Humor Translation in Persian Subtitled Comedy Movies into English: A Case Study of 'Lizard'

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Abstract—The aim of the present study is to investigate translation strategies employed in the subtitling of Persian comedy movies into English. The movie, titled 'Lizard' was chosen as the corpus of the study. Humorous instances are detected and identified in Persian version and they are classified into three groups according to Debra and Raphaelson-West's (1989) categorization of humor. The eight strategies for translation of cultural jokes proposed by Tomaszkiewicz (1993, cited in Diaz-Cintas, 2009) was adopted for the framework of the study to analyze the strategies employed in rendering the humorous expressions in subtitling of Persian comedy movies into English. The findings revealed that universal jokes can be transferred easily into other language/s whereas linguistic and cultural jokes resist in translation due to the differences between languages and cultures. Based on the findings of the study, literal translation is found to be the most commonly used technique in subtitling from Persian to English. Besides literal translation, equivalence strategy was also used in many cases. This study also suggests that in order to transfer cultural jokes, it is wiser to create humor in accordance to the visual context of the movie and domesticate the translation to achieve the desired result.

Index Terms—audiovisual translation, humor translation, subtitling, Persian, literal translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, media is considered as one of the main tools in entertainment and education. The rapid growth in technology in the last four decades has provided a unique opportunity for the advance developments in this area and as a result, a great amount of movies, animations, series and documentaries are to name but a few that have been produced and distributed around the world. The ultimate goal of producers in the film industry is to sell their productions in the global market. On the one hand, the extreme desire of viewers all across the world to watch those productions has resulted in the significant increase in international exchange of audiovisual productions. Furthermore, the diversity of audiovisual programs which are now broadcasting regularly via TVs, satellite channels or even distributed on DVDs (which is now a much favored mode for its memory capacity) has led to the urgent need for translation of audiovisual texts especially in the non-English speaking countries. In this regard, audiovisual translation has been focused by many scholars in the related areas and a large number of studies have been done in this respect in the last two decades. Audiovisual translation is a new branch in translation studies which encompasses dubbing, subtitling, voiceover, etc. A major difference between audiovisual translation and the other forms of translation is that literary lies in the constraints of this form of translation. Audiovisual translators not only should tackle with the conventional issues in translation such as cultural barriers or linguistic differences but also faced with the limitation of space and time in subtitling or synchronization in dubbing. A group of specialists is involved in the process of translating audiovisual texts. In the process of audiovisual translation, many of the sentences are modified, condensed or even changed for the sake of synchronization in dubbing or due to the lack of space in subtitling. Audiovisual translation has been fully discussed by scholars such as Delabastita (1989), Gottlieb (1997c) and Diaz Cintas (2007). A great number of taxonomies have also been proposed for this new branch of translation. Audiovisual texts represent world through languages and images. Therefore, linguistic competency in both languages is not the only criteria needed for the translators but the cultural familiarity and knowledge of the source and target culture are also of equal importance.

One of the most challenging areas in translation studies is dealing with humor transfer across languages and cultures. Humor which is a pivotal and inseparable part of human life has caused much resistance in translation. The main problem is that people in every culture construct the reality of life in many different ways. Hence, their understandings of the world have varied among one another. Consequently, a concept which is considered as humor in one culture does not necessary reflects the same humorous meaning in another culture. With the presence of issues in linguistic and cultural barriers in humor translation, a variety of techniques inspired from different theories in translation studies such as dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964a) and skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984) are often employed to resolve these problems. The aim of the humor translation is to transfer humorous expressions from the source language to the target language. Thus, in order to accomplish the task in most cases, the form of the language is sacrificed for the sake of its

function. Moreover, dynamic equivalence is preferred instead of formal equivalence. In recent decades, a vast amount of comedy movies and series especially situation comedies (sitcoms) such as *Friends, How I met your mother, Will and Grace*, etc. have been produced and distributed in many countries and most of them have been dubbed or subtitled into many different languages. The ever growing production of humorous movies and sitcoms and the need for translation of such products left no choice for scholars but to conduct more researches on this topic. In this regard, many scholars such as *Attardo (2002), Raphaelson-West (1989), Chiaro (2004) and Raskin (1985)* to name but a few conveyed many researches and studies on humor translation but improvements are still feasible with many problems remained unsolved and many questions unanswered.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Audiovisual Translation

