



## Self-mediation practices in Persian YouTube subtitling: An affective translation perspective

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**Abstract:** The rise of intralingual blogger subtitling on YouTube has introduced innovative practices in today's mediascape, particularly through the use of subtitles that include notes. These affective subtitles may enhance audience engagement and inclusivity by helping viewers better understand and connect emotionally with the content. Nonetheless, subtitling on YouTube, particularly from an affective labor angle, remains relatively unexplored. To fill this void, the study focuses on the popular Persian YouTube channel *@Kouman*, known for its entertaining content targeted at Persian-speaking audiences. Informed by theories of affect theory and affective self-mediation, this study examines how captions create a platform for materializing affective labor through subtitlers' notes, which convey their voice and inner thoughts to create a more personalized viewing experience. The findings suggest that these notes function as a form of affective labor, exhibiting subtitler's witty remarks and inner thoughts that shape how the video content is felt and understood. These affective and embodied strategies help build affective bonds with the viewers, creating a stronger connection between them and the channel. This study argues that translation theory should reconceptualize subtitles as dynamic, mood-shaping assemblages rather than mere conduits of dialogue.

**Keywords:** affect; affective labor; affective translation; captioning; self-mediation; YouTube self-subtitling.

### I. Introduction

Translation is often regarded as a professional activity practiced by agents identifying as translators (Chakraborty & Israel, 2023). This act of mediation is "full of resonances, voices, sounds, noises, images, and scents" (Vidal Claramonte, 2024, p. 106). Translation is not merely the exchange of words, but "a constant, creative, transformative and ubiquitous act that permeates every space, time and thought in our everyday lives" (Chakraborty & Israel, 2023, p. xxi). This view, as Pedwell

(2016) and Lee (2022) note, is indicative of a shift in focus from rigid constructs of equivalence and fidelity towards a more democratic and creative expression in translation.

The availability of technological tools, along with faster internet connectivity has empowered citizens to expand their amateur translation activities (Díaz-Cintas & Massidda, 2020); thereby redefining translation with their experimental and avant-garde approaches and supporting the above views on translation in the mediascape. This democratization has helped individuals on platforms like YouTube to become independent content creators, otherwise known as social media influencers (Abidin, 2018). The outcome of this ‘digital presumption’, a concept that highlights the blurring boundaries between production and consumption (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021), is challenging the dominance of mainstream media (Pérez-González, 2014).

Therefore, the contemporary media landscape is characterized by the increasing engagement of ordinary people with their self-branding activities, referred to as self-mediation (Chouliaraki, 2010). Online content creators (e.g., YouTubers) have fostered audience engagement and built affinity by incorporating personalized, affective or even ludic content into their content. YouTube serves as a platform for emerging forms of audiovisual translation (AVT), as YouTubers translating their videos frequently diverge from norms and conventions of commercial subtitling thanks to the agency they enjoy (Lee, 2021). To cultivate a sense of affinity in their channel, they may personalize and humanize the video content (Koskinen, 2020). Not only does this affective practice broaden the potential viewership but it also caters to a wide range of viewer perspectives and introduces unique ways of interpreting content.

According to Dwyer (2017) and Wang (2022), commentaries or personalized touches within amateur subtitles enhance audience engagement and strengthen the connection between creators and their audience. They function as paratextual elements, empowering subtitlers to step outside their traditionally-invisible zone and directly address viewers, resulting in a ‘hypertranslation’ where translation becomes a deeply sensory, material and dynamic activity (Vidal Claramonte & Lee, 2024). Viewed through affect theory, the notes underscore the embodied role of the translators. Subtitlers engage in affective labor by incorporating notes, often witty and humorous, into their translations, intentionally aiming to modulate viewers’ emotions, create positive emotional experiences, or sustain particular emotional states in them like YouTube vloggers (Mäkinen, 2021). Affects are communicatively enacted (Tschorhart, 2015) through language or images, and, in this case, through these notes and commentaries.

Thus, subtitlers are not merely conveying the original information; they are actively shaping an affective atmosphere. In fact, the subtitler’s notes build affective connections between the channel and the fans. Additionally, the introduction of the concept of affect challenges the naïve assumptions of fidelity, neutrality and impartiality in translation (Mo & Jin, 2023; Lee, 2025). By understanding fan translation and its interventionist approach as a form of affective labor or practice within self-mediated textualities or audiovisual content (Pérez-González, 2016), scholars can explore how this approach deeply personalizes, contextualizes and situates both content and its surrounding event (Koskinen, 2020). This perspective encourages a rethinking of subtitling through the lens of non-representational theory, which shifts focus from static representations—such as fixed meanings—towards a dynamic and lived experience (Williams, 2020). In fact, Curti (2009) considers film

subtitles “as affective bodily expressions” (p. 201), as they are not merely about meaning and literal translation. They improve the affective experience of audience.

Therefore, in line with affect theory’s emphasis on non-linguistic, embodied and sensory dimensions of experience rather than representational interpretations (Schaefer, 2019), subtitles or fansubs are less about what something means and more about how it feels (Curti, 2009; Wang, 2022). Therefore, subtitles should be evaluated according to “their affective contribution to the materiality of audio-visual texts and their transformational impact on the audience’s experience of self-mediated textualities” (Pérez-González, 2012, p. 348). Although non-professional AVT has received much attention, their examination from the perspective of affectivity and self-mediation is still limited (e.g., Pérez-González, 2014; Lee, 2021; Mo & Jin, 2023; Lee, 2025). Hence, affect theory offers valuable insights into how the individuality and subjectivity of YouTube translators.

In view of the above, this exploratory study examines the affective dimensions of intralingual subtitling on YouTube, focusing on how captions are employed for affective and expressive purposes. It explores how captions offer space for explanatory notes that articulate the subtitlers’ voices and feelings and promise a more personalized and immersive viewing experience. This is where affect theory provides a robust framework for analyzing how the individuality and subjectivity of non-professional subtitlers shape translation. This timely paper invites scholars to reconsider how translation functions in digital ecosystems—particularly through the lens of affect theory, which frames translation as an emotionally charged process, making it as much an art of feeling as of language.

With the growing scholarly interest in intralingual translation (Pilliére & Albachten, 2024), the article provides insights into a lesser-explored area of intralingual subtitling—i.e., blogger subtitling on YouTube. Adopting an affective lens, it emphasizes the experiential nature of translation, in which meaning is not merely transferred but recreated and is infused with rich contextual and emotional information.

