



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

### Investigation of the Strategies Employed in Translation of Cultural and Ideological Items from English into Farsi in the Process of Dubbing (Based on Sharifi and Darchinyan's Categorization)

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At the age of globalization and the dominance of media, the audiovisual translation is no more considered as a marginal area and plays an important role in bringing cultures closer to each other. While taboo terms are an inseparable part of American movies, the movie maker companies have to reflect the authenticity of their language in audiovisual products in order to make them more tangible for their audiences. However, one of the biggest concerns of Iranian official audiovisual translators is cultural and ideological items such as taboo terms in audiovisual products. One of the aims of the present study was to investigate the strategies applied in the translation of taboo terms in two dubbed American movies by Iranian official audiovisual translators. The results indicated that most of the taboo terms have been altered or deleted ideologically during the process of translation due to the cultural differences between the source and the target culture. Finally, Iranian official audiovisual translators attempted to tone down the strong language, offensive expressions, vulgar descriptions, etc. in the process of dubbing and create an acceptable translation for their audiences.

**Keywords:** Audiovisual Translation, Formal Dubbing, Initial Norm, Taboo Terms, Translation Strategy.

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### Introduction

According to Pym (2010), translation is a general activity of communication between different cultural groups. And, language as a means of communication plays a vital role to link between different nations and cultures to solve human problems generally or particularly. Also, translation is an attempt to replace a written message or an oral statement in one language by the same message or words in another language (Newmark, 1988).

Taboo terms' roots and origin are in culture, customs, history, religion, local conditions, cultural background, and even geography of a nation, and they are an inseparable part of American movies and the moviemakers' companies have to reflect the authenticity of their language in audiovisual products.

Sometimes native speakers of a language in their daily conversations transfer their messages by using taboo expressions. And, Western societies export their audiovisual products to other countries such as Iran, by growing the tendencies among people in audiovisual products, they are interested to watch taboo language and concepts as legally as possible, and the norms of a society in the translation of foreign movies should be considered more and more. Therefore, one of the biggest concerns of Iranian official audiovisual translators is cultural and ideological items such as taboo terms and concepts and how to translate them as naturally as possible in audiovisual products was the matter of discussion for a long time.

In the end, this study tends to investigate what are the strategies employed in the translation of taboo terms based on the model proposed by Dukate in 2007 in two dubbed American movies in the process of formal dubbing by Iranian Official Authorities. In order to determine the words and expressions which are considered taboo in Western movies according to Iranian culture, the categorization of taboo terms and concepts in Iran introduced by Sharifi and Darchinyan (2009) was employed.

### Research Questions

In keeping with the purposes of the present study, the objectives should be achieved via the following research questions based on Dukate's model (2007) and the classification proposed by Sharifi and Darchinyan (2009):

**Q1:** What are the strategies employed in translation of taboo terms in the process of formal dubbing by Iranian Official Authorities in the selected movies?

**Q2:** Have the taboo terms been altered or deleted ideologically during the process of translation due to the cultural differences in the process of formal dubbing by Iranian Official Authorities in the selected movies?

## Review of the Related Literature

### Theoretical Framework

The researchers have been employed the classification introduced by Sharifi and Darchinyan in 2009 and the strategies proposed by Dukate in 2007 as the model of taxonomy for translating taboo terms.

The strategies employed to investigate and analyze the extracted taboo terms are as follow:

- **Addition:** In this strategy, the translator manipulates the source text by adding a word or phrase to it in order to add a cultural or religious flavor to the target text or explain something, which may not be familiar to the target readers (Dukate, 2007).

- **Attenuation:** Attenuation as a translation strategy resembles the pragmatic strategy of implication, which involves toning down the strong language, offensive expressions, vulgar descriptions, etc. in the source text and creates an attenuated target text (Dukate, 2007).

- **Deletion:** In the process of translation, when the translators encounter the prohibited terms such as taboo concepts and languages decide to exclude certain words, phrases or larger textual units to produce a target text linguistically, culturally, and ideologically suitable from certain aspects. Therefore, this is the first and simplest choice in the translation of taboo terms. In this case, the translator ignores the taboo terms and concepts easily and censors them as an extra term and one of the rather easier strategies (Dukate, 2007).

