

NON-BINARY GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ARABIC SUBTITLES ON NETFLIX

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Abstract: This article investigates the representation of non-binary gender identities in Arabic subtitles for the Netflix film *Anne+* (featuring the character Lou) and the series *One Day at a Time* (featuring Syd). This research stems from the linguistic challenges of the highly gendered Arabic language, which lacks a singular gender-neutral pronoun, coupled with global media's role in shaping social perceptions. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and critical discourse analysis (CDA), the study analyses the use of pronouns and gendered adjectives referring to Lou and Syd in their original dialogue and Arabic subtitle translations. Findings reveal a dominant domestication strategy, where translators frequently use masculine plural pronouns (*hum*) and gendered adjectives (masculine or feminine) to represent non-binary characters. While this strategy attempts to navigate linguistic limitations, it significantly obscures the characters' non-binary identities and creates inconsistencies. Consequently, such representation potentially reinforces traditional gender dichotomies and diminishes the visibility of diverse identities for Arabic-speaking audiences.

المخلص: تُحلّل هذه المقالة تمثيل هويّة الجندر غير الثنائي في الترجمة العربيّة للحوارات (الترجمة النصيّة) في فيلم *Anne+* (شخصيّة لو) ومسلسل *One Day at a Time* (شخصيّة سيد) على منصّة نتفليكس. وتنطلق هذه الدراسة من التحدّيات اللغويّة في اللغة العربيّة، بوصفها لغةً شديدة التذكير والتأنيث وتفتقر إلى ضمير مفرد محايد جندريًا، فضلًا عن دور وسائل الإعلام العالميّة في تشكيل تصوّرات الاجتماعيّة. تعتمد الدراسة منهجيًا وصفيًا نوعيًا، مستندةً إلى تحليل الخطاب النقدي، حيث تُقارن بين الحوارات الأصليّة وترجمتها إلى العربيّة، مع التركيز على استخدام الضمائر والصفات ذات العلامات الجندريّة. وتُظهر النتائج هيمنة استراتيجيّة التدجين، التي تتجلّى في استخدام ضمائر الجمع المذكّر

(هم) والصفات المذكورة أو المؤنثة للإشارة إلى الشخصيات غير الثنائية. وعلى الرغم من سعي هذه الاستراتيجية إلى التكيف مع القيود النحوية، فإنها تؤدي في كثير من الأحيان إلى طمس الهوية غير الثنائية وخلق حالة من عدم الاتساق. ونتيجة لذلك، قد تسهم هذه الممارسات في تعزيز الثنائية الجندرية التقليدية، والحد من تمثيل الهويات المتنوعة لدى الجمهور الناطق بالعربية.

Introduction

In a rapidly evolving global media landscape, streaming platforms like Netflix have become a dominant force, not only providing entertainment but also playing a crucial role in shaping and reflecting social narratives worldwide (Smith et al., 2021). With increasing awareness and acceptance of the diversity of human identities, including gender identities that transcend the traditional male-female dichotomy, representations of non-binary gender characters are increasingly found in contemporary film and television productions. This phenomenon is not simply an artistic trend, but rather a reflection of a broader social paradigm shift, where society is beginning to question fixed gender norms and champion inclusivity. The presence of non-binary characters on global screens directly challenges long-dominant binaristic views, sparking discussions about identity, acceptance, and the importance of accurate and sensitive representation in the public sphere (Tair et al., 2024).

Within the framework of contemporary gender studies, the understanding of gender has expanded far beyond the traditional binary conception of male and female. The concept of non-binary gender (often called genderqueer or gender expansive) refers to gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Non-binary individuals may identify as a combination of both genders, have no gender at all (agender), have a fluid gender (genderfluid), or identify with a gender other than the binary spectrum. It is important to distinguish between gender (social and personal identity) and sex (biological characteristics) and sexual orientation (romantic/sexual attraction), as all three are distinct aspects of identity. The recognition of non-binary gender is not simply a new construct, but rather a reflection of the diversity of human experience that has existed throughout history, but is now gaining increasing validation and visibility. The presence of these gender identities in media narratives is crucial because it challenges established norms and encourages a broader acceptance of the spectrum of human identities (Carlisle & Carter, 2025).

The representation of non-binary gender identities in global media content directly confronts fundamental challenges within the realm of translation studies, particularly Audiovisual Translation (AVT). Subtitling, as a form of AVT, is not simply a word-for-word translation process; it involves complex navigation between technical constraints (such as spatial and temporal constraints), cultural contexts, and ideological implications. In this context, a dilemma arises: how does a subtitle translator transform non-binary gender expressions from a source language, which may have neutral or more flexible pronouns, into a target language like Arabic, which is highly gendered? Translators are faced with a difficult choice between domestication, fitting non-binary identities into binary gender categories familiar to Arab audiences, or foreignization, maintaining the uniqueness of those identities at the risk of sounding unfamiliar or even grammatically impossible in Arabic (Tair et al., 2024). These challenges are not unique to Arabic but also arise in other languages with grammatical gender systems. Lardelli (2025) demonstrates that translating non-binary identities requires context-sensitive strategies because linguistic resources for gender-neutral and gender-inclusive expression vary across languages. In audiovisual translation, these challenges are further complicated by the technical constraints of subtitling and dubbing, which may limit the translator's ability to reformulate gender-marked expressions while preserving their intended meaning.