## 2. Theoretical foundation

### 2.1 Self-mediation

A more critical and context-sensitive understanding of translation leads us to the concept of *mediation* (Wang & de Pedro Ricoy, 2023), challenging the so-called ‘conduit metaphor’—which restricts the translator’s role to merely conveying the original message while maintaining a detached and neutral stance (Guldin, 2020). Mediation recognizes that translations are not purely mechanical but are mediated by technological factors, and translator’s agency, beliefs and subjectivity (Wang & de Pedro Ricoy, 2023). Mediation, in this sense, involves interpretation and adaptation based on the translator’s perspective, knowledge and intentions, who may often inject their interpretations and biases into their work to make the content resonate with the target audience or align with their understanding of the text (Wang, 2019). When this idea is applied to fan translators, who often operate outside the formal constraints of professional translation, the role of mediation becomes even more evident but complicated.



The contemporary media landscape is characterized by the growing engagement of ordinary people with their self-branding activities, referred to as self-mediation (Chouliaraki, 2010), enabled by the affordances of modern technologies. To better understand self-mediation, it is essential to examine its position within the broader framework of citizen media, as conceptualized by Rodríguez (2008). She views citizen media as those platforms through which individuals actively enact or perform their citizenship; in other words, these media empower individuals “to name the world and speak the world in their own terms, formats, and aesthetic values” (Rodríguez, 2008, p. 2).

YouTube exemplifies many of the characteristics of citizen media since technological and cultural convergence has inspired a whole slew of people worldwide to create and share their media content on a global scale, transforming the way information is created and consumed (Chouliaraki, 2012; Jones, 2021). Thus, individuals are no longer passive consumers of popular culture but they effectively contribute to its construction and circulation (Chen, 2023). Pérez-González (2019) highlights the link between technological innovation and user-generated content, noting that users create their own translated versions as a kind of self-mediation. Viewing fan translation through the lens of self-mediation provides insight into how AVT is creatively and expressively performed, as opposed to conforming solely to commercial standards (Pérez-González, 2014, 2017).

## 2.2 Non-professional subtitling as an affective self-mediation

Building on Silvan S. Tomkins's seminal work conceptualizing affect as a core mechanism in human behaviour and motivation (Tomkins, 2014), contemporary theories view affect as encompassing “the capacity to experience and understand the world in ways that are profoundly relational and productive” (Liljeström, 2016, p. 16). Indeed, it has the affective potential to generate meaning, build connections and influence socio-cultural practices. According to Zhang and Wu (2022), affect emphasizes “human’s spontaneous productivity rather than passive reaction to external stimulus” (p. 328). This understanding has fuelled the affective turn in sociological research, which introduces the concept of affective labor—work aimed at generating or modulating emotional experiences in individuals (Hardt, 1999). By generating “positive externalities such as social networks, attachments, and passions” (Oksala, 2016, p. 293), affective labor illustrates how affect operates as a force in shaping both individual and collective experiences (Hardt, 1999). In the context of digital fandom and media culture, affect is not just a feeling but a productive force, making affective labor a critical lens for understanding the complex intersections of feelings, labor and capitalism (Wei, 2023).

In translation studies, this perspective shifts our focus from a purely textual model to one that views translation as an embodied, materially situated and relational practice (Lee, 2023). Thus, translation becomes “a form of investigation or research and of embracing the unknown, with the potential to open up the space between words and indeed to access that which escapes language” (Campbell & Vidal, 2024, p. 11). Indeed, this perspective positions translation as an inherently “embodied, located, worldly, contextualized, and relational” process (Liljeström, 2016, p. 16). Thus, accurately depicting the source text is no longer the primary goal. Instead, emphasis is placed on the materiality and affectivity of translation, with greater attention to the translator’s subjectivity and

individuality (Calleja, 2019) and their ‘affective engagement’ (Ahmed, 2014), which sheds light on the motivations behind their choices.

This shift towards affectivity and expressivity is particularly evident in non-professional translation, such as fan translation and online content creation (e.g., YouTube vlogging). In such contexts, affect—manifesting as creativity, fun, wittiness, activism, or emotional resonance—becomes both the primary motivation and the intended effect, often overriding the traditional expectations of equivalence or accuracy (Koskinen, 2020). This reflects a shift in focus: from the source text’s fixed meaning (referentiality, representation) to its emotional resonance (expressivity) (Curti, 2009; Lee, 2021; Pérez-González, 2014). To rephrase, these translations often prioritize “the affective and spectacular dimensions of public communication” over strict fidelity (Pérez-González, 2012, p. 346). Therefore, this approach positions subtitling as a dynamic and affective practice, that engages viewers because the goal is no longer to convey literal meaning (referentiality), but to generate and circulate affects and promise a different sensory experience for the viewer (expressivity).

Linking affectivity to non-representational theory, Pérez-González (2012) argues that affect acts as a powerful force driving amateur self-mediation. Practices like adding commentary, humor, emotional cues, or specialized captions like Japanese ‘telop’ (Sasamoto, 2024) actively manipulate the affective dimensions of a text, guiding the viewers’ attention and boosting their sensory experience. These interventions reshape the affective narrative, sometimes reflecting the creators’ beliefs or making their feelings visible (Mo & Jin, 2023). These paratextual elements (i.e., subtitler’s notes or comments) serve as spaces for subtitlers or YouTubers to share their feelings, inner thoughts and interests (Lee, 2019; Mo & Jin, 2023). They therefore prioritize affinity with the audience over referential accuracy, revealing their affective investment (Pérez-González, 2017).

This emphasis on affect and intervention underscores the embodied and relational nature of subtitling in online spaces. Lee (2025) describes self-mediation like YouTube vlogging as involving the bodily interplay between creators and viewers, expanding their capacities through human and non-human factors. A key phenomenon in this landscape is self-subtitling. It is a subtitling activity where individuals, such as bloggers or vloggers, independently create subtitles for their own audiovisual content, typically on YouTube, often driven by personal initiative (Mao et al., 2024). The increasing prevalence of self-subtitling is indicative of the growing accessibility of digital tools and the expansion of participatory culture (Wang et al., 2025). These translators render their bodily experience of the source material, giving audiences a glimpse into that subjective reality (Sadler, 2020). This dynamic space gives rise to what Koskinen (2020, p. 140) terms a “translatorial playground”, where established rules are openly challenged. Thus, subtitling becomes a space for new modes of meaning-making. Approaching YouTube blogger subtitling as an affective act of ‘textual poaching’ (Jenkins, 2013) implies that the subtitlers “exploit semiotic resources, ranging from verbal to nonverbal elements” (Wongseree et al., 2019, p. 1) to convey “varied meanings and create a visually aesthetic and coherent frame” (Zhang & Vazquez-Calvo, 2024, p. 200).

