, as not educational enough. The result; the term *Infotainment* has not been understood or internalized in the region, and consequently has no direct equivalent in Arabic (Gamal: 2013b).

### **Local and regional examples**

In order to appreciate the significance of audiovisual translation to the cultural, economic and educational development in the Arab context one has to examine, and indeed reflect on, some recent events. Arab submissions to the Oscars in 2014 were noticeably higher than any previous year. Yet none of the nominations (from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Palestine) got an award despite the artistic merit of the work presented (Fahim 2014). This however begs the question: in the absence of any formal academic examination of and professional training in subtitling did the directors consider subtitling as a serious factor that may have a direct influence on how their

work would be received by ‘foreign’ viewers and judges? Similarly, many Arab and Islamic cities of culture launch websites that remain ‘under construction’ or static for a considerable period of time, lacking updates and interactivity. Isn’t this reducing the web site to a form of one-off print-like advertising? The websites, whether for a cultural event, government service, or even a site dedicated to translation (for example the National Translation Centre in Egypt) seem to have translation errors that detract from their attractiveness and authority. Rasha Ismail, the former director of the National Translation Centre in Egypt, recognizes that the lack of interest in audiovisual translation is due to a lack of vision, as well as funds. Ismail concedes that the centre can only translate a limited number of books per year and faces a greater problem selling them (personal communication: April 2014). Another issue is the language options available, as most websites tend to be limited to English and French only. Asian languages particularly Japanese, Korean, and Chinese are seen on a very small number of sites. It is interesting, however, to note that the website of the tourism organization in Jordan has 12 languages (<http://visitjordan.com/MajorAttractions/tabid/54/Default.aspx>) and the website of the Sultan of Oman is available in 19 languages (<http://www.oman-qaboos.net/omanqaboos/default.aspx>).

Digital technology through audiovisual translation offers a new opportunity for Arab culture to be available and accessible to the outside world. This is an area in which traditional print translation has had limited success. In the Arabic context, subtitled films almost exclusively mean foreign (mostly American) films subtitled into Arabic. The complex issue of subtitling Arabic language films into foreign languages remains unexamined in the scarce number of MA theses written on audiovisual translation at Arab universities (Alwan 2011, Bhais 2011) and PhD theses at western universities (Al-Kadi 2010, Gamal 2013b). The entire Arabic (mostly Egyptian) DVD industry that is subtitled into English (and French) remains unexamined. The question is: why only subtitle into English and French when the DVD can have up to 40 languages? (Carroll: 2004) Digital technology has made subtitling more accessible and more affordable to produce. A generation ago forty language versions of the same film would have been unthinkable. Over the past two decades Mexican, Korean and Turkish dramas invaded the Arab world (Bilbassy-Charter 2010) through dubbing into classical Arabic, Syrian dialect and Egyptian vernacular. To date, dubbing and its impact on children, youth, and the uneducated remains unexamined (El-Nabawi 2014). The Treaty of Marrakesh ([www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)) that was adopted on 28 June 2013 calls for facilitating access to published work for the blind and the visually impaired has had little response from the audio-visual industry in most Arab countries. This is not surprising since only six Arab countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan) participated in the Marrakesh meeting despite the relevance to the blind community in Arab countries that traditionally receives little or no government attention. There is little interest or investment in audio description or audio recordings for this important community despite the availability of voice talent from Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Similarly, Arab states with huge tourism sectors (ironically most of them were part of the Arab Spring) remain unaware of the significance of audiovisual translation. The largest tourist media conference held in Luxor early in 2014 examined, *inter alia*, new media and the negative coverage abroad, but didn’t refer to the role of translation, foreign languages or audiovisual translation in promoting tourism. Despite the economic importance of tourism in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and Oman there are no courses dedicated to this genre of tourist translation. Nor are there programs that link the

production of documentaries to the audiovisual process of translation, subtitling and dubbing. Such a link remains an outlandish idea in translation (and media) departments.