- **Substitution:** Instead of deletion or censoring, the taboo concepts replaced with a different concept. Sometimes, substituting the taboo concepts in the first language with another term in the second language certainly distorts the meaning (Dukate, 2007).

According to Sharifi and Darchinyan's classification (2009) in translating taboo terms and concepts from English into Persian, quoted from Khoshsalighch and Ameri (2014), classified into the following categorization:

- Private relations between men and women whether legitimate or illegitimate and words related to them such as kissing, hugging, sleeping with, cheating on, etc;
- Boys' and girls' relations before marriage like boyfriend, girlfriend, etc;
- Calling or naming outer sexual organs and related words;
- Words and expressions related to alcoholic drinks and drugs;
- Swearing, curse, and impolite expressions;
- Stating features of immoral behaviors and habits like thieving, etc;
- Issues related to religion and belief which are against those of the translator's society;

- Stating some political issues which are rather threatening to the translator's society and cause some political situations to remain highly unstable.

#### *Audiovisual Translation (AVT)*

According to Zabalbeascoa, an audiovisual text is a mode of communication that is distinct from the written and the oral mode, although it may not be easy to draw a clear borderline between the audiovisual and other modes (Zabalbeascoa 2008, 29).

#### *Ideology*

The concept of ideology in translation studies is as old as the history of translation itself. And, according to Fawcett, "throughout the centuries, individuals and institutions applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effect in translation and an ideological approach to translation studies could be found in some of the earliest examples of translation known to us" (Fawcett 1998, 106). As a result, ideology viewed in a more positive sense as a vehicle to promote or legitimate interests of a particular social group rather than a means to destroy the contenders (Calzada Perez 2003, 5).

#### *Norms*

Norms specify what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in translation. Munday (2012) believes that norms are components "peculiar to cultures, societies, and time being sociocultural limitations which are acquired by persons during the educational and socializing processes" (Munday 2012, 112). Therefore, they imply sanctions, positive or negative. This means that norms imply a degree of social and psychological pressure since the concept of norm has been used differently in translation studies, and its value has been both asserted strongly and called into question. Norms of a society determine how taboo words and expressions dealt with in that given society. Finally, there are four types of norms: a. obligated; b. Permitted; c. Tolerated and d. Prohibited. In Islamic societies such as Iran, there exists a fifth norm which is recommended. Based on this, taboos are either tolerated or to a much greater degree prohibited.

#### *Taboo Concepts*

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2013) believed that "taboo has strong cultural components that representing particular customs and the way people view their society" (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams 2013, 112). Also, taboo terms actually are a broad term that has been approached by various disciplines from different standpoints. Throughout the years, there have been controversies about the scope of the term as well as various notions with regard to their function and role within the societies. Since the concept itself is multidimensional and highly culture-specific,

what taboos cover often differs from one culture to another. Therefore, it seems to be no common ground reached regarding the issues dealt with under the title of taboo. In fact, the concept plays a central role in forming the cultures which considered as the main reason why so many disciplines are interested in theorizing it (Horlacher 2010, 5). Finally, according to Wardhaugh, the taboo is one way in which a society expresses its disapproval of certain kinds of behaviors that are harmful to its members either for supernatural reasons or such behaviors are held to violate a moral code (Wardhaugh 1990, 230).

### **The Related Works in Iran and Other Countries**

#### *Among the Works Done in the Field of Translation of Taboo Terms in Iran*

Azardashti (2013) has noted that different societies and cultures, particularly more traditional societies such as Iran dislike raising unusual subjects such as slangs and examining slangs in scientific areas have been always concealed. In spite of some researches in this regard over recent years, ambiguities and intact angles regarding translating slangs into Persian still attracted attention. In view of the importance of verbal taboos as an inevitable part of the language and its difficulty for translators in encountering with them the importance of this study would be revealed.