Although audiovisual translation dates back to the establishment of the cinemas in 1895, it did not receive special care until late 19th century. Diaz Cintas (2009) stated that the proper beginning of a real flurry of activity can be traced to the late 1990s- AVT`s golden age (p.3). The boom in production of different kinds of audiovisual texts such as movies, animations and situation comedies on the one hand and the accessibility of these products via TVs, private cable channels, satellites, CDs, DVDs, computers, tablets or the internet on the other hand had increased the demand for translation of such products. Among different methods of audiovisual presentation, DVDs (digital versatile disk) received special care and gained popularity among producers and viewers. The high storage capacity of DVDs provided great opportunities for the insertion of different kinds of subtitles and dubs within a pack (about thirty two subtitles and four dub versions). This opportunity which occurred during the digital revolution (a shift from analogue to digital technology) delivered the chance to present different kinds of subtitling altogether. An example is the subtitling for deaf or hard of hearing (SPH) or audio-scription for blind (AD). The first conference on subtitling and dubbing were held in Stockholm in 1987. It acted as a motivation for the publication of more books and articles on this subject. Delabastita (1989, 1990) was among the first scholars who examined audiovisual texts from a descriptive perception. He analyzed translation as a process and set out questions and research areas which are still useful for audiovisual investigators. Many definitions have been proposed to define the concept of audiovisual translation for instance Luyken (1991), who argued that audiovisual language transfer denotes the process by which a film or television program is made comprehensible to a target audience that is unfamiliar with the original's source language" (p. 11). This definition implied that the main aim of audiovisual translation is to make it understandable for the target audiences. Another definition is given by Chiaro (2009b) as follow:

Audiovisual translation is one of the several umbrella terms that include 'media translation', 'multimedia translation', multimodal translation' and 'screen translation'. These different terms all set out to cover the inter-lingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically, usually but not necessarily, through some kind of electronic device (p.141).

Subtitling and dubbing are the most predominant forms of audiovisual translation and many researches are focused on these two topics. However, there are also some other types of audiovisual translation such as surtitling, voiceover, audio-description, etc. In this respect, Gambier (2009) suggested a category for AVT. The categories are: a) interlingual subtitling (open caption), which is carried out between two different languages for the cinema and video DVDs, including bilingual subtitling; b) bilingual subtitling, in the case of the country Belgium where subtitles are shown in two different languages at the same time; c) consecutive interpreting; d) simultaneous interpreting; e) intralingual subtitling (close caption), which is done in the original language and for the hard of hearing; f) dubbing, in that the original sound track is replaced by a target one and covers lip-synchronizations; g) voice-over or half-dubbing, which is associated with documentaries and interviews, and the original sound is heard beneath the translation sound; h) free-commentary; i) sight translation; j) real-time subtitling; k) surtitling, which is used in musical performances and projected above the stage; l) audio description, which is used for the visually impaired and the blind, in which a narration is added to the movie in order to transfer the visual information via verbal information (p.42).

B. Subtitling

Subtitling can be defined as presenting the translation of the source dialogues of audiovisual materials in written form which usually appears at the bottom of the screen. It consists of two main types: intralingual subtitling which happens within the same language and is normally used for deaf or hard of hearing and interlingual subtitling which is the transfer of dialogues from source language to the target language. Diaz- Cintas (2003, p.195) clearly delineated the notion as 'Subtitling involves displaying written text, usually at the bottom of the screen, giving an account of the actors' dialogue and other linguistic information which form part of the visual image (letters, graffiti, and captions) or of the soundtrack (songs)'. Subtitling is practiced more in smaller countries such as Greece, Cyprus, Wales, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, etc. In comparison to dubbing, subtitling presents more advantages and disadvantages. One of the strong points of subtitling is that viewers do not miss the original sound track of the movies. Moreover, subtitling is much cheaper and less time and energy are required for its production. In fact, in the digital era with mass production of different audiovisual products every year, it seems more reasonable to subtitle than dub. Among the literates, it is much more preferable and it can also be used as an aid in language learning. Deaf or hard of hearing are also taking the

benefits as well as immigrants who are not completely familiar with the source language. Yet, there are some constraints dominating the subtitling strategy. To start with, there is a limit in the number of the characters that are displayable on the screen for each dialogue. Diaz-Cintas and Remael (2007, p.63) recommended a total of 37 characters per line. Karamitroglou (2000) stated that the average reading speed of subtitles is a number of 150-180 words per minute, which is also equivalent to approximately 2.5-3 words per second. As a complete subtitled sentence on the screen is mostly about 14 to 16 words, it must remain at least 5.5 seconds on the screen for people to be able to read (p.85). Another issue is the loss of dialects, idiolects and different jargons in subtitling. Moreover, viewers are distracted by subtitles since they have to split their attention both on the written texts and the images. The space and time limitation on the one hand and the translation tendency to be longer than the original text on the other hand have brought many issues in subtitling and these have left no choice for subtitlers but to reduce the text in order to fit on the space provided on the screen. Kovacic (1991, p.409) presented a hierarchy for discourse elements in subtitling: a) the indispensable elements (that must be translated); b) the partly dispensable elements (that can be condensed); c) the dispensable elements (that can be omitted). In other words, translators need to condense and delete the text as much as possible for the limitation of space and time in subtitling. His hierarchy is important in subtitling and it has identified the elements which translators are allowed to omit in subtitling.

