

Examining the Quality of the Arabic Subtitles of Legal Terms: A Corpus-based Comparative Analysis of ‘suits’

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Corresponding Author: Mohammed Kasmi Laboratory of Applied Communication, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Mohammed I University, Oujda, Morocco	Abstract: One of the most challenging tasks in specialized audiovisual translation (AVT) is the translation of legal terms from English into Arabic. The subtitling of these terms poses many challenges, mainly because of being domain-bound and culture-specific. The time and space limitations of subtitling exacerbate these challenges. The aim of this study is to analyze the Arabic official subtitles of the American legal drama series <i>Suits</i> (USA Network, 2011-2019) produced and written by Aaron Korsh using an evaluative corpus-based approach. A purposive corpus of 60 legal terms was collected from all nine seasons and compared systematically with the Arabic subtitle terms. Thematic categorization was done for each term, and analysis of the terms was carried out using the eclectic framework that combines Baker's (1992) equivalence translation strategies and Pedersen's (2017) FAR quality-assessment model. The results show that the successful strategies are official equivalent (40%) and functional equivalent (21.7%), which together account for (61.7%) of all translatorial decisions and have the highest FAR quality scores. Paraphrasing (33.3%) is functionally adequate, but violates terminological precision or register faithfulness. Literal translation (3.3%) results in conceptual distortion and unnatural renderings of the target text. Literal translation with gloss (1.7%) is another strategy that foreignizes the source text legal terms, but contributes to incomprehension on the part of the Arab viewer. Three persistent problems emerge in this study: (1) the common-law/civil-law gap in the legal systems between the United States and the Arab world; (2) the diglossic gap between English and Arabic; and (3) the constraints that subtitling imposes, both spatial and temporal, resulting in lexical compression of multi-word legal units. Keywords: <i>Legal Translation; Audiovisual Translation; Subtitling; Suits; Legal Terminology; FAR model.</i>
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Introduction

Legal drama is one of the most complex genres in audiovisual translation in terms of language nature. Legal language is full of terminology related to the Anglo-American common legal tradition, and acts as a professional metalanguage that cannot be easily understood by laymen, let alone by an audience consuming the content through interlingual subtitles. In the case of the Arabic language, the problems are compounded by the significant structural gap between the two languages, as well as by the significant differences between the Anglo-American common-law system and the civil-law and Islamic-law system in which most of the Arab majority states operate.

Written and produced by Aaron Korsh, *Suits* (USA Network, 2011–2019) is one of the most linguistically and terminologically complex legal dramas. The series is set in the fictional Pearson Hardman (renamed thereafter as Specter Litt) law firm in Manhattan, and features a large and accurate legal lexicon in all nine seasons and 134 episodes. It was distributed globally via Netflix and other streaming platforms, leading to Arabic subtitles becoming a pivotal translation product enjoyed by millions of people in the Arab world.

Legal drama has been a relatively small but developing area of AVT scholarship. In her study on legal language in American TV series, Zottola (2017) found that legal language is

used in television dialogues, and that the use of this legal discourse is an obstacle for the general audience. Also, existing translation techniques are helpful but not comprehensive enough to cover all legal systems, so that the audience will fully understand them. Zottola adds that the strategies proposed by Pedersen (2017) should be further investigated to incorporate new strategies for Legal English and specialized discourses.

The most pertinent work to the present study for Arabic-specific issues is the corpus-based study of *Suits* by Darwish and Al-Yasin (2023) that examined the cultural, religious, and ideological features of both the English and adapted Arabic versions of the series. Although they were not working on subtitles per se, their analysis showed that the remade version was significantly different from the original, where the cultural gaps and the systematic reworking needed to make American law more accessible to Arab audiences were clearly illuminated.

Although legal terms subtitling has a special place in the field of legal translation, and though *Suits* is, especially, very popular worldwide, very few studies have examined the legal terms in Arabic subtitling in a systematic comparative analysis. The present study aims to fill this gap by compiling a 60-term corpus from all nine seasons of *Suits*, structuring those terms into six thematic legal categories, and evaluating each Arabic subtitle

equivalent by an integrated approach that is based on Baker's (1992) equivalence translation strategies and Pedersen's (2017) FAR quality model.

