The Challenges of Implicatures and Dealing with Them in Persian Dubbing

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ABSTRACT

Various articles have addressed the field of audiovisual translation and its related issues, but the pragmatic aspects of this area have not been addressed as they should be. As pragmatic issues are mainly covert in dialogues, and films are dialogue-oriented, it is crucial to consider these aspects in this area. Implicature is one of these hidden aspects of meaning which challenges the translators' knowledge and competency. Sometimes ignoring this pragmatic aspect results in misinterpreting the intended meaning of the original version, whether it is a text or a film. Therefore, the present study intends to examine the translation of implicatures and their intricacies in Persian dubbing. To this end, four American films (Notting hill, The bucket list, The ultimate gift and Still Alice) were selected, all of which had been dubbed into Persian. All parts of these films were analyzed to determine whether there is any mismatch between original and dubbed versions in terms of this pragmatic aspect. The translation techniques and their frequency of occurrences which were applied to translate this pragmatic aspect are illustrated too. The results indicate that there are mismatches between the original and dubbed versions in terms of implicature, and the most frequent number of mismatches refers to scalar implicatures. Conventional and conversational implicatures follow it respectively. Moreover, deletion is the most frequent translation strategy which was applied to render this pragmatic aspect.

KEYWORDS: *i*mplicature, pragmatics, translation, dubbing, translation techniques

1. Introduction

Audiences have to try hard to understand the implicatures of the foreign films. However, sometimes they do not understand the meaning of these hidden aspects correctly and may lack the required background information to grasp them (Pérez-González, 2014). When there is a difference between what speakers say and what they mean, we deal with implicit kind of meaning (Levinson, 1983, p. 97). As a matter of fact, Grice (1975) considers implicature as the intended meaning of the speaker, not what is uttered explicitly.

In fact, the translator plays an important role in recognizing and conveying this pragmatic aspect by producing efficient translation. Pym (2014) believes that language is a set of communicative clues with recoverable implicatures which should be translated to avoid any misinterpretation on behalf of the target readers.

Translators meet different challenges while conveying this pragmatic aspect. Hatim (2001) believes that the meaning which is implicitly stated in the source text should also be expressed in an implicit way in the target one. Frank (2015, p. 7) also asserts that the translator should convey the implicit meaning of the original text in the same implicit way in the target one, but sometimes translating an implicit meaning leads to misunderstanding in the target text. In these cases, the translator has to make

a conscious decision. In other words, explicitation disrupts the meaning of the original text, so the implicit meaning should not be explicitly stated (Gutt, 1996).

As different pragmatic aspects result in challenges regarding description and empirical testing, research into these areas has been limited (Guillot, 2016). In recent years, some studies have been conducted in the area of audiovisual translation which focus on pragmatic aspects of language like (im)politeness, taboo language, dialects, and etc. (Bruti & Zanotti, 2016; de Pablos-Ortega, 2020; Ghia, 2019; Pavesi & Formentelli, 2019).

Despite the importance of implicature in dubbing, not much research has been done on it. Hence, the present study tries to investigate this pragmatic principle in dubbing and answers three questions: 1. Is there any mismatch between the original and dubbed versions in terms of implicature? 2. If yes, what are the frequencies of different types of implicatures as well as the frequencies of mismatches between the original and dubbed versions of these films in terms of this pragmatic principle? 3. What kinds of translation strategies have the translators applied to convey this pragmatic principle? And what are the frequencies of them?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework serving the present study consists of two parts which are clarified in the following parts.

2.1.1.Implicature

Yule (1996, pp. 40-46) supposes that the implicit meaning of the utterance is formed when the cooperative principles are violated by language users. He classifies different kinds of implicatures as following:

(1) Conversational implicatures (these are formed by violating the cooperative principles)

(2) Scalar implicatures (these kinds of implicatures show one value from a scale of values like: all, many, always, often, etc.)

(3) Conventional implicatures (some specific words lead to these kinds of implicatures like: yet, even, but, etc.)