C. Humor Translation

Humor is an interesting part of every language; and presents social, cultural and political realities in a sweet and indirect way. Despite the great presence of humor in our daily lives, presenting an exact definition of humor seems problematic and there is no agreement among scholars in its definition (see Attardo, 1994, p.3). Humor can be defined as whatever that produces laughter or at least smiles in human being such as jokes, satires or funny stories. Ross (1998) explained humor as something that makes a person laugh or smile (p.1). Longman dictionary (2005) offered two definitions for humor: 1) the ability or tendency to think that things are funny, or funny things you say that shows you have this ability; 2) the quality in something that makes it funny and makes people laugh (p.796). Scholars have presented different theories to describe humor. For instance, Vandaele (2002) stated that humor can be characterized by the two most general concepts: incongruity and superiority. The former is concerned with the humorous effect resulting from the departure from normal cognitive schemes, i.e. flouting of basic formal language rules, while the latter is related to the effect of humor (p.156). In other words, the incongruity theory suggests that humor is when contradiction happens between what is actually said and what the addressee expected to hear which eventually produces laughter. Superiority theory happens when some people laugh at others for their inferior knowledge or some other weaknesses. Many classifications for humor have been suggested by scholars such as the one proposed by Patrick Zabalbeascoa (1996) from the perspective of translators. The classification is: the international joke, the national-culture-institutions jokes, the national-sense-of-humor joke, the language-dependent jokes, the visual jokes and the complex joke (pp.251-254). Another classification is presented by Debra and Raphaelson-West (1989) which placed jokes into three main categories and these were utilized in the analysis of the movie subjected to study in this paper. The categories are: 1) linguistic jokes: puns fall into this category because puns play with ambiguous words which suggest more than one meaning; 2) cultural jokes: this kind of joke could be ethnic which refers to a certain culture or just a certain culture could understand the joke; 3) universal jokes: these are jokes that could be understood worldwide (p.130). He later mentioned that the easiest part in humor translation is related to universal jokes (p.130) which was discussed in full later on in this paper. A narrower classification of humor could be as idiom, irony, joke, parody and pun. Another challenging area in humor translation is wordplay or pun which had been discussed fully by scholars (see Delabastita, 1996, p.128).

D. Humor Translation Strategies

Similar to other kinds of translation, in the subtitling of movies to other languages, 'culture' operates largely through the translational activity; not only differences in linguistic features but cultural varieties created problems for subtitlers (Yaqubi, Abdul Rahman, & Che Omar, 2014, p.84).The first problem in humor translation is the linguistic differences between the languages. This includes differences in lexicon, grammar, expressions and wordplays. In a humorous text, error of lexicon, creation, ambiguity and play on the words are happening frequently to produce humor by breaking the standard rules which are not expected. These wordplays resist in translation since they convey more than one meaning in the source language. In this case, finding the equivalence which has the same function in the target language is a difficult task for translators. Therefore, literal translation is not suitable in this case since the meaning will be distorted, and even substitution would lead to a change in grammar and meaning. These are great challenges that emerge for translators and they are constantly required to use their creativity in humor translation. Some strategies have been proposed by scholars in respect to humor translation. For instance, Leppihalme (1997) suggested nine strategies for translation of Allusion whereas Delabastita (1996) proposed eight tactics for pun translation and Mateo (1995) came up with thirteen strategies for translation of irony to name but a few. Cultural differences and specific traditions of each society influence their perspectives of the world. They construct the reality in different ways and in consequence, they have different understandings of the many concepts of the world. For instance, some elements may be considered humorous in one culture but taboo in another. A good example is the sexual jokes in American culture which can be found enormously in situation comedies but these jokes occurring in the Iranian-Islamic culture are not only not

reflected as humorous but also recognized as taboos and mostly deleted in translations. Cultural jokes are exactly reflecting certain traditions, behaviors and beliefs these are the reasons why there are no exact equivalence for them in many cases. Referring to the famous names in a certain culture could be a good example of culture-bound jokes. Cultural jokes can be translated in different ways for example, by substituting a cultural joke with a similar joke in the target text or by creating a new joke in the target text in accordance to the context or by deleting the joke. As previously mentioned, as long as viewers have access on both sounds and images in audiovisual translation and more specifically in subtitling, translators' hands are tied for creating new jokes and their selection must be wise. Scholars suggested different strategies for translation of cultural jokes. For instance, Tomaszkiewicz (1993, cited in Diaz- Cintas, 2009) presented a discussion of strategies in operation of film subtitling. The strategies are: 1) omission; 2) literal translation; 3) borrowing; 4) equivalence; 5) adaptation; 6) replacement of the cultural term with deictic, particularly when supported by an on-screen gesture or a visual clue; 7) generalization; 8) explication (p. 45).

