

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Lost in domestication: Arabic subtitling norms and the suppression of feminist critique in *Casino* (1995)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how the Arabic subtitle track of Martin Scorsese's 1995 film 'Casino' (henceforth, *Casino*) reconstructs gendered discourse of the film. The film dialogue, which deploys misogynistic epithets, sexualized commands, and hypermasculine threats as a vehicle of social critique rather than as gratuitous embellishment, poses an acute ideological problem for translators working within Arabic sociolinguistic norms. Drawing upon an integrated analytical framework that combines Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy of extralinguistic cultural references, Fairclough's (1992, 2001) critical discourse studies, and feminist translation theory (von Flotow, 1997; Castro, 2013), the analysis reveals a domesticating process whereby choices that conform to Arabic sociolinguistic norms simultaneously diminish the source film's capacity to critique the patriarchal structures it depicts. The paper also found that women mentions are more often omitted than translated. When they are translated, they are more often substituted than retained. The analysis also suggests that the translation practice is selective rather than uniform.

KEYWORDS

Audiovisual translation; Arabic subtitling; Gendered discourse; Feminist translation theory; Critical discourse studies; *Casino* (1995)

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1. Introduction

Attempting to translate gendered discourse in a film industry encapsulates ideological consequences extending beyond merely the selection of target-language equivalents. The power relations encoded in the source text are either sustained, diluted or reinforced by the choice of lexis in the target language when performing misogynistic epithets, sexualized commands, or hypermasculine threats. This has huge consequences in film translation since verbal content interacts with performance, visual narrative, and ambient sound in ways that no single semiotic layer can fully carry alone (Perez-González, 2014). When navigating the explicit gender violence of Hollywood cinema, translators of Arabic-speaking contexts encounter multiple, simultaneous pressures related to the cultural norms of certain linguistic traditions and conventions. Such norms control the representation of gender, sexuality, and verbal aggression, in addition to the commercial imperatives of global media industry, which have completely different ideological assumptions from those of the target community.

Casino offers an instructive site of rich resources for examining these pressures. Drawing upon Nicholas Pegg's (1995) nonfiction account of events in Las Vegas during the 1970s, the film deploys a register of inexorable verbal extreme, including misogynistic slurs, sexualized commands, and first-person masculine narration. Not only does this authenticate period setting but also exposes the brutality that organized crime and patriarchal power inflict on women. Characters such as the volatile enforcer Nicky Santoro and the exploited showgirl Ginger McKenna endorse a grammar of gendered domination in which language functions as a weapon of subjugation. The film's dialogue thus operates simultaneously as social realism and ideological critique, a quality that makes it a demanding text for translators and a revealing one for scholars of translation and gender.

This study draws its corpus from the Arabic subtitled version of *Casino*. The introduction of international cinema to the Arabic language has attracted increasing scholarly attention, where tendencies toward the alleviation of swear words, sexual content, and gendered slurs in subtitling and dubbing have been reported by researchers (Al-Yasin & Rabab'ah 2019; Diaz-Cintas Remael, 2007; Faiq 2019). Nevertheless, insufficient research has scrutinized the ideological consequences when such

adaptations are applied to a film whose explicit language is itself a vehicle of feminist critique. This paper addresses that gap, highlighting what changes when Casino's gendered discourse is translated into Arabic as well as what those changes do to the film's ideological argument. The study was guided by three research questions:

What translation strategies characterize the Arabic version of misogynistic language, threats and sexualized discourse in Casino?

What ideological consequences do these strategies produce in terms of reconstructing the film's portrayal of masculinity and femininity?

To what extent does the neutralization of misogynistic discourse in the Arabic version preserve, dilute, or subvert the film's feminist critique?

Addressing these questions requires an integrated theoretical framework capable of operating at both the micro-level of individual lexical choices and the macro-level of ideological reconstruction. The framework proposed here brings together Pedersen's (2011) systematic taxonomy of translation strategies, Fairclough's (1992, 2001) critical discourse studies, and feminist translation theory (von Flotow, 1997; Castro, 2013). This combination allows the analysis to move between technical description and ideological interpretation without collapsing the distinction between the two.

The study has some limitations in terms of its reliance on one movie and the small size of the corpus. This makes it more of an exploratory study that gives room for potential future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

The analysis draws on three interrelated bodies of theory, each one of them addresses a distinct dimension of the phenomena under study. Rather than applying these frameworks sequentially or in isolation, the study deals with them as mutually informing. While Pedersen's taxonomy provides the descriptive vocabulary for identifying and classifying translation choices, Critical Discourse studies (CDS) offer the analytical tools for interpreting their ideological consequences, and feminist translation theory supplies the evaluative criteria for assessing their ethical implications. Following is a glimpse of each framework.