Stagnation in the traditional cultural powerhouse of the Arab world (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) is almost counter-balanced by an increase in interest and investment in culture, media and technology in the fast developing countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The six member states have taken gigantic strides in creating an Arab brand worldwide. The City of Sharjah, the 2014 City of Islamic Culture has a website that reflects a sound understanding of the potential digital technology has and offers its content in eleven languages. However, the Libyan city of Tripoli which was designated the 2014 Arab City of Culture has not been able to seize the opportunity due to the violence in the country (Mzioudet: 2014). The city of Manama, on the other hand, became the inaugural Asian City of Tourism in 2014 and the title allows the city to showcase itself to its citizens, residents and visitors. The Manama case merits closer examination in order to measure the impact of audiovisual translation policies on society since it was the Arab City of Culture in 2012 and the Arab City of Tourism in 2013. Audiovisual translation offers solutions that are affordable and accessible, however this requires that bureaucrats know how to exploit it. Otherwise invaluable opportunities to raise the profile of a city will be missed, as happened with the Kurdish city of Erbil, which was named the Arab City of Tourism in 2014 ([www.erbiltourism2014.com](http://www.erbiltourism2014.com)). Despite the immediate and obvious benefits tourism in the Arab world can derive from collaboration with audiovisual translation, there are no examples of such cooperation. These events and examples, the good and lackluster, are necessary to build a body of knowledge that provides case studies for examination and discussion. Audiovisual translation is a new discipline and despite the fact that it is practiced in its simplest forms of subtitling (mostly into Arabic) and dubbing (only into Arabic), it needs to be broadened with investment and collaboration with other vital industries such as film, television, tourism, sport and culture to ensure that it is thoroughly localized. There are lessons to be learned from other activities and disciplines that were introduced into Arabic and practiced for a long time before they became localized linguistically and professionally. One such example is football (Gamal 2008b).

### **Research in Arabic audiovisual translation**

It is for this very reason that research into Arabic audiovisual translation must start in Arabic, and with local examples, issues, and case studies. Importing a foreign idea is not a bad thing, particularly in today's super-connected world, but for an idea to take root and bear fruit it must be localized and seen as a local activity with direct relevance to the local context. Egyptian philosopher Zaki Naguib Mahmoud points out that the act of importation *per se* is not shameful as long as the attitude is to examine and adapt the foreign idea to the local context. He warns that until this happens "all production will be no more than a pale imitation of the foreign original (Mahmoud: 164)". Despite the lack of interest in examining audiovisual translation academically and professionally it is significant to point out that research should be focused on examining the local context in as many Arab countries as possible so as to help define the landscape of AVT in Arabic. There is no shortage of suitable examples that can provide material for case studies. For instance, attempts by the film industry in Morocco to promote itself abroad in languages other than French and English, the call in Palestine to produce multilingual documentaries on the history and geography of the land for future generations in Palestine and abroad, the activity in Lebanon to increase the interest in and usage of the Arabic language

([www.feilamer.org](http://www.feilamer.org)) , the call in Abu Dhabi to use Arabic only on social media for just one day a year (Al-Subaihi: 2013), the crowd-sourcing activity in Jordan to produce a free Wikipedia-style encyclopaedia in Arabic, the new translation award for Arabic-language works translated into foreign languages offered in Iraq in 2013, the campaign to safeguard Arabic in Saudi Arabia ([www.voiceofarabic.net](http://www.voiceofarabic.net)), the initiative to develop a large scale diabetes education campaign in Egypt (a project that remains paper-based whereas a DVD employing multimodal information may prove more successful particularly with the less educated population), the translation conference organised in Abu Dhabi with the focus on young translators, and the announcement of the first MA and first teaching positions in audiovisual translation in Qatar in 2014, offer a bird's eye view of the current situation in the Arab region. Thus engagement with local and regional examples of audiovisual translation is conducive to more practice, and therefore more experience. This is seen as a prerequisite for the successful localisation of the so-far-foreign concept of AVT; developing solutions that are not only current and practical but also inclusive, relevant, and applicable in the wider Arabic context.