E. Dynamic Equivalence

From Nida`s (1964a) point of view, equivalence can be divided into two categories: 1) formal equivalence, which focuses on the message itself, in both form and content; 2) dynamic equivalence, which is based on what he calls 'the principle of equivalent effect', where 'the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that existed between the original receptors and the message (Nida, 1964a, p.159). In other words, this means that in cases like cultural elements where literal translation is not suitable, translators can transfer the content of the text without being limited to the form. Here the form is lost while the meaning is transferred. Mona Baker (2001a) argued that the word 'equivalence' has become widely used among translators to simply identify the relationship between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) that allows the TT to be considered a translation of the ST in the first place (p.77). Dynamic equivalence seems to be a crucial strategy in translating humor in audiovisual text due to the linguistic and cultural differences in ST and TT.

F. Skopos Theory

Skopos theory was introduced by Hans J. Vermeers in 1970s and later developed by Reiss and Vermeer in 1984. In this theory, the priority is given to the aim and purpose of translation which determines the strategies of the translation to produce a text with the same function as it has on ST. The basic rules of this theory are: 1) a translatum (or TT) is determined by its skopos; 2) a TT is an offer of information in a target culture; 3) a TT does not initiate an offer of information in a clearly reversible way; 4) a TT must be internally coherent; 5) a TT must be coherent with the ST; 6) the five rules above stand in hierarchical order, with the skopos rule predominating (Reiss and Vermeer 1984 cited in Munday, 2008, p. 119). Inspired from skopos theory, translators apply any strategies which are compatible with their situation to transfer the aim of the translation and recreate the same function of the ST in the target language. In the case of humor in audiovisual translation, as long as the purpose of translation is to transfer the humorous expressions, translators are free to opt for any method and make any relevant decisions whether to substitute the humor with another equivalent humor in TT or even create a new humor in accordance to the context (image, sound).

III. METHOD

A. Corpus

The movie, titled 'Lizard' or MARMOLAK in Persian was chosen as the corpus of the study since it is considered as a masterpiece in Iranian cinema with a new topic, at least for the first time in Iran. It is a 2004 comedy drama film directed by Kamal Tabrizi and starring Pariv Parastuie as Reza the lizard. A good source of verbally expressed humor is found in the movie either cultural or linguistic which best served the purpose of this paper. The English subtitled version of the film was broadcasted on IRIB satellite channel soon after the release of the movie in the Persian cinemas.

B. Methodology

The aim of the present study is to investigate translation strategies employed in the subtitling of Persian comedy movies into English. Humorous instances are detected and identified in Persian version and they are classified into three groups according to Debra and Raphaelson-West (1989)'s categorization for humor. The categories are linguistic jokes, cultural jokes and universal jokes. Next, the eight strategies for translation of cultural jokes proposed by Tomaszkiewicz (1993, cited in Diaz- Cintas, 2009) was adopted for the framework of the study to analyze the strategies employed in rendering the humorous expressions in subtitling of Persian comedy movies into English by comparing every Persian sentences with their English subtitled equivalence. In order to analyze the movie, the following procedures were taken. Firstly, the Persian dub version was transcribed in order to identify the humorous expressions. Subsequently, the English subtitled version was transcribed. Later, the humorous expressions in Persian were extracted and their equivalence English subtitle was written before them. Lastly, the strategies applied in the translation were outlined through a comparison of Persian sentences with the English subtitles with the aid of the instrument of the study. Furthermore, descriptive statistics containing frequency, percentage and sum were provided for each strategy.

IV. FINDINGS

The analysis of the movie revealed a total of 104 instances of humorous expressions which were identified in the original Persian version. They were classified into three groups based on the classification of Debra and Raphaelson-West (1989). Table 4.1 indicated the frequency of each group.