Yule (1996, p. 44) believes that there is also a kind of implicature related to numbers which implicates only that number.

2.1.2.Translation Strategies

Chesterman (2016) is among the scholars who have suggested different kinds of translation strategies, and his categorization of pragmatic translation strategies is as following:

(1) Cultural filtering: Here the SL items, specifically culture-specific ones, are rendered to the functional or cultural equivalents of the TL.

(2) Explicitness change: In this strategy, either the translator renders the implicit ST information in an explicit way in the TT (explicitation), or he/she acts the opposite way and conveys the explicit information of the ST implicitly in the target one (implicitation).

(3) Information change: This includes the two strategies of addition (addition of information to the TT) and deletion (deletion of the information of the ST)

(4) Interpersonal change: In this strategy, the overall style is altered. It includes cases like changing the ST level of formality or its technical lexis.

(5) Illocutionary change: Changing the speech acts falls into this category.

(6) Coherence change: "It has to do with the logical arrangement of information at the ideational level in the text".

(7) Partial translation: It includes translations such as: summary translation, transcription, and the like.

(8) Visibility change: This encompasses methods in which the translator's presence is much apparent like using footnotes or bracketed comments.

(9) Transediting: This strategy encompasses methods of editing and rewriting the badly written original texts.

(10) Other pragmatic changes: Other cases like altering the dialect or text layout fall into this category.

2.2. Past Research

Pinto (2010) investigates advice in English subtitles of Spanish films. He tries to answer the question why students who watch Spanish films consider Spaniards vulgar and rude. He concludes that there is a level of impoliteness in the English subtitles which is caused by an increased level of directness and reduction of mitigating elements.

There are also some works on the pragmatic aspects of dubbing that have investigated hesitation markers (Romero-Fresco, 2009), interjections (Bruti & Pavesi, 2008; Cuenca, 2006), and discourse markers (Baños, 2014; Cuenca, 2008; Freddi & Malagori, 2014; Fresco, 2006; Romero-Forchini, 2010).

In the case of studying implicature in audiovisual translation, Desilla (2014) suggests a new approach to the examination of audience reception. She investigates the comprehension of implicit meaning by both Greek and British viewers, and observes that Greek viewers have difficulty understanding this type of meaning because it is necessary for the viewers to be familiar with British culture. To collect data, she used a questionnaire which included questions about the films implicatures. Each group of viewers included nine women in the age group of 18 to 52 years old, one of which were British English speakers and the other one speak Greek as their native language. Qualitative analysis of this study showed that viewers do not always understand the implicit meaning intended by filmmakers, and often have their own personal understanding.

In another research, Salari (2019) studied the representation of pragmatics and its principles in Persian dubbing. First, they clarify the classifications which researchers have previously recommended for pragmatic aspects, one of which is the implicit aspect of meaning. Then, they demonstrate their representations and how translators change them in Persian dubbing by providing some instances of these films.

In a recent study, Ameri (2023) investigates the translation of general extenders in Persian dubbing and non-professional subtitling. He believes that non-professional subtitlers applied a source oriented literal approach. On the other hand, these pragmatic issues were edited or deleted by the dubbing team caused by synchronicity which is one of the limitations in dubbing. He suggests that the negligence of the dubbing team can be another factor which results in these kinds of alterations.

Salari et al. (2024) also prioritize the most challenging pragmatic principles in Persian dubbing. They investigate the frequencies and types of mismatches between the original and dubbed films in terms of three pragmatic principles of presupposition, speech act, and implicature. They also identify the translation strategies applied in the dubbed versions. Finally, they consider a hierarchy for the most challenging pragmatic principles in Persian dubbing.

