



Translating Interjections and Suprasegmental Features of English Movies to Persian Subtitles

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Abstract. Translating orality aspects from one language into another is a notoriously challenging task which occupies the first place along the cline of translation complexities. This is one of the reasons why rendering interjections and suprasegmental features as orality aspects have rarely been studied from English into Persian, particularly in the area of subtitled movies. This study, hence, was performed to be one step towards more analyses and researches in this domain. In the present study, the researcher attempted to investigate how interjections and suprasegmental features are dealt with by Persian translators i.e. whether they omit them or insert them in the target text and finally to identify the best way to render them in Persian subtitles. Three translation theories were adopted to analyze the data of the study: looping model (Nord, 1991), hermeneutic motion (Steiner, 1975) and Ullmann's (1926) transparency. The data were gathered from a popular movie, *Harry Potter*. After a thorough analysis, it was concluded that the gear shaped model as a combination of the above-mentioned theories is if not the best but at least the most applicable way for translating interjections and suprasegmental features. The model provides a substitution in the target language which approximates the source language concept as close and contingent as possible.

Keywords: Movie Subtitles, Orality, Interjections, Suprasegmental Features, Looping Model

1. INTRODUCTION

Without doubt mankind is capable of speaking some types of languages to express their feelings, represent their thoughts, enunciate and obviate their needs, to put it succinctly to communicate as a member in their own community and to utilize the facilities. By the arrival of varied languages the need of translation among various nations has arisen. Besides it's a common fallacy to imagine that translation from one language into another is a simple task to be carried out. That is, despite the superficial view of translation captured in the contemporary framework; the issue of translation is an intricate phenomenon. Specifically nowadays in global village with regard to miscellaneous mediums to be translated, it becomes more complicated. The fact is that all translators have always had a difficult time tackling with various kinds of translation problems although they are conscious about some of these problems but unaware of other ones. However from this researcher's standpoint translation of what are innately considered as spoken language features are seriously ignored in written context of Persian. In this century with the ascendancy of the internet, television and cell phones and their utilization among present generations; there is no surprise to trace spoken features in these mediums. By the emergence of social media, among all, as Facebook, websites, SMS and Viber, we have to notice; although conversations in these spaces are written but are more conversational, as a kind of storytelling. Therefore orality aspects have entered into these recent written genres.

According to Dombek (2013), there is a growing interest in orality as a concept underpinning research in many disciplines, including translation studies. She claimed orality has featured in many ideologies such as postmodernist expressions of artistry seemingly in audiovisual media. She continued, among various disciplines or approaches, translation and interpretation are

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indispensable as the conduit for representing orality. In her opinion one of the increasing presences of research on orality in translation studies seems to follow treatment of orality in interlingual translation practices such as in audiovisual translation.

The researcher's interest was not far from the interest in Dombek's (2013) words so the focus of this study is on the rendering of two orality aspects, interjections and suprasegmental features (SFs), from English dialogues of films into Persian subtitles. It is believed this rendering will result in the better understanding of the films. Audiences of movies in Iran are showing interest for films on DVDs which are downloaded from internet and are available at video clubs. It is important for them to watch topical and up to date films as soon as their screening in other countries therefore the immediate requirement, lack of time and financial aspects results in subtitling over dubbing. Then why not to include orality aspects in subtitles as they are manifestation of spoken dialogues just in written format? Subtitling as a kind of written genre should retain the oral nature of dialogues in the case of unfamiliarity of the audiences with the spoken language of dialogues thus the mode of "written to be read as if heard" (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p.49) should be applied to subtitles. This mode clarifies the accentuation of orality aspects' application in subtitling.

Purposefully the researcher wants to make subtitlers conscious about the importance of paying attention to the oral aspects such as interjections and SFs in subtitles as these are not elements to be neglected but are meaningful. Application of them, increases the quality of subtitles by bridging the gap between dialogues and written texts and homogenises them. As well, this research wants to bring it out that subtitling as a kind of translation, needs a professional scrutiny. It is not a job prospect for amateur, unprofessional translators and businessmen but is a territory for educated translators. It is desired the present study be a kind of trigger for other improvements in the field of subtitling.