Pedersen (2005, 2011) develops a systematic taxonomy of strategies available to subtitlers when handling extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs), items embedded in the source culture that may not map straightforwardly onto target-culture equivalents. His framework distinguishes between strategies that retain source-culture specificity (retention and specification) and those that assimilate content to target-culture norms (substitution, omission, and generalization). Particularly relevant here is Pedersen's (2011) distinction between adaptations that are functionally "mandatory" because the source item would be incomprehensible without modification, and those that are "optional," motivated by ideological preference or cultural acceptability rather than communicative necessity (pp. 75-78).

This distinction is especially productive when applied to the Arabic translation of Casino gendered discourse. As the analysis below demonstrates, the most consequential translation choices in the corpus are not those driven by linguistic necessity but those reflecting culturally motivated judgments. Pedersen's taxonomy allows these choices to be identified and classified with precision, providing a descriptive baseline from which ideological interpretation can proceed.

CDS provides the analytical tools necessary to move from description to interpretation. Fairclough's (1992) foundational framework conceptualizes languages as a form of social practice that both reflects and reproduces power relations: discourse does not merely represent the social world but actively constructs it. His concept of "discourse technologization," developed in later work (Fairclough, 2001), is relevant here, referring to the process by which discursive norms are reshaped to conform to institutional or cultural expectations, often naturalizing asymmetric power relations in the process.

Van Dijk (2001) emphasis on the ideological dimensions of lexical selection further informs the analysis. Van Dijk demonstrates that the choice between near-synonymous expressions is never ideologically neutral since words encode evaluative frameworks that position social actors in specific power relations. When a translation replaces a degrading term with a neutral one, it does not simply remove an offensive element; it erases the evaluative positioning that the original term performed. Van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) framework for the representation of social actors complements this perspective, offering categories, including activation, passivation, and exclusion, through which the analysis traces how the agency and subjectivity of female characters are reconfigured across source and target texts.

Feminist translation scholarship has evolved considerably since its early formulations, and this evolution bears directly on the questions the study addresses. von Flotow (1997) established core principles of feminist translation praxis, emphasizing the translator's ethical responsibility to foreground rather than obscure gender relations. Her identification of strategies such as supplementation, prefacing, and footnoting as means of making gender politics visible remains influential, though she acknowledged the context-dependency of such interventions.

Castro (2013) argues that what counts as ethically sound translation practice varies considerably across cultural and institutional contexts, and that strategies which appear progressive from one standpoint may have regressive effects from another. This insight applies directly to the Arabic translation of Casino, where choices that might be understood as protective toward Arabic-speaking audience may simultaneously work against the source film's feminist logic. It is precisely this tension that the concept of the feminist silencing effect (discussed Section 6) is designed to capture.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Audiovisual Translation and Gendered Discourse

The translation of gender in audiovisual media has attracted sustained scholarly interest, though research remains uneven in its disciplinary distribution. Work in translation studies has tended to focus on the formal constraints of subtitling and dubbing, while feminist media studies have examined gender representation in localized content with comparatively less attention to the specific mechanisms of translation. Perez-González's (2014) comprehensive overview of audiovisual translation identifies the treatment of taboo content as one of the challenges in the field, noting that technical accommodations, such as compressing dialogue to fit subtitle timecodes, often carry ideological effects that are neither intended nor recognized by practitioners.

Mills (2008) establishes the theoretical basis for analyzing gendered language as a system of social relations rather than a mere catalogue of offensive expressions. Her concept of "marked femininity," referring to linguistic forms that specifically target women's identities through demeaning categorization, is directly applicable to the vocabulary Casino deploys. Mills' framework enables the recognition that removing misogynistic epithets in translation does not simply excise a surface feature; it eliminates a marker of ideological positioning that the source text places at the centre of its argument.

Santaemilia and Maruenda (2018) observe that research on gender in translation has predominantly addressed the written mode, with audiovisual translation receiving far less sustained feminist attention despite the multimodal complexity that sets it apart from literary translation. This gap matters because the interaction between verbal and visual meaning in film creates possibilities for compensatory meaning-making that text-based feminist frameworks may not adequately account for. Where dialogue is softened in the subtitle track, the visual content of a scene may retain its graphic force, producing a disjunction between verbal and visual registers that is itself a form of semiotic meaning.

3.2 Arabic Media Localization and Cultural Norms

Research on the localization of international media content into Arabic has consistently reported patterns of modification in the treatment of taboo content. Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah's (2019) study of Arabic audiovisual translation demonstrates the tension between the communicative imperative to render source content with reasonable fidelity and the cultural expectation that translated media will conform to norms governing the representation of gender, sexuality, and verbal aggression. This tension is acute in the subtitling of Hollywood films, where the gap between source-culture and target-culture conventions is wide and frequently traversed at significant ideological cost.