The study attempts to answer the following questions: (1) What translation strategies are employed in the Arabic subtitling of legal terms in Suits? (2) What types and degrees of equivalence or non-equivalence do these strategies generate, particularly with respect to the common-law/civil-law systemic gap? (3) How do the Arabic subtitles perform on the FAR quality dimensions of functional equivalence, acceptability, and readability?

Literature Review

In the last decade, the focus of research on English-Arabic legal translation has significantly expanded owing to Arab states' involvement in international commercial law, and the emergence of bilingual legal institutions, along with the growing interest in AVT. Alwazna's study of 2019 showed that the legal untranslatability between Arabic and English is mainly due to conceptual incongruity arising from the differences in legal systems and cultures, and suggested the following coping strategies such as loan translation, coinage, descriptive paraphrasing, and omission.

In the context of AVT, Alkhatib and Haider (2024) conducted a study on the strategies adopted by Netflix, Google Translate, ChatGPT and Gemini in subtitling legal expressions into Arabic from four English Netflix series, finding that the strategies most frequently used were paraphrase (33.1%), literal translation (26%), and cultural substitution (25.3%), with the human translators at Netflix achieving the highest quality and minimum of mistranslations. They discovered that most of the English legal terms in their corpus were related to criminal law and mistranslations were most frequent in the case of Google Translate.

Recently, the quality of Arabic subtitles has become an empirical topic of interest using the FAR model. Al-Shareef and Ashuja'a (2024) used the FAR model to analyze subtitles in the *Lost* series that are subtitled in Arabic. They found that there were many errors in functional equivalence and readability due to mistreatment of nicknames and culture-specific elements. They suggested that Arabic subtitlers should keep the Skopos (communicative purpose) of the original utterance and develop technical skills to enhance the quality of subtitling.

Alwazna (2019, p. 75) observes that "the issue of untranslatability of legal terms, particularly between originally unrelated languages like legal Arabic and legal English, has long been a real challenge in legal translation [stemming] from the conceptual incongruity between legal terms of different legal languages." The strategies for dealing with non-equivalence at the word level, as described by Baker (1992) are: (1) translation by a more general word (superordinate); (2) translation by a more neutral/less expressive word; (3) translation by cultural substitution; (4) translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation; (5) translation by paraphrase using a related word; (6) translation by paraphrase using unrelated words; (7) translation by omission; and (8) translation by illustration (Baker, 1992, p. 26–42). These strategies are limited in the legal subtitling context, because legal discourse demands terminological accuracy, which makes paraphrase preferable to free style, and because the length of explanatory rendering is not allowed for by the space and time constraints of subtitling.

Pedersen (2017) created a model to evaluate interlingual subtitles. It was based on Romero-Fresco's NER model for intralingual subtitling; it operationalizes subtitle quality assessment through an error-penalty scoring system in three dimensions: (1) Functional equivalence assesses whether the subtitle conveys the speaker's intended meaning, with semantic errors carrying higher penalty weights (0.5, 1, and 2 points for minor, standard, and serious errors, respectively); (2) Acceptability assesses grammaticality, idiomaticity, and stylistic naturalness in the TL; and (3) Readability assesses technical parameters including reading speed, line segmentation, and subtitle duration (Pedersen, 2017, pp. 218–224).

Subtitling enacts a set of constraints which make it different from other modes of translation (Diaz Cintas and Remael, 2021); the synchrony constraint is that subtitles should be synchronously coordinated with the visual and acoustic content, the spatial constraint is that subtitles are typically limited to 37–42 characters per line, with no more than 2 lines per subtitle, and the reading-speed constraint is that subtitles are read at a speed of up to 20 characters per second in Arabic, as stipulated in Netflix's Arabic style guidelines. That means specialized terms like "shareholder derivative suit" are difficult to translate; they must be delivered in a short, understandable Arabic equivalent in the limited space of the subtitles. As shown by Alkhatib and Haider's (2024) analysis of Netflix legal subtitling, this means that certain legal terms are often paraphrased or translated into more general ones to ensure the message is understood.

