Techniques for Translating Abstruse Movies and Movie Titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English

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Abstract: *Movies are among the best form of entertainment. People like to enjoy their time with their close friends and watch their favorite movies in the cinema or at home. Moviemakers make movies to address the social problems of the world. But what is the use of movies if they are not translated into our native languages? Audience cannot enjoy a movie since the social message that the moviemaker wants to convey is not conveyed. To release a movie for a global audience, to increase its success and makes it much more popular then it is of a great need to be translated into multiple languages.*

Keywords: Literal Translation, Transformation, Transliteration, Subtitling, Dubbing

1. Introduction

For sure, I already promised you, my dear readers, to write a paper entitled techniques for interpreting abstruse English fixed expressions into Arabic which will be part five and the final to complete my project of writing regarding the process of interpreting which is considered the most difficult form of all types of translation. Since part one of the project was entitled Techniques for Interpreting English Proverbs into Arabic and was published in International Journal of Language and Literary Studies, IJLLS, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2019, part two of the study was entitled Techniques for Interpreting Abstruse English Idioms into Arabic and was published in this honorable peer-reviewed journal, Volume 8 Issue 12, December 2019. And part three of the study was entitled Techniques for Interpreting Abstruse English Collocations into Arabic and was published again in this honorable peer-reviewed journal, Volume 9 Issue 11, November 2020and part four which is entitled Techniques for Interpreting Abstruse English Phrasal Verbs into Arabic published in this honorable peer-reviewed journal, Volume 10 Issue 3, March 2021. But through careful readings of many papers regarding fixed expressions, I changed my mind and decided to change the topic and write about techniques in translating movies and movie titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English for two basic reasons: the first basic reason when I found out that fixed expressions are merely idioms, proverbs and collocations and all these terms I previously wrote about in my project. The second basic reason when- and this happened to me for many times-I see popular American and Egyptian movies and movie titles that contain best themes but of bad and weak translation and even in case the translation is good it does not necessarily convey the complete message the filmmaker wants to convey. I remember when I was watching the most widely spread and famous work entitled **Vikings** with its seven seasons, this great work of enormous production that has been translated into many languages worldwide unfortunately has a weak equivalence regarding at least the Arabic version, since I found no harmony in the translation between part one and the other parts of the

work. Moreover, the names of the heroes and heroines are not the same, this happened because the translator of season one is not the translator of season two, and the translator of season three is another one, and this is not bad especially the work is enormous and great and needs many translators not only one, but the problem I found that there was no harmony between the works of translators and this problem was clearly reflected in their translation. It is unacceptable to find the name of the hero of **Vikings** as Beon, son of Ragnar Lothbrok in season one, and then his name changed into Beorn in season two since the audience with another name will think him another character. Furthermore, the hero's title is Iron side once translated into Arabic literally الجانب الحديدي Aljaneb Alhadidi, and another time was translated into الرجل الحديدي Alrajool Alhadidi, the Iron Man, and another time the same title for the same person is transliterated.

It is well-known that in case there is teamwork in translation, there must be a boss or what we call a team leader that organizes the work and gives instructions to be followed by the other translators, one of these instructions which must be followed is to unify the names and terms of the whole work. For these two basic reasons I decided to write this paper on hand.

According this paper, there are five basic techniques to translate abstruse movies and movie titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English. These techniques are as follows: literal translation, transformation, transliteration, subtitling and dubbing. According this paper, the first three techniques, i.e. literal translation, transformation and transliteration deal with the problem of translating movie titles, but the other two techniques, i.e. subtitling and dubbing deal with the problem of translating movies.

I mean by the technique of literal translation of a movie is the formal conversion of its SL title into TL title. This technique is used with those movie titles of proper nouns and those movie titles which have their ready-made equivalence in TL. (Tawfiq, 2020). The second technique, i.e. transformation needs some or many modifications

while translating the movie title from English into Arabic and vice versa. Sometimes, it needs to completely change the SL movie title into another TL movie title. Moreover, the technique of transliteration means to keep the form of a movie title in SL while transferring it into TL.

Furthermore the technique of subtitling a movie means the process of translating and converting the spoken dialogue into a written text on the screen.

In the technique of dubbing the source audio track is removed and a new recorded language is added.

Source: Netflix

2. Problem Statement

This paper seeks to answer the following raised question:

What are the suggested techniques used in translating abstruse movies and movie titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English?

According this paper, the applicable proposed techniques used in translating movies and movie titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English are as follows:

1) The technique of literal translation.
2) The technique of transformation.
3) The technique of transliteration.
4) The technique of subtitling.
5) The technique of dubbing.