Finally, Ghazizadeh and Mardani (2012) have pointed out language in the same extent can be used for expressing thoughts and communicating that can be used as a tool for obstructing propagation of certain opinions too. For example, taboo terms derived from the ideology and a set of beliefs of different nations about certain contents which they transfer in the process of translation give rise to lingual and cultural problems. Since cinema products are among main tracts of transferring culture components such as taboo, the matter of translating such products in the form of subtitle or dubbing is of high importance. Yet fewer studies have been conducted in this regard. In the current study, it has been attempted that through a descriptive study of dubbing English movies into Farsi, translator's strategies are examined in translating the language and cultural Western taboo terms and concepts. The results of their research revealed that the most common strategies regarding language taboo expressions are finding equivalent for them, compensating and for cultural taboo, those are manipulating, modification, and using non-taboo equivalents.

#### *Other Studies Done Abroad in the Same Field*

Midjord (2013) with a special focus on the translation of the word fuck as an interest in exploring how the swear words are translated in the process of subtitling from Danish into English. The results of her study revealed that in English speaking

countries the most frequently used swear words derive from the religion, sex, and bodily effluvia, while in the Danish language the most frequently used swear words derive from the religion, diseases, sex and bodily effluvia. Moreover, the analysis showed that many swear words have either been translated directly or deleted completely in the subtitles. With more than half of the swear words deleted in the target text, it can be discussed, whether there is a loss of the understanding of the environment and the characters' personalities in the film. However, on the basis of reviews from English speaking persons, this does not seem to have been a problem, which could indicate that the subtitler has made the right choices in the subtitling of the swear words in *Flickering Lights* movie.

### Methodology

#### Corpus

This study is a parallel one and involves parallel corpora, including two English original American movies alongside their dubbed Persian versions. Also, the nature of this study is comparative, and "comparative model is useful for studying the differences resulting from or leading to different translation strategies" (Williams and Chesterman 2002, 6). And, the details of the original movies and their dubbed versions are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. *English Corpus of the Study*

No.	Original Title	Initial Release	Run Time	Director
1.	Die Hard	1988	110	John Mc Tier nan
2.	Casino Royal	2006	145	Ken Hus

Also, these American movies consist of the following characteristics:

- Consisted a lot of taboo terms and expressions and
- Translated by Iranian native audiovisual translators.

Table 2. *Persian Corpus of the Study*

No.	Title	Back Translation	Dubbing Year	Run Time	Translator
1.	Jan sakht		2008	96	M. Rahimi
2.	Casino Royal		2006	108	M. Arjomandi

According to Table 2, the runtime of the dubbed movies is shorter than in comparison with their original corpora due to the deletion occurred during the process of translation and dubbing by Iranian official authorities. Also, several parts of the selected movies were completely removed due to inappropriate senses such as private relations between men and women whether legitimate or illegitimate, drinking alcoholics, hugging, cheating on, etc.

#### Procedure

The required data collected from the selected corpus of the present study with their dubbed Persian versions by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

In order to answer the research questions provided for the present study, the following steps have been taken to collect and analyze the obtained data. First of all, after watching the original American movies, the taboo words and concepts identified and extracted by the researchers. Secondly, each English taboo words or expressions compared with their dubbed equivalents in Persian. In order to consistently detect the words or expressions which are locally understood as taboo terms and concepts according to Iranian culture, in American movies the classification of taboo language in Iran introduced by Sharifi and Darchinyan (2009) was employed.

Finally, since this study is based on the categorization introduced by Sharifi and Darchinyan (2009), this is a non-quantitative and descriptive-explanatory research and a non-statistical and descriptive method was used to analyze the gathered data.

### Results

According to the distribution of the strategies employed, totally 95 taboo terms have been collected from the original movies as the corpus of the study. As mentioned before, one of the aims of the present study is to determine what the strategies are employed to translate taboo terms and expressions from English into Persian in the selected American movies by Iranian Official Audiovisual translators based on the model proposed by Dukate (2007). To investigate the strategies employed by Iranian Audiovisual translators in dealing with taboo terms at the very stage, the concepts of taboo language were defined. By considering the variety of definitions presented for taboo terms and regarding the religious, cultural, social, and political norms prevalent in Iran, tabooed subjects are defined as swearing, bad language, curses, vulgarisms, blasphemy and reference to sex, drinking alcohols, eating certain foods, open men-women interactions, political oppositions, and body functions.

Table 3 represents the sum of frequencies and percentages of the strategies employed in the process of translation from English into Persian, and the strategies employed by Iranian Official Audiovisual translators will be categorized from the most frequently used strategy to the least frequent ones.

