



Allameh Tabataba'i University

Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages

Department of English Translation Studies

**Translation of Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs) in English
Subtitle of Persian Movies Screened at International Film Festivals**

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English Translation Studies

Farid Karami

Advisor: Dr. G.R. Tajvidi

Reader: Dr. K. Mahmoudzadeh

June 2012

Tehran, Iran

In the Name of God

To the Memories of My Lovely Mother,

To My Loving Father,

And to My Nice & Caring Family



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فرم گردآوری اطلاعات پایان نامه ها

کتابخانه مرکزی دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی

عنوان: ترجمه ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی در زیرنویس انگلیسی فیلم های ایرانی اکران شده در جشنواره های بین المللی فیلم
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چکیده

الف . موضوع و طرح مسئله (اهمیت موضوع و هدف): موارد، آیتم ها، و واژگان فرهنگی همواره در زمره چالش های پیش روی مترجمان در عرصه های مختلف ترجمه خاصه ترجمه آثار فاخر فرهنگی و هنری مکتوب و نمایشی بوده است. علت این امر نیز آن بوده است که این واژگان ریشه در آداب، رسوم، نحوه زندگی، و به طور کلی فرهنگ مردم سرزمین های خاص دارند. و از همین رو است که برگرداندن بی کم و کاست این واژگان و عبارات تا حد ممکن همواره از اهمیتی ویژه و گاهی حیاتی برخوردار بوده است.

تحقیق حاضر به بررسی نحوه ترجمه ارجاعات (واژگان) فرهنگی برون زبانی در زیرنویس انگلیسی فیلم های ایرانی اکران شده در جشنواره های بین المللی فیلم می پردازد. در این تحقیق، روشهای اتخاذشده از سوی مترجمان برای برگرداندن این گونه ارجاعات بر اساس تقسیم بندی روش های ترجمه پیشنهادی "پدرسون" مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفته اند.

ب . مبانی نظری شامل مرور مختصری از منابع، چارچوب نظری و پرسش ها و فرضیه ها: در این تحقیق سه پرسش مطرح گردیده و به آنها پاسخ داده شده است: (۱) مترجمان ایرانی چه نوع استراتژی هایی را برای ترجمه ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی موجود در فیلم های ایرانی اکران شده در جشنواره های بین المللی فیلم به کار گرفته اند؟ (۲) کدام یک از این استراتژی ها دارای بیشترین بسامد در میان سایر استراتژی ها بوده است؟ و (۳) کدام یک از این استراتژی ها کمترین بسامد را در بین دیگر استراتژی ها داشته است؟

چارچوب نظری این تحقیق، تقسیم بندی ارائه شده توسط "پدرسون" در خصوص روش های ترجمه ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی است که شامل ۶ استراتژی می باشد.

پ . روش تحقیق شامل تعریف مفاهیم، روش تحقیق، جامعه ی مورد تحقیق، نمونه گیری و روش های نمونه گیری، ابزار اندازه گیری، نحوه ی اجرای آن، شیوه گردآوری و تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها: این تحقیق توصیفی کاربردی بر مبنای یک پیکره دوزبانه شامل ۱۱ فیلم ایرانی اکران شده در جشنواره های بین المللی فیلم و زیرنویس های انگلیسی این فیلم ها انجام گرفته است. فیلم های مذکور عبارتند از: *باشو غریبه کوچک، آفساید، طعم گیلاس، ده، بانو، آینه، درخت گلابی، دونده، آواز گنجشک ها، باد مارا خواهد برد، و مسافران*. ابتدا واژگان و ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی در خلال مشاهده این فیلم ها شناسایی و ثبت گردید. پس از آن، معادل های ترجمه شده انگلیسی مربوطه از زیر نویس فیلم های مورد نظر استخراج و ثبت شد. سپس این واژگان به همراه معادل های انگلیسی مربوطه بر اساس مدل "پدرسون" مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند تا بدین ترتیب به پرسش نخست تحقیق پاسخ داده شود. در مرحله بعد نیز داده های به دست آمده مورد تجزیه و تحلیل آماری قرار داده شدند تا به پرسش های دوم و سوم تحقیق نیز پاسخ داده شود. واحد تحلیل در این تحقیق از یک واژه تا عبارات کوتاه و بلند و حتی جمله متغیر بوده است و انتخاب آنها مشروط به وجود ارجاعات فرهنگی و برون زبانی بوده است. تمامی مراحل تحقیق شامل گردآوری، طبقه بندی، و تحلیل داده ها به صورت دستی انجام شده است. نتایج کلی تحقیق نیز در فصل ۵ ذکر گردیده است.

