Linguistic Analysis of Audio-Visual Translation: With Reference to the Subtitles of *Belaseshe*

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**ABSTRACT**

Translation is an effective way of sharing information and expressions from a source language to a target language. By nature, Translation Studies is a heterogeneous and interdisciplinary area. As a result, it spontaneously connects other branches of social sciences like Psychology, Gender studies, Culture Studies, Film Studies, Linguistics and so on. The present paper deals with the interface between Translation Studies and Linguistics. It casts light on how the translation strategies are applied during the task of translation from the linguistic viewpoint in making subtitles of a selected Bengali film.

1. Audio-Visual Translation

Audio-Visual Translation (AVT) is a flourishing field within Translation Studies. It deals with more than one mode of reception, i.e., the visual as well as the aural media. It covers films, television, computer games, video games which have multimodality. This is why, AVT is also known as *Multimedia Translation*. It encompasses all the programmes that are distributed via a screen. So, the name *Screen Translation* comes in popularity. When the focus of translation is particularly on films, it is called *Film Translation* or *Cinema Translation*. According to Gambier (2003), the term audiovisual is used to bring to the forefront the multi-semiotic dimension of all broadcast programmes. Luyken et al. (1991) defines AVT as “the process by which a film or television programme is made comprehensible to a target audience that is unfamiliar with the original’s source language”. Ako (2013) asserts, “AVT is inter-semiotic translation which operates at either intralingual or interlingual levels. It is simply the translation of all forms – radio, television, internet – of audiovisual material”.

Now-a-days, AVT is in vogue to meet the socio-cultural need and demand of the localisation as well as the globalisation. The hearing-impaired community started to use subtitling to get access to the dialogue of audiovisual texts (Markham & Peter, 2003). In business world for corporate communications, AVT is required. For a greater promotion, entertainment industry welcomes it. Scholars like Caimi, Danan, Díaz Cintas have advocated AVT as the means of Second Language Learning in educational sphere as it is easier to cater the cultural items in real time activities to the language learners effectively. *Learning via Subtitles* is a European commission funded project used for
developing educational material for active foreign language learning. There are many countries like Spain, England where Post Graduate course in AVT are provided in universities. Currently international conferences and symposia are also organized particularly on AVT.

2. Translation Modes and Translation Processes

Translation can be performed in different modes which are post-production activities in AVT. The most popular translation modes are Dubbing, Subtitling and Voice-over. Dubbing is a recorded voice in target language over the original voice of the actors in films. Subtitling is a written form in target language which is translated from the source speech and is usually found at the bottom of the screen. It is strictly time bound as it has to be synchronized with lip-movement. Along with this, there is constraint of space so that the spectators can read it within the given time. Voice-over is the translated audio version and is broadcasted in target language by a narrator with the original soundtrack in lower volume.

However, to translate any kind of text from one language to the other, translators require certain processes. These are called Translation Procedures or Translation Processes. Sometimes they are called Translation Strategies. Krings (1986) define translation strategies as ‘potentially conscious plans for solving a translation problem’.

3. Literature Review

This section briefly mentions the theories proposed by different translation scholars found in literature. Firstly, Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) are the proponents of the famous dichotomy between direct translation (Borrowing, calque and literal translation) and oblique translation (transposition, Modulation, equivalence and adaptation). Secondly, Venuti (1995) distinguishes between domestication and foreignization. Among others Vazquez Ayora, Hurtado can also be noted. Interestingly, Díaz Cintas, Chaune and others advocate translation processes for subtitling exclusively. Tomaszkiewicz (1993) proposed eight strategies in operation in film subtitling. The framework given by her is mentioned below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>How to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>the cultural reference is omitted altogether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal Translation</td>
<td>the solution in the target text matches the original as closely as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing</td>
<td>original terms from the source text are used in the target text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalence</td>
<td>translation has a similar meaning and function in the target culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>the translation is adjusted to the target language and culture in an attempt to evoke similar connotations to the original. Strictly speaking this can be considered a form of equivalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement of the cultural term with deictics</td>
<td>particularly when supported by an on-screen gesture or a visual clue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalisation</td>
<td>neutralisation of the original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explication</td>
<td>a paraphrase to explain the cultural term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

4. The Film and Its Subtitling

In this paper the film named Belaseshe, a Bengali family drama film is taken to be researched. This is directed by the duo Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad Mukherjee and released in 2015. (It revolves around
the domestic life of an aged couple Arati and Biswanath. It also describes the lives of their only son and three daughters who are all married. The movie starts with the advent of Durga puja and then continues. As the time passes, Biswanath reveals his wish to get divorce from his spouse. This was shocking for all the members of his family. However, at the end, they got united happily.

Bengali (Source Language) → English (Target Language)

Oral Text (Source Text) → Written Text (Target Text)

5. Linguistic Approach to Translation Processes

Revolving around the interface among the images (visual media), the sound (aural media) and the written target text (visual media) in multimedia, AVT facilitates intercultural communication. With this target translators transfer the ideas from one language to the other. They play the role of mediators between two linguistic as well as cultural systems by applying translation strategies. Now to respond to the objective of this paper the framework proposed by Chesterman (1997) can be presented as it best deals with the function of linguistics in translation studies. His tripartite distinction of translation strategies includes three levels of language: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Accordingly, these are called syntactic strategies, semantic strategies and pragmatic strategies.

