

The Role of Subtitling and Dubbing in Arabic Vocabulary Acquisition: A Contrastive Study

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Abstract

The critical comparison of subtitling and dubbing has long been a subject of discussion by many researchers in the field of Audiovisual Translation. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study to investigate the role of subtitling and dubbing in vocabulary acquisition has been carried out in the Arab world. The aim of the present study is to measure the effect of Audiovisual Translation modalities, mainly subtitling and dubbing, in the acquisition of Arabic vocabulary in an Arabic as a foreign language class (AFL) carried out at Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic For Non-Native Speakers. In order to do this a couple of questions needed answers 1) Which modality (subtitling and/or dubbing) is more conducive to vocabulary acquisition in the Arabic language? And 2) Which modality is more efficient in the long-term memory retention of Arabic vocabulary? Thirty upper intermediate students participated in this case study, which involved them watching a four-minute clip of the American TV series *Designated Survivor* in three versions: (a) subtitled into Arabic, (b) dubbed into Arabic, and (c) dubbed and subtitled in Arabic. The results showed that all groups were able to acquire and retain second language (L2) vocabulary; however, the dubbing group achieved higher results in both the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test.

Keywords: dubbing, education, language learning, subtitling, vocabulary acquisition

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