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Censorship and Manipulation in AudioVisual Translation

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ABSTRACT

Censorship and manipulation in AudioVisual Translation are described in this paper. AV products, because of their sign features, which make the utmost communication possible, have the most paramount effects on people among other media. Hence from the very beginning of birth, screen materials were deemed to high levels of control. Censorship and manipulation in AVT have been practiced in all times and all places and under all kinds of ruling powers. Now, the classifications of AVT are investigated. There are two major AVT modes, dubbing and subtitling. They occupy two opposite ends of the domestication and foreignization continuum. In this paper, six Korean films were investigated to substantiate censorship and manipulation happen in dubbing more than subtitling on Iran Television. Analyzing these films shows that dubbing tends to be more domestication and subtitling tends to be more foreignization.

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INTRODUCTION

Translation studies is an interdisciplinary study which deals with many aspects of translation. Nowadays, especially since postcolonial turn, one of the most prominent aspects which have raised many discussions and theories is the cultural one.

Censorship and manipulation is one of the cultural factors which prevents some peices of exact information and also, is the most complicated and important issues in translation. As a matter of fact, censorship deals with the degree of tolerance that a culture shows towards the other culture.

Another field in Translation Studies which has attracted the attention of researchers in the last two decades is Audiovisual Translation Studies. This investigates on one hand, Film Studies and Translation Studies on the other.

The film history began with the Lumieres. They used their cinematograph to display the first film, which had ever been publicly displayed, on December 28, 1895, in the basement of Grand Cafe in Paris. But the first generation of movies was silent and didn't need dubbing for the introduction into the international market. These films were intertitled and when imported the intertitled were translated.

In all countries, AV industry was tightly controlled by their governments. Governments believe that the entrance of AV materials has two facets; it can be considered as both a dillema and a gift. If they are translated against the target culture norms, they will be a dillema but if these translations are compatible with the target culture norms, they are as a gift. Because in the first one the immoral and inethical factors are entered and hurt the cultural elements but the second one improve the society, its technology, its cultural elements and etc.

By these descriptions we can discover that there is a close relationship between norms, censorship, manipulation and film industry in Translation Studies.

Audiovisual Translation:

Audiovisual translation also called 'screen translation', 'film translation' and '(multi)media translation' consists of two main categories: dubbing and subtitling. Each of them falls into the two ends of domestication and foreignization continuum. By the definition of these two classifications, we can understand why they occupy this continuum. The third one but not important is voice-over translation.

Dubbing, on the one hand, means the method that makes the source text familiar to the target audience through domestication. In other words, it is the method in which 'the foreign dialogue is adjusted to the mouth

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and movements of the actor in the film' [6]. In this type the audiences of target language feel the actors actually speak into their language and the source text is changed in a large degree. Because of this, we say that dubbing is as a form of domestication which is stated by Venuti.

Subtitling on the other hand, means the translation of source audiovisual materials into the target language in the form of inscribing, usually at the bottom of the screen.

In this type the target language audiences know that its foreignness in every moment and the source text is altered in a least degree and it preserves the local colour. Because of this, subtitling is considered as a form of foreignization.

According to Szarkowska (2005) each country develops a different tradition of translating films and supports dubbing, subtitling, or other modes. Dries [6] notes that some factors such as historical circumstances, traditions, the technique to which the audience is accustomed, the cost, as well as on the position of the target and the source cultures in an international context influence our decision to choose the mode of film translation and it is not arbitrary.

Also, the countries are divided according to the type of screen translation: first, the source-language countries, in which hardly any films are imported. Second, the dubbing countries, in these countries the majority of films undergo the process of dubbing. Third, the subtitling countries, which are highly imported AV products, and there is a great need to translation. The last one is voice-over countries those that cannot afford dubbing.

De Linde and Kay [3] state that „in terms of national' preferences, a decision on which method to choose is often based more on economic consideration than cultural characteristics. Countries with relatively smaller numbers of views and consequently limited levels of investment and production tend to favor subtitling, it being the cheaper method”.

Now, on the basis of financial capacities and the use of screen translation we have three classifications of country:

First, some countries like United States and Britain are the source-language countries. It means that because these countries have rich film industries and they can produce many AV materials without any problems, they export films rather than import. In fact, in these countries any films hardly are imported and if this happens, they prefer to subtitle rather than dub these films. Because these countries think there is no value to dub them.

Second, some countries like France, Italy, Spain and Germany or in other words, the large market countries tend to dub the imported films. Because these countries can afford to dub and in these countries the language speaking is one.