TABLE 4.1.
THE FREQUENCY OF THE HUMOR EXPRESSIONS IN THE CASE STUDY

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Linguistic jokes	44	42/3%
Cultural jokes	47	45/2%
Universal jokes	13	12/5%
Total	104	100%

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the strategies employed in the translation of Persian comedy movies into English subtitling. Therefore, to analyze the data, the instances were categorized into six groups in regard to their success or failure in translation. Table 4.2 showed the frequency of each group. Furthermore, the study aimed at casting light on the micro-strategies employed when translating humorous expressions from Persian comedy movies into English subtitles. Hence, the micro-strategies applied in translation related to each category were examined and presented in table 4.3.

TABLE 4.2
THE FREQUENCY OF HUMOR EXPRESSIONS IN REGARD TO THEIR SUCCESS IN TRANSLATION

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Successful transfer of linguistic jokes	18	17/3%
Unsuccessful transfer of linguistic jokes	26	25%
Successful transfer of cultural jokes	24	23/11%
Unsuccessful transfer of cultural jokes	23	22/1%
Successful transfer of universal jokes	12	11/53%
Unsuccessful transfer of universal jokes	1	0/96%
Total	104	100%

TABLE 4.3
THE FREQUENCY OF MICRO STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN EACH CATEGORY

Category	Literal	Equivalence	Omission
Successful transfer of linguistic jokes	14	3	0
Unsuccessful transfer of linguistic jokes	17	2	1
Successful transfer of cultural jokes	13	0	0
Unsuccessful transfer of cultural jokes	14	1	1
Successful transfer of universal jokes	10	1	0
Unsuccessful transfer of universal jokes	0	0	1

The analysis of some of the instances of humorous expressions in each category is presented below:

A. *Successful Translation of Linguistic Jokes in English Subtitling of the Case Study*

Example: 1

بله،خوباشو گرون خرید داشتن

Yeah, they bought the good ones at a high price

گزاشتن به فصلش بدن بیرون

They're waiting to sell them in the right season

In this excerpt, Reza the Lizard (henceforth referred to as Reza) is talking with a mullah whom he shared the room with in the hospital. The mullah was arguing that there are both good and bad mullahs but Reza disagreed with him and used an ironic expression in response to him. His answer implied that there are no good mullahs at all. In English subtitling, although the intention was not clearly defined, it was still able to transfer the humor. Literal translation seemed to be a good choice that they made in this case.

Example: 2

عجب بچه فجیعی ست ماشاالله

What a hell raiser! God bless him

Reza was going to get on the train when a small boy hit him while he was running. As long as he was wearing the mullah's official dress, he had to talk and act like them. Therefore, he tried to use the mullah's jargon but since he was not familiar with it, he made up something that implied his intention which was anger in this situation. Equivalence strategy was used which served the best in this case. The expression hell raiser which is the equivalence for بچه فجیع is had implied exactly the purpose of this sentence.

Example: 3

انشاالله تعالی یه همچین مالی...

God willing, a hot dish…

یعنی یه همچین بانوی وجیهه ی فهمیده ای روی زمین نمیمونه

I mean a modest, smart lady like her, won't be hard to pass off…

Reza shared his train compartment for some hours with a young girl and her mother. The lady was asking Reza to pray for her girl to find a good husband. Reza who was very attracted to the girl, forgot the mullah's dress he was wearing for a while and started with a colloquial expression which was not suitable for his position as a mullah but he realized his situation quickly and corrected himself. The word مالی in Persian has different meanings. It can refer to a good object, financial issue or a hot girl. The use of the expression 'a hot dish' as an equivalence for the word مالی could transfer the humor in this sentence. The rest of the sentence was literally translated.

Example: 4

الا ای الحاله خداوند به ما خدمت بدهد که به شما توفیق کنیم

Anyhow, I hope God gives me the service to offer you my strength

Substituting the position of the words ((خدمت، توفیق)) along with the mullah's jargon by Reza created humor in the Persian version. Literal translation has been used for the words خدمت (service) and توفیق (strength) which could transfer the humor.

Example: 5

البته بنده نمیدونم این آقا مجتبی سوالارو از کجاش در میاره!

Of course I don't know where Mojtaba' gets these questions!

There are two boys in the mosque and one of them (Mojtaba) kept asking interesting questions which have never been questioned by anyone else before. In this excerpt, Mojtaba asked a question which was really hard to answer even by real mullahs. The ironic sentence that Reza said was to show his anger politely. The Persian idiom was lost but literal translation could transfer part of the humor.

B. Unsuccessful Translation of Linguistic Jokes in English Subtitling of the Case Study

Example: 6

حاج آقا ببخشید ، یک سوال

May I ask you a question, Hajji?

بفرمایید

Sure

شما درس خارجم خوندید دیگه؟

You have done studies in theological cognition?