Faiq (2019) examines this dynamic through the lens of cultural adaptations in Arabic translation, describing the institutional pressures that shape translators' choices and demonstrating that culturally driven modifications can compromise the source text's semantic and ideological integrity. Bassnett's (2014) notion of adaptation as a form of interpretive rewriting provides a complementary theoretical perspective: what appears in the target text is not merely a modified version of the source but a reconstruction that reflects the translator's cultural positioning as much as the source author's intentions.

Amireh's (2000) earlier work on the reception of feminist content in Arabic translation offers a useful historical perspective, demonstrating that the challenges of rendering gendered discourse across this particular linguistic and cultural boundary are longstanding and have consistently involved difficult compromises between different claims of fidelity. Her analysis makes clear that the choices Arabic translators make when handling gendered content reflect not merely individual judgment but institutional, regulatory, and cultural constraints that operate simultaneously at multiple levels.

3.3 Research Gaps

Despite these contributions, the existing literature presents several significant lacunae. No study has yet examined in sustained detail the ideological consequences of Arabic localization practices when applied to a film whose explicit gendered language constitutes the medium of its feminist critique. The existing research on Arabic media translation has recorded patterns of neutralization without examining the effect when social critique in the source text depends precisely on its vulgarity for its rhetorical force. Furthermore, while scholars have studied the domestication of female sexuality in translation, the rendering of masculine violence and hypermasculine discourse in Arabic audiovisual contexts remains underexplored. This gap that Mills (2008) identifies at the level of gendered language analysis in English but that requires empirical grounding of the kind this study provides. Finally, the concept of the feminist silencing effect articulated in Section 6 responds to the absence of a precise theoretical vocabulary for describing the specific configuration in which protectionist translation ethics and ideological suppression coincide.

4. Methodology

The data used in this study consists of the English dialogue track of Casino (1995) and its corresponding Arabic subtitle file, sourced from the film Egybest released Arabic-localized version of the film. Egybest version was selected for two reasons. While it is a pirated free streaming website, it gained popularity in the region due to the availability of series and movies, as well as Arabic subtitles. Casino was selected based on both its cultural significance and its linguistic density since the film's dialogue contains an unusually high concentration of misogynistic epithets, sexualized commands, explicit threats, and first-person masculine directed at or concerning female character. Diaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) identify this category of content as among the most challenging for audiovisual translators, and its density in this film makes it a productive corpus for examining how translation strategies handle gendered discourse in sustained ways.

The researchers identified 75 instances of slurs that were related to gender (both men and women) and general profanity. The following protocol was followed in the course of data collection and analysis:

identifying all the instances of relevant expressions (separately and then jointly)

classifying the relevant expressions extracted from the movie into gender and general profanity (separately and then jointly)

listing the gendered expressions related to women only (separately and then jointly)

identifying the subtitling strategies applied in the Arabic translation (separately and then jointly)

discussing the identified subtitling strategies with reference to those indicated by Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy of extralinguistic cultural references to highlight any discrepancies that the authors had

Data collection proceeded through systematic viewing of the complete film with simultaneous reference to the Arabic subtitle track, with source-text (ST) utterances and their target-text (TT) equivalents transcribed for all instances meeting the inclusion criteria. Three criteria governed inclusion: the ST utterance contains a gendered slur, sexualized term, or bodily reference applied to a female character; the ST utterance constitutes an explicit threat addressed to a female character; or the ST utterance represents a female character's self-referential speech in relation to her gender or sexual identity. Instances meeting any of these criteria were retained for analysis. Instances of male-directed insults, general profanity without gendered content, and expletives not involving gendered references were excluded.