However, research on amateur subtitling from an affective perspective remains limited (e.g., Pérez-González, 2014; Lee, 2021; Mo & Jin, 2023; Lee, 2025), with a notable lack of studies focusing on intralingual subtitling/captioning on YouTube. Therefore, there is a huge gap in our understanding of this emerging practice in the online mediascape. Focusing on the Persian channel @Kouman, this

paper explores how captions provide fertile ground for materializing affective labor through subtitlers' notes.

### 3. Method

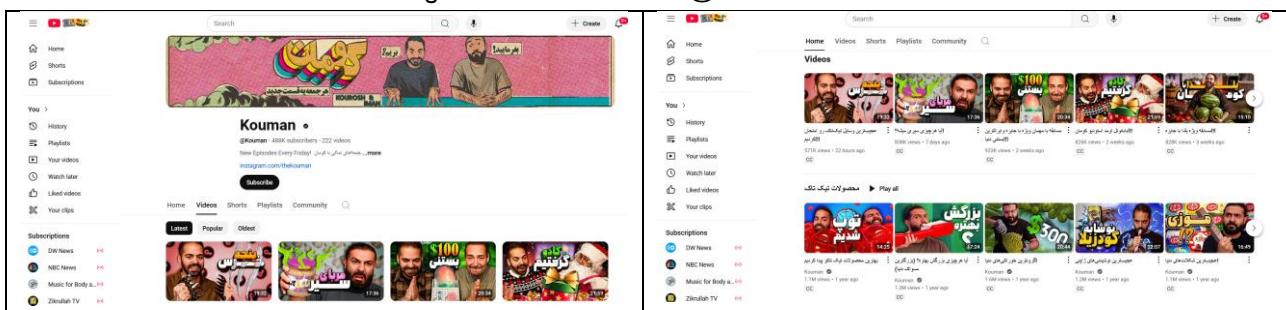
#### 3.1 Research design

This qualitative study follows a research design guided by case studies. The case study method presents a rich and in-detailed exploration of a phenomenon from various perspectives, enabling researchers to validate new models or theories or challenge existing models (Duff, 2020). Case studies typically explore an under-studied phenomenon, which can lead to the development of new theories and fresh insights (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013). This exploratory single case study focuses exclusively on the YouTube channel *@Kouman*. The rationale for selecting a single case stems from the fact that, to the best of our knowledge, this is the only YouTube channel that employs affect-infused captions, which contain subtitler's notes. As such, the case is both critical and revelatory: it is critical because the channel's subtitles align closely with the theory of affective self-mediation, and revelatory because it presents a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible to our scholarly investigation (Yin, 2018), especially, affective subtitling that has been limitedly examined in AVT.

#### 3.2 Data collection and analysis

Our case here is the YouTube channel *@Kouman*, with 584K subscribers and 255 videos<sup>1</sup>. The channel was created on 13 January 2021, and has approximately 292 million views. As can be seen in Figure 1, the channel produces entertaining content for Persian-speaking audiences. Videos explore various themes, including the world's most expensive food, unusual drinks or the best toys. The primary language in the videos is Persian/Farsi, and closed captions are provided in the same language. The CC symbol under the videos, as shown in the right picture in Figure 1, indicates the availability of these intralingual subtitles. Besides accessibility for deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences within the channel, the intralingual subtitles on *Kouman*'s channel serve some unique purposes, as will be explored in the result section.

Figure 1: The interface of *@Kouman* channel



Source: Kouman (n.d.)

<sup>1</sup> Date of consultation: 7 May 2025.

As will be discussed below, all videos uploaded to the channel after February 17, 2023, included Persian captions. It is worth noting that the channel serves as the overarching case, with the purposively selected videos from it representing the most illustrative instances. These videos, therefore, function as analytical units within the broader case of the channel itself. Due to space constraints, this paper analyzes a select sample of these videos, deemed critical for examining affective subtitling. Four videos formed the corpus of the study. These videos were not randomly chosen but were selected through purposive sampling, deemed more appropriate for yielding deeper insights due to their specificity (Table 1). The unit of analysis consisted of YouTube videos and their accompanying Persian captions. These captions, beyond merely transcribing spoken dialogue, often incorporate humor, commentary and additional notes.

This study employed a multimodal comparative approach to analyze these captioned videos. By examining the Persian captions alongside the source videos, the research investigated how they contribute to an affective subtitling experience. Specifically, the analysis sought to identify affective elements present in the Persian captions. The data analysis followed a recursive process of interpretation and meaning-making, involving iterative examination of the captions and the YouTubers' spoken content to assess how they aligned with the affective perspective.

Given the absence of a specific analytical tool designed to examine subtitlers' commentaries through the lens of affect theory and affective labor, insights were drawn from various relevant works in both AVT and sociology. The goal is to reinterpret subtitlers' interventions through affect theory where they are framed as bodily acts. Indeed, their emotionally invested labor makes the act of subtitling feel personal and emotionally resonant, rather than mechanical or detached like any professional rendering. These commentaries transform what might otherwise be an informational or entertainment video into a playful and engaging experience, reshaping how audiences feel and connect with the content.

Table 1: Research units

	Title	Views	Upload date	Video length	Fieldnotes
Video One <sup>2</sup>	Which is better, Brazilian or Iranian food?	971K	Nov 15, 2024	20.44	
Video Two <sup>3</sup>	Who loves more, Mia or Iman?	1.7M	Feb 23, 2024	22.58	3000 words and
Video Three <sup>4</sup>	The game of early humans with punishment!!!	1.1M	Sep 20, 2024	22.04	34 screenshots
Video Four <sup>5</sup>	We tried the weirdest TikTok gadgets!!!	903K	Jan 10, 2025	19.31	

Source: Author (2025)

In the analysis section, we first present our observations of the channel to provide more context about the channel under analysis and highlight how captioning serves as an essential feature of the channel. The analysis of the cases is presented in tables, which include information about the scene and context, as well as the intralingual subtitles (i.e., captions) and subtitler's notes. The TCR also specifies the timing of each scene within the video. It is important to note that only the back

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omMxKWMTWmA>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6eT2pjhh68&t=74s>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PD61DIFE4wo>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwKLA6ORVkc&t=3s>

translations into English from Persian of the intralingual subtitles and commentaries are provided here to save space. These back translations have been conducted by the researcher, who is a professional-certified translator.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Preliminary analysis

This section presents the field notes recorded during the observation of the channel. @Kouman is a Persian-language YouTube channel that releases new episodes almost every week. The inclusion of Persian subtitles (not YouTube's automatic captions) in the videos was not their initial intention, as videos posted before February 17, 2023, lacked Persian captions. This initiative began on February 17, 2023 with a video titled “The best food in the world? Gilan”. These Persian captions likely address accessibility issues by helping deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, people in noisy environments, or those who prefer to watch videos silently. They go beyond the YouTubers' spoken dialogue to include the subtitlers' commentaries, which contain additional information and facts about the video's subject, as well as humorous and witty comments.