Table 3: The Sum of Frequencies and Percentages of the Strategies Applied in the Selected Movies

Strategy	1	2	Total	%
Attenuation	19	15	34	35.7
Deletion	14	10	24	25.3
Substitution	9	12	21	22.2
Addition	8	8	16	16.8
Total	50	45	95	100

\*Movies: 1. Die Hard; 2. Casino Royal.

According to what issued above, in order to answer the first research question, the taboo terms and expressions in the original movies will be compared with their

dubbed versions and the strategies employed in the translation of taboo language are as follows:

Table 4. *Some Taboo Instances and their Dubbed Versions by IRIB*

Strategy	Taboo Language	Dubbed Versions
Attenuation	Sick bastard.	روانی!
	The same asshole man.	همون یارو.
Deletion	Are you fucking kidding me?	شوخیت گرفته؟
	Put the fucking gun away mother fucker.	-----
	Bloody hell, what are you doing?	-----
Substitution	Why are you staring at my breasts, Dave?	چرا تو صورت من زل زدی، داو؟
	You fucked them up.	لت و پارتون کردی.
Addition	Monkeys are the only non-human primates that have oral Sex.	میمون‌ها تنها حیواناتی هستند که می‌توانند از حرکات و رفتار انسان‌ها تقلید کنند.
	Negro slave.	کاکا سیاه عوضی.
	Stop telling me the lie or I'll put you back in the dungeon.	(Addition of an offensive color to the original non-offensive term) خفه شو یا دوباره میندازمت تو سیاه چال! (Addition of an offensive color to the original non-offensive term)

Yaghoot Miandoab believes that “some spectators shocked by hearing taboo words and concepts in American audiovisual products, while others criticize the translators for moderating these terms and praise those translators who attempted to maintain the indecency of original terms loyally, and the task of the audiovisual translators is to moderate and soften the impolite force and the vulgar effect of the original taboo language in the dubbed movies and make a balanced stance between these terms and the cultural standards of the target audiences. It means that translators should at first interpret the style and the original texts; then, by considering the attitude of the audiences creates an acceptable translation” (Yaghoot Miandoab 2017, 89).

While Iranian culture is a religion-oriented and limited to its religious customs, manners and culture, it does not accept interferences easily from the outside and has cultural take up defensive stances to them, so audiovisual translators attempt to tone down the original taboo concepts and expressions which could be considered as prohibited terms by the cultural standards of Iranian audiences because they can be challenging intrusions to the integrity of the public Iranian audiences (Hermans, 2013). In other words, the ideology of the professional Iranian audiovisual translators affects their decision making and the strategies employed to produce a translation of the movie scripts which would best fit the target culture.

In order to answer the second research question, according to what mentioned above and the results of the first research question (strategies employed to translate



taboo terms and expressions), it revealed that most of the taboo terms and concepts have been attenuated or deleted ideologically during the process of translation due to the cultural differences between the source and the target culture of the audiences, and the cultural standards of religion-oriented societies such as Iran affected the process of translation.

### **Discussion**

Everybody who lives in a society usually follow the accepted norms of his community, and when encounters the taboo terms and concepts, he usually attempts to censure or euphemize them as prohibited terms. In other words, he tries to adapt his behaviors and speech to the norms of the society, and if he does the opposite and says whatever he wants in his daily conversations may be considered as an abnormal citizen by the other individuals of the society (Allan and Burridge, 2006).

Initial norms deal with acceptable and adequate kind of translation whereas preliminary norms refer to translation policy and directness of translation, and operational norms relate to the choices in the text itself; metrical norms (is the text complete) and textual linguistic norms (the lexical and syntactic choices) (Toury, 1995). So, the realm of this study relates to initial norms and the findings of this study depicts that Iranian Official Audiovisual translators tried to create an acceptable and target-oriented translation, given the tendencies of Iranian audiences and the norms governing the society. Translation policy refers to the factors which determine the selection of a text to translate into a specific culture, language, or time. And, directness of translation relates to an intermediate language in which a translation occurs (Toury, 1995). It means that in this study, there is no intermediate language and the translation occurred directly from English into Persian.