Third, some countries such as Netherlands, Norway, Sweden,... or the small market countries are subtitling ones. And in these mentioned countries, the large communities are speaking two languages. However, it must be kept in mind that some third world countries are subtitling ones. (Essay on film translation,)

Gottlieb [8] state that „the subtitling is becoming a preferred mode of audiovisual translation due to the financial considerations especially considering that the production of subtitles is much cheaper than dubbing”. He continues that another reason is that the viewers prefer to watch a subtitled film than a dubbed film because subtitles retain the authenticity of the original production.

The difference in costs is one of the main reasons why dubbing dominates in large markets and subtitling in small ones. (Thorsten Schröter, p.48)

Sanchez (2004:12) points out “the advent of DVD and satellite television has meant an increase in subtitled film and TV”.

An advantage of subtitling is that it is much simpler than dubbing. In order to subtitle a film, all that is needed is one subtitler and a machine with which to place the subtitles onto the picture. This is true even if e.g. Gummerus & Paro (2001:139) stress the importance of a joint effort for good translation quality; a quality check by a second person, for example, is nevertheless optional. In dubbing, by contrast, many more persons are directly involved, including all the actors and the technicians, and the required technical equipment is also more advanced. This makes subtitling considerably faster and cheaper. On the other hand, the comparatively complicated dubbing process however, that the average viewer weighing the pros and cons of different forms of screen translation against each other will generally not take costs and jobs into consideration.

The number of viewers, and thus turnover, is higher in dubbing countries, and it is therefore easier to turn the considerable financial investment that dubbing entails into a profit. However, it has been claimed that dubbing became dominant in some countries for reasons of protectionism, nationalism, and censorship.

Germany, Italy, and Spain were fascist dictatorships. Those in power wanted to promote the domestic language, protect the national film industry, and especially have full control over what was being said on the screens (cf. Danan 1991 for a general overview, and e.g. del Camino Gutiérrez Lanza 1997 for the influence that the Spanish state exerted on film translation under Franco). While France was more democratic at the time, it too became a dubbing country for partly the same reasons, namely what could be called cultural and linguistic chauvinism [2].

It is certainly true that the replacement of the original dialogues by new ones, as is the case in dubbing, makes it possible to hide anything that is not deemed appropriate for the target audience. This is not the case in subtitling, at least if the SL is understood to some extent.

If one is in favor of the freedom of speech and has reason to suspect that the powers that be may wish to suppress comments made on the screen that they deem unfavorable to themselves, then subtitling will stand out as better. The same applies, of course, if one wants to have access to all the verbal brutality and sexual references expressed in the original versions, because these, too, have historically been neutralized in dubbing [11]. Finally, it has been common practice in post-war German dubbing to tone down references to Nazism and suggestions that Germans have been or are bad people. 47 Presumably, the main concern was to ensure a pleasant experience for the target audience and to boost the popularity of the product. Large parts of the audience might even have approved if they had known what was going on, but modifications of this kind have nevertheless become rarer in Germany. Be that as it may, to the extent that dubbing countries are functioning democracies, and political, sexual and other kinds of messages not systematically weakened, the advantage that subtitling enjoys in this respect is limited. Actually, the complete absence of a conflict between SL and TL dialogues in dubbed material may contribute to what friends of dubbing prefer about 'their' system.

It should also be remembered that there are considerable numbers of people, especially those with poor eyesight and other problems affecting their ability to read, but without sufficient knowledge of foreign languages, who can enjoy a dubbed film, but not a subtitled one. Even if reading is no problem under normal circumstances, secondary activities such as household work may keep one from always having one's eyes fixed on the screen at all times. This is said to be the reason why dubbing has become popular among housewives in the traditional subtitling country Greece [5].

Censorship:

In sociological term, "censorship is rooted either in the fear that a message will do harm to an individual or to society as a whole through the corruption of personal morality" or, based on the Freudian belief, "that useless fear is instilled in society's members primal drives leading to the unraveling of social cohesion will be unleashed" [14]. Freud links censorship to "latent and universal feelings of guilt" (ibid.). The main cause for applying censorship has been fear; fear of rebellion, expansion of immoral behaviors or blasphemy, sedition and obscenity.