Whereas, the techniques of literal translation, transformation and transliteration deal with translating abstruse movie titles, the techniques of subtitling and dubbing deal with translating abstruse movies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

This paper adopts the qualitative approach for collecting and analyzing data. It investigates the techniques that are applied in translating abstruse movies and movie titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English. Most of the data collected in this study are quoted from a number of books and a number of articles such as: *Issues in Translation, How to Translate a Literary Work, Funny Issues with Translation and Translators*, *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Moreover, the paper consulted a number of mono-lingual and bi-lingual dictionaries such as Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Longman Dictionary of English language and Culture, Longman Advanced American Dictionary, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and A Dictionary of English idioms: English-Arabic.

3.2. Data Analysis

The first technique in this study to deal with a movie title I call the technique of literal translation. That means to transfer the message of the movie title as it is in SL i.e. source language, since it holds the same meaning in TL i.e. target language. This technique has no serious difficulty to translators.

Tawfiq (2020) in his book entitled وقفات مع الترجمة *Issues in Translation* refers to the action famous American movie entitled **Taken** and suggested to be translated literally into Arabic as **المخطوفة** AL-Makhtoofa, i.e. kidnapped. Below is a list of famous Egyptian Arabic movie titles translated into English following the first technique of literal translation:

The Egyptian Movie Title	It's Literal Translation
همام في أمستردام	Hammam in Amsterdam
الفيل الأزرق	The Blue Elephant
شاهد ماشفش حاجة	A Witness Who Did Not See Anything (a play acted on a stage)
العيال كبرت	The Children Have Grown Up (a play acted on a stage)
سكة السلامة	The Road to Safety.

Tawfiq (2020)

The second technique in this study for translating Movie titles is called the technique of Transformation. Unlike the first technique of literal translation, the technique of transformation needs some or many modifications either by deletion or by addition to the title of the movie.

Sometimes, according this technique, as we shall see later on, we need to change not only part of the SL title but also the whole SL title into another completely different TL title since meaning and attraction are the main goal for the TL audience as well as the SL audience. This technique is

more difficult to translators compared with the previous technique.

I remember the well-known American movie entitled **Deep Blue Sea**, with its three parts which is really interesting with its great theme and also its subtitling into Arabic version is also good but the real problem lies in translating its title literally. In other words the Arabic equivalence of the SL title of the movie does not reflect the real message the filmmaker wants to convey. The theme in brief of this movie, namely part three is: Professor Emma Collins and her team are spending their third summer on the island of Little Happy studying the effect of climate change on the great bull sharks which come to the nearby nursery every year to give birth. Along with the last two inhabitants of this former fishing village, their peaceful life is disrupted when a "scientific" team led by her ex-boyfriend and marine biologist Richard show up looking for three bull sharks who we soon learn aren't just any bull sharks. (Wikipedia, Deep Blue Sea3).

When I saw this movie, part three, which was really amazing and its translation into Arabic is also good, but I was in deep doubt regarding the literal Arabic equivalence of the translated title البحر الازرق العميق, when I read about bull-sharks my doubt multiplied since I found out that sharks, especially bull-sharks, never live in deep water and this was found clearly in the movie. These sharks were diving on the surface of water. That means the first technique of literal translation cannot work here. Actually, the SL title of this movie is in fact a part of an idiom that says: *between the devil and the deep blue sea.* Whereas Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) points out that this idiom means "in a difficult situation where there are two equally unpleasant or unacceptable choices", Longman Dictionary of English language and Culture (1992) indicates that this idiom is informally used and means "facing two choices, both of which are unpleasant", Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) defines the idiom as "to be in a difficult situation in which you have to choose between two unpleasant things" and A Dictionary of English idioms: English -Arabic (1985) refers that this idiom means "between two equally dangerous or unpleasant alternatives". Then all the mono-lingual and even bi-lingual dictionaries previously indicated agreed that this idiom is used when a person is put in two severe problems and he /she is forced to choose one of them.

This really indicates to the incidents of the movie since Professor Collins and her team found themselves between two severe problems: the problem of her ex-boyfriend who wants to control the bull-sharks and make them aggressive for the sake of his own criminal interests and the other problem of the bull-sharks themselves after being aggressive as a result of the dangerous experiments carried out by the biologist. Consequently, the first technique, i.e. the literal Arabic equivalence: البحر الازرق العميقis of no use or at least not in harmony with the incidents of the American movie. In my point of view, practicing the second technique, i.e. the technique of transformation can offer great help, that is to completely change the whole SL movie title, this movie title is better

be rendered into Arabic as رعب تحت الماء *A Terror under Water.* I mean by this, since the movie is attractive and full of suspense; its TL title equivalence has to be attractive and full of suspense too for commercial objectives as well as for home entertainment objectives.

Source: IMDb

Below is a list of famous Egyptian Arabic movie titles translated into English following the second technique of transformation.