The subtitlers insert as much information as possible, metaphorically similar to how Sheldon Cooper in *The Big Bang Theory* often provided excessive details about any topic. They engage affectively and not just semantically, which means that subtitles are processual and dynamic. Indeed, cultural assemblages that, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) terms, bring diverse elements together in a process of becoming. As such, these subtitles integrate heterogeneous components—material, affective and semiotic—into contingent wholes (Wise, 2011). Therefore, the captioned videos become more than just audiovisual content; they become multi-component texts, sites of expressivity, and tools for enhanced engagement.

Figure 2: An example of subtitlers' commentary



Enriched with the subtitler's feelings and personal commentary, these captions function as affect-mediated content, building a space for the creators' emotive performance. Figure 2 shows

one example of such commentaries, where the subtitler offers some facts about *The Alps* in Europe. It is worth noting that these commentaries appear between two asterisks (\*\*) in order to signal that they are not part of the dialogue, as seen in Figure 2. The subtitler is also a member of the channel's team. Therefore, these captions are created under the supervision of the channel's creators.

The inclusion of Persian captions in the videos also captured the attention of some if not all users, as evidenced by comments, some of which are presented in Table 2<sup>6</sup>. Users expressed their appreciation for the addition of subtitles in the videos, particularly for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, with one user mentioning that the subtitles could be displayed for a longer duration. These comments show that in subtitling, adding a funny remark or an emotional touch may evoke affective responses such as laughter or curiosity in viewers (Tomkins, 2014).

Table 2: Users' comments about captions

Users' comments	Likes for the comment	Video title
@k****y It was such a thoughtful thing to add subtitles. Deaf people deserve this kindness. Honestly, this gesture made my respect for you grow a thousand times more. May God bless you. ☺☺	411	The Most Expensive Clothes in the World
@****4 This idea of adding Persian subtitles for friends who are hard of hearing or deaf is really great. Thank you so much.	422	The Strangest TikTok Products
@g****e Thank you for adding Persian subtitles to your videos. One of my deaf friends loves Komaan's videos, and the subtitles make them so happy.	814	Let's Dance Arabic Together
@g****5 One of the best parts of Koman's videos is the subtitles. Thank you, really 10/10!	58	Can Anything Make You Feel Full?!
@m****4 Hooray! (Subtitles 🎉)	147	Santa Claus Came to the Kouman Studio!!!
@****8 The person who adds the subtitles seems like the narrator of the story, and they tell it in such a way that it feels like they're actually in the video, which is really cool. The only thing is, the subtitles go by a little too quickly. ❤	94	Vlog: The Strangest Street Foods in Vancouver!

Source: Author (2025)

Below is an analysis of four cases from the channel, examining how these captions can modulate emotional flows between communicative bodies, such as the subtitler, the audience and the video.

#### 4.2 Video one: Which is better, Brazilian or Iranian food?

Our first case is fairly peculiar in terms of subtitling. This video introduces Brazilian and Iranian food, featuring two Iranian YouTubers, Kourosh and Iman, who invited a Brazilian guest, Jessica. The video starts with Brazilian food, with Jessica providing information while Kourosh and

<sup>6</sup> The viewers' names were made anonymous with asterisk to protect their rights.

Iman try the dishes. This is followed by Jessica tasting Iranian food. Although the language of the videos on the channel is Persian as mentioned before, this specific episode was conducted in English due to the non-Persian guest, creating an interesting mix of interlingual subtitles and intralingual captions.

While Kourosh, Iman and Jessica speak English, their dialogue is translated into Persian using a placement and colour technique. The subtitles appear near each speaker to avoid confusion about who is talking, with each person's subtitles in a different colour. Kourosh and Iman occasionally speak Persian in the video. As a result, the viewers can see two sets of subtitles: one in colour for the Persian translation of English dialogue, and another in white, normal font for the Persian sentences and commentary (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The presence of interlingual and intralingual subtitles, and explanatory notes



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omMxKWMTWmA&t=543s>

Affective translation can be seen in the subtitlers' explanatory notes. The first form of this can be observed when Jessica is introducing foods from her country, Brazil. Initially, when Jessica presents and introduces the food, her English is translated into Persian using green-colored subtitles. Alongside this, the subtitlers' notes appear, but they are not included in the green-coded subtitles to prevent confusion, as viewers might mistakenly associate them with her speech. Instead, these commentaries are presented in a different subtitling font.

In Table 3, the subtitler's note, offering factual information about the dish and its preparation, serves not merely to inform but to deepen the viewer's appreciation of the Brazilian culture. This constitutes affective labor, characterized by a desire to build or enhance emotional or relational engagement or deliberately evoke or shape emotions in the audience (Koskinen, 2020; Lee, 2025). In this context, the subtitler actively promotes the understanding, appreciation, curiosity and

connection to Brazilian culture for Iranian viewers. Indeed, these explanatory notes add depth and meaning to the video, helping viewers more easily engage with the culinary richness of Brazil. Lee (2025) points out that they are a means of “exchanging information with fellow fans and displaying affinity for them” (p. 109).

Table 3: Instance one

Context	Here, the YouTubers and Jessica are talking about <i>Bolinha de queijo</i> .
	 <p>Context: Here, the YouTubers and Jessica are talking about <i>Bolinha de queijo</i>.</p> <p>TCR</p> <p><b>Intralingual Subtitles</b></p> <p><b>Subtitler's Notes</b></p> <p>07:42 <b>Kourosh:</b> So we've got three items. What's this one? - 07:47 <b>Jessica:</b> This is <i>Bolinha de queijo</i>. It's called cheese balls.</p> <p>07:48 <b>Iman:</b> Can you say it again? - 08:07 <b>Jessica:</b> <i>Bolinha de queijo</i>. <b>Kourosh:</b> It's so hard to pronounce, <i>Bolinha de queijo</i>. <b>Mia:</b> Fried balls? <b>Kourosh:</b> That's such a cool word to say. <b>Iman:</b> And what is it? <b>Jessica:</b> It's like a snack, made of like cheese deep fried. <b>Iman:</b> Oh, perfect! <b>Kourosh:</b> Oh cheese, it's cheese.</p> <p>Subtitler's Notes: These are the Brazilian version of the same fried snacks sold by weight [in Iran]. <i>Bolinha de queijo</i> literally means cheese ball. It's usually made with mozzarella cheese, but sometimes they add gouda or parmesan alongside it.</p> <p>They coat the cheese in flour, egg, breadcrumbs, and annatto seasoning, then fry it. You might ask, what on earth is annatto? Annatto is a Brazilian spice made from the seeds of the achiote tree, native to the Amazon. It gives food a unique color and flavor. The closest thing to annatto you can find in Iran is paprika powder.</p>

Source: Author (2025)

The second example (Table 4) presents the subtitlers' emotional reactions to what Jessica said in Persian. The initial reaction to the swear word is of surprise and amusement, reflected in the “What???” commentary. The note plays a crucial role in affective mediation by adding emotional depth or intensifying the feelings, as it captures the humor, surprise and playful interactions that emerge from Jessica's limited knowledge of Persian, particularly her familiarity with only the swear word.