ت . یافته ها و نتیجه گیری تحقیق: نتایج تحقیق حاضر بیانگر آن است که مترجمان ایرانی از تمامی روش ها و استراتژی های پیش رو در جهت برگرداندن ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی موجود در فیلم های مورد نظر بهره برده اند. در این میان از برخی روش ها بیشتر از سایر روش ها و از برخی کمتر از دیگر استراتژی های پیش رو استفاده شده است، اما به هر روی تلاش مترجمان بر این بوده است که تا حد امکان محتوا و بار فرهنگی این واژگان را به هر روش و راهبرد ممکن در قالب زبان مقصد بیان کنند.

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Abstract

Complexity of culture, language, and the relationship existing between them paves the way for an Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) to be a very challenging task for a translator to render such items across different languages, for different language users with different cultures. Taking this into consideration, this study was intended to investigate the strategies applied by translators for rendering extralinguistic culture-bound references in the Iranian movies which have been screened at international film festivals. To this end, a number of such movies were selected and viewed to spot the extralinguistic culture-bound references and extract their subtitled English translations. Then, the English rendered equivalents of the identified Persian references were analyzed and classified according to Pederson's (2005) taxonomy of ECR transfer strategies to find out which strategies the translators have used to render such items. Finally, the results of the study were tabulated in order to identify the frequency and percentage of adopting each strategy, finding out the most and the least frequently used strategy among all the strategies adopted by different translators to render a Persian extralinguistic culture-bound reference into English in the movies subject to the topic of the study.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, subtitling, extralinguistic culture-bound references

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List of Abbreviations

AV: Audiovisual

AVT: Audiovisual Translation

CSI: Culture-Specific Item

ECR: Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference

I.R.I.: Islamic Republic of Iran

MMT: Multimedia Translation

SC: Source Culture

SL: Source Language

ST: Source Text

TC: Target Culture

TL: Target Language

TT: Target Text

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Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

First of all, this chapter provides the reader with a brief introduction on the subjects of language, culture, translation, and audiovisual or multimedia translation altogether. Then, it goes through the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of study, theoretical framework of the dissertation, research questions, and definition of key terms. Finally, limitations and delimitations of the study will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

1.2 Introduction

The word misunderstanding, writes Rabassa (1996), is crucial in most spheres of life. Misunderstandings are said to derive from incompatibilities in processing of media which carry them: languages. Yet misunderstandings are not only the products of linguistic incompatibilities *per se* but of cultural ones as well. This means that misunderstandings generally occur in particular social structures, particular histories, and prevailing norms of language production and reception. All these can be said to make up the ingredients of the culture and the ideology subsumed within it. Culture involves the totality of attitudes towards the world, towards events, other cultures and peoples and the manner in which the attitudes are mediated. In other words, culture refers to beliefs and value systems tacitly assumed to be collectively shared by

particular social groups and to the positions taken by producers and receivers of texts, including translations, during the mediation process.(cited in Faiq, 2004: 1)

The first step towards an examination of the processes of translation must be to accept that although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to *semiotics*, the science that studies sign systems or structures, sign processes and sign functions (Hawkes, 1977; cited in Bassnette, 2002: 22). Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach, that translation involves the transfer of ‘meaning’ contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria (Bassnett, 2002).

Edward Sapir claims ‘language is a guide to social reality’ and that human beings are at the mercy of the language that has become the medium of expression for their society. Experience, he asserts, is largely determined by the language habits of the community, and each separate structure represents a separate reality (Bassnett, 2002: 22):

No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Cited in Bassnett, 2002: 22).

Culture-bound terms or as some call them Cultural-Specific Items (CSIs) refer to those which have no equivalents or different positions in target reader's cultural system, thus causing difficulties of translation of their functions and meanings in the source text into target text. According to Hatim and Mason (1990: 223-4)

“it is certainly true that in recent years the translator has increasingly come to be seen as a cultural mediator rather than a mere linguistic broker. It is also true that, in any form of translation, translators tend to apply a general strategy that will favor either an SL-oriented approach, or a TL-oriented approach.”