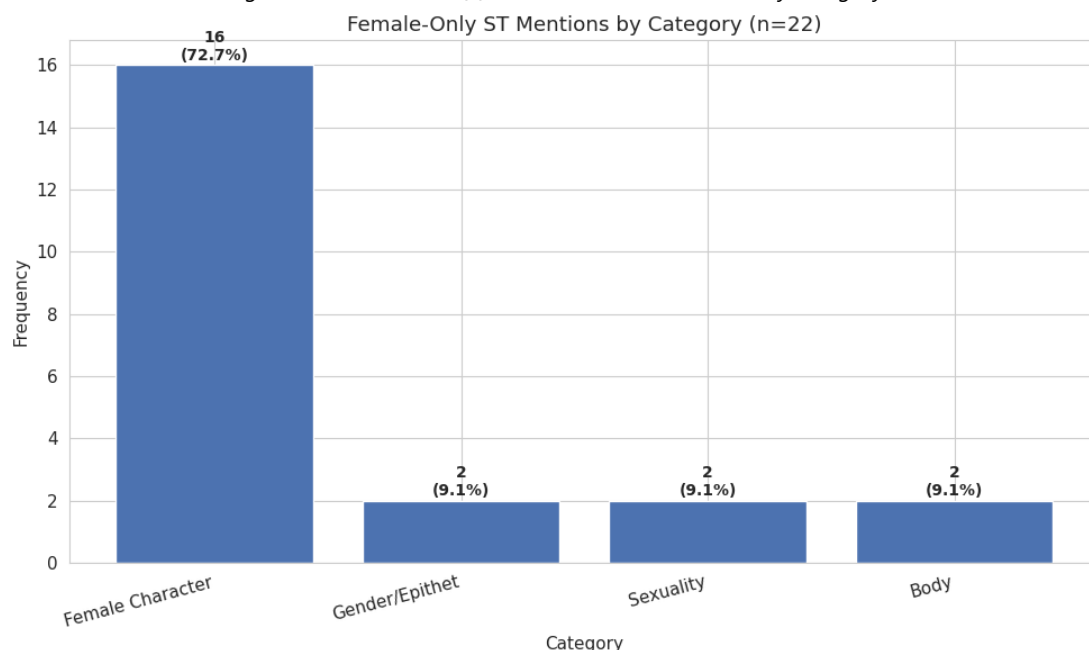
The resulting data comprises 109 source-target text turns that include 22 instances of female-related insults, distributed across. The two authors categorized the themes separately and then cross-checked the resulting list together. Each pair was analyzed in two sequential stages. In the first, descriptive stage, the translation strategy was identified and classified using Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy. Strategies identified in the corpus include generalization (replacement of a specific, charged term with a more neutral equivalent), omission (complete deletion of the ST utterance or element), and euphemistic substitution (replacement of a taboo expression with a circumlocutory alternative). In the second, interpretive stage, each identified strategy was analyzed through the combined lens of critical discourse studies and feminist translation theory, with specific attention to the reconstitution of power relations and the representation of female agency in the target text.

The analysis presented in the subsequent sections draws upon seven illustrative examples from the data. The study makes no claim to represent the full range of Arabic subtitle practices for Hollywood cinema, since it is based on a single commercially released translation. Its conclusions should be read as a close reading of one translation's ideological choices, though the patterns identified are consistent with those reported in the broader literature on Arabic media localization (Al-Yasin & Rabab'ah, 2019; Faiq, 2019).

5. Analysis

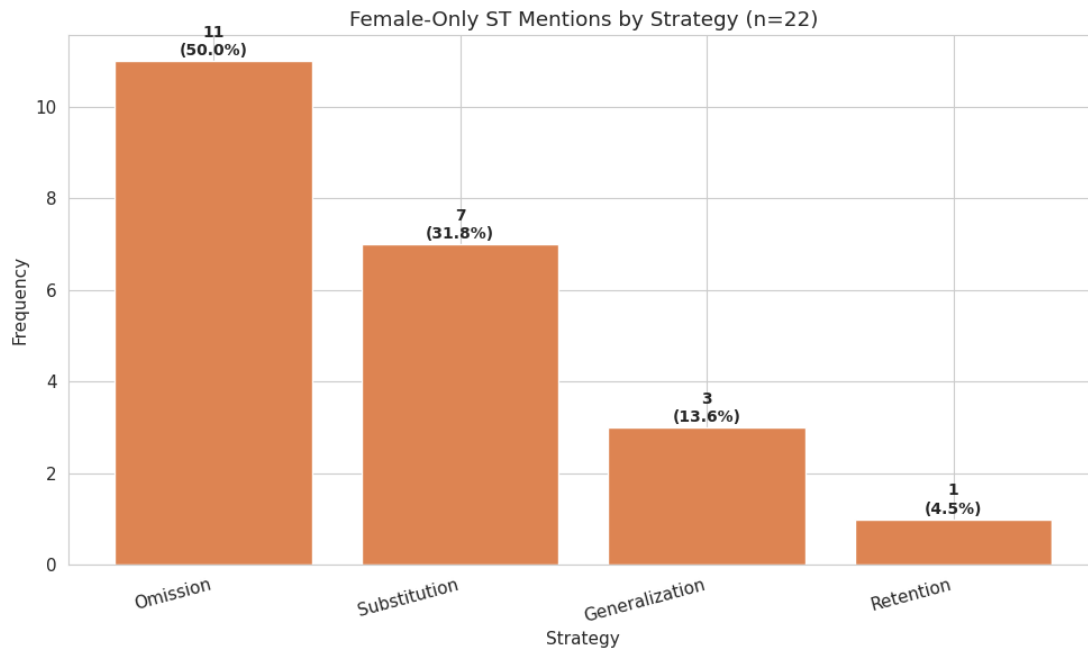
The initial analysis showed that female mentions fall under four categories as shown in Figure 1. The data showed that the most mentioned expressions, 72.7%, are directed towards the female character category using expressions such as bitch, whore, poor fuckin' waitress. In contrast, the occurrences of gender/epithet (e.g. broads), sexuality (e.g. knocked up, blonder hooker), and female body (e.g. tits, balloons) are evenly distributed in the data, each at 9.1%.