The Egyptian Movie Title	Its Transformation
الباشا تلميذ (Literally) Pacha Student	A Cop at School
كراكون في الشارع A jail in street كراكون) in Egyptian means jail.	A Mobile Jail
ايامنا الحلوة (Literally) our Sweet Days	Our Old Good Days
حمادة يلعب (Literally) Hamada plays.	Lucky Hamada
بين السماء والأرض (Literally) Between the sky and the land	A Stuck Elevator

Tawfiq (2020)

The third technique in this study is called Transliteration. Campbell et al. (2000) defines the word transliterate as "to write a word, a sentence etc. in the alphabet of a different language or writing system". In other words to copy out the phonemic transcription of the SL movie title into TL equivalence following TL alphabet. This technique is best be practiced with those movie titles of proper noun and those movie titles which have their formal ready-made equivalence in TL.

Below is a list of famous Egyptian Arabic movie titles translated into English following the technique of transliteration.

The Egyptian Movie Title	Its Transliteration
عمارة يعقوبيان	Yacqubian Building
الكيت كات	Ket Kat
مرجان أحمد مرجان	Morjan Ahmad Morjan
دهب	Dahab
أبو ربيع	Abu Rabee

Tawfiq (2020)

The fourth technique in this study I call the technique of subtitling. It is used with movies. This technique is used when the spoken dialogue of a movie is translated and converted into a written text on the screen. Cintas & Remael (2007) define subtitle 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). They also refer that in some languages, like Japanese, cinema subtitles are presented vertically and tend to appear on the right-hand side of the screen. This technique has been used by smaller regions in the translation of the movies. These smaller regions are the countries with a population of around 10 million people or less than it. It is cheap and good for movie makers that have a low budget. Portugal and Spain are a few of these countries that apply subtitles to foreign television shows. At present many countries have two official languages and this is another reason that subtitling is getting very popular.

Cintas & Remael (2007) point out that all subtitled programs consist of three basic parts. These parts are: the spoken word, the image and the subtitles. They assure that the interaction of these three components, along with the viewer's ability to read both the images and the written text at a particular speed, and the actual size of the screen, determine the basic characteristics of the audiovisual medium. They also indicate that subtitles must appear in synchrony with the image and dialogue, provide a semantically adequate account of the SL dialogue, and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them.

Adams (2020) states the benefits of subtitling. These benefits are as follows:

1. It is almost 15 times cheaper than the dubbing option.
2. The main message to the recipient remains the same because it is not important to integrate the dialogues and actors' lips.
3. You can hear the original message and can learn a new language.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages in using subtitles that can restrict filmmakers from employing it. These disadvantages are as follows:

1. This option slows the watching speed as the watcher needs to read the comments and it will distract their attention from the exact message.
2. Limited space is required because many languages expand after translation.
3. The production time gets longer.
4. The imbrication of colors also becomes a problem. Adams (2020).

The final technique of this study that deals with translating movies is the technique of dubbing. This technique is carried out when the source audio track of a movie is removed and a new recorded language is added.

Many countries of central Europe are using this technique in the translation of movies and TV shows. The countries that have only one official language considered it the best option. In this process the critical thing to obey is censorship.

The art of dubbing started to develop around 1930, when the first sound movies appeared. When the first American sound movie was projected in a French cinema in Paris, the audience wanted the characters to speak French because they could not understand them. The first solution was to re-film the movies keeping the same actors but making them speak different languages. This idea turned out to be inefficient because of its high costs and because bad accents and bad pronunciation made it almost impossible for the audience to understand the dialogue. Moreover, in some European countries such as Spain and Italy dubbing is the most spread mode of translating movies. This is due to the fact that it was the preferred mode of translating movies during periods of dictatorship in the past of these countries. Benito Mussolini in Italy and Frances Franco in Spain prohibited all original versions with subtitles and used dubbing because it allowed them to change the dialogue and promote, as they claim, "higher moral values". (Parini, 2009).

Adams (2020) indicates to some advantages of the technique of dubbing in translating movies. These advantages are as follows:

1. It provides a sense of identity and comfort to movie watchers.
2. When the movie is dubbed in the native language, it imparts the intended message clearly to the audience.
3. You can understand the idioms and humor well and it is dubbed in a way that the native population can understand it easily.
4. Dubbing makes the localization process easy and people think that movies are specially made for them.

But since there are advantages to the technique of dubbing, there are also disadvantages to it. These disadvantages are as follows:

1. The voices are not synchronized by the lip-synchronized of the actors.
2. People get bored with similar voices.
3. The selection of voice is not appropriate and does not resonate with the region. Adams (2020).

4. Conclusion

This paper might be concluded by referring that there are five basic techniques used in translating abstruse movies and movie titles from English into Arabic and from Arabic into English. These techniques are as follows:

1. The technique of literal translation.
2. The technique of transformation.
3. The technique of transliteration.
4. The technique of subtitling.
5. The technique of dubbing.

Whereas the first three techniques deal with translating movie titles, the final two techniques deal with translating movies.

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