### **Localising the new discipline**

Despite the lack of taught courses in audiovisual translation at Arab universities, some postgraduate research actually examines several aspects of audiovisual translation. While a few of the published dissertations can be classified as research into audiovisual translation, they have two major shortcomings, if not limitations. First, the research is linguistically-based, focusing on translation proper to the exclusion of other relevant issues in audiovisual translation. These issues include, *inter alia*, the non-linguistic meaning in film, the examination of the subtitling of different film genres, the subtitling, dubbing and re-narration of documentaries, subtitling for children and the less-educated, the study of viewer reception, the examination of non-, extra- and partly-linguistic features in film, technology and its applications. Furthermore, the lack of an alliance with the media industry, and the absence of multilingual tourist, sport, cultural, or political audiovisual translation material either on air, online or in DVD format is a major weakness. A second limitation is the direction of subtitling, which is pre-dominantly *into Arabic*. Not unlike the situation in translating Arabic literature into foreign languages, the subtitling of Arabic-language television and filmic material (narrative films and documentaries) remains unexamined. The Egyptian Literary Writers Society concluded in its 2013 meeting that 'translating Egyptian literature into foreign languages should be treated as a national security issue' (El-Meligi: 2014). The DVD industry in Arabic began with films from Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco but no known studies have examined the activity of subtitling Arabic language films into foreign languages. This is a significant issue as it pertains to two big industries; cinema and tourism.

As can be gleaned from the above observations, the scarce Arabic research into audiovisual translation does not include reference to the technical issues of software design, selection and use, professional training programs or the practical issues of subtitling such as working conditions, freelance work, pay, resources, quality, working with an editor, deadlines or viewer reception. It is clear that most of the research is purely academic and for academic purposes only (higher degrees by students or the fulfilment of publication requirements by faculty) with little interest in, or relevance to, the real practitioner. It is equally significant to note that to date the number of researchers who have published more than one academic paper on Arabic to English

audiovisual translation remains at two (the other researcher is Dr M. A. Thawabteh from Al-Quds University in Palestine). This deficit in research is a serious issue that, if allowed to continue, will actually hamper and frustrate the localization of audiovisual translation in Arabic. It must be remembered that the quantity of translators working as subtitlers far outnumber academics, a fact that requires (audiovisual) translation pedagogy adopt a more practical approach. 'Traditional translation' professors need to explore the mechanics of working as a freelance subtitler, come to terms with the software, the theory and practice of subtitling as well as the principles of research in audiovisual translation if they wanted to establish genuine programs in audiovisual translation in their translation departments. Anything short of this will falsely entrench the notion that audiovisual translation is a passing trend.

In other words, this is a case of a technological gap between academia and practitioners on the one hand, and a generational gap between the professors and their students who are growing up with YouTube, Facebook and smart phones on the other. To overcome this state of affairs, the wider map of audiovisual translation in the Arab world must be explored through descriptive and chronological studies. It must be remembered that most, if not all, of the published Arab research in audiovisual translation is actually on subtitling and dubbing. Also requiring examination is the new concept of audiovisual translation; as translation of a multimodal text that requires attention to two channels: audio & visual. Further, the language it employs must be carefully designed to address a particular audience. Finally, the audiovisual text is accessed and consumed via screen, which has a totally different format from print translation. This basic theoretical aspect is fundamental as it provides the necessary introduction to teaching audiovisual translation. However the technical aspect of audiovisual translation is equally fundamental as the subtitler is also the technician who actually produces the translation for television (Gamal: 1996). The idea of separating the translator from the software is no longer tenable despite the current commercially-dictated practices of the subtitling industry in many countries.

### **Building stronger links with industry**

Audiovisual translation is closely linked to two other fields; the media and technology. This is why the subtitling industry needs to liaise with the translation profession for mutual benefits. A gap between the two is neither sustainable nor profitable (Gambier: 2014; p. 8). For example, the introduction of simultaneous interpreting and subtitling of the prayer services at the Grand Mosque in Mecca (and later in Medina) into English, French, Urdu, and Malay, have not been examined either academically or professionally. Examination would yield professional and pedagogic benefits not only for the service in Saudi Arabia but also for translators, translation scholars, the subtitling industry, and the translation community everywhere in the Arab world. The Saudi Ministry responsible for the Hajj (pilgrimage) that attracts two million pilgrims annually could also benefit from audiovisual translation ([www.hajjinformation.com](http://www.hajjinformation.com)). Another example is the introduction by Al-Arabiya news channel (based in Dubai) of live English subtitles of its Arabic language content ([www.alarabiya.net](http://www.alarabiya.net)). This is an advanced technological step and a professional one in news media production. However, the service which subtitles the news feed into English remains outside the scope of industry and academia. These large-scale professional initiatives and practices should provide motivation and scope for academic research and professional examination. Failure to capitalize on these individual but successful examples disregards an invaluable resource in the bid to localize the discipline of audiovisual translation in



Arabic. Researchers, academics, and practitioners alike need to describe their experiences highlighting the conditions, challenges, and strategies employed in these projects to the benefit of all.