خارج نخیر ، بنده تمام مدت قم بودم

No, I've spent my whole life in Qom

The first time Reza came to the mosque, Mojtaba asked him if he had studied theological cognition. This special course which was a high-leveled mullah's education is called خارج in the Persian language. This word also has another meaning that is outside the country or abroad. As long as Reza was not familiar with this lesson (theological cognition), he took the other meaning and answered that he had spent all his time in Qom (which is the main city in Iran for mullah's education) and never been abroad. This joke was not transferable due to the linguistic and cultural barriers. Firstly, English viewers are not familiar with the Qom city and secondly, the homonym word خارج does not have any equivalence in English.

Example: 7

شما بفرمایین بنده این عزیزان رو راهی کنم

You go on, I'll escort these dear souls

الهی که من ...یقین بدونید که اجازه ما هم دست شماست عزیز دل برادر

I also ask your permission

In this excerpt, Reza wanted to say goodbye to the lady and her daughter. As mentioned before, some colloquial expressions that Reza used in his speeches created humor in Persian original movie since he was wearing the mullah's cloth. In this scene, the words الهی که من were used in cases when you want to flirt with a girl. These words were deleted in translation and in consequence, humor was not transferred.

Example: 8

خوب اذان بده بریم دیگه

Well, call the "Azan" so we can begin

اذون گفتیم حاج آقا

I already called

ازکدوم؟

Called who?

اذون دیگه

The "Azan", sir

Reza wanted to say prayer for the first time in the mosque as an Imam (prayer leader). Before that, he asked Mojtaba how he is going to say his prayer in order to learn it implicitly from him (he did not know how to pray). The first sentence in Persian language is funny for the colloquial expression he used because normally people never use such expressions for religious subjects. The last two sentences are wordplays which there are no equivalence for them in

English. The word اذون (AZAN) is a homonym and refers to two things. The first function is related to religious ceremonies and in the second function, it means 'from that one'. Literal translation was used in this situation which did not transfer the humor.

Example: 9

هیچی ، عرض کردم تو عزیز دلمی دل انگیز

Nothing, I said peace be upon you, Delangiz

اگر اسلام دست و بالم رو نبسته بود

If only Islam hadn't tied our hands

There is a bad guy in the movie who is Faezeh's ex-husband (Faezeh is the girl whom Reza met in the train compartment). The word 'Delangiz' in Persian is a homonym and has two functions. Firstly, it means something or someone pleasant and secondly, it refers to a family name. The use of 'Delangiz' as a wordplay by Reza created humor in the Persian movie. However, this humorous expression did not transfer through literal translation. The second sentence is a colloquial expression which again is funny in Persian. The literal translation for this sentence is completely satisfied but since its meaning relies on the humor of the last sentence which did not transfer, the humor of this sentence was not transferred either. The actual intention of Reza by saying these two sentences was that if he was not restricted by his position (mullahs' dress), he would punch the man.

Example: 10

به قدری سوال میکند ماشاالله که انگار خوارو مادر آدم را ... باهاش وصلت میکند

He asks so many questions that it has become a pain in the… neck

Taboos are rarely used in Persian movies but there are some sentences and words that imply taboos indirectly. This sentence is indirectly referring to a taboo expression. Moreover, the word ماشاءالله which is used more often in a mullah's jargon created more humor in the Persian version. The literal translation was applied but the whole translation was wrong and meaningless.

C. Successful Translation of Cultural Jokes in English Subtitling of the Case Study

Example: 11

حاج آقا ببخشید بعد از دیدن فیلم ترسناک نماز آیات واجبه؟

Is the fear prayer required after watching a horror movie?

چون امکان دارد که موقع دیدین فیلم ترسناک خودتان را خیس بکنید

Since you might piss in your pants after watching a horror movie

برای شما طهارت واجب است

Ablution is in order for you

برو آب بکش

Go and wash up

ننویس ، برو آب بکش ، برو

Don't write, go wash

Reza was talking with his friend on the public phone about his escape plan when he saw Mojtaba and his friend eavesdropping on him. Mojtaba again asked a funny question but Reza who was mad at him tried to insult him with his answer. The funny part is that Mojtaba never noticed his intention. In spite of the unfamiliarity of English viewers with the fear prayer (in Islamic rules in case you are really afraid of something you have to say the fear prayer), the literal translation could transfer the humor.

Example: 12

حاج آقا قطب شمال ،شش ماه شبه ،شش ماه روز

Hajji, in the North Pole we have six months of nights and six months of days

چه جوری میشه نماز خوند؟

How do we say our day and night prayers over there?

Example: 13

یک جوری آدمو نگاه میکنید انگار بلیط شمس العماره دستتونه

You look at me as if you have a bus ticket for the North Pole

و میخواید برید قطب شمال!