This creates a playful context that encourages viewers' engagement and builds a casual atmosphere. It is also a strong example of non-representational subtitling, which conveys additional information or reflects the subtitler's inner thoughts and feelings (Pérez-González, 2014). Regarding

the viewers' reactions, some highlighted the subtitles in the comments, reflecting the subtitler's affective strategies and their success in eliciting a positive emotional response from the audience (see Table 5).

Table 4: Instance two

Context Here, the YouTubers and Jessica are talking about another Brazilian food Pão de Queijo. Then, they switch to this topic if they know anything about the language spoken in Brazil and if Jessica knows Persian.



خوراکی‌های برزیلی بهترن یا ایرانی؟

Kouman 490K subscribers

Subscribe

966,908 views Nov 15, 2024 #miaplays #کرمان# #kouman

TCR Intralingual Subtitles Subtitler's Notes

TCR	Intralingual Subtitles	Subtitler's Notes
8:44	<b>Kourosh:</b> What do you know in Farsi?	What???
-	<b>Jessica:</b> I know [her Persian word is replaced with a sound]	Who taught this girl Persian?
9:04	<b>[Kourosh and Iman laughed when they heard Jessica says a Persian swear word]</b>	Come on, sis!!
	<b>Iman:</b> That's the only word, you know?	He said something in a street-style accent that totally threw me off.
	<b>Jessica:</b> No, I know some others.	Wrap it up quickly before it heats up!
	<b>Iman:</b> Salam [Persian word for hello]	
	<b>Jessica:</b> Salam. Chetorin? [Persian phrase for how are you]	
	<b>Iman:</b> So you know these!	

Table 5: Viewers' comments

Source: Author (2025)

#### 4.3 Video two: Who loves more, Mia or Iman?

The three YouTubers play a game to know who knows Kourosh better. This video was posted to celebrate the Iranian version of Valentine's Day. Like any video on the channel, this video in Persian and has Persian intralingual subtitles with the subtitler's commentary. In this video, Kourosh asks personal questions about his life and lifestyle, which the other two YouTubers answer to receive a score. The questions are displayed in bold yellow subtitles to distinguish them from the regular white captions.

Table 6: Instance three

Context	<p>Here, Mia and Iman compete to see who knows Kourosh best. The winner will receive a gift from Kourosh Just as a lover gives a gift on Valentine's Day.</p> 	
TCR	Intralingual Subtitles	Subtitler's Notes
0:15 - 0:48	<p><b>Kourosh:</b> Hey Iman, tell me why we're celebrating Love Day today? Didn't Valentine's just pass?</p> <p><b>Iman:</b> Come on, what is Valentine! Today is the celebration of Sepandārmazgān, which is a day to honor women, love and the Earth.</p> <p><b>Kourosh:</b> So true Valentine is today!</p> <p><b>Iman:</b> Our ancient Valentine is today, the other one is fake [He's referring to the western Valentine].</p> <p><b>Kourosh:</b> Of course, it's celebrated on the 5th of Esfand, but we're celebrating it earlier so that guys can prepare themselves.</p> <p><b>Kourosh:</b> On this day, back in the old days, people used to give gifts to their loved ones. Now I want to do the same with you two today</p>	<p>Sepandārmaz or Esfand are the name given to the fifth day of each month and the twelfth month of every year [Iranian calendar]. This term, found in Avestan as Spenta Armaiti, is composed of two parts: 'Spenta' or 'Sepand,' meaning pure and sacred, and 'Armaiti,' meaning humility and patience.</p> <p>This ancient celebration has roots in the celebrations of the Achaemenid Empire.</p> <p>In each month, once, the name of the day and the month would coincide, and on that day, a celebration would be held corresponding to the name of that day and month. Similarly, the fifth day of each month was called Sepandārmaz or Esfandarmaz, and in the twelfth month of the year, which was also called Esfandarmaz, a celebration with the same title would be held.</p> <p>On this day, women would wear new clothes and shoes, and in a way, they would rule the household. Therefore, their husbands or sons would take over daily chores inside the house, following all the instructions and commands of the women.</p>

15:39 - 16:07	[Kourosh keeps asking questions, and Mia and Iman answer them. Here the subtitler also answers the questions to create some funny moments] <b>Kourosh:</b> Name three of my favorite brands	Considering his classic and minimalist taste: Patek Philippe, Richard Mille, and Vacheron Constantin.
	<b>Mia:</b> I misspelt all of them, both their names and their spellings. <b>Kourosh:</b> Show me, show me. You wrote two of them similarly. <b>Kourosh reacting to Mia's familiarity with the brand Vacheron Constantin:</b> I cannot believe it! How did you know its name? <b>Mia:</b> You mentioned its name, but I don't know if it's your favorite one or not.	The checkered background of Audemars Piguet reminds you of swimming pool tiles.
17:10 - 17:27	<b>Kourosh:</b> I've only used one perfume in my life for almost 10-15 years. What's the name of that perfume?  <b>Kourosh:</b> 3, 2, 1.  <b>Kourosh:</b> Bravo, Mia. Creed. <b>Iman:</b> Sauvage. <b>Kourosh:</b> Not Sauvage. I've never worn Sauvage in my life.	Not Patek Philippe and Richard Mille? Really? I can't believe it!  Creed Silver Mountain It's a very fresh, cool, and nice fragrance, but among the perfumes I have in this style, I think Tom Ford Gray Vetiver and Marly Galloway are much better. We should create an episode dedicated to fragrances, where I can sit and introduce you to different scents.  Savage is the inseparable companion of the tired 206-driving Amir.

Source: Author (2025)

This case was quite unique, particularly due to its inclusion of extensive extra information at the beginning of the video. In fact, the effort in presenting detailed information is indicative of a strong affective investment. The opening segment focuses on introducing the Iranian version of Valentine's Day. Here the subtitler provides detailed information about this day in Iran primarily sourced from Wikipedia. The subtitler's effort to educate viewers about *Sepandārmazgān* circulates positive emotions like pride, curiosity and shared identity. This meaningful activity reflects how fans enrich the viewing session with added context to connect with others (Gregg, 2009).