Debating and discussing these case studies is likely to raise awareness of what is happening in the industry and the world of commercial and freelance translation projects. Academics need to consult with industry leaders before they design courses and training material to ensure that the skills and techniques taught are actually the same skills and techniques the industry expects. This underscores the significance of a strategic alliance between the translation profession and the media sector/film industry/information technology sector to ensure that a cadre of researchers/trainers exist to help in localizing the concept. Only then will practitioners be able to use the technology aptly and reflect on practice to develop the necessary expertise to tackle local problems with solutions that are linguistically correct, culturally acceptable and pragmatically appropriate. Some of these problems include: Arabic online content, low reading levels, poor command of Arabic, low levels of scientific and general knowledge, lack of suitable educational documentaries, the private tuition endemic and the non-existent infotainment sector to name but a few.

### **Towards a pedagogy of audiovisual translation**

Courses that examine audiovisual translation at Arab universities are still rare. However, the lack of interest in audiovisual translation studies, confirmed by the absence of classes, courses and conferences, does not necessarily reflect a total lack of interest in researching issues in audiovisual translation (Thawabteh 2011). There are some studies on Arabic subtitling although the majority are in one direction only; English into Arabic and at the linguistic and cultural levels only (Mazid 2006, Mustafa 2012, Zitwai 2004). However, these studies need to be compiled and discussed in order to develop the Arabic-based literature that will eventually lead to a body of knowledge sufficient to develop pedagogy in Arabic audiovisual translation studies. As already addressed, there are some obvious issues that need to be tackled first, once resolved, the general awareness of the discipline will increase, as will the theoretical framework, methodologies, views and knowledge (Gamal 2013c). An example of a possible topic for initial research is film titles. Is there a difference in strategy between translating Arabic film titles into English, and Hollywood film titles into Arabic? The answer: there is. A quick quantitative survey of Egyptian film titles translated into English would show that the titles are translated *literally* into English. For example, subtitlers are keen to preserve the impact the title has in Arabic. This is in contrast with Hollywood film titles that are translated *liberally*, which means the subtitler feels authorized or empowered to domesticate the foreign title into Arabic. Now, why is this the case? What are the linguistic, cultural and translational factors that determine, or indeed force such an attitude? Are there other important factors that have a direct bearing on the process of translating foreign film titles in most Arab countries? This is more so in Egypt due to the size and volume of the film industry in the country. Naturally there are several factors at play. However, the commercial factor, which looks at promoting the foreign film among specific sectors of the community, is the most significant. As for the translation of the Arabic-language film titles into English it is, most likely, the under-developed skill of trans-creating that tends to 'label' the film rather than find a proper and creative title in English. A different albeit interesting example is the first film produced in Qatar in 2010 and titled in Arabic *Aqareb el Sa'a* (Hands of the clock) directed by



Khalifa Almuraikhi. Its English translation is *Clockwise* which raises a different problem: there is a popular British film by the same name starring John Cleese and directed by Christopher Morahan dating back to 1986. Was the translator aware of this and what effect, if any, did the translation strategy achieve? This example also raises the issue of a national audiovisual authority and how a country presents itself abroad. The commercial translation of film titles produced on (Egyptian) DVDs provides an opportunity for the examination of Arabic titles translated into English. It is equally instructive to conduct a bilingual study of the translation of film titles on commercially released DVDs between 2002 and 2010, which will show that the French translations of the Egyptian title, by and large, tend to be more trans-creative, accurate, and on the whole more professional than the English titles (Gamal 2013b).