The following questions were considered to accomplish the goals of this study: 1) What is the necessity of rendering interjections and SFs in subtitling? 2) What are the obstacles alongside their translation? Therefore the present research had been established on these hypothetical bases: 1) Applying SFs fortifies understanding of the expected meaning and interjections can be considered as the language of feelings. Therefore their applications in subtitles facilitate comprehension. 2) Cultural differences, divergent norms in social and personal interactions in separate languages and structural gaps between these two languages may augment hindrances to find the equivalent structure.

2. METHODS

All the following aspects were considered in the selection of the corpus of the study: It should be a kind of film spoken in English which is available with Persian subtitles, be famous among present generations and include enough SFs and interjections. Consequently *Harry Potter Series* has been chosen as the corpus of this study. *Harry Potter Series* is a British-American feature film series based on the Harry Potter novels by Joanne Rowling. Four directors worked on the series: Chris Columbus, Alfonso Cuarón, Mike Newell, and David Yates. Subtitled versions of these films are downloadable from www.dementor.ir.

Nord (1991) has argued that SFs are all those features of text organization which overlap the boundaries of any lexical or syntactical segments; framing the phonological gestalt and tone of the text, like pause, pitch, intonation and stress. Interjections are expressions of current emotions and can be single segments like oh, or more than one segment like good lord. This writer's preconception is that Persian language is capable of making good equivalents even in the case of interjections and SFs. With respect to Hesabi (1374) Persian language is fecund and

productive. According to him when Arabic is capable of making new words in 1750000 numbers, Persian is capable of 226275000 ones. Then with this rate of productivity how can we neglect translation of interjections and SFs? For determining this preconception, the translatability of these elements has been viewed by Torop's (2000) opinion. According to him there can't be a single and solitary approach toward translatability so it should be resolved into three approaches. First, the text itself should be considered, here no consideration of reader-text relation is observed then translatability is separated from personal and subjective deductions. Second, the selection of a unit of meaning not a total consideration of the whole text is important. Alongside the second stage the writer focuses just on SFs and interjections in regard to chosen units. Third, the possibility of receiving the source text in the target language and culture are considered, then the potential relations between the source text and the target language are investigated. With these three preliminaries what is the applicable model for translation of SFs and interjections?

Among all models of translation process, the writer found Nord's (1991) looping model applicable for translating SFs as it considers them in analyzing intratextual factors. Nord (1991) asserted the interpretation of translation as a circular process can therefore be regarded as an analogy to Hermeneutics. Here has been presented a figurative explanation of Nord's (1991) model.