This translator's decision has significant implications that go beyond linguistic accuracy and touch upon the realm of representation studies. Media, including subtitles, are powerful agents in shaping and reproducing social reality. When non-binary gender identities are consistently "translated" into rigid masculine or feminine forms in Arabic, this has the potential to reinforce existing binaristic norms, disregarding or even erasing the validity of non-binary identities for Arabic-speaking audiences. This highlights a broader debate in gender linguistics about how the structure of language itself can constrain or facilitate the expression of identity. The question of the feasibility and desirability of developing gender-neutral language in Arabic is particularly relevant here, as translators often operate in the absence of universally accepted linguistic solutions to these representational challenges (Saed et al., 2023).

More recent studies have expanded this discussion by examining gender-fair translation strategies across different grammatical gender systems and audiovisual contexts (Lardelli, 2024; Lardelli et al., 2025). Other research has investigated the use of gender-fair linguistic forms in translated news reports (Lardelli & Gromann, 2023) and the translation of LGBTQ+-related language in television series (Cruz, 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights into gender-sensitive translation, the present study

focuses specifically on Netflix's Arabic subtitles for Lou in *Anne+* and Syd in *One Day at a Time*. It examines how pronouns and other gender-marked linguistic forms operate across dialogue contexts in Arabic, thereby extending the discussion to the representation of non-binary identities in this particular linguistic and audiovisual setting.

In the context of gender representation and translation, several studies have highlighted the challenges faced. Al-Musawi stated that translators fail to use appropriate language, are inconsistent in pronoun use, and repeatedly misgender grammatical appropriateness (Tair et al., 2024). Furthermore, on nassawiyat.org, the use of dual pronouns (such as 'هما' and 'أنتما') as potential gender-neutral forms in Arabic (Nassawiyat, 2022) has sparked discussions about linguistic adaptation. Finally, contrastive studies of gender in English and Arabic have highlighted fundamental differences between grammatical and natural gender systems, which directly impact translation options (Saed et al., 2023). While numerous studies have addressed the issue of gender representation and its translation challenges in the Arabic context, studies specifically and comprehensively examining Netflix subtitlers' strategies for representing non-binary pronouns are still very limited. Most studies tend to focus on general linguistic issues or on contrastive analyses of gender systems between English and Arabic, without delving deeply into subtitling practices as a concrete arena for ideological negotiation. Furthermore, few studies have explicitly examined the strategic choices between domestication and foreignization in the context of translating non-binary characters on global streaming platforms with a wide audience reach like Netflix. This gap highlights the need for a more focused and data-driven analysis of how non-binary identities are represented in Arabic subtitles, and how these choices potentially shape audience perceptions of the legitimacy of non-binary gender identities in contemporary Arabic linguistic space.

This study aims to systematically analyze how Netflix subtitlers navigate the complexities of non-binary gender representation in Arabic. Through a case study approach, the researcher will closely examine the use of pronouns and other linguistic strategies in the Arabic subtitles of *Anne+* and specific episodes of *One Day at a Time* (Season 2 Episode 3 and Season 3 Episode 2), which explicitly feature non-binary characters. The researcher will also analyze whether the translation tends to adopt the traditional, rigid binary gender dichotomy in Arabic, or instead attempts to create linguistic space for non-binary identities. In line with these objectives, this study addresses the following research questions: 1) How do Arabic subtitlers navigate the

morphosyntactic constraints of Modern Standard Arabic when translating singular non-binary pronouns referring to Lou in *Anne+* and Syd in *One Day at a Time*?; 2) What discursively constructed gender narratives emerge from the translators' choices in representing Lou's and Syd's non-binary identities in Arabic subtitles?

Previous research has examined the challenges of translating non-binary gender expressions in Netflix's Arabic subtitles, particularly inconsistencies in pronoun selection and grammatical gender agreement in *Degrassi: Next Class* and *One Day at a Time* (Abu Tair et al., 2024). The present study builds on this research by examining Lou in *Anne+* alongside Syd in *One Day at a Time*. It compares the Arabic representations of these two characters through the use of pronouns and other gender-marked linguistic forms, including verbal inflections and adjectival forms. Particular attention is given to how these forms operate across dialogue contexts and whether their use produces consistent or conflicting grammatical representations of non-binary identities. By including *Anne+* and comparing the linguistic patterns identified in both characters, this study seeks to extend the discussion of non-binary representation in Arabic subtitling beyond the audiovisual material examined in previous research. The findings are interpreted with consideration of the grammatical constraints of Modern Standard Arabic, while distinguishing observable linguistic patterns from claims about the subtitlers' ideological intentions.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach (Harahap, 2020). The qualitative approach was chosen to deeply understand the representation of non-binary gender in Netflix Arabic subtitles and its implications, which cannot be measured numerically. Its descriptive nature allows the researcher to describe and interpret translators' strategies in addressing the challenges of non-binary pronouns. The research data includes transcripts of original dialogues of non-binary gender characters and the use of pronouns referring to them, as well as official Arabic subtitles from Netflix for these dialogues. Primary data sources come from the Netflix series *Anne+* (<https://www.netflix.com/search?q=anne%2B&jbv=81337079>) and *One Day at a Time* (<https://www.netflix.com/search?q=one%20day%20at%20time&jbv=80095532>) (Season 2 Episode 3 and Season 3 Episode 2), chosen because they explicitly feature non-binary characters. Secondary data sources come from relevant books, journals, and articles.

For *Anne+*, the English subtitles were used as the reference text because the researcher lacked sufficient proficiency in Dutch to analyze the original dialogue independently. The Arabic subtitles were then compared with the corresponding English

subtitle segments to identify the linguistic choices used to represent Lou's non-binary identity. This procedure was treated as a comparison between an intermediate translation and the Arabic target subtitles, rather than as a direct Dutch-to-Arabic translation analysis. The distinction was taken into account when interpreting the findings and formulating the study's conclusions.