### **Comparative audiovisual studies**

Another popular avenue for promoting research into audio-visual translation is to encourage researchers to pay attention to versions in subtitles. Quite often satellite channels in various Arab capitals broadcast a film subtitled into English (and at times into French and Spanish) and these subtitled films offer an invaluable opportunity to examine their subtitles against the commercially-subtitled DVDs or other versions broadcast on other channels. A comparative study of the subtitling would be not only instructive but highly informative. The exercise could be taken further, comparing translations of multiple foreign languages of the same film. Starting students in audiovisual research is seen as an important step towards the localization of the discipline. However, this presupposes interest and a high level of expertise by professors, both requirements for this exercise to bear fruit. One common pitfall already mentioned is the examination often takes a linguistic twist, and focuses on semantics and lexical issues only. To overcome this, intensive courses in audiovisual translation need to be developed and delivered to prospective teaching staff. In order to take the first step, however, the political will is needed to train a core group of professors who are first and foremost interested in the field, film-literate, well-versed in the local context, appreciate the mechanics of creative translation to be consumed via a screen, and are aware of the viewer and their needs.

In this paper, I have examined the situation of audiovisual translation in the Arab world since my previous publication on the subject “Audiovisual translation in the Arab world v.03” (Gamal 2013a). It is my hope that the next article in this body of work will examine the research papers presented at the first conference on audiovisual translation in the Arab world. I have been calling for a conference on AVT to be held at an Arab university and to be discussed in Arabic. Despite the initial interest there has been a reluctance to commit. Next year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Strasburg Conference that gave AVT in Western Europe its initial push. A lot has happened since then. However, the picture is not entirely sombre as the European occasion is matched by the twentieth anniversary of the first course in Screen Translation in the Arab world that commenced at the American University in Cairo. So far Arab translation conferences do not examine audiovisual translation, a fact that is indicative of its standing in academia and the translation profession.

### **Conclusion**

Next to the Great Pyramid of Cheops there is a modern building that houses a boat, the oldest boat in the world dating back to the Fourth Dynasty 4600 years ago (EAO 1986). The sixtieth

anniversary of the discovery of the Sun Boats beside the pyramid of Cheops passed in May this year with no acknowledgement from the Egyptian media. The discovery, and its anniversary, is significant for a country that derives 12% of its income from tourism. In a culture where almost half the population is under the age of 25, such an anniversary has an educational relevance that should be utilized. The story of Kamal El-Mallakh's discovery of the sun boats on May 26<sup>th</sup> 1954 deserves to be retold, documented, and translated. Visual culture, in a society that is characterised by young users of digital technology, needs to be examined again in order to find the most appropriate ways to cater to the demands of this new consumer. The story of El-Mallakh's unusual discovery and his professional career in the wake of the discovery provides content that should be made available not only in Arabic but also in foreign languages. These cultural events and anniversaries should not be missed. Due to their value as *infotainment*, they need to be highlighted, explained, and documented on air, online, on DVDs and in new media. Apart from the cultural and archaeological significance of the anniversary the audiovisual treatment of the event is highly instructive. It shows the importance of understanding the local context in order to draw up a relevant policy. This example also shows why audiovisual translation is pedagogically relevant: as classrooms are increasingly becoming wired and equipped with WiFi, tablets will soon become the *modus operandi* of accessing material and resources. Documentaries and audiovisual material both in Arabic and in foreign languages need to be incorporated into the curricula thus the class dedicated to translation would be replaced by online content creation; which could start with homework and assignments and develop into translation and its trans-creation into foreign languages. There is an obvious need for creative solutions when it comes to translating Arabic into foreign languages. It is for all these reasons that Arab universities should start organizing their first ever conference on audiovisual translation.