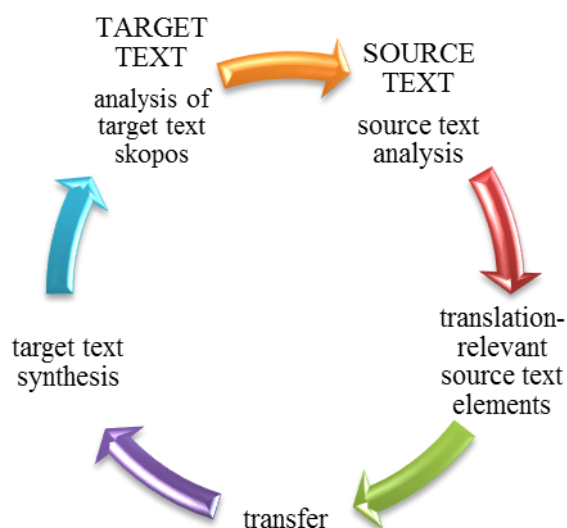


Figure 1: Nord's Translation Process

Afterwards the interrelatedness of looping model to Hermeneutics led in the selection of a kind of gear shaped model illustrated below and this helps to handle translation of interjections via four stages of Steiner's (1975) hermeneutic motions. A brief explanation of these four stages is presented in the following lines from Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies. 1) Trust: the translator first succumbs to the source text; the translator who stops at this stage produces literal renditions. 2) Aggression: here the movement of the translator is aggressive and extractive as an attack. The translator goes abroad with a kind of plunder in mind, enters the source text, he has the active goal of taking something away, of grabbing the meaning. 3) Incorporation: in the third stage the translator returns with plunder in hand not just in mind. The translator who ceases at this stage produces assimilative translation which is conformed to target language and has no evidence of originality of the source language and culture. 4) Restitution: the translator goes to deep layers of meaning; restitutes and restores the meaning in the target language and culture.

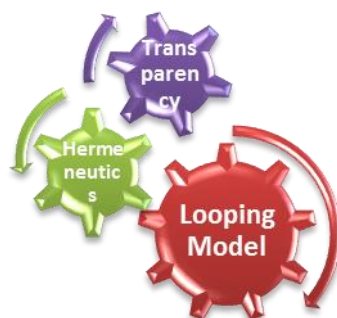


Figure 2: Gear Shaped Model

As the last step and the last gear in the gear shaped model which is observable in figure2, transparency of interjections in the target language and the source language has been compared, to assure whether it is the best equivalent and to be certain not being trapped in personal prejudiced opinion via Hermeneutics. It should be clarified here source language is English and the target language is Persian and Ullmann's (1926) aspects of transparency have been chosen. Ullmann's (1926) transparency has three motivations. 1) Phonetic motivation: there is a sounding resemblance between signified and signifier. 2) Morphological motivation: we can conclude the meaning of combinations from adding up morpheme's individual meaning as in the case of *wind*, *screen* and *windscreen*. 3) Semantic motivation: because of semantic resemblance we can conclude the meaning of illusion as in the case of *break*, *fast* and *breakfast*.

3. RESULTS

At this point, all instances of interjections and SFs extracted randomly from the film were thoroughly discussed through this eclectic model. Herein first SFs have been discussed. It should be mentioned in Nord's (1991) looping model intratextual elements are related to extratextual ones then it is why extratextual factors have been considered and analyzed in all the examples below but for the sake of conciseness just one table is illustrated. As it is tried to find the nearest correspondence to the source text and spoken dialogues, no table analysis has been presented for the target text. Throughout the detections these four SFs have been found as the most problematic, frequent ones: pitch on a word or tone-unit stress, stress on a word or sentence stress, pause and intonation. According to Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003) pitch is "the fundamental frequency of the sounds and is perceived by the hearer as pitch." It can also be described as "magnitude or intensity of the variations which determines the loudness of the sound" (p.400). As analogy it is near to stress on a special letter of a word but the second differentiates the meaning as in "present" which is a verb and "present" which is a noun. After SFs interjections have been discussed finally.

1) Vernon was at the door, it was raining outside. He ringed and called Harry: Harry... Harry... Harry! Open the door.

Table1: Analysis of Intratextual and Extratextual Factors.

Intratextual Factors	Extratextual Factors
Subject matter: asking the door to be opened	Sender: Vernon
Content: a comment for the door being opened	Intention: initiating the need for the door being opened
Presupposition: the door will be opened as soon as possible	Recipient: Harry
Composition: imperative word order with repetition	Medium: spoken language
Nonverbal elements: ...	Place: behind the door
Lexic: simple imperative words as well as repetition of the word "Harry"	Time: evening
Sentence structure: simple, ordinary form of imperative sentence	Motive: needing the door to be opened
Suprasegmental features: after the two Harries exists a pause which shows something else will follow in the continue and represents calling	Text Function: obviating the need and going inside

Subtitled as: "هری. هری. هری. در رو باز کن". According to the source text analysis, it is clear; there exist a lack of suprasegmental element which is a kind of pause which can be manifested by three repeated dots (...) between the two *Harries*. So for the sake of correspondence between the source text and the target text the subtitle should be changed to "هری... هری... هری در رو باز کن"

هری. هری. هری. در رو باز کن ← هری... هری... هری در رو باز کن .