Data collection techniques were conducted through non-participant observation (Hasanah, 2017). Researchers watched the series repeatedly, noted relevant dialogue, and took screenshots of Arabic subtitles. The original dialogue was then transcribed, and identified pronouns were matched with their Arabic translations. Data triangulation (Anjani & Wati, 2023) was used for data validation. This involves comparing analysis results from various contexts in different episodes or comparing translation choices with linguistic references on the use of dual pronouns in Arabic.

The data analysis technique will use critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Silaswati, 2019). Each use of pronouns and gender references in Arabic subtitles will be analyzed to identify patterns, translation strategies (such as domestication or foreignization), and the representational implications of these linguistic choices.

Result and Discussion

The representation of non-binary gender in Netflix's Arabic subtitles presents complex linguistic and ideological challenges, particularly in the highly gendered context of Arabic. This section presents key findings from an analysis of the subtitles for the film *Anne+* (Bisscheroux, 2021) and two episodes of the series *One Day at a Time* (Kellett et al., 2018), the analysis focuses on three interrelated aspects: pronoun selection, grammatical gender marking in verbs and adjectives, and the consistency of these forms across different dialogue contexts. These aspects are considered in relation to the grammatical characteristics of Modern Standard Arabic and the representational implications of the translation choices. Previous research has identified inconsistencies in pronoun use and grammatical agreement in Arabic subtitles featuring non-binary characters, highlighting the challenges of maintaining gender representation across linguistic structures (Tair et al., 2024).

Similarly, translating non-binary identities between languages with different grammatical gender systems requires context-sensitive choices, as no single strategy is universally applicable (Lardelli, 2024). Building on these studies, the present analysis examines how the Arabic subtitles of *Anne+* and *One Day at a Time* represent the non-binary identities of Lou and Syd. Rather than assuming that gender-marked forms

necessarily indicate ideological bias, the analysis distinguishes between constraints arising from Arabic grammatical structures and patterns of translation that may affect the consistency and visibility of non-binary identities. The discussion is organized into two subsections, focusing respectively on Lou in *Anne+* and Syd in *One Day at a Time*.

Anne+ is a Dutch drama series that follows the life of Anne, a student in Amsterdam, and her various relationships, particularly with women. The series is known for its diverse and inclusive representation of LGBTQ+ identities, making it a crucial platform for discussions on gender diversity and sexual orientation in media. The presence of non-binary characters in *Anne+*'s narrative organically raises issues of identity and self-acceptance, providing a rich context for linguistic analysis of how these identities are translated (Danishya, 2022).

Meanwhile, *One Day at a Time* is an American sitcom that follows the lives of a Cuban-American family led by a single mother and a military veteran. The series has been praised for its honest and often humorous approach to addressing relevant social and political issues, including immigration, mental health, and LGBTQ+ identity. Throughout its storyline, the series introduces a non-binary character through one of the core supporting cast members, opening up important dialogue among families and viewers about the acceptance and understanding of diverse gender identities. The warm and educational context of *One Day at a Time* provides a different perspective from which to examine the challenges of translating non-binary pronouns (Tair et al., 2024).

Before analyzing pronoun usage, it is important to introduce the non-binary characters that are the focus of this study. In the Dutch series *Anne+* (Bisscheroux, 2021), researchers will examine Lou, a non-binary individual whose relationship with Anne forms an integral part of the storyline. Lou's gender identity is explored nuancedly throughout the series, often reflected in their dialogue and the way other characters refer to him, who may use specific pronouns in their native language to affirm Lou's non-binary identity. Meanwhile, in the American series *One Day at a Time* (Kellett et al., 2018), the focus will be on the character Syd. Syd identifies as non-binary in key episodes (Season 2 Episode 3 and Season 3 Episode 2) selected for this analysis. The series explicitly addresses Syd's non-binary identity through interactions with her family and friends, making it a relevant case for examining how Arabic language representation of that identity on Netflix.

Understanding the representation of non-binary identities in Arabic subtitles requires an examination of the morphological and syntactic features through which

grammatical gender is expressed in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Unlike English, which generally does not mark gender on verbs and adjectives according to the subject's gender, Arabic employs a grammatical gender system that affects personal pronouns, verb inflections, and adjectival agreement. Personal pronouns distinguish between masculine and feminine forms, as illustrated by *huwa* (هو, 'he') and *hiya* (هي, 'she'), while verbs and adjectives may also exhibit gender-specific morphological forms depending on their grammatical context (Hasan, 1975). Consequently, translating singular *they/them* into Arabic presents a challenge because the target language does not have a widely established (Ryding, 2005), standardized singular gender-neutral pronoun equivalent to the English non-binary pronoun *they*.

One relevant linguistic feature is the use of the masculine plural pronoun *hum* (هم) in reference to a singular non-binary individual. In standard Arabic grammar, *hum* is conventionally associated with third-person masculine plural reference (Hasan, 1975). Although the use of a plural form may offer a practical alternative when a singular gender-neutral equivalent is unavailable, it does not automatically function as a gender-neutral singular pronoun in conventional MSA (Ryding, 2005). Its interpretation therefore depends on the surrounding linguistic and narrative context. When *hum* is used repeatedly to refer to a single non-binary character, the translation may preserve some distance from an explicitly feminine singular pronoun while simultaneously introducing a mismatch between grammatical number and the character's singular reference. This distinction is important because the use of *hum* should not, by itself, be interpreted as evidence of ideological bias; rather, its representational implications must be assessed alongside other linguistic choices and their recurrence throughout the subtitles (Ryding, 2005).