Methodology

The dialogue and the Arabic subtitles of the TV show *Suits* (Seasons 1–9, 2011–2019) on Netflix were used as a source for extracting a purposive corpus of 60 English legal terms. The operational criteria used for the selection of terms are as follows: (1) the word must be mentioned in the dialogue of at least one episode in English; (2) the word must be a legal term, which is a term that has a defined meaning in the American common-law system, as verified against Black's Law Dictionary (Garner, 2019); and (3) the word must have a corresponding translation in Arabic in the Netflix Arabic subtitle file.

The 60 corpus items were categorized under six thematic legal fields that reflect the main areas of legal practice represented in *Suits*: (1) Firm Structure (10 terms); (2) Civil Procedure (15 terms); (3) Litigation Parties (8 terms); (4) Evidence and Proof (7 terms); (5) Corporate Law and Contracts (10 terms); and (6) Legal Ethics and Criminal Law (10 terms).

The 4-stage analysis was carried out for each corpus item. In the first stage, the English term was categorized under one of the six legal categories and its definition was checked against Black's Law Dictionary (2019) by Garner. This Arabic subtitle rendering was identified, transcribed and back-translated into English in Stage 2. In Stage 3, the translation strategy was coded according to Baker (1992) into six categories: official equivalent (existing legal term in Arabic), functional equivalent, paraphrase (using related or unrelated words), literal translation, and literal translation with gloss. For Stage 4, the subtitle was assessed in a qualitative way, adapted from Pedersen's (2017) FAR model, that is, a High, Medium or Low rating for each of the three FAR dimensions and recording the predominant error type.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the full set of 60 legal terms as they occurred in Suits with their Arabic subtitle equivalents, back-

translations, legal category, translation strategy, and FAR quality assessment.

Table 1: Complete Corpus of Legal Terms in Suits and Their Arabic Subtitle Equivalents

No.	English Term (Suits)	Arabic Subtitle	Back-Translation	Legal Category	Strategy	FAR Score
1	Managing Partner	الشريك المدير	Managing Partner	Firm Structure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
2	Senior Partner	الشريك الأول	First/Senior Partner	Firm Structure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
3	Junior Partner	الشريك المساعد	Assistant Partner	Firm Structure	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
4	Associate Attorney	المحامي المساعد	Assistant Lawyer	Firm Structure	Functional Equiv.	Medium (F+A-)
5	Of Counsel	المستشار القانوني	Legal Advisor	Firm Structure	Functional Equiv.	Medium (F-A+)
6	Name Partner	اسمه شريك على اللافتة	Partner Whose Name Is on the Sign	Firm Structure	Paraphrase	Low (F-A-)
7	Paralegal	المساعد القانوني	Legal Assistant	Firm Structure	Functional Equiv.	Medium (F+A-)
8	In-House Counsel	المستشار الداخلي	Internal Advisor	Firm Structure	paraphrase	Low (F-A-)
9	Managing Committee	لجنة الإدارة	Management Committee	Firm Structure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
10	Law Clerk	مساعد القاضي	Assistant to the Judge	Firm Structure	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
11	Motion to Dismiss	رفض طلب الدعوى	Request to Reject the Case	Civil Procedure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
12	Summary Judgment	إجمالي حكم	Summary Ruling	Civil Procedure	Literal	Medium (F+A-)
13	Preliminary Injunction	قضائي أمر مؤقت	Temporary Court Order	Civil Procedure	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
14	Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)	تقييدي أمر مؤقت	Temporary Restrictive Order	Civil Procedure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
15	Permanent Injunction	قضائي أمر دائم	Permanent Court Order	Civil Procedure	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
16	Deposition	الإدلاء بالشهادة	Testimony Session	Civil Procedure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
17	Discovery	عن الكشف الأدلة	Disclosure of Evidence	Civil Procedure	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)