3. Methodology

To determine the translation of implicatures and their intricacies in Persian dubbing, four American films were selected, all of which had been dubbed into Persian (Table 1). All parts of these films were thoroughly analyzed using content analysis. To determine the different types of implicatures and the translation strategies applied, the qualitative phase of content analysis was used. The quantitative phase was also utilized to determine the frequencies of implicatures in the original films, the frequencies of mismatches between the original and dubbed versions, and the frequencies of translation strategies. To identify different types of implicatures, Yule's classification (1996) of implicatures was used. Chesterman's classification (2016) was also utilized to determine the translation strategies. To ensure the validity of the analysis, one of the authors conducted the analysis and two others revised and confirmed it.

Table 1.

General Information about the Selected Films

Original titles	Titles of the dubbed versions	Release year	genres	Run time
Notting Hill	ناتینگ هیل	1999	romance, comedy	124min
The ultimate gift	هدیه نهایی	2006	drama	117min
The bucket list	فهرست آرزوها	2007	drama, comedy	97min
Still Alice	من هنوز آلیس هستم	2014	drama	101min

4. Data Analysis

In this part, some examples of the aforementioned films are presented which clarify the mismatches between original films and their dubbed versions in terms of implicatures and how translators dealt with the intricacies of this pragmatic principle.

Example (1)

Film title: *The Ultimate Gift*, **scene time**: 2nd minute
(**Context**: Everyone gathered at the cemetery to perform Red's funeral. It's raining and Red's son is uttering this sentence.)

ST	TT
Well, it's a sure bet he's laughin'... watchin' us get soaked.	حتما داره بهمون میخنده که مثه موش آب کشیده شدیم (He must be laughing at us that we became like soaked rats.)

In example (1), the underlined phrase (get soaked) in the original version has been rendered to an idiomatic expression in Persian which carries a conversational implicature caused by flouting the maxim of quality. This kind of implicature is not seen in the original version. Thus, implicitation is the translation strategy which has been applied here.

Example (2)

Film title: *The Bucket List*, **scene time**: 13th minute
(**Context**: Edward is in the hospital and the doctor is examining him.)

ST	TT
Doctor: How's that cap doing? **Edward**: Didn't know what I ever did without it. **Doctor**: Humor is a good sign.	**Doctor**: با سوند که مشکلی نداشتی؟ (You didn't have any problem with the catheter??) **Edward**: بدون اون تا حالا مرده بودم. (I would have died without it.) **Doctor**: وقتی شوخی می‌کنی یعنی بهتر شدی. (When you're kidding, it means that you've gotten better.)

In example (2), the underlined sentence in the original version results in a conversational implicature caused by flouting the maxim of relevance, but it has been rendered to an explicit sentence in dubbing through explicitation strategy.

Example (3)

Film title: *Still Alice*, **scene time**: 45th minute (**Context**: John and Alice are standing outside.)

ST	TT
John: When I get finished are we still going to go for a run? **Alice:** Yeah, I just need to grab another layer.	**John:** وقتی کارم اینجا تموم بشه میریم قدم بزنیم؟ (When I finish my work here, shall we go for a walk?) **Alice:** آره میرم یه چیزی بپوشم. (Yes, I'm going to wear something.)

In example (3), the word still in the underlined sentence results in a conventional kind of implicature which implies that they already planned to go walking, and Alice forgets because of her Alzheimer's desease. This implicature has been deleted in the dubbed version. Therefore, deletion is the translation strategy which has been applied here.

Example (4)

Film title: *Notting Hill*, **scene time**: 5th minute
(**Context**: William is going to work and uttering these sentences as the narrator.)

ST	TT
William: And so it was just another hopeless Wednesday, as I set off through the market to work, little suspecting that this was the day which would change my life forever. This is work, by the way, my little travel book shop ... which, well, sells travel books -- and, to be frank with you, doesn't always sell many of those. .	**William**: مثل همیشه این یکی دیگه از چهارشنبه‌های مایوس‌کننده بود و من از خونه تا سر کارم که چند کیلومتری بود داشتم پیاده می‌رفتم، هرگز تصور نمی‌کردم این چهارشنبه زندگی منو برا همیشه تغییر میده، به هر حال اینجا محل کار منه، کتاب‌فروشی کوچیک من. میفروشم سفرنامه‌های گوناگونه. راستش بخواین این فروشم جنگی به دل نمیزنه. (As always, this was another hopeless Wednesday And I was walking from home to work which was a few kilometers away, I never imagined this Wednesday would change my life forever. Anyway, this is my workplace, my little bookstore. Most of the books I sell are various travelogues. To be frank with you, my sale makes no appeal.)

