



ABSTRACTS: [VOLUME 1, SPECIAL ISSUE S1](#).

ABSTRACT

Sexual, Religious and Cultural Taboos Subtitled in American TV Shows and Movies

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Published in September 2019

This study was conducted to examine subtitling into Arabic in American movies and TV shows that deal with sexual, religious and cultural taboos. This paper analyzed three episodes from the American TV show, Friends, and two episodes from animation series, The Simpsons, and three American movies, Troy, Sierra Burgess is a Loser, and The Wolf of Wall Street, to examine these issues. The analysis process was done by watching these episodes and movies, collecting the English words that have discrepancy with the Arabic subtitles, transcribing them with a short description of the relevant scenes in which they occurred, and finally considering the relationship between the original English words and the Arabic subtitles by focusing on the choice of words used in the subtitle. The study demonstrated that subtitlers generally present qualified subtitles, but when it comes to sexual, religious and vulgar contents, they tend to either euphemize or omit this content from the subtitle line. Through examining these contents, the study also showed that the subtitlers, by honoring the cultural ideologies that are found in most of the Arab societies in their subtitles, presented a discrepancy between the ideologies of the Arab culture and the ideologies of the American culture. The first was presented as a standard and idealized one, while the other was presented in any ways deprived.