2) While Vernon was putting off his clothes Harry asked him: Uncle Vernon... I need you to sign this form. Subtitled as: "عمو ورنون همیشه این فرم رو برام امضا کنین" this subtitle is very direct that it seems it is not a polite, ambivalent request. Just by adding a pause after uncle Vernon it will become gentler as the pause shows hesitation of the speaker and his hope.

عمو ورنون همیشه این فرم رو برام امضا کنین ← عمو ورنون... می خواستم این فرم رو برام امضا کنین

3) Harry was angry. First he shouted *SHUT UP*=/*shatap*/ fast, without any pause between shut and up. The second time he shouted *SHUT... UP*= /*shat ap*/ Subtitled as: "ساکت شو! ساکت شو!" Here a kind of pause exists between shut and up which changes the words into staccato, sharp separated words. But in Persian we cannot express this tone by separating "خفه" from "شو" in fact staccato "خفه...شو" is not used in Persian. That's why for pinpointing the tone and pause, the writer find it better to change the expression to "خفه خون بگیر" for the second representation of *shut...up*. Actually the pause has been compensated by the use of another expression which is more emphatic.

ساکت شو! ساکت شو!! ← خفه شو! خفه خون بگیر!

4) Harry was getting in a bus. The chauffer said: Come on, move on, move on, move **On**. The last *move on* has a strong rising pitch on the *On* for emphasis, but in other *move on* parts the chauffer pronounced the phrasal verb as a single word *movan* which is normal in producing phrasal verbs in ordinary speaking. Subtitled as: "زود باش، برو، برو، برو" in this combination no one can feel the rising pitch on the last *On* and therefore the emphasis has vanished. For the sake of saving this pitch and emphasis the following translation has been presented: "زود باش، برو، برو، برو جلو"

زود باش، برو، برو، برو، برو، برو ← زود باش، برو، برو، برو، برو، برو

5) These following two examples are the cases for stress on a word or sentence stress. 5) Harry was reading a spell and saying a magic formula: Lumos maxima, lumos maxima, LUMOS MAXIMA! The spell did not work therefore Harry shouted the last *lumos maxima* as the result of his anger. Subtitled as: "لوموس ماکسیما، لوموس ماکسیما، لوموس ماکسیما!", Without pinpointing the last part as it was shouted in dialogue itself and therefore no perception of the anger is concluded. It is better to render it in bold as follow.

لوموس ماکسیما، لوموس ماکسیما، لوموس ماکسیما! ← لوموس ماکسیما، لوموس ماکسیما، لوموس ماکسیما!

6) Harry's aunt is speaking with him: Don't say **yes** in that ungrateful way. In this dialogue you can hear a kind of emphasis on the word *yes*. Subtitled as: "چرا اینجوری میگی بله؟ اینقدر نمک" To near the intratextual and extratextual factors of the target text to that of source text especially the mentioned suprasegmental feature here, it is better to translate the sentence as:

"بله" in Persian has more emphatic tone than "بله". The use of "بله" به این حالت قدر نشناسانه نگو بله

چرا اینجوری میگی بله؟ اینقدر نمک نشناس نباش ← به این حالت قدر نشناسانه نگو "بله"

7) Hagrid was introducing an anonymous creature. He said: Isn't he beautiful? With a more prominent stress on the first **U** in beautiful. It can transfer more assertiveness and it is stressed or better to say: it is pitched. Subtitled as: "خوشکل نیست؟" Here there is no problem with this translation except the ignorance in rendering a suprasegmental feature which is a prominent pitch on the *u*. So we can say: "خوشکل نیست؟". To highlight the pitch on the letter, long-bold letter has been used.