In example (4), the word most has been added to the dubbed version which carries a scalar kind of implicature. The underlined clause in the original version is also rendered to an expression which induces a conversational implicature caused by flouting the quality maxim. This implicature is not seen in the original version and the sentence has been explicitly stated. Therefore, addition and implicitation are the strategies which have been applied here.

Example (5)

Film title: *The Ultimate Gift*, **scene time**: 107th minute
(**Context**: Hamilton remembers the day Red called him for the first time and asked him to be his attorney.)

ST	TT
[Hamilton's Voice] Sir, are you sure you wouldn't like to meet first? **[Red's Voice]** You were at the top of your law class, were you not? **[Hamilton's Voice]** Yes, sir. **[Red's Voice]** Then you're my lawyer. Now let's get on with it. We got a world to conquer.	**[Hamilton's Voice]** قربان! مطمئنید که نمی‌خواین اول همدیگر ببینیم؟ (Sir! Are you sure you do not want to meet each other first?) **[Red's Voice]** شما وکیل هستید، مگه نه؟ (You are a lawyer, aren't you?) **[Hamilton's Voice]** بله آقا، هستم. (Yes sir, I am.) **[Red's Voice]** پس از این به بعد وکیل من هستید. (Then from now on you are my lawyer.) بهتره کارتون رو شروع کنید. ما خیلی کار داریم. (You better start your work. We have a lot of work to do.)

In example (5), the underlined sentence in the original version is a kind of hyperbole and resuts in a conversational implicature induced by flouting the maxim of quality. It has been translated to an explicit sentence in the dubbed version. So, explicitation has been used as the translation strategy in this instance.

Example (6)

Film title: *The Bucket List*, **scene time**: 67th minute
(**Context**: Edward points to the old woman sitting next to them and starts talking.)

ST	TT
Edward: See that old woman? Odds are, we're gonna be dead, before her. **Karter**: A happy thought.	**Edward**: اون پیرزنُ می‌بینی؟ (Do you see that old woman?) عجیبه که باید قبل از اون بمیریم. (It's odd that we have to die before her.) **Karter**: کجاش عجیبه؟ (Where is it odd?)

In example (6), the underlined part in the original version carries a conversational implicature triggered by flouting the relevance maxim, because Carter's response has nothing to do with Edward's question. However, it has been rendered to a question with a different meaning which does not induce this kind of implicature. So, a total change has been occurred here.

Example (7)

Film title: *Still Alice*, **scene time**: 11th minute
(**Context**: John is asking Alice about her lecture at the university.)

ST	TT
John: How did it go? **Alice**: What? **John**: UCLA… **Alice:** Good. They were really... receptive. **John:** I'm sure they were.	**John:** اوه، چطور برگزار شد؟ (Oh, how was it held?) **Alice**: چی؟ (What?) **John**: سخنرانی دانشگاه. (University lecture.) **Alice**: اوه، خیلی خوب بود، شنونده‌های خیلی علاقمند. (Oh, it was very good, very interested listeners.) **John**: خوشحالم. (I am glad.)

In example (7), UCLA refers to the name of university and carries a conversational implicature caused by flouting the quantity maxim. In the dubbed version, the word lecture has been added and this implicature has been removed. So, addition has been applied here as the translation strategy.

Example (8)

Film title: *Notting Hill*, **scene time**: 8ᵗʰ minute
(**Context**: Anna comes to William's bookstore for the first time, and at the same time someone in the bookstore steals a book. William walks over to the thief and talks to him. Then he comes to Anna and apologizes for what happened.)