In the competition segments, the subtitler's active participation, answering questions about Kourosh's preferences, acts as affective labor that elicits amusement and surprise among the viewers. For instance, he manages to name one of Kourosh's favourite brands and is surprised to discover that Patek Philippe and Richard Mille are not Kourosh's favorite ones. Thus, the subtitler is not an anonymous intermediary but a social actor. Such an affective labor yields a sense of community, esteem and belonging among those having common interests or mutual recognition within the same community (Curti, 2009; Gregg, 2009). Affective labor, therefore, generates "social networks, forms of community, biopower" (Hardt, 1999, p. 96).

In the third part, the subtitler adds an intriguing commentary about the perfume *Creed Silver Mountain*, describing it as fresh and cold. He also shares his own favourite perfumes, including *Tom Ford Gray Vetiver* and *Marly Galloway*, and even suggests creating a dedicated episode about perfumes to showcase his expertise on the topic. Thus, the subtitler's participation involves performing affect, like expressing surprise at getting answers right and sharing enthusiasm for perfumes. Indeed, such

embodied notes and commentaries enrich the subtitles with emotional depth, effectively prioritizing expressivity over referentiality (Pérez-González, 2014).

Finally, commenting on Iman's inaccurate answer—mentioning *Sauvage*—the subtitler humorously says that this perfume is stereotypically associated with young Iranian men named Amir who drive a white Peugeot 206 car. This stereotype requires some cultural clarification: on Iranian social media, it is humorously implied that Iranian men named Amir normally own white Peugeot 206 cars and are known for having many girlfriends, who do not marry them. Such a hilarious paratextual comment allows the affect to be mediated; thus, the subtitler is able to convey their feelings beyond the diegetic space (Mo & Jin, 2023). Overall, the subtitler acts as an affective mediator, who shapes the viewer's experience of the video through affective labor. This act both generates and circulates amusement, surprise and a sense of connection between the audience and the video content. User comments in this case clearly support the subtitler's affective mediation, emphasizing the positive emotional impact of their contributions:

Table 7: Viewers' comments

@y****i	One of the things I love is the subtitles in your videos — it feels like I'm watching it with someone else. Thanks, Mr. Subtitler!
@I****6	The subtitler made my day, thanks dude ❤️❤️❤️

Source: Author (2025)

#### 4.4 Video three: The game of early humans with punishment!!!

The third case is about prehistoric humans' games. Here, Kourosh and Iman play a game where the loser gets hit with a soft plastic mace. This case continues to highlight the subtitler's role as an active affective mediator, shaping the viewer's experience by intervening in the intralingual subtitles with extensive commentary and notes.

Table 8: Instance four

<b>Context</b>	The video begins with an introduction to the games. They also talk about their new under-construction studio before playing the games.
	 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>Kouman</span> <span>498K subscribers</span> <span>Subscribe</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>44K</span> <span>Share</span> <span>Thanks</span> <span>...</span> </div> <p>1,184,597 views Sep 20, 2024 #miaplays #کومن #kouman</p>

TCR	Intralingual Subtitles	Subtitler's Notes
0:00	<b>Kourosh:</b> Today, we're fighting for our honor! Ready?	Boys when they play FIFA.
-		
0:04	<b>Iman:</b> Let's go	
0:19	<b>Kourosh:</b> Hey guys, welcome to another angle of our new studio!	Every week, we'll be setting up a mini studio tour for you all.
0:32	<b>Iman:</b> Right now, the studio is facing away from us.	A rose is a rose.
	<b>Kourosh:</b> It's facing away from us. [They keep talking about the decoration of their studio]	
0:33	[Here, Kourosh pauses for some seconds, while pointing his finger]	While Koroush is thinking, let me tell you a joke. 'Do you know what they say to a banana that hasn't ripened yet? They say, when you're ripe, give us a call.'
0:35		

Source: Author (2025)

From the outset, the subtitler adds his witty comments, beginning with a reference to Kourosh's statement that reflects common phrases boys say when playing sports video games like FIFA. Functioning as affective translation, it reflects the excitement of male gaming culture and helps circulate affect among viewers familiar with that culture.

The two YouTubers begin by discussing their new studio and its features. When they refer to the studio behind them, the subtitler adds a Persian proverb related to the words 'back' and 'behind'. In Persian, they say, 'a flower has no backside' meaning that a rose can be appreciated from all sides, highlighting its beauty from every angle. The subtitler thus associates the studio with the rose, suggesting it, too, is attractive, no matter if it is now located behind the YouTubers or the viewers can see the back of the studio.

As the two continue discussing the studio, Kourosh suddenly stops speaking, points his finger, and remains silent for a second before bursting into laughter. Capturing this moment, the subtitler notes that while Kourosh is thinking, he would like to share a joke. The joke is amusing because it plays on the double meaning of the Persian word 'رسیدن', which translates to both 'arrive' and 'ripen' in English. As an emotive and non-representational element in the subtitles, humor is introduced as an affective tool, which can fill the silence with levity and create a sense of shared amusement. By inviting the audience to laugh, the subtitler acts as an affect modulator (Mo & Jin, 2023)—not merely transcribing the original, but lightening the atmosphere and helping the viewer's feel entertained and engaged.

Focusing on the game Poetry for Neanderthals in this scene (Table 9), Kourosh introduces the game title while the subtitler seizes the moment to provide valuable information about Neanderthals for Iranian viewers who may not be familiar with them. This act of conveying additional context not only enriches the viewing experience but also enhances understanding and appreciation of foreign culture-specific references. By bridging the cultural gap and offering insights into the historical significance of Neanderthals, the subtitler effectively engages the audience, making the content more accessible and informative.



Table 9: Instance five

Context Here, the two YouTubers start playing the games. This chosen scene focuses on Poetry for Neanderthals and Kourosh loses the game.



بازی انسان‌های نخستین با مجازات!!!



Kouman 490K subscribers

Subscribe

43K



Share

Clip

...

1,152,298 views Sep 20, 2024 #miaplays #کومن #کومن

TCR	Intralingual Subtitles	Subtitler's Notes
13:09 - 13:18	<b>Kourosh:</b> Next game, 'Poetry for Neanderthals'. I've posted the price here for everyone to see. <b>Iman:</b> It is poems for Neanderthals. <b>Kourosh:</b> Yeah, this is one of the games we bought in our last vlog.	Neanderthals were an earlier human species that were more behaviourally and physically similar to chimpanzees than modern humans, or Homo sapiens.
13:19 - 13:31	[They keep talking about the game, and its rules and Kourosh shows the mace as the punishment tool for the losers] <b>Kourosh:</b> We have a piece of wood. <b>Iman:</b> Ok!	Oh my God, what kind of mace did you pull out? I'm speechless.
14:09 - 17-14	[They keep playing the game, here Kourosh loses the game and should be punished with the mace] <b>Iman:</b> Come here. Come here. <b>Kourosh:</b> Wait a sec, Iman. I'm playing with the wrong person! Mia, I should have been playing these games with you! [Iman keeps hitting Kourosh with the plastic mace].	Iman is spinning that mace in such a way that I felt the pain too—God have mercy on Kourosh. Iman hit Kourosh so hard, it was like a factory reset for him.