Gender marking in Arabic verbs provides a second level of analysis. In the second-person feminine singular imperative, for example, the verb may carry the suffix *-ī*, as illustrated by *ḥaddithī-nī* (حدثيني, 'tell me') and *iqtaribī* (اقتربي, 'come closer'). These forms grammatically address the interlocutor as feminine in the relevant context. Similarly, feminine adjectival forms are commonly marked by *tā' marbūṭah* (ة), as in *jadhdhābah* (جذابة, 'attractive'), in contrast to the corresponding masculine form *jadhdhāb* (جذاب). Arabic adjectives generally agree with their modified nouns in grammatical gender, alongside other agreement features, although agreement patterns vary according to syntactic and semantic conditions (Alharbi, 2025). When such feminine forms refer

directly to a character who identifies as non-binary, they constitute observable instances of feminine grammatical marking. Their significance for gender representation, however, must be evaluated in context, particularly by examining whether the forms recur and whether alternative forms are used for the same character elsewhere in the subtitles.

A further analytical consideration is the consistency of gender marking across different linguistic categories. Pronouns, verb forms, and adjectives may each encode grammatical gender, but they do not necessarily perform identical functions in a sentence. Therefore, an analysis limited to pronouns may overlook instances in which gender is communicated through verbal inflection or adjectival agreement. Conversely, an isolated gender-marked form may reflect a local grammatical requirement rather than a systematic translation pattern. Examining these features together makes it possible to distinguish between forms that arise from the grammatical conventions of MSA and recurring translation choices that may affect the visibility and consistency of non-binary identities. This approach is particularly relevant to audiovisual translation research, which has documented inconsistencies in pronoun selection and grammatical agreement in Arabic subtitles featuring non-binary characters (Tair et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the present study examines pronoun selection, verbal gender marking, adjectival agreement, and consistency across dialogue contexts as interconnected dimensions of linguistic representation. These features provide the micro-linguistic evidence for the subsequent critical discourse analysis of Lou in *Anne+* and Syd in *One Day at a Time*. The analysis does not assume that grammatical gender marking necessarily reflects a deliberate ideological position. Instead, it investigates how repeated or inconsistent linguistic choices interact with the characters' explicitly established non-binary identities and how these choices may shape their representation in Arabic subtitles.

Analysis of the Representation of the Pronoun Lou in the Arabic Subtitles of Anne+

The representation of Lou's non-binary identity in the Arabic subtitles for *Anne+* largely demonstrates a domestication strategy, where translators often adopt binary gender pronouns that obscure Lou's non-binary identity. The original dialogue is in Dutch, which has greater flexibility or uses specific pronouns (such as *die/hen*) (Bisscheroux, 2021). Although *Anne+* is originally a Dutch-language production, this study uses the English subtitles as the reference text for analyzing the Arabic subtitles. This decision reflects the researcher's linguistic limitations in analyzing the original Dutch dialogue independently. The English subtitles are therefore treated as an intermediate translation

rather than as the original source text. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on the correspondence between the English and Arabic subtitle versions, particularly the rendering of singular *they/them* pronouns referring to Lou. The findings are not intended to establish direct translation equivalence between the original Dutch dialogue and the Arabic subtitles, since linguistic or semantic shifts may have occurred during the Dutch-to-English translation process. Instead, the analysis identifies linguistic patterns observable in the English and Arabic subtitles and examines their implications for the representation of Lou's non-binary identity. This methodological limitation is taken into account when interpreting the findings and formulating the conclusions.

In the English subtitles, Lou's pronouns are *they/them*. This pronoun is considered neutral, thus explicitly highlighting Lou's non-binary identity. However, due to the structural limitations of Arabic, which strictly distinguishes between masculine (هو) and feminine (هي), the translator uses the word هم as a pronoun (Nassawiyat, 2022).

For example, in a scene depicting Anne and Lou's meeting, there's an unusual question: Lou asks what pronouns Anne uses.

Data 1:

Lou: What are your pronouns?

لو: ما الضمائر التي تفضلينها للإشارة
إليك؟

Lou: *Mā aḍ-ḍamā'ir allatī
tufaḍḍilīnahā lil-isyārati ilaiki?*

Anne: um, **She/her**.

آن: "هي" و"إنها"

Anne: *"Hiya" wa "Innahā"*

Lou: Okay, cool. Mine are **they**,
them, and **their**.

لو: حسناً، رائع. ضمائري هي "هم" و"إنهم".

Lou: *Ḥasanān, rā'i'. Ḍamā'irī hiya
"hum" wa "innahum".*

(00:26:21)

Table 1. Analysis of Data 1

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Lou: "Okay, cool. Mine are they, them, and their." (Anne+)	لو: حسناً، رائع. ضمائري هي "هم" و"إنهم".	Lou: "Okay, cool. My pronouns are 'hum' and 'innahum' [masculine plural forms]."	Personal pronouns: <i>they/them/their</i> → <i>hum</i> (هم) and	Domestication through the use of an established Arabic pronoun form; the implications for

Lou: <i>Ḥasanan, rā'ī'.</i> <i>Ḍamā'irī hiya</i> "hum" wa "innahum".	<i>innahum</i> (إنهم).	singular non- binary reference require contextual analysis.
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Anne's preferred pronouns are she/her, or "هي" and "إنها" in Arabic subtitles. This is clear because Anne identifies and expresses her gender as a woman. In everyday contexts, the pronouns "هي" and "إنها" are generally used for women of all ages. Unlike Lou, her usual pronouns are they/them/their. The translator uses the masculine plural dhamir, "هم" and "إنهم".