ST	TT
William: Sorry about that... **Anna**: No, that's fine. I was going to steal one myself but now I've changed my mind. Signed by the author, I see.	**William:** معذرت می‌خوام... (I'm sorry…) **Anna:** خیلی عالی بود. منم می‌خواستم کار اونو بکنم ولی حالا دیگه تغییر عقیده دادم. نویسنده خودش این کتابُ امضا کرده. (It was great. I also wanted to do it, but now I have changed my mind. The writer himself signed this book.)

In example (8), the underlined sentence in the original version has been uttered in response to William's apology, but it has been rendered to a sentence which carries a conversational implicature caused by violating the quantity maxim. Therefore, a total change has been occurred here.

Example (9)

Film title: *The Ultimate Gift*, **scene time**: 57ᵗʰ minute
(**Context**: Jason and his uncles and aunts gather for Thanksgiving. They are all curious to know about Jason's inheritance.)

ST	TT
Uncle: So he's making you work for your inheritance? **Jason**: Not anymore, because I don't think I could ever win at this one.	**Uncle**: اون مجبورت کرده واسه ارثت کار کنی؟ (Did he make you work for your inheritance?) **Jason**: دیگه نه. فکر نمی‌کنم تو این مرحله موفق بشم. Not anymore. I don't think I will succeed at this stage.

In example (9), the word because carries a conventional kind of implicature which implicates the reason why Jason doesn't work for his inheritance. However, this word has been deleted in the dubbed version.

Example (10)

Film title: *The Bucket List*, **scene time**: 17ᵗʰ minute (**Context**: Thomas has brought some food for Edward.)

ST	TT
Thomas: Okay, we've got some pochuto and melons... some dorado mozzarella and a veal a la card I brought some biscuits and... **Karter:** You sure you wanna eat all that? **Edward:** That's the plan.	**Thomas:** یه مقدار انبه و خربزه و یه مقدارم پنیر ایتالیایی با گوشت گوساله داریم. خودم همشُ براتون آوردم. (We have some mango and melon, and some Italian cheese with beef. I myself brought them all to you.) **Karter:** می‌خوای اونا رو بخوری؟ (Do you want to eat them?) **Edward:** همین کار رو می‌خوام بکنم. (This is what I want to do.)

In example (10), the word all carries a scalar implicature which implicitly ask whether he wants to eat them all or just some. This word has been deleted in the dubbed version. So, deletion is the translation strategy which has been applied here.

Example (11)

Film title: *Still Alice*, **scene time**: 55ᵗʰ minute
(**Context**: The family members are eating lunch, while Lydia and Anna are arguing.)

ST	TT
Anna: Oh, that's very articulate. Well said. **Lydia:** You want me to show you?	**Anna:** نمی‌دونستم تا این حد خوش بیانی. (I didn't know you are so articulate.) **Lydia:** می‌خوای نشونت بدم چقد خوش‌بیانم؟ (Do you want me to show you how articulate I am?)

In example (11), the underlined question in the original version carries a conversational implicature induced by violating the quantity maxim. This sentence has been rendered to an explicit one by adding how articulate I am. So, explicitation is the strategy which has been applied here.

Example (12)

Film title: *Notting Hill*, **scene time**: 6th minute (**Context**: William is upset about his financial loss at the library.)

ST	TT
Martin: Shall I go get a cappuccino? Ease the pain. **William:** Yes, better get me a half. All I can afford.	ضرر زیادیه، برم برات یه کاپوچینو بخرم؟ میدونی کمی درد رو تسکین میده. **:Martin** (That's a great loss; Shall I go get a cappuccino for you? You know it relieves pain a little bit.) آره، آره. ولی یه لیوان کوچیک، پول بزرگشُ ندارم. **:William** (Yes! Yes. But a small glass. I don't have the money to buy a bigger one.)

In example (12), the original sentence carries a conversational implicature caused by violating the quantity maxim, because Martin doesn't explain the cause of this pain. The sentence (زیادیه ضـرر) has been added to the dubbed version and explicitation has occurred here. The words all and better also carry scalar kind of implicatures which have been deleted in the dubbed version. Therefore, explicitation and deletion are the translation strategies which have been applied here.