Figure 1. Distribution of female-related occurrences by category



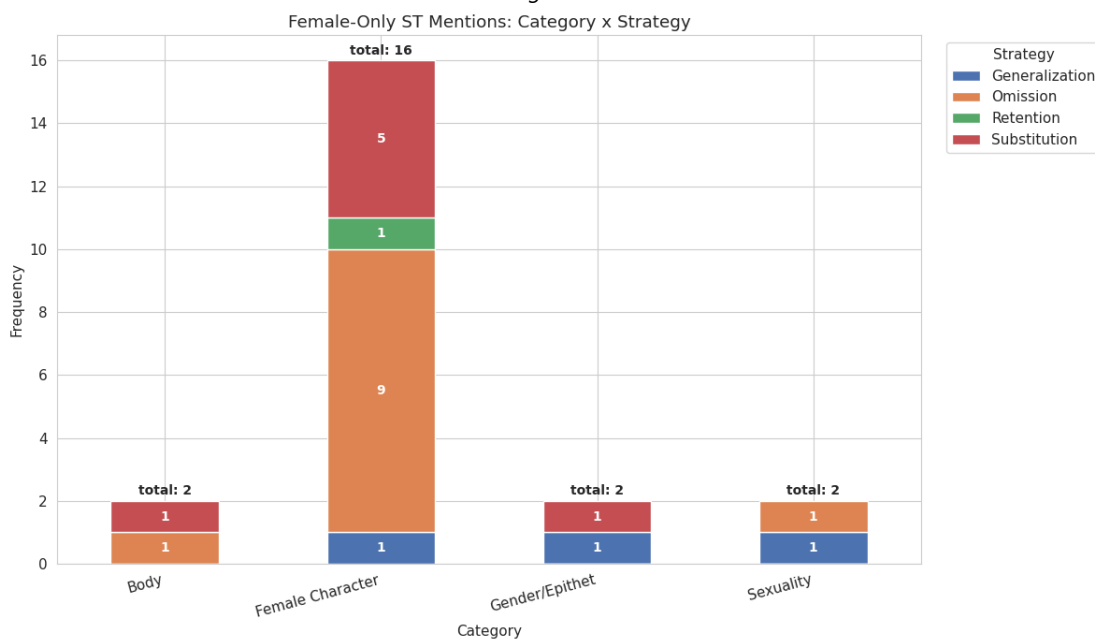
When looking at how these expressions were treated by the translator, the analysis showed that the most used strategies were omission and substitution, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Distribution of gender-related occurrences by translation strategy



Moreover, the analysis showed that there was no one-to-one correspondence between the categories and the translation strategies, as shown in Figure 3. This means that the translator tended to apply different translation strategies within the same category. For example, five female character category expressions were translated using substitution, one using retention, 9 were omitted, and one using generalization.

Figure 3.



Interestingly, the translator does not seem to primarily soften language; instead, the translator primarily removes women. This shifts attention from lexicon to structure, from individual words to the presence or absence of female characters in the TT.

Moreover, the internal variation within each category, as shown in Figure 3, suggests that the translation choices are not driven by a fixed policy but by situated judgements about the utterances. That is, these judgements were selective and based on what the TT can carry without disruption, rather than a uniform erasure of the female mention.

5.1 Omission of Masculine Power and Threat Discourse

The mitigation of hypermasculine threats directed at female characters through omission constitutes the major pattern in the data. These threats form some of *Casino*'s most dramatically charged moments, and their translation involves consequential ideological work.

ST: "You'll shut your mouth and do what I say, **bitch**."

TT: ستسكتين وتفعلين ما أقول

Back translation: "You will be quiet and do what I say."

ST: "Get your sweet **ass** over here now."

TT: تعالي إلى هنا الآن

Back translation: "Come here now."

ST: "I'll **smash your face** into the **fucking** wall."

TT: سأعاقبك بشدة

Back translation: "I will punish you severely."