Source: Author (2025)

Moving on with the game, we can see the subtitler again seizes the moment to share his thought and feelings concerning the two YouTubers. The commentary is filled with humor, making the situation more entertaining. The phrase "it was like a factory reset for him" is particularly humorous, which evokes a laughter response in the audience. All in all, these notes and commentaries function as affective interventions and prime examples of affective subtitling, which presents "subjective or engaged spectatorial experiences" (Pérez-González, 2014, p. 263). The users' comments, praising the humor and overall quality of the captions, indicate these affective strategies are well-received and contribute significantly to the viewers' positive experience:

Table 10: Viewers' comments

@s****i
That's what she said 😊
Subtitles are divine
Michael Scott's catchphrase from the series The Office
@e****0
You're awesome! The person who writes the subtitles comes up with some really funny jokes 😊😊
@z****e
Yooo the subtitles are amazing! 😊

Source: Author (2025)

#### 4.5 Video four: We tried the weirdest TikTok gadgets!!!

The last case deals with the introduction of the weirdest TikTok gadgets, which we found the intralingual subtitles full of humorous notes, make it an ideal case for researching affective subtitling. In other words, the subtitler goes beyond the primary role of transcribing dialogue to actively intervene in ways that stimulate specific emotional responses, such as amusement, joy and laughter in audience, thereby building a friendly atmosphere on the channel.

Table 11: Instance six

Context	This is part of the video which features a carrot sharpener.															
	 <p>هیچ * خوب شد گفتی من فک کردم گر ز رستمه *</p> <p>عجیبترین وسایل تیکتاک رو امتحان کردیم!!!</p> <p>Kouman 490K subscribers</p> <p>Subscribe</p> <p>807,813 views Jan 10, 2025 #کمان #miaplays #kouman</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>TCR</th> <th>Intralingual Subtitles</th> <th>Subtitler's Notes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0:00</td> <td><b>Kourosh:</b> Today, our lives are going to get easier! Are you ready?</td> <td>May God make it happen!</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0:04</td> <td><b>Iman:</b> Impossible! Let's go.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>0:09</td> <td><b>Kourosh:</b> Alright, guys! Mr. Iman.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>0:20</td> <td><b>Iman:</b> Yes? <b>Kourosh:</b> Do you like cooking and eating? <b>Iman:</b> Hmm, I don't know... I like eating it. <b>Kourosh:</b> Cooking it... Exactly, exactly! <b>Kourosh:</b> What makes you dislike cooking?</td> <td>I have this phobia that Gordon Ramsay might suddenly show up in the kitchen and start yelling at me.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	TCR	Intralingual Subtitles	Subtitler's Notes	0:00	<b>Kourosh:</b> Today, our lives are going to get easier! Are you ready?	May God make it happen!	0:04	<b>Iman:</b> Impossible! Let's go.		0:09	<b>Kourosh:</b> Alright, guys! Mr. Iman.		0:20	<b>Iman:</b> Yes? <b>Kourosh:</b> Do you like cooking and eating? <b>Iman:</b> Hmm, I don't know... I like eating it. <b>Kourosh:</b> Cooking it... Exactly, exactly! <b>Kourosh:</b> What makes you dislike cooking?	I have this phobia that Gordon Ramsay might suddenly show up in the kitchen and start yelling at me.
TCR	Intralingual Subtitles	Subtitler's Notes														
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0:09	<b>Kourosh:</b> Alright, guys! Mr. Iman.															
0:20	<b>Iman:</b> Yes? <b>Kourosh:</b> Do you like cooking and eating? <b>Iman:</b> Hmm, I don't know... I like eating it. <b>Kourosh:</b> Cooking it... Exactly, exactly! <b>Kourosh:</b> What makes you dislike cooking?	I have this phobia that Gordon Ramsay might suddenly show up in the kitchen and start yelling at me.														

0:36	<b>Kourosh:</b> Today, we're going to test out a bunch of items that have gone super viral on social media.	
0:48	<b>Kourosh:</b> We'll test them today to see if they actually work or not.	Engaged viewers, pay close attention to this episode, these items might come in handy for your dowry
0:51	<b>Kourosh:</b> So, the first item. A pencil sharpener! Look how beautiful it is.	Pencil sharpener or cucumber sharpener?
0:59	<b>Iman:</b> Did you get a large pencil sharpener?	
	<b>Kourosh:</b> A pencil sharpener specifically made for carrots!	Perfect for decorating fancy salads and totally making other brides green with envy!
	<b>Iman:</b> Why would anyone sharpen a carrot?	It depends on its use.
01:16	<b>Kourosh:</b> Carrot!	I'm glad you said that, I thought it was a mace! Mission Impossible: Veggie Edition
01:19	<b>Kourosh:</b> You put it inside this.	
01:44	<b>Kourosh:</b> It turned into a pencil.	This device has to be shut down—this thick carrot turned into a much more dangerous threat!
	<b>Iman:</b> Anything else will just turn like this.	
01:52	<b>Kourosh:</b> No, it's way too thick—this won't work. What do you want to do with this now?	This device [the carrot sharpener] has to be eliminated and destroyed under strict security measures.
	<b>Iman:</b> With this, you could even kill a vampire.	Not only vampires, even the White Demon would be terrified and flee from this pillar of fear.

Source: Author (2025)

From the very beginning, the subtitlers' commentaries show up. Indeed, watching the videos with these Persian captions is like watching a sitcom with a friend who is constantly making jokes and remarks about the show. In these contexts, translation strategies frequently function as 'affective interventions' (Lee, 2025). For instance, in the opening line, when Kourosh says, "Today, our lives are going to get easier," the subtitler adds, "May God make it happen!" to reflect his inner thoughts and boost the viewing experience with a touch of humor.

In the second commentary, we can see that the subtitler makes a reference to the British celebrity chef and restaurateur, Gordon Ramsay, when Kourosh asks Iman, "What makes you dislike cooking?". This reference adds an extra layer of humor or relatability for viewers familiar with him and his shows. Additionally, the commentary "engaged viewers, pay close attention to this episode—these items might come in handy for your dowry!", directly addresses and entertains the viewers, especially those with the intention of marriage, and keeps the tone playful. Thus, these notes add depth to the viewing experience (Dwyer, 2017). Engaging directly with others on an emotional and interpersonal level is affective labor (Hardt, 1999).