In Modern Standard Arabic, the masculine plural pronoun is commonly used as the default form when referring to mixed-gender groups or when gender is unspecified (Ryding, 2005). In the Arabic subtitles of *Anne+*, the English singular non-binary pronouns "they/them/their," used by Lou, are rendered using the masculine plural forms *hum* (هم) and *innahum* (إنهم). This choice reflects a translation strategy that draws on an existing grammatical form in Arabic, particularly in the absence of a widely established singular gender-neutral pronoun (Nassawiyat, 2022). A similar strategy has been identified by Tair et al. (2024), who examined the use of masculine plural pronouns in Netflix's Arabic subtitles for non-binary characters. Therefore, the use of *hum* in the present study is not considered an entirely new finding. Rather, this study extends the discussion by examining how Lou's representation in *Anne+* is constructed through the interaction between pronoun selection and other gender-marked linguistic forms. Although *hum* may avoid explicitly assigning Lou a feminine singular pronoun, it does not independently establish a linguistically neutral representation of Lou's non-binary identity. Its representational implications must therefore be examined alongside other grammatical choices in the subtitles, particularly the use of gender-marked adjectives and verbs. This distinction is important because the selection of a grammatically available pronoun does not, by itself, demonstrate either the subtitler's ideological intention or the overall effect of the translation on audience interpretation.

A similar thing (the use of the word هم) occurs when Lou is in someone else's conversation. As in the following dialogue, when Jip (Anne's friend) is checking whether Anne likes Lou or not.

Data 2:

Jip: you like **them**, right?

جيب: أنت معجبة بهم، صحيح؟

Anne: Yeah.

Jīb: Anti mu'jabah bihim, ṣaḥīḥ?
آن: أجل.

Anne: Aja.

(00:40:52)

Table 2. Analysis of Data 2

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Jip: "You like them, right?" (Anne+)	جيب: أنت معجبة بهم، صحيح؟ <i>Jīb: Anti mu'jabah bihim, ṣaḥīḥ?</i>	Jip: "You like them, right?" The Arabic <i>bihim</i> (بهم) uses a masculine plural pronoun form.	Object pronoun: <i>them</i> → <i>bihim</i> (بهم).	Domestication through the use of a conventional Arabic masculine plural form.

Then there are several scenes where Anne quickly corrects Lou's pronoun (هم) if her friends use the feminine pronoun (هي).

Data 3:

Jip: hey, Lou is, like, super fun, right?

Another Anne's friend: yeah, **she** is so fun.

Anne: **They**.

جيب: "لو" مريحة جدا، أليس كذلك؟

Jīb: "Law" mariḥah jiddan, alaysa kadhālik?

صديق أن: بلى، إنها مريحة جدا.

Ṣadīqu An: Balā, innahā mariḥah jiddan.

آن: إنهم

Anne: Innahum.

(00:40:33)

Table 3. Analysis of Data 3

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Anne: "They." (Anne+)	آن: إنهم. <i>Anne: Innahum.</i>	Anne: "They" → "innahum" (إنهم).	Personal pronoun: <i>they</i> → <i>innahum</i> (إنهم).	Use of a masculine plural form to represent a singular non-binary referent.

Data 4:

Saraa: you wanna be with **her**?

سارة: هل تريد أن تكوني معها؟

Sārah: Hal turīdīna an takūnī ma'ahā?

Anne: No, **them**, No.

آن: لا، بل معهم، لا.

Anne: Lā, bal ma'ahum, lā.

(01:06:35)

Table 4. Analysis of Data 4

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Anne: "No, them , No." (<i>Anne+</i>)	آن: لا، بل معهم، لا. <i>Anne: Lā, bal ma'ahum, lā.</i>	Anne: "No, them , No" → "ma'ahum" (معيهم).	Object pronoun: The English pronoun <i>them</i> is rendered as <i>ma'ahum</i> (معيهم), consisting of the preposition <i>ma'a</i> (مع, "with") and the masculine plural pronoun <i>-hum</i> (هم).	Domestication through a masculine plural form: The Arabic subtitle uses a conventional masculine plural pronoun to refer to Lou. This differs grammatically from the singular non-binary reference in English and should be examined alongside other pronoun choices in the subtitles

However, if we look at the verb (*fi'il madhi/mudhari'/amr*), the dhamir that is paired with the verb that refers to Lou is *ya mukhathabah* (ين/ي). In Arabic language rules, *ya mukhathabah* is intended for feminine pronouns (أنت/هي) which follow the original gender (Al-Hamid, 2008). This is seen when Anne is in dialogue with Lou.

Data 5:

Anne: but anyway, tell me your (Lou) political story.

آن: على كل حال، حدثيني (لو) عن اهتمامك السياسة.

Anne: 'Alā kulli ḥāl, ḥaddithīnī (Lou) 'an ihtimāmiki bis-siyāsah.

Anne: come here.

آن: اقتربي.

An: Iqtaribī.

Anne: you were saying something serious?