These three examples demonstrate a consistent transformation in the nature of the power relations enacted through dialogue. In the source text, the threats are physically specific and explicitly gendered, fusing bodily reference, profanity, and misogynistic address into a register of performative violence. Austin's (1962) framework for speech act theory is relevant here as these utterances function as illocutionary acts whose force is to coerce submission through the enactment of a power asymmetry that is simultaneously physical, gendered, and verbal. In the Arabic version, this force is systematically redirected: specific bodily violence ("smash your face into the wall") becomes abstract institutional authority ("I will punish you severely"), gendered address ("bitch") is omitted entirely, and sexualized physical references ("sweet ass") become unmarked commands. Fairclough's (2001) concept of discourse technologization aptly describes the ideological work performed by these changes: the reshaping of discursive norms to conform to cultural expectations, often with the effect of naturalizing the underlying power relations by making them appear less exceptional. Arabic preferential patterns of authority expression frequently favor institutional formalization over direct physical threat, and the translation's substitution of abstract for bodily aggression is consistent with this tendency (Almanna, 2016). However, this accommodation to target-culture norms carries a high ideological cost. The original threats not only communicate a desire for compliance but also enact a specific mode of masculine domination premised on physical intimidation and the reduction of women to controllable bodies. The translation replaces this mode with a form of authority that is no less real but is considerably less confrontational and, crucially, no longer specifically gendered in its expression.

The verbal extremity of Casino's threat discourse is designed to produce discomfort in the viewer, making the behaviors depicted as excessive rather than normalized. This distancing effect is central to the film's critical project: by making the toxicity of its male protagonists' language impossible to overlook, the film works against uncritical identification with their exercise of power. When the Arabic translation moderates this extremity, it reduces the critical distance between viewer and character, potentially rendering male authority more socially acceptable than the source text intends. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework offers a complementary analytical perspective: the Arabic version's consistent substitution of softened for explicit commands represents a marked increase in negative politeness that paradoxically allows the male characters' exercise of dominance to appear more legitimate than the source text presents it.

5.2 The Neutralisation of Misogynistic Epithets

The data showed that the translator replaced misogynistic epithets with neutral or near-neutral semantic equivalents. The following examples are illustrative:

ST: "Tell those **broads** to get their asses over here now."

TT: أخبري أولئك النساء أن يأتين إلى هنا الآن

Back translation: "Tell those women to come here now."

ST: "Another dumb **blonde** with fake **tits**."

TT: فتاة أخرى غير ذكية

Back translation: "Another unintelligent girl."

In the first example, "broads," a term that in the film's period setting carries a deliberately contemptuous marking of women as instrumentalized objects, is rendered as *al-nisa'* ("women"), a formally neutral collective noun that carries no evaluative loading in standard Arabic. The bodily imperative "get their asses over here" is reduced to the neutral directive "come here," eliminating both the physical reference and the imperious register. The second example extends this pattern: the compound insult "dumb blonde with fake tits" is reduced to an evaluative adjective applied to a generic noun, with the physical description disappearing entirely. Using Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy, both changes are classifiable as "optional" generalizations, since nothing in the Arabic linguistic system prevents a more explicit rendering. The modification reflects cultural preferences rather than communicative necessity.

Such substitutions constitute what Fairclough (1992) identifies as ideological erasure: the removal of linguistic markers that expose and perform power asymmetries. In Casino's original dialogue, terms such as "broads" do not simply reflect a character's personal hostility toward women; they encode a social grammar of contempt that the film's narrative frame presents as symptomatic of the broader patriarchal culture of organized crime. Replacing these terms with neutral equivalents

detaches the language from its ideological function, producing utterances that are semantically less charged and pragmatically closer to conventional interpersonal address. The critique of patriarchal dehumanization that the original register through its very vulgarity is consequently muted, not through any suppression of theme but through the removal of the linguistic evidence of the argument.

This pattern exemplifies what von Flotow (1997) describes as the "toning down" of gendered violence in translation, a strategy she identifies as problematic precisely because it prioritizes surface-level decorum over ideological transparency. The paradox, as Castro (2013) frames it, is that the translator's impulse to avoid reproducing offensive language inadvertently serves to naturalize the power relations that the language makes visible. A translation that renders "broad" as "woman" does not challenge the social grammar that the original exposes; it renders that grammar invisible by substituting a neutral representation for a marked one. Van Dijk's (2001) observation that lexical choice encodes evaluative frameworks is directly relevant: when the evaluative marking is stripped from the ST epithet, the target-culture viewer receives a representation of male address that lacks the self-condemning quality that makes the original scene a form of social critique.

5.3 The Negotiation of Female Sexuality and Agency

A third pattern concerns how the Arabic translation handles dialogue that directly references female sexuality, particularly in context where female characters exercise or reflect on their own sexual identities. This is the most consequential pattern analytically because it is in these moments that *Casino's* feminist potential is most concentrated.