Translational activities are not only a means of communication but also they are ideological tools carried out within a social context, and language is a social phenomenon that occupies a central position. Especially by the emergence of the notion of cultural turn, followed by post-colonial and gender studies, attracted the attention to translation studies to conducting specific matters such as translation strategies, patronage, the role of norms, ideologies and power relations in translation. The recognition of the fact that translation is beyond a textual transfer happening in a social context and involving a decision-making process of a cognitive nature led to the rise of approaches interested in studying the role of ideological, social, and cultural factors in the translation choices (Kaya, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

So having an appropriate translation of taboo concepts and expressions is an undeniable matter for all audiovisual translators in the Islamic societies such as Iran,

and they opted out some specific strategies depending on the constraints surrounded them. Also, audiovisual translation products are not different from any other textual productions, and ideological factors affected them during the process of translation. Thus, translated products provide a remarkable source for examining the logical emersion of ideologies in the selected movies dubbed by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting center.

Finally, the "Attenuation" strategy with the highest frequency of 35.8% was the most frequently used strategy in the translation of taboo terms, the second most frequently used strategy was "Deletion" which involves 25.3%, and the third frequently used strategy was "Substitution" with 22.2%, and the least frequently used strategy for dealing with taboos in the selected American movies was "Addition" which is 16.8%. Therefore, according to the findings of the present study and the concepts of norms, it can be concluded that there is a direct relationship between ideology and culture; i.e., in the Islamic societies such as Iran, the taboo words and concepts have been deleted or attenuated, and analysis of the strategies employed by Iranian Official Audiovisual translators provides an opportunity to see how the translations of the selected movies by Iranian Official Audiovisual translators were done under the influence of deleting or euphemizing and ideologically fermented diplomacy, and all of them involved in the process of translation of taboo words and expressions from English into Persian.

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## بررسی استراتژی‌های به‌کاررفته در ترجمه‌ی عناصر فرهنگی و ایدئولوژیکی از انگلیسی به فارسی در فرایند دوبله (براساس طبقه‌بندی ارائه‌شده‌ی شریفی و دارچینیان)

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سیدشهاب‌الدین ساداتی<sup>۲</sup>

استادیار گروه ادبیات و مترجمی زبان انگلیسی، دانشکده‌ی ادبیات فارسی و زبان‌های خارجی، دانشگاه آزاد  
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در عصر جهانی‌شدن و تسلط رسانه‌ها، ترجمه‌ی سمعی‌وبصری دیگر موضوعی حاشیه‌ای به‌حساب نمی‌آید؛ بلکه نقش مهمی در نزدیک‌ترکردن فرهنگ‌ها به هم دارد. اصطلاحات ممنوعه بخشی جدایی‌ناپذیر از فیلم‌های آمریکایی محسوب می‌شوند، با این حال شرکت‌های فیلم‌ساز مجبورند واقعیت زبانی خود را در تولیداتشان منعکس کنند تا درک این فیلم‌ها برای مخاطبانشان آسان‌تر شود. اما، یکی از مهم‌ترین نگرانی‌های مترجمان رسمی سمعی‌وبصری در ایران ترجمه‌ی عناصر فرهنگی و ایدئولوژیکی مانند اصطلاحات ممنوعه در تولیدات سمعی‌وبصری است. یکی از اهداف این مطالعه بررسی استراتژی‌های به‌کاررفته در ترجمه‌ی اصطلاحات ممنوعه در دو فیلم آمریکایی ترجمه‌شده توسط سازمان رسمی دوبله‌ی ایران است. نتایج تحقیق نشان می‌دهند اکثر اصطلاحات ممنوعه به‌دلیل تفاوت‌های فرهنگی بین زبان‌های مبدأ و مقصد، در طی فرایند ترجمه‌ی رسمی تغییر یافته‌اند. سرانجام، مترجمان رسمی سمعی‌وبصری ایرانی تلاش کرده‌اند تا در فرایند دوبله از لحن شدید، قباحات عبارت‌های توهین‌آمیز، توصیف‌های مبتذل و غیره بکاهند و ترجمه‌ای قابل‌قبول به مخاطبان خود ارائه دهند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: ترجمه‌ی سمعی‌وبصری، دوبله‌ی رسمی، هتجار اولیه، اصطلاحات ممنوعه، استراتژی در ترجمه.

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