آن: على كل حال، كنت تتحدثين عن

<p>Lou: uh, yeah. I just need to recover from that ambush.</p>	<p>موضوع شديد الجدية؟ <i>Anne: 'Alā kulli ḥāl, kunti tataḥaddathīna 'an mawḍū'in syadīdi al-jiddiyyah?</i> لو: أجل، لكنني أحتاج إلى التعافي من هذا الكمين. <i>Lou: Ajal, lākinnanī aḥtāju ilā at-ta'āfi min hādhā al-kamīn.</i> (00:47:33)</p>
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Table 5. Analysis of Data 5

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Anne: "But anyway, tell me your political story." (<i>Anne+</i>)	آن: على كل حال، حدثيني عن اهتمامك بالسياسة. <i>Anne: 'Alā kulli ḥāl, ḥaddithīnī (Lou) 'an ihtimāmiki bis-siyāsah.</i>	Anne: "Anyway, tell me about your political interests."	Imperative verb: <i>ḥaddithīnī</i> (حدثيني), second-person feminine singular.	Feminine grammatical marking; the form explicitly addresses Lou as feminine in this utterance.

Similarly, if we look at the adjectives used to describe Lou, we use *ta marbuthah* (ة). As in Arabic grammar, *ta marbuthah* (ة) is used for feminine adjectives (Al-Hamid, 2008), following the gender of the original. As when Anne describes Lou.

Data 6:

<p>Lou: And you? What about me?</p> <p>Anne: attractive of course. And... smart, and interesting and ethical.</p>	<p>لو: وأنت، ما انطباعك عني؟ <i>Lou: Wa anti, mā inṭibā'uki 'annī?</i> آن: جذابة جداً أيضاً بالطبع، وذكية، ومثيرة للاهتمام وشريفة. <i>Anne: Jadhḥābah jiddan ayḍan biṭ-ṭab'i, wa dhakiyyah, wa muthīrah lil-ihtimām, wa sharīfah.</i> (00:44:49)</p>
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Table 6. Analysis of Data 6

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Anne: "Attractive, of course. And... smart, and	آن: جذابة جداً بالطبع، وذكية،	Anne: "Very attractive, of course, and smart,	Feminine adjectival marking: <i>Jadhḥābah</i>	Feminine grammatical marking: The adjectives

interesting and ethical." (<i>Anne+</i>)	ومثيرة للاهتمام وشريفة. <i>Anne: Jadhābah jiddan ayḍan biṭ-ṭab'i, wa dhakiyyah, wa muthīrah lil-ihtimām, wa sharīfah.</i>	interesting, and honorable."	(جذابة), <i>dhakiyyah</i> (ذكية), and <i>sharīfah</i> (شريفة) are feminine adjective forms. <i>Muthīrah</i> (مثيرة) in <i>muthīrah li-l-ihtimām</i> (مثيرة للاهتمام) is also feminine.	describing Lou consistently use feminine forms. This explicitly marks Lou as feminine at the grammatical level and may contribute to binary gender representation in the subtitles.
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Overall, the analysis of Lou's representation in the Arabic subtitles of *Anne+* illustrates the linguistic challenges involved in translating non-binary gender identities into a language with a grammatically gendered system. The data reveal two notable patterns: the use of the masculine plural pronouns *hum* (هم) and *innahum* (إنهم) to refer to Lou, and the use of feminine adjectival forms, including *jadhābah* (جذابة), *dhakiyyah* (ذكية), *muthīrah* (مثيرة), and *sharīfah* (شريفة), to describe the character. These choices demonstrate that Lou's non-binary identity is represented through different grammatical gender and number features in the Arabic subtitles. The use of masculine plural pronouns may reflect an attempt to avoid assigning Lou an explicitly feminine singular pronoun, whereas the feminine adjectival forms grammatically associate the character with feminine gender. Taken together, these patterns suggest a tension between the representation of Lou's non-binary identity and the grammatical conventions of Arabic. Although such choices may reflect a domestication strategy, this interpretation should be considered in relation to the linguistic constraints of the target language rather than taken as direct evidence of the subtitler's ideological intentions. Nevertheless, the recurring use of gender-marked forms may obscure the linguistic visibility of Lou's non-binary identity and reproduce binary gender associations in the Arabic subtitle representation. These findings highlight the need to examine translation choices across pronouns, verbs, and adjectives to understand how grammatical structures and representational considerations interact in audiovisual translation.

Analysis of the Representation of the Pronoun Syd in the Arabic Subtitles of One Day at a Time

The representation of Syd's non-binary identity in the Arabic subtitles of *One Day at a Time* consistently demonstrates a strong tendency towards domestication, with translators predominantly adapting Syd's English pronouns "they/them/their" to binary gender forms in Arabic. In the original series, Syd's non-binary identity is explicitly affirmed through the use of singular neuter pronouns by themselves and other characters. Analysis of the Arabic subtitles of key episodes (Season 2 Episode 3 and Season 3 Episode 2) reveals that translators frequently use the masculine plural dhamir (هم/hum) to refer to Syd, similar to the strategy observed with Lou.

Data 7:

Syd: Syd. My Pronouns are **"they"** and **"them"**.

سيد: أنا "سيد". ضميري المفضلان هما "هم" و"هم".

Syd: Anā "Syd". Ḍamīrāya al-mufaḍḍalāni humā "hum" wa "hum".

(00:00:44)

Table 7. Analysis of Data 7

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Syd: "I'm Syd. My pronouns are 'they' and 'them' ."	سيد: أنا "سيد". ضمائري المفضلان هما "هم" و"هم". Syd: Anā "Syd". Ḍamīrāya al-mufaḍḍalāni humā "hum" wa "hum".	Syd: "I am Syd. My preferred pronouns are 'hum' and 'hum'."	Pronoun: The English pronouns <i>they</i> and <i>them</i> are translated as <i>hum</i> (هم), a masculine plural pronoun in Arabic.	Masculine plural substitution and grammatical adaptation: The English singular non-binary pronouns <i>they</i> and <i>them</i> are both rendered as <i>hum</i> (هم).