No.	English Term (Suits)	Arabic Subtitle	Back-Translation	Legal Category	Strategy	FAR Score
18	Interrogatories	الا ستفسارا الكتابية ت	Written Inquiries	Civil Procedure	Literal	Low (F-A-)
19	Subpoena	أمر استدعاء قضائي	Judicial Summons Order	Civil Procedure	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
20	Subpoena Duces Tecum	تقديم أمر المستندات	Order to Submit Documents	Civil Procedure	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
21	Motion for Continuance	تأجيل طلب الجلسة	Request to Postpone the Hearing	Civil Procedure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
22	Writ of Mandamus	إلزامي أمر قضائي	Mandatory Judicial Order	Civil Procedure	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
23	Stay of Proceedings	وقف الإجراءات	Suspension of Proceedings	Civil Procedure	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
24	Change of Venue	مكان تغيير المحاكمة	Change of Trial Location	Civil Procedure	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
25	Mistrial	إبطال المحاكمة	Nullification of Trial	Civil Procedure	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
26	Plaintiff (s1e1)	المدعي	The Claimant	Litigation	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
27	Defendant	المدعى عليه	The Sued Party	Litigation	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
28	Co-Defendant	المدعى عليه المشترك	Joint Defendant	Litigation	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
29	Cross-Claim	مضادة دعوى	Counter-Claim	Litigation	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
30	Third-Party Defendant	المدعى الطرف عليه الثالث	Third Party Sued	Litigation	Paraphrase	Low (F-A-)
31	Class Action	دعوى جماعية	Collective Lawsuit	Litigation	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
32	Counterclaim	الدعوى المضادة	Counter-Lawsuit	Litigation	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
33	Amicus Curiae	صديق المحكمة	Friend of the Court	Litigation	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
34	Affidavit	خطية إفادة محلوف عليها	Sworn Written Statement	Evidence	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
35	Hearsay	الشهادة	Reported	Evidence	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)

No.	English Term (Suits)	Arabic Subtitle	Back-Translation	Legal Category	Strategy	FAR Score
		المنقولة	Testimony			
36	Admissible Evidence	أدلة مقبولة	Acceptable Evidence	Evidence	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
37	Chain of Custody	سلسلة الحيازة	Chain of Possession	Evidence	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
38	Spoliation of Evidence	إتلاف الأدلة	Destruction of Evidence	Evidence	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
39	Privileged Communication	مراسلات مشمولة بالحماية	Protected Correspondence	Evidence	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
40	Attorney-Client Privilege	بين السرية المحامي وموكله	Confidentiality between Lawyer and Client	Evidence	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
41	Retainer	أتعاب قانونية مقدمة	Advance Legal Fees	Corporate/Contract	Official Equiv.	Medium (F+A-)
42	Non-Disclosure Agreement	اتفاقية عدم الإفصاح	Non-Disclosure Agreement	Corporate/Contract	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
43	Breach of Contract	الإخلال بالعقد	Contract Breach	Corporate/Contract	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
44	Conflict of Interest	تضارب المصالح	Conflict of Interests	Corporate/Contract	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
45	Hostile Takeover	الاستحواذ العدائي	Hostile Acquisition	Corporate/Contract	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
46	Fiduciary Duty	الواجب الائتماني	Duty of Trust	Corporate/Contract	Functional Equiv.	Medium (F+A-)
47	Shareholder Derivative Suit	دعوى المساهمين بالإنابة	Shareholders Proxy Lawsuit	Corporate/Contract	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
48	Merger Agreement	اتفاقية الاندماج	Merger Agreement	Corporate/Contract	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
49	Due Diligence	التدقيق والفحص اللازم	Required Examination and Audit	Corporate/Contract	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
50	Pro Bono	خدمة قانونية مجانية	Free Legal Service	Legal Ethics	Paraphrase	Low (F-A-)

No.	English Term (Suits)	Arabic Subtitle	Back-Translation	Legal Category	Strategy	FAR Score
51	Bar Association	نقابة المحامين	Lawyers Syndicate	Legal Ethics	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
52	Disbarment	من شطب نقابة المحامين	Removal from the Bar	Legal Ethics	Paraphrase	Medium (F+A-)
53	Ethics Violation	انتهاك قواعد السلوك المهني	Breach of Professional Code	Legal Ethics	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
54	Contempt of Court	إهانة المحكمة	Insulting the Court	Legal Ethics	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
55	Perjury	شهادة الزور	False Testimony	Criminal	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
56	Money Laundering	غسيل الأموال	Money Laundering	Criminal	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
57	Obstruction of Justice	سير عرقلة العدالة	Hindering the Course of Justice	Criminal	Official Equiv.	High (F+A+R)
58	Grand Jury	هيئة المحلفين الكبرى	Grand Jury / Major Jury	Criminal	Literal Gloss +	Medium (F+A-)
59	Plea Deal / Plea Bargain	صفقة الاعتراف بالذنب	Guilt-Admission Deal	Criminal	Functional Equiv.	High (F+A+R)