There are many definitions of multimedia, hereinafter abbreviated as MM, as well as the fact that there exists quite large number of multimedia project types such as electronic books and magazines, multimedia databases, interactive education, interactive art and performance, etc. (Cattrysse 1992, cited in Gambier, 1998: 7-12).

As far as Cattrysse (1992) is concerned, MM could be defined in a very wide sense as processing and presentation of information in two or more media simultaneously. This process and presentation refers to text, graphics and pictures, if not animation and motion video.

He defines Audiovisual Translation (AVT) or MM translation in terms of translating a message into an audiovisual or multimedia message, arguing that this specific

translation definition paves the way for integration of linguistic translational aspects into the global AV or MM communication, and provides the possibility to identify and analyze what is common and what is specific to verbal and non-verbal translation.

What Meckel (1996) states is that if translation is expected to be a communicative process, the translation theory needs to pay more attention to other than verbal code so that the target of maintaining and boosting translation position in the field of communication could be realized (cited in Gambier and Gottlieb, 2001: 65-72).

Subtitling, as a very significant sub-categories of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), is the translation of spoken (written) source of text of an audiovisual product into a written target text which is added on to the images of the original product at the bottom of the screen.

Gottlieb (1998), enjoying the translation model proposed by Jakobson (1959), classifies subtitling in terms of interlingual and intralingual types. Accordingly, the target language is the same as the source language in the intralingual subtitling while, in interlingual subtitling, the target language is different from the source language.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Different translators, depending on many criteria such as background knowledge, experience, academic education, respective context, target audience requirements and the like, may render extralinguistic culture-bound terms in several various ways by

means of different techniques and strategies. Furthermore, the complexity of a typical culture-bound item and its dependency on the multiple cultural values and traditions of source language-speaking people could be in such a way that leaves the translator no option other than deleting the item in question during the process of translation.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the forthcoming study is to investigate the strategies used by Iranian translators when translating the Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs) in English subtitles of Iranian movies which appeared in international film festivals.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The movies produced and directed by nationally and/or internationally accredited Iranian directors and filmmakers, like almost every type of artistic work, contains a specific range of cultural contents. Therefore, these people along with their art products are among the cultural messengers of the country. And since these movies have to be dubbed or subtitled to be understandable for the target reader, the translator's mission in such a case will be highly significant and effective in transferring the message which has been intended to be explicitly or implicitly conveyed by the film director and/or writer by means of the source language. In other words, if the translator fails to do his task sufficiently in the movie translation, it could be deemed that the movie has

failed to say what has been intended to express, perhaps reducing the respective success level of the artistic production among the target audience and festival juries.

So far, there has been a couple of studies done in the area investigating the translation strategies applied in movie subtitle translation from English to Persian, and even less researches have been carried out to find out about the strategies used by Iranian translators to render culture-specific items existing in Persian movies from Persian into English. And finally, as far as the current study was concerned, no research paper or study has been written to investigate the translation strategies and techniques of such items when translating the Iranian Persian language movies which have been screened at international film festivals.

Therefore, the potential results of this dissertation could contribute to the professional translators and/or the novice and just-graduated translators planning to start a career in the field of movie subtitle translation. More specifically, those translators whose most-interested and expert translation field is to translate the would-be screened Iranian movies at international film festivals could enjoy the descriptively analyzed results of this study.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework which was used to carry out this research was the one developed by Jan Pederson (2005), the Swedish translation scholar. This model has

been proposed based on data from the investigation of hundred Anglophone films and TV-programs and their Scandinavian subtitles. Pederson, in order to establish such a model, uses Venuti's theory of foreignization and domestication so that he could put his identified strategies of rendering Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs) in two main categories of 'Source Language Oriented' and 'Target Language Oriented' strategies.

1.7 Research Questions

This study was intended to find answer(s) to the following questions:

Q 1. What types of strategies have been used by Iranian translators to render ECRs in Persian language movies screened at international film festivals?

Q 2. Which one(s) of the strategies in question is the most frequent one among all?

Q 3. Which one(s) of the strategies is the least applied strategy in translation of ECRs from English into Persian?