This is also seen when Elena (the main character) asks permission to go out for ice cream with Syd.

Data 8:

Elena: But I was just wondering if I could get ice cream with **them**.

إيلينا: ولكنني كنت أتساءل إن كان يمكنني الذهاب لتناول المتلجات معهم.

Elena: Walākin-nanī kuntu atasā'alu in kāna yumkinunī adh-dhahābu litanāwuli al-muthallajāti ma'ahum.

(00:23:30)

Table 8. Analysis of Data 8

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Elena: "But I was just wondering if I could get ice cream with them ." (<i>One Day at a Time</i>)	إيلينا: ولكنني كنت أتساءل إن كان بإمكانني الذهاب لتناول المثلجات معهم. <i>Elena: Walākin-nanī kuntu atasā'alu in kāna yumkinunī adh-dhahābu litanāwuli al-muthallajāti ma'ahum.</i>	Elena: "But I was just wondering if I could go to have ice cream with them."	Pronoun: The English pronoun <i>them</i> refers to a non-binary individual. In the Arabic subtitle, <i>ma'ahum</i> (معهم) consists of the preposition <i>ma'a</i> (مع, "with") and the masculine plural pronoun - <i>hum</i> (هم).	Masculine plural substitution: The singular non-binary pronoun <i>them</i> is translated using the conventional masculine plural form <i>hum</i> (هم).

While this strategy may aim to avoid imposing a single binary gender (masculine or feminine) and utilize the use of the masculine plural as an 'inclusive' form in mixed-gender contexts, its use for non-binary singular individuals like Syd still feels awkward and inaccurate. This is illustrated when Elena corrects her parents for mispronouncing the pronoun Syd.

Data 9:

Elena: No, "they" is (Syd) "them."
Stop making this confusing.

إيلينا: لا، "هم" هي "هم". توقفنا عن جعل هذا محيرا.

*Elena: Lā, "hum" hiya "hum".
Tawaqqafā 'an ja'li hādhā muḥayiran.*

(00:01:33)

Table 9. Analysis of Data 9

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Elena: "No, 'they' is (Syd) 'them.' Stop making this confusing."	إيلينا: لا، "هم" هي "هم". توقفنا عن جعل هذا محيرا. <i>Elena: Lā, "hum" hiya "hum". Tawaqqafā 'an ja'li hādhā muḥayiran.</i>	Elena: "No, 'they' is 'them.' Stop making this confusing."	Pronoun: The English pronouns <i>they</i> and <i>them</i> are rendered as <i>hum</i> (هم), a masculine plural pronoun in Arabic. Grammatical structure: The Arabic phrase	Masculine plural substitution: Both <i>they</i> and <i>them</i> are translated using <i>hum</i> (هم). This reflects the use of a grammatically available masculine plural form to represent a non-

<p>“هم هي هم” includes the feminine singular pronoun <i>hiya</i> (هي) between two instances of the masculine plural pronoun <i>hum</i> (هم).</p>	<p>binary referent. The phrase also contains <i>hiya</i> (هي), a feminine singular pronoun, creating a potentially relevant contrast in the Arabic rendering. Its function should be interpreted in context before drawing conclusions about gender representation.</p>
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Furthermore, observations of the adjectives used to describe Syd also tend toward the feminine, reinforcing this pattern of domestication by linking Syd to existing gender categories, as in the following dialogue.

Data 10:

Elena's Mom: Syd's your "queer dear."	<p>أم إيلينا: "سيد" عزيزتك الغريبة. <i>Ummu Īlīnā: "Sīd" 'azīzatuki al-gharībah.</i></p>
	(00:08:09)

Tabel 10. Analysis of Data 10

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Elena's Mom: "Syd's your 'queer dear.'"	أم إيلينا: "سيد" عزيزتك الغريبة.	Elena's Mom: "Syd is your strange/queer dear."	Lexical choice: The expression "queer dear" is rendered as 'azīzatuki al-gharībah (عزيزتك الغريبة). The word 'azīzatuki (عزيزتك) is a feminine form meaning "your dear one," while al-gharībah (الغريبة) is a feminine adjective that can	Gender marking and lexical shift: The Arabic translation uses feminine grammatical forms to refer to Syd, whose pronouns are <i>they/them</i> . In addition, translating <i>queer</i> as <i>gharībah</i> (غريبة, "strange/odd") may shift the expression's meaning from an

	mean “strange” or “odd,” depending on context.	identity-related term toward a description of unusualness.
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The adjectives and *mausuf* (property) used here are *ta marbuthah* (ﺓ), as mentioned above (ﺓ) which refers to the feminine pronoun. However, in other scenes, the adjectives and *mausuf* referring to Syd are masculine.

Data 11:

Elena: Your “Non Bino-saur”

إيلينا: الـ"بينوصور" المجهول.