Distribution of Translation Strategies

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of translation strategies across the 60-term corpus. The data reveal that official equivalent

is the most used translation strategy, accounting for 40% of all translatorial decisions; a finding that attests to the availability, in Modern Standard Arabic legal discourse, of a body of established legal equivalents for the most common-law terms.

Table 2: Distribution of Translation Strategies in Suits Arabic Subtitles (n=60)

Translation Strategy	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (%)	FAR Dominant Score	Typical Outcome
Official Equivalent	24	40%	High (F+ A+R+)	Terminological precision; near-total equivalence
Functional Equivalent	13	21.7%	High (F+ A+)	Conceptual transfer; pragmatic adequacy
Paraphrase	20	33.3%	Medium (F+ A-)	Semantic preservation; technical loss
Literal Translation	2	3.3%	Low (F- A+)	Potential distortion; unnatural rendering
Literal + Gloss	1	1.7%	Medium (F+ A-)	Foreignization; risk of non-comprehension
Total	60	100%	—	—

The official equivalents achieve the top FAR quality scores in the corpus (n=24, 40%). Cases such as "plaintiff" المُدَّعِي (al-mudda'ī), "defendant" المُدَّعَى (al-mudda'ā 'alayhi), and "breach of contract" الْإِكْلَالُ بِلِـ'اِقْدٍ (al-ikhāl bil-'aqd), show that there are Arabic legal terms that correspond closely to those of the English equivalents in terms of legal function, register, and denotative content. Most of the official equivalents are either terms in the Litigation Parties category (plaintiff, defendant, class action, counterclaim) or under the Criminal Law category (perjury, money laundering, contempt of court).

Paraphrasing is the second most relevant strategy and produces the most variable quality outcomes in the corpus (n=20, 33.3%). The most consequential paraphrasing cases involve complex firm-structure and corporate-law terms for which no established Arabic equivalent exists. "Retainer," which means a payment made to secure the ongoing services of a lawyer, is rendered as أَتَابَ قَانُونِيَّ مُقَادِّمًا (at'āb qānūniyya muqaddama) (lit. advance legal fees). While this paraphrasing preserves the propositional content (a prepaid legal fee), it entirely loses the contractual specificity of the term: a retainer in American law creates a formal attorney-client relationship that carries specific fiduciary obligations, which is not conveyed by the Arabic rendering.

Likewise, "pro bono" is a Latin-origin term for legal services performed without remuneration in the public interest, which is rendered as خِدْمَةٌ قَانُونِيَّةٌ مَجَانِيَّةٌ (khidma qānūniyya majjāniyya) (lit. free legal service). This paraphrasing removes the moral and professional identity aspects of pro bono practice; pro bono practice, in the legal culture of the United States, is not just about charity, but about professional duty, which is codified in the American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct. This item has a Low function equivalence rating (FAR) due to the substantive semantic loss.

The most difficult paraphrasing case is "name partner", which means the partner's name mentioned in the title of the firm; it is translated as شَرِيكَ اسْمِهِ عَلَى الْاِفْتَةِ (sharik ismuhu 'alā al-lāfitta). This paraphrasing is semantically correct and contextually appropriate, but the length (four words paraphrased in Arabic versus two in English) poses a readability and spacing challenge; in the subtitle space, the expansion of a two-word English term into a four-word Arabic paraphrased version may violate the reading-speed constraint, generating a Readability-dimension FAR deficit.