ST: "She's just another Vegas **whore**."

TT: هي مثل أي فتاة تعمل في فيجاس

Back translation: "She's like any girl working in Vegas."

ST: "Those showgirls are all cockteases."

TT: [Omitted entirely]

The two examples above reveal two distinct translation approaches. In the first, the term "whore," which in the film functions as a marker of women's sexual commodification within the Las Vegas economy, is rendered through a circumlocutory construction that identifies the referent woman as someone "working in Vegas," retaining the professional dimension while suppressing the explicit sexual reference. Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy classifies this as euphemistic substitution, and optional modification motivated by cultural acceptability. The second example goes further: the entire utterance is omitted, leaving no trace in the Arabic subtitle track. This distinction between substitution and omission is analytically important because omission affects not only the content of a single utterance but the narrative coherence of the scenes in which such utterances appear, altering the informational and affective context within which a viewer interprets subsequent action.

Butler's (1990) framework for understanding regulatory discourse is illuminating here. The systematic omission of references to female sexuality does not simply reflect cultural sensitivity; it enacts a regulatory function, policing the limits of what may be said about women within the translated text. Van Leeuwen's (1996) category of "exclusion" in the representation of social actors captures the structural dimension of this effect. When utterances that represent female characters as agents of their own sexual narratives are removed, those characters are excluded from a dimension of self-representation that the source text grants them.

The case of Ginger McKenna's self-referential dialogue is particularly significant. At several points in the film, Ginger articulates an awareness of her own exploitation that constitutes *Casino's* most politically complex engagement with female subjectivity. Her utterances in these moments are neither simply those of a victim nor those of a resistant agent; they reflect a self-knowledge that the surrounding narrative does not contain or resolve. These moments are among the most substantially modified in the Arabic translation, with a considerable proportion of such self-referential utterances either significantly attenuated or omitted entirely. This pattern aligns with what Spivak (2000: 397-98) theorises as the discursive silencing of marginalized voices through translation. The irony, which Fairclough (1992) would identify as ideologically significant, is that the moments most thoroughly erased in the Arabic version are precisely those in which *Casino's* feminist potential is most fully realized.

6. Discussion

The three patterns analyzed above converge in a phenomenon that this study proposes to term the feminist silencing effect. The concept describes a specific configuration of translation choices in which strategies motivated by protectionist ethics, the desire to shield target-culture audiences from misogynistic, sexually explicit, or violent language, inadvertently reproduces the ideological marginalization that the source text critiques. In *Casino's* case, the vulgarity of the film is not a gratuitous feature of its style but an ideological argument. That is the explicitness of its gendered language is the vehicle through which the narrative indicts the patriarchal culture it depicts. When that explicitness is attenuated in translation, the argument is weakened, even as the impulse to attenuate it is, from one cultural standpoint, entirely understandable. As previously shown, the Arabic translations included optional generalization of misogynistic epithets (e.g., "broad" → "woman"), euphemistic substitution for explicitly sexual or degrading terms (e.g., "whore" → "girl working in Vegas"), and omission of whole utterances about female sexuality or sexual agency. These are "optional" in Pedersen's sense (not required for comprehension), which is central to the effect.

The feminist silencing effect is distinct from straightforward censorship in that it operates without deliberate intent to suppress feminist content. Thus, it emerges from 'locally sensible' norms rather than an explicit anti-feminist agenda. In other words, the translators (whose choices this study examines) were responding to the sociolinguistic norms of an Arabic-language media environment rather than pursuing an ideological agenda. It is this inadvertency that makes the phenomenon theoretically significant and practically difficult to address. As Castro (2013) argues, there is no view from nowhere in feminist translation practice, and strategies that appear progressive from one cultural position may be regressive from another. The feminist silencing effect names the specific form of this problem that arises when audiovisual translation reduces rather than preserves the ideological charge of gendered language, not through malice but through the application of norms that are locally sensible and globally consequential. The analysis showed the ideological outcomes of the adopted translation strategies, for example, when neutralizing marked sexism so patriarchal contempt becomes invisible (e.g., insults reduced to neutral nouns), mitigate threat discourse, turning explicit, gendered physical violence into abstract "punishment" or softened authority, and erasing women's self-reflexive lines where they articulate exploitation or agency, especially key moments of feminist insight. Thus, the feminist silencing effect is present where optional softening/erasure systematically targets the language that carries the film's feminist critique, rather than merely random or technical adjustments. Against this backdrop, a passage would count as an instance of the feminist silencing effect if: (1) it is part of the source's feminist or critical representation of gendered power, and (2) it undergoes optional generalization, euphemism, or omission, and (3) it is with the outcome that the patriarchal violence or women's critical voice becomes less visible or less condemnable in the target text.