Elena: *al-“Bīnūṣūr” al-majhūl.*

(00:08:19)

Tabel 11. Analisis Data 11

Source Text (ST)	Target Text(TT)	Gloss (Back-Translation)	Linguistic Unit	Strategy Classification
Elena: “Your ‘Non Bino-saur’”	إيلينا: الـ"بينوصور" المجهول.	Elena: “Your ‘Nino-saur,’ the unknown.”	Lexical choice and wordplay: The English expression “ <i>Non Bino-saur</i> ” appears to be a playful coinage combining “ <i>non-binary</i> ” with “ <i>dinosaur</i> .” In the Arabic subtitle, the expression is rendered as “بينوصور” and accompanied by “المجهول” (“the unknown”), which may alter the original wordplay and its association with non-binary identity.	Wordplay adaptation and potential semantic shift: The Arabic rendering appears to adapt the coined expression rather than reproduce its English components directly. The addition of “المجهول” (“the unknown”) may shift the expression’s meaning.

The analysis of Syd's representation in the Arabic subtitles of *One Day at a Time* confirms the pattern of domestication also seen in Lou's case, but with the added dimension of significant inconsistency. The predominant use of the masculine plural *dhamir* (هم/*hum*) in response to the pronouns “they/them/their” reflects the translator's attempt to navigate the absence of the neuter singular, although its use for singular

individuals remains unusual. Crucially, observations reveal a gender shift in adjectives referring to Syd, varying between feminine (with *ta marbutah*) and masculine forms across scenes. These inconsistencies, as seen in the translation of "is" to "هي" or Elena's correction of pronouns, highlight the translator's struggle to maintain identity accuracy amidst strict grammatical constraints. As a result, these linguistic choices collectively obscure Syd's non-binary identity and lead to pronominal misalignment in the subtitles, which can ultimately confuse audiences and diminish the authentic representation of the character in Arabic.

Overall, the comparative analysis of Lou in *Anne+* and Syd in *One Day at a Time* reveals challenges in representing non-binary identities in Netflix's Arabic subtitles, particularly in the translation of pronouns and other gender-marked expressions. One recurring pattern is the use of the masculine plural pronoun *hum* (هم) to translate the English singular non-binary pronouns *they* and *them*. Although this choice draws on an established grammatical form in Arabic, it does not necessarily provide an unambiguously gender-neutral equivalent. Its representational implications therefore need to be examined in relation to other linguistic choices in the subtitles rather than interpreted in isolation.

The analysis also identifies gender marking beyond pronoun selection. In the subtitles examined for Syd, for example, the expressions *ʿazīzatuki* (عزيزتك) and *al-gharībah* (الغريبة) contain feminine grammatical forms. Such choices illustrate how gender distinctions may be expressed through lexical items and grammatical agreement, even when the English dialogue uses non-binary pronouns or identity-related expressions. The translation of "queer dear" as *ʿazīzatuki al-gharībah* also raises a question about lexical meaning, since *gharībah* can convey the sense of "strange" or "unusual," depending on context. These examples suggest that the representation of non-binary characters cannot be evaluated solely by examining pronouns; adjectives, nouns, and other gender-marked forms must also be considered. However, conclusions about systematic inconsistency require evidence of recurring patterns across the complete dataset.

From the perspective of audiovisual translation (AVT), these findings highlight the challenges of translating non-binary identities between English and Arabic, whose grammatical systems differ in their treatment of gender. The use of masculine plural pronouns and feminine-marked expressions demonstrates that translators must negotiate the relationship between the linguistic resources available in Arabic and the gender

identities represented in the source dialogue. Nevertheless, the available examples do not establish that all such choices result from domestication, nor do they independently demonstrate the translators' ideological intentions. Rather, they show how particular translation choices may affect the consistency with which non-binary identities are represented in the target subtitles. These findings contribute to discussions of gender representation in audiovisual translation by emphasizing the importance of examining pronouns alongside other gender-marked linguistic forms and by distinguishing grammatical constraints from the potential representational implications of translation decisions.

Conclusion

This study has examined the representation of non-binary gender identities in Netflix's Arabic subtitles for *Anne+* (character Lou) and *One Day at a Time* (character Syd). The findings highlight several challenges in translating non-binary identities between English and Arabic, particularly in the use of pronouns and other gender-marked linguistic forms. One notable pattern is the use of the masculine plural pronoun *hum* (هم) to translate the singular non-binary pronouns *they* and *them*. Although this choice draws on an established grammatical form in Arabic, it does not necessarily provide an unambiguously gender-neutral equivalent. The analysis also identifies gender-marked expressions, including feminine forms such as *'azīzatuki* and *al-gharībah* in the subtitles referring to Syd. These examples illustrate that gender representation extends beyond pronoun selection to encompass lexical choices and grammatical gender marking. The observed variation in gender-marked forms further highlights the challenges of maintaining consistency in the representation of non-binary characters.

These linguistic choices demonstrate the complex relationship between the grammatical resources available in Arabic and the representation of non-binary identities in audiovisual translation. While the use of masculine plural pronouns and gender-marked expressions may reflect attempts to accommodate the structural characteristics of Arabic, their representational implications must be evaluated in context. In particular, such choices may affect the consistency and visibility of non-binary identities in the target subtitles. However, the present study does not directly examine audience reception; therefore, the extent to which these translations influence viewers' understanding of non-binary identities remains an area for further investigation.

Overall, this study contributes to research on audiovisual translation (AVT) and gender representation by demonstrating the importance of examining pronouns alongside other gender-marked linguistic forms. It also highlights the need to distinguish between grammatical constraints and translation choices when evaluating the representation of non-binary identities. Future research could expand the dataset to include additional audiovisual works and language pairs, investigate audience responses to different translation strategies, and explore translation practices that preserve the linguistic naturalness of the target language while representing non-binary identities more consistently. Such research could contribute to the development of more inclusive approaches to audiovisual translation across languages and cultural contexts.

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