And you want to leave right now!

Example: 14

نظره اتفاقا در خصوص این موضوع هنوزم میان علما اختلافه

Actually, there are differences among the clergy over this issue

یه عده از علما نظرشون اینه که ما مسلمین اصلا به قطب شمال نباید بریم

Some of them believe that we Muslims should never go to the North Pole

چون گرمایی هستیم و سرما به ما سازگار نیست

Because we are used to warm climates and the cold weather will bother us

حالا چه کاریه که ما بریم به یه جایی که خدایی نکرده از شدت سرما به لقاالله بپیوندیم

Why should we go to a place where we might freeze to death?

Example: 15

خب حاج آقا ببخشید با این حساب اگه بین مسلمین و قطب شمال جنگی بشه
Then, if a war breaks out between the Muslims and North Pole
تکلیف اون مسلمونی که اسیر میشه چیه؟
What would happen to a Muslim who might be taken captive?
Example: 16
بله!
Yes!
اتفاقا اون دسته از علمام همینو میگّن
Actually this is what the other clergy say
که شما تو اون شش ماهه شب هر نمازی که بخوانید
All the prayers that you say during the six months of night
جزو نماز شب محسوب میشه ...
Will be considered as night prayers and so…
و اصلا گُور پدر قطب شمال
To hell with the North Pole
شما بهتره که طبق ساعت مملکت خودتون نماز بخوانید و بخوانید
Say your prayers according to the local time of your own country

Mojtaba kept asking interesting questions and Reza made up the answers which created the humor in Persian version. Literal translation was used for examples 12, 14 and 15 and humors were transferred in these sentences. In example 13, equivalence strategy was used and humor was transferred. However, in number 16, humor was not transferred since night prayer is referred to another kind of prayer which Muslims say during the midnight to the morning Azan and it is completely different with the five times prayer during the day. As English viewers cannot distinguish between these two (day and night pray), they were not able to comprehend the humor.

Example: 17
ولی خوب به هر حال مهمه که مسلمین بدانند...
But anyhow, it's important for Muslims to know…
در فضا چگونه به وظایف شرعی خودشون عمل کنند
How to conduct their religious duties in space

Again, in this scene, Mojtaba started asking interesting questions regarding how Muslims should do their religious duties in space. Literal translation was used and could transfer the humor.

D. Unsuccessful Translation of Cultural Jokes in English Subtitling of the Case Study

Example: 18
خیلی باس ببخشین ها، شما آخوندا مثه اینکه روضه نخونین اموراتتون نمیگذره
Excuse my language, but do you Mullahs have to preach all the time?

Reza was talking to the Mullah in the hospital; he was so mad at his life. Mullah wanted to give him some advice to make him feel better but Reza said a funny thing in response. His sentence refers to the actual works of mullahs (giving speech). He said that you cannot make money for a living without giving speech to others. Literal translation did not transfer the intention of the sentence.

Example: 19
سلام بنده رو به مادرتون ابلاغ بفرمایید!
Give my regards to your mother!

In the train station, a teenager wanted to have fun with Reza (wearing mullah's cloth) and told him: Hey, Hajji, your turban is backwards. Reza, who was not aware that the turban does not have an inner or outer side, took it off to check. When he got his intention, he wanted to pass some taboo words on him but he realized his situation (People considered him as a Mullah). Therefore, he said his taboo in an indirect way. The literal translation is correct but did not transfer the intention of this sentence which is passing a taboo. Hence, humor was not transferred.

Example: 20
گفتیم کجا بهتر از اینجا پیش حاج آقا که امین ناموس مردم هستن
And I thought next to you would be the safest place for these ladies
بله بنده امین ناموس هستم
Yes, they'll be safe here

When the train officer brought Faezeh and her mother to Reza's compartment, he asked Reza politely for the permission to allow the two ladies to be in the compartment as there were no family compartment available and he thought that the safest place for them would be in the mullah's compartment who will never betray his trust and take care of the ladies. Using the expression امین ناموس in Persian has created humor in this case because he was not really a mullah; and was staring at the girl in a bad way while saying the expression. The literal translation could not transfer the humor.

Example: 21
ببخشید این وقته شب مزاحمتون میشم ها
Excuse me for bothering you this late, Hajji

اختیار دارین! عندالمطالبه بنده در خدمت شما هستم

No problem, I'm at your service anytime

Faezeh came to Reza's room in the mosque late at night. Reza was happy and thought that maybe she was there to make love and said something funny. In order to understand his answer, viewers need to have some background knowledge in Islamic rules and traditions. The one referred here was that whenever a marriage is happening, the groom must point an exact amount of money, gold, house or any other valuables for the bride. This is called MEHRIEH which does not have any equivalence in English. MEHRIEH can be asked by the woman at any time of their marriage or in cases of divorce and the groom is obliged to pay for it. In this scene, Reza referred to this tradition and implicitly said that he is going to pay MEHRIEH in cash which created the humor at this point. Literal translation was not successful in this culture-bound joke.