The concept also challenges two assumptions that have proven influential in translations studies. The first is the domestication/foreignization binary that has structured much theoretical debate since Venuti's (1995) canonical formulation. The Arabic translation of *Casino* is thoroughly domesticating in Venuti's terms, assimilating source-culture content to target-culture norms. However, the study demonstrates that the ideological effects domestication cannot be read off from its formal properties alone. A domesticating translation may reinforce the social structure it accommodates rather than simply making content accessible to a new audience, and the ideological cost of this reinforcement may be considerably greater than a purely linguistic analysis would reveal. The second challenged assumption concerns the ethical coherence of interventionist feminist translation. von Flotow's (1997) influential account suggests that translators who make gender relations visible in their translations enact a form of feminist politics. The feminist silencing effect reveals a limit case in which intervention takes the form of suppression, producing the opposite of the intended effect by removing the linguistic evidence on which a critique of patriarchy depends.

The findings also illuminate a dimension of audiovisual translation's specificity that merits sustained theoretical attention. The interaction between verbal and visual meaning in film means that dialogue does not carry the full burden of ideological signification that it would in a literary text. A scene in which a physical threat is mitigated in the subtitle track remains visually explicit: an Arabic-speaking viewer may apprehend a gap between what is said and what is seen, and that gap itself constitutes a form of meaning. This multimodal dimension creates possibilities for compensatory strategies, in which meaning suppressed in the verbal mode is partially recovered through engagement with the visual, performance, or tonal dimension of the scene. Perez-González (2014) identifies compensation as an underutilized resource in translation studies, and the present study suggests that developing compensatory approaches to translating feminist content in audiovisual contexts represents a productive direction for both theoretical and applied research.

More concretely, the study suggests that translators working with challenging gendered content in Arabic audiovisual contexts might develop strategies that acknowledge rather than suppress the ideological charge of their source material. Such strategies need not reproduce offensive language directly; they might instead engage with the multimodal resources available in film, including visual context, tonal framing, and narrative structure, to signal to target-culture audiences that the gendered representation they are witnessing is to be viewed critically rather than approvingly. This requires translators to engage explicitly in the ideological dimensions of their choices rather than treating cultural accommodation as a self-evident ethical default, a shift that has professional as well as theoretical implications.

7. Conclusion

This study has examined the Arabic subtitling of *Casino* (1995) as a site of ideological negotiation, in which the film's gendered discourse is modified in ways that reflect the sociolinguistic norms of the target context while diminishing the source text's capacity to critique the patriarchal structure it depicts. The analysis revealed that the neutralization of misogynistic epithets, the mitigation of hypermasculine threat discourse, and the attenuation or omission of references to female sexuality collectively produce a translated text that is less ideologically confrontational than its source in ways that extend well beyond adjustments of register or tone.

The central theoretical contribution of the study is the concept of the feminist silencing effect, which describes the paradox by which protectionist translation choices designed to shield audiences from offensive content inadvertently suppress the ideological critique that depends on such content for its force. This concept adds precision to the broader problem that Castro (2013) identifies in feminist translation theory: that ethical practice in translation does not map straightforwardly onto feminist political positions, and that choices which appear sound from one cultural standpoint may be regressive from another. By grounding this general insight in a specific, empirically analyzed case, the study provides both a theoretical formulation and an exemplary instance that future research can interrogate and extend.

For translation studies as a discipline, the findings suggest several directions for further inquiry. Longitudinal research comparing Arabic-language translations of Hollywood films across different periods would help to determine whether the norms documented here are shifting in response to evolving Arabic media environments. Reception-oriented studies examining how Arabic-speaking audiences interpret translated gendered discourse would provide an empirical grounding for claims about ideological effect that the present study, in common with most text-based translation analyses, must leave at the level of inference. Ethnographic research exploring the decision-making processes of translators working with challenging gendered content in Arabic-language contexts would contribute a practitioner perspective that is largely absent from the existing literature, and that may reveal the institutional constraints, commercial pressures, and professional norms that shape translation choices in ways that neither the translators nor their critics fully recognize.

The challenge the study identifies is not unique to Arabic localization or to *Casino*. Whenever translation bridges significant cultural gaps in the representation of gender, the risk of inadvertent ideological erasure is present. Meeting that risk requires both more sophisticated theoretical frameworks and a professional culture in audiovisual translation that treats fidelity to a text's feminist potential as an ethical obligation, one that may sometimes be in tension with other, equally legitimate commitments and that therefore demands conscious negotiation rather than default accommodation.

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