To entertain the audience, the subtitler kept sharing his inner thoughts in the commentary. When the first item, which is a huge pencil sharpener is shown, he makes a comment about whether it is a carrot sharpener or pencil sharpener, creating an absurd and playful tone. The follow-up commentary "making other brides green with envy" reflects an Iranian socio-cultural theme of competition and status, particularly in the context of weddings, where brides often feel pressure to stand out in terms of their dowry.

Furthermore, when Kourosh sharpens the carrots with the device and shows it to Iman, the subtitler quickly shares his inner feeling by saying that this device should be banned because it could be dangerous. The hilarious phrasing—"eliminated and destroyed under strict security measures"—

exaggerates the threat of a carrot sharpener, turning an otherwise mundane object into something absurdly dangerous. This type of commentary adds a playful tone, making the scene more entertaining and engaging, especially in moments of absurdity. Additionally, comparing the act of sharpening carrots to a “Mission Impossible” scenario exaggerates the seriousness or intensity of what is otherwise a trivial or comedic action.

Overall, this case demonstrates affective subtitling by showing how the subtitler goes beyond linguistic equivalence to translate or, more accurately, transmit and generate affect, shaping how the viewer feels while watching. The subtitler acts as an affective mediator, interpreting the source material and adding layers to maximize emotional engagement, primarily humor, for the audience. They, Pérez-González (2014) notes, set the stage “for the expression of subjectivity and developing further affinity with their audienceships” (p. 265). This evidence is further supported by the user’s comments:

Table 12: Viewers’ comments

@d****r
Shayan must've been in a great mood when he wrote the subtitles for this video 😂😂😂 I seriously laughed so hard. Thank you, Shayan!
@M****x
I want to give a special shoutout to Shayan right here for his creative subtitles 😂😂❤️ Honestly, half the fun of the video comes from the subtitles 😂😂😂
@H****7
People really don't give enough credit to Mr. Subtitle-Wikipedia-born. I got your back ❤️

Source: The author (2025)

## 5. Discussion

The current paper explored the affective dimensions of intralingual blogger subtitling on YouTube, demonstrating how the subtitler’s commentaries, viewed through the lens of affect theory, function as affective labor in subtitling. They actively use humor, cultural references and a conversational, companion-like tone to build a connection with the audience, and shape the overall viewing experience in an affectively rich way. These commentaries express the subtitlers’ voices and feeling, making them more visible. They do more than simply convey information; they intervene in the mediation of the video content by injecting emotionally rich notes, creating an enjoyable experience for the audience.

These affect-laden captions introduce new flows of feeling, such as humor, curiosity and a sense of connection with the subtitler’s personality. Indeed, these creative decisions reflect the translators’ bodily presence, marked by their emotional imprint as commentary. This aligns with Koskinen’s (2020) observation that the captions in such videos exhibit “affective qualities such as fun, wittiness, creativity or activism” (p. 135). Building on this, Yoshimizu and Hoshi (2023) argue that affective or non-representational subtitles can transmediate and generate new sensorial and affective effects, further transforming the viewing experience.

By presenting extra information, the subtitler may want to keep the viewers engaged and informed, re-mediating the entire viewing experience. As Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2006) and Evans (2020) suggest in the context of fan translation, these notes are like a supplementary text

that aids in appreciating the original content and its nuances. They also “directly address viewers and share information that is intended for their specific audience” (Lee, 2025, pp. 108-109). Such affective mediation also leads us to the concept of subtitler’s visibility. Commercially, subtitles are regarded as high quality when they pass unnoticed by their audience (Díaz-Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez, 2006). However, affective subtitles disregard accurate representations of the original by prioritizing their visibility or affects, which, in turn, encourages “an alternative aesthetics of reception based on mutual recognition” (Pérez-González, 2014, p. 250). This is because these subtitlers seek to gain “the symbolic visibilities of being educators and innovators” (Huang, 2021, p. 63). In the words of Lee (2025), these translators “make themselves visible as active mediators of audiovisual content rather than remaining transparent and invisible” (p. 109).

Understandably, these explanatory notes like *Danmu*, yield “a dynamic narrative layer that complements the visual content, making the viewing experience more engaging and multifaceted” (Lu et al., 2025, p. 1). This engaging and immersive yet accessible viewing experience was reflected in the video comments as noted earlier. Koskinen (2020) also views that the metric for translation success should not be how accurately the original is rendered, but how well the translated piece resonates with the audience; how funny, clever or aesthetically pleasing it may be. As mentioned by a viewer, “half the fun of the video comes from the subtitles”. In this view, accuracy is devalued, even irrelevant; instead, acceptability, which is how well the audience receives and engages with the translation, is elevated as the core criterion (Koskinen, 2020). On the whole, these affective subtitles have challenged the dominance of representational approaches, such as the translator’s neutrality and invisibility in commercial subtitles (Flynn, 2016) by highlighting the translator’s affect in creating meaning (Calleja, 2019).

## 6. Conclusion

The current article offered a fresh perspective on self-subtitling on YouTube, exploring how subtitlers’ notes provide a fertile ground for affectivity and expressivity. It investigated how these notes allowed subtitlers to express their voice and inner thoughts. This research argued that affective subtitling is a practice that goes beyond merely conveying the original content. These captions reflect the subtitler’s subjectivity and individuality, such as cheerfulness, wit or playfulness in most of our examples, which, in turn, contribute to a positive environment for the viewers of the channel. Therefore, the act of subtitling is repositioned as an expressive and interpretive practice rather than a mechanical transfer of meaning. Drawing on postmodern and post-structuralist theories, this argument challenges traditional views of translation as a neutral or purely linguistic process. In summary, this paper enriches our understanding of how intralingual blogger subtitling on YouTube functions as a site of affective self-mediation, foregrounding the subtitler’s affective labor in actively shaping the viewing experience of the audience.

It is important to interpret the results with caution and avoid overgeneralization due to the study’s limitations. They are a stepping stone for future research. Further research with larger and more diverse samples is essential to enable the development of robust theories on this topic. It is equally important to analyze these new forms of captioning on YouTube through the lens of ludic translation (Lee, 2022). An issue worth mentioning is that the reading speeds of the captions were

often high due to many commentaries, making it difficult for viewers to read them in real-time. As a result, they may pause or replay the video to fully understand the information in the captions. This issue demands closer scholarly attention, especially as reception studies are increasingly addressing non-professional subtitling (Ameri, 2023).

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Not applicable.



## Conflicts of interest

Not applicable.

## Data availability statement

The data from this research, which are not included in this work, may be made available by the author upon request.

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