

Difficulties in Using Strategies by the Translators in Subtitling Cultural Expressions in Arabic Films into English**Nesrin Goda Afifi**

MA (General Translation)

Dr. Fatima Elnaeem Mohammed

Ph.D (English language – Curriculum and Methodology)

Ph.D (General Translation)

Buraydah Colleges – KSA

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the difficulties in using strategies by the translators in subtitling cultural expressions in Arabic films into English. It is an investigation of Henrik Gottlieb's Subtitling Strategies that are used by student translators. A number of students were asked to translate Arabic cultural expressions from Egyptian films to find out what subtitle strategies they used. The main findings and results showed that the students used more than one strategy which proved that they faced problems and difficulties in choosing the suitable and appropriate one for each expression, the students tend to use paraphrase and transfer strategies more than others.

Introduction

Nowadays our society was highly influenced by the Media, as well as with the significant progress in information technologies that help in spreading new forms as well as types communications that led to new and different strategies of translation.

As translation is the process of transferring the meaning of a text into another language text with accuracy in written or spoken form, aiming for transferring the ideas of the text into the Source Language (SL) to readers of the Target Language (TL), cultural terms are considered the main reason that pose difficulties to translators.

Subtitling also is a form differs from the translation of written text. Subtitles means translation of dialogue from a language into another language, the audience hear the actor's voices. The translators role is to translate the actual word of the actors, but not necessarily for the translator to have a written transcript of the dialogue, spoken language may include some structures can't be expressed in the written subtitles.

Subtitling is defined as: “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)”. (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, p.8) In the book *Audiovisual Translation*.

Subtitling has a completely different form of translation process. The translators now use various computer programs for subtitling, which make their work a lot easier.

Subtitling and dubbing dates back to the invention of film, since film producers wanted their works to be presented not only in the countries of origin, but also abroad. Subtitles are easy to read because of their simple language. Subtitling is problematic area for translators because cultural expressions varied from one language to another.

Literature review

Hurt, Wilder, (1998) defined subtitling as translation of a film dialogue, in the form of titles appear at the bottom the screen to be read easily by audience.

Many researchers have conducted the research in the field of translation. Yet, there were few studies done on the study about subtitling translation and its problems and strategies the researcher uses them as references in conducting this research.

The first study is Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010) “Strategies Used in the Translation of Interlingual Subtitling”. In this study they attempted to show the strategies used to translate English subtitles into Persian to find out their frequency, as well. Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies were used in the study, and the results showed that Gottlieb’s strategies were applicable to the corpus with some differences of distribution among different film genres. “Transfer” was the strategy with the percentage of (54.06%); “transcription” and “decimation” are the lowest percentage (0.81%).

According to Ivarsson, several methods of creating subtitles evolved over time, such as an optical method, film subtitling using mechanical and thermal processes, a chemical method, and laser subtitling. Some of these procedures are also described in Oldřich Kautský’s work *Dubbing, yes and no*. Compared to contemporary subtitling, these methods were significantly more difficult and time demanding.

Pošta (2011 p. 12) states that an ideal subtitler is able to create subtitles from a scratch, i.e. he/she can do the translation, divide it into individual subtitles, set them, adjust them accordingly, save and pass them on for a check-up, and supply the finished subtitle file to the client. He added that these skills a translator has, the easier for him more of /her to find a job.

Another research was conducted by Mousavi (2012) entitled *Strategies in Subtitling Black English Movies*. She also used Gottlieb's typology of subtitling strategies. The major aim of this study is to explore the most commonly used strategies in subtitling *Black*

English movies. To do this, six original *Black English* movies were compared with their subtitled versions research was a qualitative attempt to describe and analyze the applied strategies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the most challenging tasks for all translators is how to render subtitling language in Arabic films that can be accepted by the audience, it is the most difficult task for translators. The intended meaning of the expressions have special cultural reference. Researchers will attempt in this study to find the actual problems and difficulties in using strategies by the students when they subtitle cultural expressions in Arabic films into English.

Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this research, a number of students (20) who study English language at different Egyptian universities were taken as random sample, they were asked to translate cultural expressions from Arabic films into English. These translations will be analyzed using Gottlieb's strategies (1992) and findings will be explained to enable the researcher build suitable recommendations upon them.

Analysis of the results and discussion:

No	Film Name	Arabic Sentence	Subtitling	Strategy
1	إسماعيل يس في متحف الشمع	ياخبر اسود	Oh no! That's horrible	Paraphrase
2	مراتي مدير عام	بعد الشر عليك	Don't say this	Expansion
3	ابن حميدو	انا كلمتى ماتنزلش الأرض ابدأ	I have one word	Transfer
4	بوحة	صبح صبح	Good morning	Transfer
5	الكبير	ده باينه هيبقى مرار طافح	black days	paraphrase
6	تيتا رهيبه	اتكل على الله ورينى عرض كتافك	Go away	paraphrase
7	غزل البنات	والله عال جابوا الاقرع يسرح بنت السلطان	Unbelievable	Transfer
8	انا وبناتى	أعيش خدامة تحت رجلك	I will be your servantusing	transfer



In this film, Ismail Yaseen is afraid of seeing frightening ghost talking to his friend, saying (ياخبر اسود) and this expression is subtitled by some students giving different translations to render its meaning from Source Language (SL) into target language (TL) by saying "I'm afraid, Oh no!" and "That's horrible" using *Expansion* strategy, And other students used wrong strategy *omission* by saying "black" only.



In this one, the wife is talking to her husband, saying (بعد الشر عليك), this expression is subtitled as "stop talking like that", "stop, please", "God forbid" and "don't say that", here some students used *Expansion* strategy in order to give good translation, while others used *addition* strategy saying "God forbid you and me".



In this scene, the husband is talking to his wife , saying (انا كلمتى ماتنزلش الأرض ابدأ), this Arabic expression from the film was translated by a number of students as : "I like to keep my word", " I have fast word" and "I have one word", using *paraphrase* strategy, while other students used a different translations "my words go down" , by applying *transfer* strategy.



The translation of this one, Lempey is saying his famous word as if he was greeting some one (صبح صبح) and this expression is subtitled differently from its source into the target language "Good morning" and "Morning" using *transfer* strategy.



This expression (ده باينه هييقى مرار طافح) which is always used by Alkapeer, it is his famous sentence expressing his anger, was subtitled in different versions by the students "It looks like all hell's", "gonna break loose" , "oh black days" and "bad days" using *paraphrase* strategy.



The grandmother here is talking to her grandson, after she finished her speech , she asked him to leave, angrily saying

(اتكل على الله ورينا عرض كتافك), this expression is subtitled differently, "good bye", and "leave me alone" using *paraphrase* strategy.



In translating this expression (والله عال جابوا الاقرع يسرح بنت السلطان) , subtitling seems to have different versions, such as: " you are kidding" , "unbelievable" , "that's a new one" , and "is this a joke ?" using *transfer and paraphrase* strategy.



An innocent girl addresses her lover to convince him to marry her saying (أكون خدامة تحت رجلك) , this expression was subtitled as follows: " I will be your servant" using *transfer* strategy.

Conclusion

The major aim of this study is to explore the most commonly used strategies in subtitling cultural expressions in Arabic films into English and the difficulties the students face in choosing the suitable and appropriate one. The results of the analysis of cultural expressions from Arabic films can be concluded in the following points:

- Expansion strategy was used to subtitle the first two expressions which is the most suitable one, while others used omission and addition strategies, these are not suitable for this context.
- The students used paraphrase strategy in expressions (3, 5, and 6) which revealed the nearest meaning of the source expression.
- In number (4, 6, and 7) transfer was chosen as best strategy to render the meaning.
- It is worth mentioning that omission, addition and transfer strategies were used for subtitling some expressions which resulted in poor translation according to Henrik Gottlieb's Subtitling Strategies.

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