خوشکل نیست؟ ← خوشکل نیست؟

8) Harry was speaking with Stan in a bus. Harry asked him about a photo in the newspaper: Who's that? Stan replied: who is that! ... who! Stan's replies contain a degree of surprise that how Harry does not know that famous man. This punctuation mark "!" is better to be used, as in spoken dialogues of the film the intonation of question format is not heard. The answers of Stan have been subtitled as: "اون کیه؟" ... "کیه؟". While question mark, rises the intonation; it should not be used here. Instead a kind of surprise should be added to the sentences with the use of exclamation marks.

اون کیه؟... کیه؟ ← اون کیه!... کیه!

9) Hermione said: It isn't going to w**OoO**ork, with a high pitch on the word *work* and by singing the word rhythmically. Subtitled as: "این کار نمی کنه", without applying the aforementioned playful singing rhythm on the word. What matters is how to apply this spoken feature in writing. What is clear is that the sentence has a kind of emphasis on failing of the intended stuff, hence it can be subtitled in the form of written features with the same effect as this: "این عمراً جواب بده". This length of — shows emphasis in pronunciation of it for preserving the high pitch and rhythm.

این کار نمی کنه ← این عمراً جواب بده.

10) Cho said: I've said, I'll go ... with him. The part "...” represents a pause in the string of spoken words. Pause is considered in SFs so it should be presented in subtitles. Subtitled as: "من بهش گفتم باهانش میرم", this sentence excluded the pause which is used to avoid outspoken words. Then to tone it down and represent mildness of the speaker, the pause and hesitation should be preserved.

من بهش گفتم باهانش میرم ← من بهش گفتم که... که باهانش میرم

11) Said Hagrid: **Do not** touch that. With an obvious emphasis on *Do not* because if it was not emphasized we could use the abbreviated or contracted form *don't*. But in this dialogue the emphasis is more than the normal, ordinary emphasis of *do not*. The current sentence has been produced as *Do not touch that* with a more emphatic tone. Therefore we have to consider it as high pitch. Subtitled as: "بهبش دست نزن" but it could be better subtitled by accounting the pitch emphasis on *Do not* by adding extra words. As in "اصلاً بهبش دست نزن".

بهبش دست نزن ← اصلاً بهبش دست نزن

In following, about fourteen problematic interjections have been surveyed. First of all *Oh* will be discussed. According to hermeneutic motion "اوه، وای، آه" seemed to be good equivalents but on the basis of semantic motivation of transparency "وای" has been concluded as the best one because in Persian a lengthy "وای" with a rhythmic length on "الف" has been used to show surprise, pleasure and agreement. 1) Ronald: Oh, well done! Subtitled as: "عالی بود" without inserting *oh*. The opinion of this translator came after the arrow:

عالی بود ← وای، دست مریزاد

Then some examples were found for the *oh* which were featured pain, moan, disappointment, complain and annoyance. Steps of gear shaped model have been passed and by the usage of phonetic motivation that causes a sounding resemblance between signified and signifier and semantic motivation "اوف" has been concluded as the best equivalent for pinpointing the concepts of pain, moan, disappointment, complain and annoyance in Persian. 2) Hermione: oh, no! Okay, relax. It was a case of annoyance. Subtitled as: "نه! طوری نیست، آرام باش." But the better one without the omission of interjection is:

نه! طوری نیست، آرام باش ← اوف، نه! طوری نیست، آرام باش

Oh as pity and disagreement can be translated as "وای" with a falling intonation, the "واو" has been typed in bold to highlight falling intonation. 3) Madam Hooch: oh, dear! It's a broken wrist.

عزیزم! مچ دستت شکسته ← وای عزیزم! مچ دستت شکسته

For inciting and calling someone to do something *oh* can be used either and this case has been observed in some subtitles. Following the present eclectic model and on the basis of gear shaped model "وای" has been deduced as the best rendering of this kind of *oh* in subtitles. 4) Hermione: oh, move over.