- Syntactic Strategies: ‘translation approaches with a particular focus on the syntax are called syntactic strategies’. Some of them can be mentioned: Literal Translation, Loan Translation, Transposition, Unit Change, Structural Change (paraphrase, clause, and sentence) and so on.
- Semantic Strategies: They concentrate on the meaning of sentences associated with the lexical choice. The commonly used devices are Synonym, Antonym, Converse, Abstraction Change, Distribution Change, Emphasis Change, Paraphrase, and Trope Change.
- Pragmatic Strategies: They go beyond syntactic and semantic aspects and deal with meaning in terms of what content is important to be present in the target text. Cultural Filtering, Explicitness Change, Speech Act Change, Visibility Change, Coherence Change, Partial Translation etc.

6. Data Analysis

The present section analyses data collected from the dialogues and the subtitles made for the selected film to show how linguistics get connected with the processes of translation. The following examples from (1) to (3) in SL and TL show up some syntactic strategies. In Transposition, the change of word class is noticed in English.

1. Transposition
   1.1. naekaamo kOro naa (ST)
       stubbornness do-2P no
       ‘don’t be stubborn.’ (TT)

Unit shift demonstrates the change of phrase level unit to a lexical unit and the vice versa.

2. Unit shift
   2.1. chat kOre baaniye phelo naa (ST)
       prompt do-CP make-CP fall-2P no
‘Don’t make it **yourself**,’ (TT)

2.2. **maa bOdhubarOn Suru hOlo**

Mother Badhubaran start be-PST

‘ma your serial has started.’ (TT)

As the name implies, Clause structure change displays the change of clause construction in TT.

3. **Clause Structure Change**

3.1. **hOcche naa hOcche naa**

be-PRS CONT no be-PRS CONT no

‘if they can’t help it… let it be.’ (TT)

The instances presented below exhibit semantic strategies. In (4), the TT shows the use of converse by placing an opposite word of the source one.

4. **Converse**

4.1. **naa naa aami tomaar saathei jaabo**

No no I your with-EMP go-FUT

‘No.. No.. I’ll **come** with you.’ (TT)

In the given example the place becomes explicitly presented in TT by deriving the contextual meaning from the ST.

5. **Distribution change**

5.1. **jOdi apnaara phire asen……**

If you-HON.PLU return-CP come-HON.FUT

‘return to the court.’ (TT)

It is observed that emphasis can be decreased, increased or changed as found in TT where it is not given.

6. **Emphasis change**

6.1. **naa naa aami tomaar saathei jaabo**

No no I your with-EMP go-FUT

‘No.. No.. I’ll come with you.’ (TT)

> *No.. No.. I’ll come only with you.*

From (7) to (9) some pragmatic strategies are explained. Culture filtering has two options: the one is target language and culture oriented (domestication) and the other one is source oriented (foreignization).

7. **Cultural filtering**

7.1. **Domestication**

7.1.1. **Taanchis keno, baabaa?**

Pull-2P.NON-HON why, father

‘why are you pulling me, dear?’ (TT)

7.1.2. **maa bOdhubarOn Suru hOlo (by maidservant)** (ST)
Mother  Badhubaran start  be-PST
‘ma your serial has started.’  (TT)

7.2.  Foreignization

7.2.1.  maa  plij  tomaar baepaarTaa…. (by daughter)  (ST)
Mother please your matter-CLA
‘mom please, yours is a different.’  (TT)

7.2.2. maa  bOdhubarOn suru hOlo  (ST)
ma  your serial has started.  (TT)

To make translation, addition or omission can be applied as noted in the subsequent instances.

8.  Explicitness change

8.1.  Addition

8.1.1.  maa plij, tomaar baepaarTaa  ….  (ST)
mom please, yours is a different.  (TT)

8.2.  Deletion/ omission

8.2.1.  Taanchis keno,  baabaa?  (ST)
why are you pulling me?  (TT)
> why are you pulling me, …….?

Though in case of film translation there is rare scope of making footnote, in the given example the notion of shucibaai is put brackets in TT.

9.  Visibility change

9.1.  … aamaar bou … Sucibaai  (ST)
... my wife … shucibaai (OCD)  (TT)

When the title of the film comes in notice, it is seen that all the strategies (syntactic strategies, semantic strategies and pragmatic strategies) are employed at a time. These are motioned below.

- Syntactic Strategy
  - Paraphrase structure change (where internal structure changed)
- Semantic Strategy
  - Distribution change
    - expansion (where ST is expanded)
- Pragmatic Strategy
  - Cultural filtering
    - domestication

10. belaaSeShe  (ST)
    ‘in the autumn of life’  (TT)

7. Findings

Depending upon the data analysis, the findings can be pointed out. A song on Durga puja and the title track of this film are not translated yet may be because of the use of cultural specific items in ST. At a
time two or more strategies can be used as found in the title of the selected film. With cultural understanding, linguistic knowledge including familiarity with subject, writing skill in target language, expertise in proof reading and editing is also necessary.

8. Conclusion

Gambier (2013) states, “AVT has become more familiar and more frequently discussed in translation studies since the 100th anniversary of cinema (1995), which also coincided with the booming of the so-called new technology.” Romero Fresco (2006) aptly opines: “if the autonomy of AVT is the starting point for research, its interdisciplinarity is the way forward, as it is drawing on other disciplines that AVT finds new and fruitful avenues of research”. Now it becomes evident that AVT is a heterogeneous and interdisciplinary field which is its resource indeed. And it is needless to say, Translation Studies and Linguistics go hand in hand.

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