Butler summarizes her views as follows:

Censorship is a productive form of power: it is not merely privative, but formative as well. I want to distinguish this position from the one that would claim that speech is incidental to the aims of censorship. Censorship seeks to produce subjects according to explicit and implicit norms, and this production of the subject has everything to do with the regulation of speech. By the latter, I do not mean to imply that the subject's production is narrowly linked to the regulation of that subject's speech, but rather to the regulation of the social domain of speakable discourse.

censorship is regarded not only as a repressive force to prevent communication but also as an integral element of communication. Because each society has its own discourse and each discourse has its own principles and norms which are considered as censorial nature. It is important to say that the degree of censorship differs from time to time and place to place. Imagine Iran before and after revolution, or Iran during the wartime. After revolution and during the wartime censorship is increased especially where the information and products are incompatible with the dominant ideologies and norms of communication. As a matter of fact, when the norm of one society is changed followed that the censorship is modified too.

When we study the history of censorship, we can easily perceive that even the freest countries censor or manipulate the texts, films and even the spoken form of speech which import their countries. For example, when in religious schools, the authorities want to persuade people towards what they wish, they try to censor or manipulate some parts according to their interests.

According to Andre Lefevere (1983, p. 25): "Nobody ever speaks or writes in complete freedom, at least if they want to be listened to, read and understood".

Hence, due to the fact that members of no society can be absolutely free and have to limit themselves in some ways in order to respect the freedom of others, there is no country, even the most democratic ones, where censorship is not practiced.

Film and censorship:

Some countries which are fascism and dictatorship try to protect their mother tongue language and film industry, and because of this they have absolute control over what is being said on the screens. This can be happened even the democratic countries. Seemingly, the manipulation and censorship happen in all countries on the basis of their bias and norms (Thorsten Schröter, p.50). It means that, whenever the sentence has been problematic, the sentence has usually been manipulated to change the meaning and the lost effect of such a manipulation is not compensated. Surely, censorship and manipulation happen in both dubbing and subtitling.

In dubbing, some items which are not appropriate for audiences are censored or hidden. In subtitling, by contrast, this is not true and the subtitler is freer to translate and is more faithful to the source film.

Now, the names of six Korean movies which were analyzed and studied are mentioned. It is worth to mention that these films were shown on Iran television and the Persian translation of these films in the form of subtitling and dubbing were studied.

These translated films in both forms are mentioned bellow:

1. legend Jumong
2. Jewel in the Palace
3. Emperor of the Sea
4. Emperor winds
5. ISAN

sets thanks The bellow figures display the analysis:

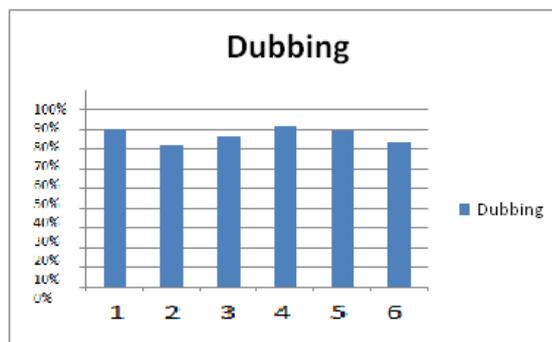


Fig. 1: Showing Censorship & Manipulation in Dubbing

Figure 1. shows that in dubbing process, the scale of censorship and manipulation of each film is different from the others. Because the literature of these films are not the same. Also, it shows that almost high percent of censorship and manipulation occurs in dubbing.

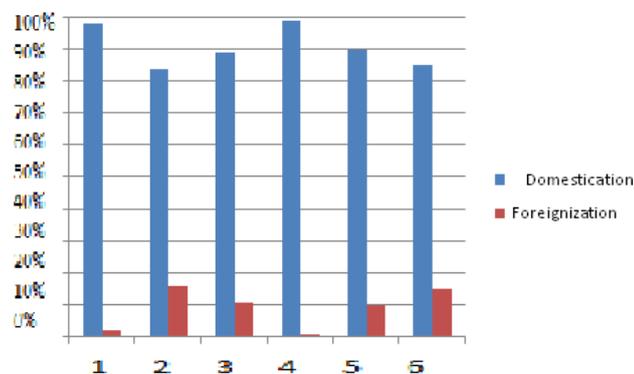


Fig. 2: Domestication & Foreignization in Dubbing

As figure2. shows domestication is done more than foreignization in dubbing. This difference is considerable.

