

Domestication Techniques in Persian Translation of English Animations: Barnyard, Kung Fu Panda, and Hoodwinked

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Since the late 1990s, the world has been experiencing a gradual involvement into an emerging trend of translation-related activities; a transition from “translation” and “interpretation” towards “media translation”. This has been a period characterized by an ever-increasing momentum in dubbing, voice-over, subtitling, etc. with regard to a multitude number of movies, TV series, documentaries, multi-media factoids, and the like. These obviously require domestication/deforeignization of the materials. According to Venuti (1995, p. 20) “domestication” is defined as “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bringing the author back home”. Thus, domestication involves some sort of manipulation in a foreign text aimed at reproducing it to serve the recipient language and culture. Recent sources on the issue too appear to comply with this perspective (Ramieri, 2006; Tymoczko, 1995; Ulrych, 2000). American directors were in fact among the first to elaborate on issues related to the linguistic barriers confronting movie productions, as well as the challenges involved in dubbing animated cartoons (Chiaro, 2009), later to be followed by linguists and researchers into translation studies (Denton & Ciampi, 2012). Helgren (2007), for one, did research on allusions used in the animated cartoon *The Simpsons*. Another researcher, Gall (2012) carried out a comparative study on the original English version of *Chicken Run* versus its Romanian and Hungarian versions. Bruzdzia (2009) too highlighted the conceptual changes taken place in translating verbal expressions in *Shrek* in its Polish dubbing. A number of animated cartoons were also analyzed by Burczynska (2012). The same research line was followed by Song (2012), and Nachkebia (2012). In Iran, however, to the best knowledge of the present researcher, only a very few articles and still fewer theses have so far been devoted to such an emerging field of inquiry: the first, a study by Qumi (2009), the second, a thesis by Javadi (2010), and the third by Jamalimanesh, Fatholollahi and Rahkhoda (2010).

2. Methodology

With an eye on domestication literature in translation studies (e.g., Ramieri, 2006; Ulrych, 2000; Venuti, 1995), in this study we intend to show in what ways and to what

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extent domesticating techniques are used by Iranians involved in the dubbing industry. A classification of eight techniques is also offered. Two research questions are formulated: one, dealing with the identification of the overall domestication techniques being adopted, and the second, with the identification of the most frequent ones. To this end, three Persian dubbed animated cartoons *Barnyard*, *Panda Kung Fu*, and *Hoodwinked* were selected. Their original English version scripts were obtained from the relevant online sources. Later on, each of the English vs. Persian version pairs was independently compared and contrasted to arrive at a list of the most frequent techniques employed in Iranian animated cartoons.

3. Discussion

The data revealed that Iranian translating/dubbing agents tend to adopt a technique from among the eight ones specified below to domesticate and/or deforeignize non-Iranian animated cartoons:

1. Substituting original English foods and drinks with Iranian ones
2. Substituting original English dialects with Iranian social/geographical ones
3. Substituting original English non-idiomatic expressions with idiomatic Persian expressions
4. Substituting original English non-idiomatic expressions with Persian neologistic slang expressions
5. Substituting original English idioms with Persian slang expressions
6. Substituting original English songs/lyrics with Iranian folk songs or contemporary lyrics
7. Adding linguistic elements with no counterparts in the original English script
8. Omitting particular cultural and/or linguistic elements from the original English script

The results of the present study revealed that in Iran, by and large, translation and/or dubbing of the English animated cartoons are done in ways, giving the impression as if the original English scripts were written in Persian.

4. Conclusion

It could be claimed that Iranian translators of English animated cartoons tend to manipulate western English original scripts in ways which facilitate maximal domestication / Iranization of the materials to make the plot more believable and native-like. That is typically crystallized by making use of as many instances of Persian idioms, slang, colloquial expressions, as well as proverbs, as possible. The findings of this study are likely to comply with “skopos” as suggested by Vermeer (1984/2004). On the other hand, it might be argued that the translation and dubbing of the above movies are so carefully done that their Iranian Persian-speaking viewers could hardly sense the “presence” and/or “visibility” of the translators.

Keywords: Translation, audio-visual translation, domestication, substitution, technique, entertainment.

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