

**IN THE NAME OF
GOD**



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Procedures Used in Translation of Movie Titles
from English into Persian

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**A Thesis Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in Translation Studies (M.Sc.)**

September 2013



دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی

بخش زبانهای خارجی

پایان نامه تحصیلی برای دریافت درجه کارشناسی ارشد رشته زبان انگلیسی
گرایش مترجمی زبان انگلیسی

راهکارهای به کار رفته در ترجمه عناوین فیلمها از انگلیسی به فارسی

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شهریور ماه ۱۳۹۲

Dedicated to:

My mother for her kindness and encouragement,

My husband for his endless love and support,

My son for his patience and understanding.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis is due to the contribution of the people without their generous support and kind encouragement this study would have been impossible to be completed.

First, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. Rostami Abusaeidi for his interest, encouragement, and invaluable pieces of advice during the supervisory period.

I would also want to offer my especial gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Moeinzadeh for his patience, support and insightful comments and suggestions.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all my professors who have taught me the pleasures of learning and understanding.

Abstract

Movie titles are the inseparable parts of the movies. A title is an essential first impression determining whether or not the receiver decides to watch the movie. Therefore, it is important that the translation of a movie title, distributed in a foreign country, has the same effect as the original title. Although Iran has long been a market for western movies which are rapidly being translated from English into Persian, it seems that translation of movie titles from English into Persian has not received much attention. Therefore, the present study made an attempt to investigate the translation of movie titles from English into Persian. In order to do so, a corpus of 300 movie titles and their translations has been randomly selected and analyzed based on Gavling's (2008) model for translating titles who proposed nine procedures in this respect, in order to find out which translation procedures have been used the most and the least. It has been concluded that the most frequent procedure in translating titles is translating the title literally and the least frequent one is adding a tag to English translation.

Keywords:

Translation, culture, title, movie, movie title

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List of abbreviations

SLT Source language text

TLT Target language text

ST Source text

TT Target text

Chapter one

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

Translation has been defined in various ways by different scholars. Generally, it can be defined as a rendering from one language into another. Brislin (1976, p.1) defined translation as a “general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language to another, whether the language is in written or oral form, whether the languages have established orthographies or not; or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with signs of the deaf”.

Newmark (1981, p.27) defined the act of translating very briefly “It is the act of transferring meaning of a stretch or a unit of language, the whole or a part, from one language to another”.

Another expert, Wilss (1982, p.3), stated that translation is a transfer process which aims at the transformation of a written source language text (SLT) into an optimally equivalent target language text (TLT), and which requires the syntactic, the semantic, and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing of the source text. Syntactic under-

standing is related to style and meaning. Understanding of semantics is a meaning related activity. Finally, pragmatic understanding is related to the message or implication of a sentence. This definition does not state what is transferred. Rather, it states the requirement of the process.

Nida and Taber (1982, p.12) saw translating as a process of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. In other words, translation is a transfer of meaning, message, and style from one SLT to the TLT. In the order of priority, style is put the last. Here the things to reproduce (transfer) is stated, message.

Venuti's (1995, p.17) definition is "a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation.

Gambier (1995) emphasized the role of translators in importing foreign culture values and creating aesthetic values, which resulted in the hybridity of cultures. (Cited in Moindjil, 2006)

So it can be deduced that translation is a broad idea and has been perceived in numerous different ways and it is of utmost importance in conveying the meaning and message of a source text into the target language. Translators are permanently encountered with finding the most appropriate way of conveying the similar effect for target audience. According to (Newmark, 1988, p.94), “Frequently when there is a cultural focus, there is a translation problem due to the cultural gap or distance between the source and target languages”.

In our time film is one of the most influential mass media. Although film was born in the west, it is gaining ever-growing popularity and has now become a global art.

As an audiovisual art, a film follows and reflects people's life. It is a reflection of our life, culture, world and our vision of world. Films entertain, educate, enlighten and inspire audience. The foreign films give to the target audience the possibility to know something new about the people and culture of that country, which produced these films. With regard to the fact that the main function of film titles is to say something general about the whole movie, the film titles are also very important. If

the picture is imported, its title should be translated to make it more understandable for the target audience. Here the difficulties may appear.

One of the most important parts of movies is their titles which play a significant role in conveying the content of that movie. Titles are a dynamic part of any creative work, especially when it comes to movies. The objective of a movie title is to summarize in such a way that shows what the film is about.

The title of a movie is an essential first impression determining whether or not the receiver decides to watch the movie. In film, potential viewers determine whether they will watch a film or not by some sense of the film narrative which starts with film titles (Hillman, 2011, p.388).

The goal of a title is to give an impression of the action of the movie while attracting as many viewers as possible. Therefore, it is important that the translation of a movie title, distributed in a foreign country, has the same effect as the original title and corresponds with the action of the movie.

Of course, what some titles mean in one language, are not always easily translated into another language. Some titles are culture specific and it is not an easy task to find an equivalent for them in the target language. Translation of movie titles can be a real challenge for translators who want to convey the same meaning in a different language. The particularity of film title translation determines its difficulty, but it does not mean its impossibility. The translator should make the best use of the potential translation methods and techniques in a flexible and realistic way and develop a rigorous spirit.

1.2. Statement of the Problem