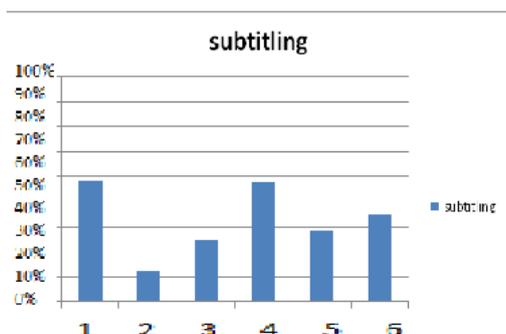


Fig. 3: Showing Censorship & Manipulation in Subtitling

Censorship and manipulation also occurs in subtitling as shown in figure 3.

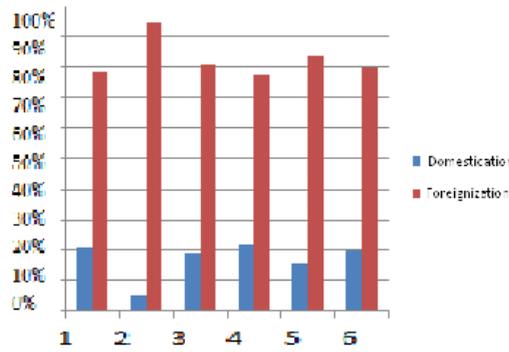


Fig. 4: Domestication & Foreignization in Subtitling

Figure 4. displays the significant difference between domestication and foreignization in subtitling.

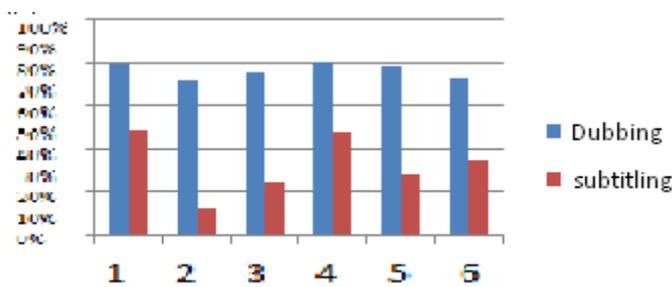


Fig. 5 Comparison of the Censorship & Manipulation in Both Dubbing & Subtitling

By comparison of the censorship and manipulation in both, dubbing and subtitling, the considerable difference clearly shows that the censorship and manipulation is done in translation of dubbing rather than subtitling.

The below two figures show the total results and accentuate the above findings. These figures present the comparison of domestication and foreignization in AVT, dubbing and subtitling.

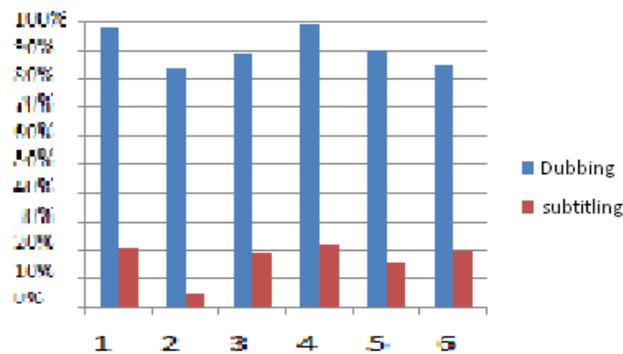


Fig. 6: Comparison of the Domestication in Dubbing & Subtitling

Dubbing inclines to be domestication. Many films are dubbed into Persian through this rule.

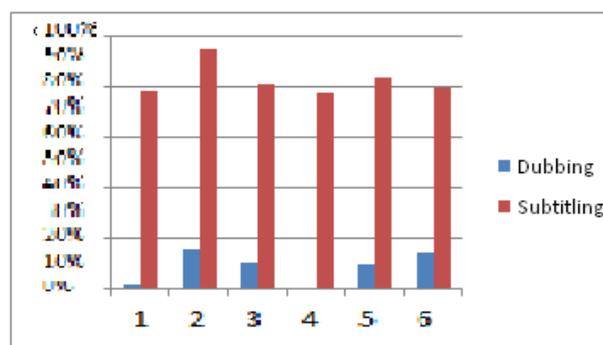


Fig. 7: Comparison of the Foreignization in Dubbing & Subtitling

Subtitling is translated as foreignization. Many films which are subtitled in Iran follow this way.

Conclusions:

The present paper provides some information about subtitling and dubbing in Iran. By comparison of the translation of subtitled and dubbed films into Persian, it is found that dubbing and subtitling occupy two opposite ends of the domestication and foreignization continuum. Dubbing because of the dominant norm of society and government control is domesticated. Hence it is more understandable for ordinary and educated people. Contrary, the translation of films which are subtitled is more foreignization because some rules are overlooked. So it has more local color and it is not understandable and easy for people. The subtitled translation is tired for viewers.

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