*Muhammad Y Gamal is an audiovisual translator and researcher with more than 21-year experience. He holds the first PhD in Arabic audiovisual translation from the University of New South Wales. His research interests include: Audiovisual translation policy, pedagogy and practice. Gamal takes great interest in subtitling Arab cinema into English and the filmography of Omar Sharif. He has published extensively on developing audiovisual translation studies in Arabic.*

## References

- Abdelrahman, W. (2014) *Tablet elmadariss lan yulghi alkitab almadrassi* (School Tablets will not abolish school books). An interview with the Egyptian Minister of Education. In Asharqalawsat Newspaper. 20 January 2014. London.
- Al-Batly, K. (2010) *Mahmoud Shammam: Alnaft Shawaba almasbbad althaqafi alsaudi li'uquod tawilah* (Oil disfigured the Saudi cultural scene for many decades: Mahmoud Shammam). In Al Hayat Newspaper 23 February 2010. London.
- ALECSO, <http://www.projects-alecso.org/>
- Al-Jabry, S. (2013) Alarm bells over future of Arabic language. In The National newspaper, Abu Dhabi. <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/heritage/alarm-bells-over-future-of-arabic-language> (Article accessed 14/04/2014)
- Al-Kadi, T. (2010) Issues in the subtitling and dubbing of English language films into Arabic: problems and solutions. Thesis available at: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/326/> (Accessed on 14/04/2014)
- Almuraikhi, Khalifa, 2010, *Clockwise*, Zubara Films
- Al-Subaihi, T. (2013) Bel Arabi calls on Arabs to use only Arabic on social media for 24 hours. In The National newspaper, Abu Dhabi. <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/education/bel-arabi-calls-on-arabs-to-use-only-arabic-on-social-media-for-24-hours> (Article accessed on 14/04/2014).
- Al-Sultani, F. (2014) *Assayab wa Thomas bayna ehitfalayan* (Assyab and Thomas between two anniversaries). In Asharqalawsat Newspaper. Issue 11 January 2014. London.
- ALECSO (2014) Statement on the Arab Fight Illiteracy Day January 8<sup>th</sup> 2014. Arab League Education, Culture and Science Organization. Article available at; <http://www.projects-alecso.org/?p=2335> (Sighted 14 April 2014)
- Alwan, N. (2011) Subtitling and cultural representation: the case of Freej. Thesis available at <https://dspace.aus.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11073/2742/29.232-2011.16%20Nouf%20Alwan.pdf?sequence=1> (Sighted 14/04/2014)
- Arab digital content, <http://arabdigitalcontent.com/>
- Asfour, G. (2007) *Moustaqbal altarjamah fil alam alarabi* (Future of translation in the Arab world). In Alitihad Newspaper on 30/12/2007 Abu Dhabi. Article available at; <http://www.alitihad.ae/details.php?id=161783&y=2007> (Article accessed 14/04/2014)
- Asfour, M.H. (2007) Ta'theer altarjamah ala lughah al-Arabiya (Influence of translation on Arabic language). In Sharjah University Journal of Religion and the Humanities, Vol.4 No 2. June 2007.
- Bhais, E. (2011) The Translatability of English profanity in Arabic subtitles. Thesis available at: <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/thesis/view/137>
- Bilbassy-Charters, N. (2010) Leave it to Turkish soap operas to conquer hearts and minds. Article available at: [http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/04/15/leave\\_it\\_to\\_turkish\\_soap\\_operas\\_to\\_conquer\\_hearts\\_and\\_minds](http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/04/15/leave_it_to_turkish_soap_operas_to_conquer_hearts_and_minds) (Article accessed 14/04/2014)
- Carroll, M. (2004) 'Subtitling: changing standards for a new media?' Article available at: <http://www.translationdirectory.com/article422.htm> (Article accessed 14/04/2014)
- EAO (1986) Museum of Cheops Boat. Egyptian Antiquities Organization. Cairo.
- El-Meligui, S. (2014) *Targamat aladab almasri ila allughat qadiyat amn qawmi* (Translating Egyptian literature into foreign languages is a national security issue). In Almasry Alyoum newspaper, Cairo. Accessed 14/04/2014. <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/369436>
- El-Nabawi, M. (2014) 'To sub or to dub: A translator argues for dubbing'. Article available at <http://madamasr.com/content/sub-or-dub>. (Article accessed 14/04/2014)
- Fahim, J. (2014) Arab cinema and the struggle for Oscar glory. Article available at: <http://www.culture.com/arts/arab-cinema-and-struggle-oscar-glory> Article sighted 14 April 2014.
- Gamal, M. (1996) 'Producing translation for television: subtitling'. In the Journal of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators *Antipodes*, No.1. AUSIT. Melbourne.
- Gamal, M. (2007) 'Audiovisual Translation in the Arab world: a changing scene' in Translation Watch Quarterly. Vol.3, No.2 (June 2007). Translations Standards Institute. Melbourne. Australia.
- Gamal, M. (2008a) 'Egypt's audiovisual scene' published on the Arab Media and Society website: <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=675>
- Gamal, M. (2008b) 'The final whistle: how football terminology took root in Arabic'. In Lavric, E, G. Pisek, A. Skinner and W. Stadler (eds) *The Linguistics of Football*. Gunter Narr Verlag. Tubingen.