Table 2 shows the frequencies of different kinds of implicatures in the original films. According to this table, conventional implicatures have the highest frequency of occurrence. Scalar, conversational, and numeral ones also follow them respectively.

Table 2.

The Frequencies of Different Kinds of Implicatures in the Original Films

Films' titles	Total implicatures	conversational	scalar	conventional	numeral
Notting Hill	602	147	188	237	30
The bucket list	295	156	77	62	-
The ultimate gift	446	121	125	165	35
Still Alice	458	79	159	211	9

Table 3 illustrates the frequencies of mismatches between the original and dubbed versions regarding different kinds of implicatures. As it's evident in this table, scalar implicatures have the highest frequency of occurrence. Conventional, conversational and numeral ones also follow them and are in the next levels respectively.

Table 3.

The Frequencies of Mismatches between the Original and Dubbed Versions in Terms of Different Kinds of Implicatures

Films' titles	Total mismatches	conversational	scalar	conventional	numeral
Notting Hill	69	21	28	17	3
The bucket list	31	14	7	10	-
The ultimate gift	63	14	24	24	1
Still Alice	50	16	15	19	-

Table 4 demonstrates the frequencies of different translation strategies applied to render these various kinds of implicatures. Deletion has the highest frequency of occurrence in this table. Furthermore, explicitness change, total change, addition and illocutionary change are in the next levels respectively.

Table 4.

The Frequencies of Different Translation Strategies Applied

Films' Titles	Deletion	Addition	Explicitness Change	Illocutionary Change	Total Change
Notting Hill	40	6	8	-	15
The Bucket List	20	2	6	-	3
The Ultimate Gift	40	2	12	1	8
Still Alice	32	8	7	-	3

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As it is apparent, there were mismatches between the original and dubbed versions in terms of implicatures. These mismatches were of various kinds. In fact, the most frequent kinds of mismatches belonged to scalar implicatures. Conventional, conversational and numeral ones were also in the next levels, respectively. In some cases, the original implicatures were deleted in the dubbed versions which included the highest frequency of occurrence. In some other ones, what had been stated implicitly in the original versions had been rendered in an explicit way or vice versa in the dubbed ones. In other words, explicitness change was at the second rank in terms of frequency. Total change, addition and illocutionary change also followed it respectively. Therefore, this pragmatic aspect has undergone changes in the aforementioned dubbed versions.

Of course, it is necessary to keep in mind that some limitations impose on dubbing which affect the translation product. One of these limitations is lip synchronicity (Chaume, 2012) in which the dubbing sound and the actors' lip movements must match. Chaume (2012) believes that some aspects are crucial in dubbing; producing a coherent and loyal translation is among those important items which are essential to be considered.

Another constraint which imposes on dubbing is that the translator is not the only person who decides in this process and it involves a group of people including dubbing actors, dubbing assistant, dubbing director, translator and editor (Pérez-González, 2014), and the dubbing director is the one who finally approves the product. Other factors that may result in imposing some limitations on dubbing are censorship and the differences between source and target language structures. So, these limitations may lead to the implicit meaning of the original film being lost in dubbing.

However, the translator is proficient in both source and target languages, and he must be the one who has the permission to make such changes (Chaume, 2004). Despite all these limitations, sometimes the translators' inadequacy may result in such changes. Thus, it's essential for the translators to achieve the required skills in the pragmatic aspects of the translation and do their best to observe these aspects in their translations.

This study has shed some light on the translation of implicature and its challenges in Persian dubbing. Future studies could investigate other pragmatic aspects in dubbing and subtitling. Researchers could also examine the translation of implicature in other modes of AVT (i.e. audiodescription, voice over, and etc.). The current study investigates four films; future research could extend the findings and analyze more films. In this research, the effects of this pragmatic aspect and its translation on audiences have not been examined; future research could also investigate the translation of implicature and its reception by audiences.

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