برو کنار ← وای، برو کنار

There are other forms of *oh* as *ah*, *uh*. In *uh great* according to hermeneutic motion it can be concluded that *uh* has an emphatic role then here it is preferred to translate it as "واقعاً محشره"

instead of "محشره". Although the interjection does not exist in the translation but its role has been inserted by morphological motivation and with the word "واقعا". *Ah, excellent* is exactly the same case.

(5) محشره ← واقعا محشره

(6) عاليه ← واقعا عاليه

In all the above examples the omission of interjection was preferred by subtitlers. But it is not a hard task to translate them furthermore the gear shaped model is really efficient in their rendering. 7) In the case of *oops* which is used to indicate there has been a slight accident or mistake, or to apologies to someone for something; can be simply substitute by "آ كه هي". 8) For *ouch* why not to use "آخ"? Unfortunately it was omitted in the screened subtitle. 9) According to gear shaped model for the word *brilliant* as an interjection "بي نظيره" was preferred, 10) for *bravo*: "آفرين", 11) for *excellent*: "عاليه", 12) for *splendid* just because its use is after an activity which has been done well; is better to use "عالي بود" with a past verb in Persian as "بود", but not a present word like the mentioned ones as "بي نظيره", "عاليه". 13) *Blimey* is utilized in surprising and upsetting situations, therefore the best equivalent will be "واويلا" and 14) *weird* will be deployed in situations where a strange or unusual thing makes surprise or excitement so "عجب" coincides with this concept, all on the bases of gear shaped model.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Thereupon, movie is a powerful medium that can portray even orality aspects in subtitles therefore it is worthwhile to examine how subtitles have been translated and what strategies and priorities have been chosen to arrive at a successful translation in subtitles. This is specially the case when audiences are unfamiliar with the spoken language of dialogues that a translator should play all priorities out, priorities which dominate the comprehension of the film. Of the preliminary priorities in these cases are orality aspects, among them SFs and interjections were chosen in this current study.

For representing SFs in writing and subtitles, these following applications can be applied. Suspension spaces or three dots without spaces are used to indicate hesitation and pause in middle of a sentence. Full stops should be used just after the last character of a subtitle to indicate the end of the sentence. Comma should be used to simplify comprehension of the text and flow of the sentence. Question marks and exclamations should be used according to the tone of the voice, whether the sentence is a question or a surprising emotive one. Upper case may be used to represent shouting if for all letters or emphatic tone on the part of a word. Among the mentioned applications these following were more prominent in the examples here: punctuation marks, three dots without spaces, using segmental elements instead of SFs, bold case, uppercase and creative structures like long bold letter.

It is claimed that interjections and exclamations arise from similar emotions among mankind so they can be taken into account as innate language, thus their applications in subtitles facilitate comprehension. With a glance on translatability and transparency, we can consider interjections and SFs translatable; the proposed gear shaped model is applicable therefore. Alongside their innateness; it seemed cultural differences, divergent norms in social interactions in separate languages and structural gaps between two languages and two modes (spoken versus written) result in marginalization of SFs and interjections in subtitles. Notwithstanding it does not mean they are not translatable, here in this study no instance of untranslatability were found and all the cases were translatable. The gear shaped model named by this writer which is an eclectic model; was preferred for translating interjections and SFs. Naturally eclecticism of it denotes

that this approach has not been used before but separately all the section of this model have been profitably proved. Finally it can be claimed that this model is if not the best but at least the most applicable way for translating interjections and suprasegmental features. Hence the translations presented heretofore instead of omission can be considered as sufficient evidence for this claim and contention. As the last pinpointed point it should be mentioned by rendering these two orality aspects the gap between film dialogues and subtitles has been bridged and the slogan of subtitles should be written as if heard has been achieved as a foundation. To clarify in this study none of these cases: cultural differences, divergent norms of interactions, structural gap and even the difference between two modes resulted in any kind of hindrance in the translation of SFs and interjections via gear shaped model.

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