- Gamal, M. (2013a) 'AVT in the Arab world v.03'. In the proceedings of ACAH 2012 The Asian Conference on the Arts and Humanities, Osaka. April 2013.
- Gamal, M. (2013b) Towards a model for film literacy in audiovisual translation: a case study of the subtitling of a classic Egyptian film into English. Unpublished doctoral thesis.
- Gamal, M. (2013c) "Developing a theoretical framework for audiovisual translation in Egypt". In *The American Journal of Translation Studies*, Vol.5 (2). Academic Press, Utah, USA.
- Gambier, Y. (ed) (2003) *Screen Translation. A special issue of the Translator*. Manchester. St Jerome.
- Gambier, Y. (2014) Changing landscape in translation. In *The International Journal of Society, Culture and Language*. Article available online at: [http://ijscl.net/article\\_4638\\_0.html](http://ijscl.net/article_4638_0.html) (Accessed 14/04/2014)
- Mazid, B. (2006) 'Arabic subtitles on English movies: Some linguistic, ideological and pedagogic issues'. *IJAES*, vol. 7, 2006: pp. 81-100.
- Mahmoud, Z. N. (1990) *Arabbiyyon bayna thaqafatein* (An Arab between two cultures). Cairo. Dar Shorouk.
- Mathews, D. (2014) 'Let us learn in our own language, says Algerian scholar'. In *The Times Higher education supplement*. 17 April 2014. London. Article available at: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/let-us-learn-in-our-own-language-says-algerian-scholar/2012649.article> (Article accessed 17/04/2014)
- Morahan, Christopher, 1986, *Clockwise*, Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment
- Mustafa, B. (2012) Film translation: subtitling vs dubbing. In *Almustansariyah Journal of Arts*. Vol 56. Pps 1-24. Almustansariyah University. Baghdad.
- Mzioudet, H. (2014) Celebrations of Tripoli as Arab Culture Capital postponed; preparations continue though, Ministry of Culture. In *Libya Herald* 14/03/2014. <http://www.libyaherald.com>. (Article accessed 14/04/2014)
- Saeed, L. (1999) *ilm almasriyat mata ysbih masriyan* (When will Egyptology become an Arabic discipline?). In *Ahwal Masriyah* magazine. Vol 2, Issue 5. Cairo. Ahram Publishing.
- Sultan Qaboos web site, <http://www.oman-qaboos.net/omanqaboos/default.aspx>
- Thawabteh, M. (2011) 'Linguistic, cultural and technical problems in English-Arabic subtitling'. In *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpreting*. Vol 5 (1). Article available online at: [http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTI05/pdf\\_doc/02.pdf](http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTI05/pdf_doc/02.pdf)
- Treaty of Marrakesh, [http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/en/vip\\_dc/vip\\_dc\\_8\\_rev.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/en/vip_dc/vip_dc_8_rev.pdf)
- Visit Jordan, <http://visitjordan.com/MajorAttractions/tabid/54/Default.aspx>
- Wazen, A. (2010) *Altarjamah wal tafra* (Translation and the rise). In *Alhayat Newspaper*. 29 March 2010 . London.
- World Population Review, [www.worldpopulationreview.com](http://www.worldpopulationreview.com)
- Zitawi, J. (2004) *The Translation of Disney Comics in the Arab World: A Pragmatic Perspective*. [http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/ctis/phd/completed\\_phd/zitawi/](http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/ctis/phd/completed_phd/zitawi/) (Accessed 14 July 2014)