E. Successful Translation of Universal Jokes in English Subtitling of the Case Study

Example: 22

حاج آقا خوده خدا هم نمیخواد من از این کاره بشم

Even God doesn't want me to become a clergy

بزمجه ! خریت خودتو گردن خدا ننداز

You sap! Don't blame God for your stupidity

Example: 23

ببین منو!آدمی خوب ، آدم خود به خود علاقه داره به کاره خلاف

Look at me! You are a man and all human beings are attracted to mischief

دسته خودشم نیست

Its human nature

خوده خدا هم اینقدر که میگَن سختگیر نیست

God is not as strict as they say

بابا اگه خودشم از بیخ با این قضایا مخالف بود اصلا آلت جرم به من و تو نمیداد

If he was totally against these things, he wouldn't give us the tools for mischief

In this excerpt, Reza was giving some speech to one of the boys to calm him down. He said things that are very interesting that people rarely think about and his speech created humor in the original Persian version. Literal translation was successful because the concept is understandable universally.

F. Unsuccessful Translation of Universal Jokes in English Subtitling of the Case Study

Example: 24

بیا،میخنده ، برو تو

Come on!! Get inside

Only one case was found categorized under universal jokes which had failed in the humor transfer. The funny part of this sentence is the word میخنده in Persian which means 'he laughs'. This word was deleted in the translation and as a result, humor was not transferred. In fact, it showed that laughing was considered a crime in this situation.

<div align="center">V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</div>

The aim of the present study is to investigate the strategies employed in the subtitling of Persian comedy movies into English. In order to conduct the study, a brief description of audiovisual translation and its categories by different scholars was reviewed. Furthermore, the definition of humor, its classifications and translation strategies proposed by scholars were also presented. The major tools in creating humor in the Persian movie in this study can be categorized as follow:

1) Incongruity: in this movie, incongruity plays an important role in the creation of humor. On the one hand people expect certain behaviors and speeches from mullahs and on the other hand Reza who wore mullahs' cloth with the usage of colloquial expressions with mullahs' jargon resulted in the contradiction between Reza's behavior and the expectancy of people from mullahs which had created humor in the movie. Moreover, Reza's answers towards many religious questions contradicted with the reality and this had subsequently produced humor.

2) The great use of idioms, colloquial expressions and jargons: the other tool in the creation of humor in this movie is the abundant use of idioms and colloquial expressions. Reza mixed the colloquial expressions with mullahs' jargon which created humor in the Persian movie.

3) Wordplays: there are many instances of wordplays in this movie which created humor. For example is the word دل انگیز(DELANGIZ) which refers to a family name or something pleasant. Another example is the word خارج(KHAREJ) which refers to theological cognition (a high level course in mullahs' education) or out of the country.

4) False pronunciations of the words: for example, معین باشید(MOAYAN BASHID) which is the mispronunciation of the word موید باشید(MOAYAD BASHID) which means be successful.

5) Great reference to the religious elements: there are many instances of humor that are referred to cultural-religious elements. For instance are نماز ایات(NAMAZ AYAT) which means fear prayer. or طهارت(TAHARAT) which means ablution.

The findings of the study indicated that universal jokes are easily transferred into other language/s. However, linguistic and cultural jokes resisted in translation due to the differences between the two languages and cultures. Based on the findings of the study, equivalence and literal translation are found to be the most commonly used techniques in subtitling of comedy movies from Persian into English. Out of 104 humorous expressions extracted from the case study, literal translation strategy was used in a number of 94 items; equivalence strategy in a total of 7 items and omission strategy were used in only three elements. The main theory behind the great use of literal translation strategy (more than 90%) in this case study is twofold: firstly, the great reference to the religious, linguistic and cultural elements which in many cases there were really impossible to transfer the humor and the second reason was the carelessness of the translators whether intentionally or unintentionally. Some practical and useful strategies in humor translation are: the use of idioms, colloquial expressions, wordplays and proverbs. However, except for some instances, no examples of these types were found. Persian translators tend to use literal translation in most cases which was the easiest but the worst strategy for this case. As a conclusion, cultural difference is a major issue in humor transfer due to the unfamiliarity of viewers with the source culture. In such cases, domesticating the target text by creating new humorous expressions in regard to the context (image, sound) would be the best choice.

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