Functional equivalents are the strategically most advanced category in the corpus (n=13, 21.7%), where the Arabic subtitle introduces a term that has the same legal function as the term in the source language, but the same legal concept does not exist in the target language legal systems. Other important functional equivalents are "fiduciary duty" الْوَجِبُ عَلَى التَّامَانِ (al-wājib al-i'timānī) and "due diligence" التَّحْقِيقُ وَالْفَهْشُ بِاللَّزِيمِ (al-tadhqīq wal-fahṣ al-lāzim). The FAR ratings for these items are uniformly High on the functional equivalence dimension, reflecting the subtitlers' success in conveying the legal function; they score somewhat lower on acceptability.

The literal translation strategy is the most problematic in the corpus, and invariably results in the poorest FAR quality scores

(n=2, 3.3%). The most relevant case would be "summary judgment", which was rendered in Arabic subtitles as حُكْمُ الْيَمَالِي (ḥukm ijmālī) (lit. summary ruling). A summary judgment is a pre-trial procedure in American civil procedure whereby a court, after examining the pleadings, will grant a judgment based on a determination that there is "no genuine dispute as to any material fact" (R. Civ. P. 56). This procedural nuance is not captured by the literal translation of the Arabic phrase, "summary ruling", which would imply only a short ruling, and would be completely misunderstood by an Arab reader as referring to a brief ruling as part of the trial process. Literal Translation with Gloss (n=1, 1.7%) is also used, e.g., "grand jury" is translated as هَيْئَةُ الْمُحْلَفِينَ الْكُبْرَى (hay'at al-muḥallafīn al-kubrā) (lit: great jury of jurors). The grand jury is an institution of American common law that is not found in Arab civil-law systems, and a literal translation of its name, "great jury of jurors," would be a foreign institutional concept that would need a lot of glossing to be understood. While some subtitle versions feature a short gloss, the FAR of this item is medium.

The FAR analysis reveals three systematic patterns. First, the functional equivalence quality dimension is strongly stratified by strategy: official and functional equivalents achieve high functional equivalence ratings in nearly all cases, while literal translation achieves Low ratings in one of the two cases identified in the corpus. Second, acceptability deficits are most concentrated in paraphrasing and literal translation (with gloss) strategies, where the Arabic renderings, while semantically adequate, fail the idiomaticity criterion; they sound like translations, not natural legal Arabic discourse. Third, readability deficits are primarily associated with multi-word paraphrase strategies, where the lexical expansion required to render a compact English legal term generates subtitle units that exceed reading-speed limits.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to systematically examine the subtitling of legal terminology in the legal drama *Suits* (2011-2019) from English to Arabic. Based on the analysis of 60 legal terms in six thematic and legal categories, the following main conclusions are drawn: First, official equivalent (40%) and functional equivalent (21.7%) contribute to the majority of the translatorial decisions and obtain the highest FAR quality scores. The result shows that the existing legal Arabic discourse, contrary to some prior expectations, offers a much wider range of terminological correspondences of common-law terms than is usually assumed. Second, paraphrasing (33.3%) is a secondary but significant strategy of legal subtitling, with systematically medium quality scores, especially in terms of functional equivalence and acceptability. In legal translation, paraphrasing legal terms takes away terminological precision and register fidelity to gain a communicative accessibility that is a less desirable trade-off in legal translation than in purely idiomatic translation. Third, literal translation (3.3%) and literal translation with gloss (1.7%) are the least effective subtitling strategies, which result in conceptual distortion and comprehension deficit. Literal calques of complex words (e.g., summary judgment and grand jury) illustrate the potential risks of a literal translation of formality from the source text in a system-bound, legally non-equivalent target system.

These findings carry clear implications for practice and research. At the level of subtitling pedagogy, training programs should incorporate legal translation theory alongside audiovisual

translation methodology, ensuring that subtitling trainees are equipped to recognize the conceptual asymmetries between Anglo-American common law and its Arabic version. At the level of streaming-platform localization, platforms such as Netflix should develop specialized glossaries of legal terminology for Arabic subtitlers, which will standardize the Arabic rendering of the most frequently recurring legal terms in anglophone legal drama and reducing the translatorial inconsistency documented in the present corpus. At the level of research, future studies should extend the corpus to include viewer reception experiments, assessing how Arab audiences comprehend and interpret the various renderings of common-law terms.

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