



Ascending Movie Subtitling to the Level of Literary Translation

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ABSTRACT

The topic for this research paper is ascending subtitling of movies as a part of academic translation studies. I have got inspiration about this topic from the current scenario of movie subtitling in international film festivals. For some obvious reasons film translation is considered as a very inferior matter when it comes to be included as a part of mainstream translation studies. To the movie subtitler and as well as the viewers of the movie think of subtitling as a part of adaptation and not at all a part of translation. In this paper I will argue that this kind of excluding is not accurate as there are several reasons to be shown to prove my argument. This paper will examine that the attitude about film subtitling as adaptation is not proper and film subtitling should be ascended as a part of translation studies. This research paper will act as a spectator to show that my argument is based upon theories and practical observations. I have taken references of scholars who had already researched in this field. The practical part contains the case study of the English-subtitled version of the Bengali film *Shobdo*, in verbal and auditory sense transcribed into English subtitles, does it influence the content? The analytical part of the movie is done by the application of many theories and also the how cultural differences effect of the translation of movie. My dissertation will observe theoretical and cultural matters that effects the accurate translation of subtitles and how it is important to overcome those obstacles in order to make the translation more precise. These findings will help scholars to research further in this field of subtitle translation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Between the year of 1895 and 1930 is called the 'silent movies era'. In this period intertitles were used as a narrative aid cut into the film as an integral part of the movie. Subtitles grew out of these 'intertitle'. Egyoyan and Balfour, two prominent translation theorist date the beginning of movie subtitling as early as 1907. The first

intertitled film is "*Uncle Toms Cabin*" in 1903 directed by Edwin Porter, based on a novel written by Harriet Beecher Stowe's of the same title that swept the nation. Movie subtitling is still not included in the area of translation studies because there are some serious linguistic concerns that needs more efficient academic research to develop those conditions that are preventing subtitle translation to be incorporated as a part of translation studies.

In an essay named "Issues and Strategies of Subtitling Cultural References Harry Potter Movies in Arabic" written by Ahmed R. M. Altahri, talked about the usefulness of the audio-visual method in film subtitling "Subtitling, as an audio-visual mode, has recently been considered as a key method to facilitate communication with the audience, "especially in comparison with dubbing which is, at present, another mainstream method." Subtitling, unlike traditional forms of translation, is "a process from verbal language into written text, and highly dependent on subtitling equipment to present or transfer information to its viewers" (ibid). Subtitling is seen here as a point of contact and as a culture procedure, where different social practices meet in the shaping of oral and written exchange and by means of which 'the other' is represented. With the restrictions imposed on subtitling in mind, "subtitlers adopt different strategies in their attempts to convey movie plots or content to target language audiences, thereby creating an interface between culture and technology in the context of translation" (Ying Zhang & Junyan Liu, 2009: 113)". (Althari, 2013)

In an essay named "Cultural References in Subtitles" written by Heidi Zojer, she talked about the idea that word choices of the editor will always make the syntax simpler which makes translation more understandable to the target audience. "The extremely difficult and challenging demands on subtitlers by investigating the technical restraints and restrictions, which make the translation of cultural references within subtitles particularly challenging. In order to set up the framework for this analysis". (Zojer, 2012)



“In an essay named “Beating words to Life: subtitles, assemblagescapes, expression” written by Giorgio HadiCurti, he talked about “Ostensibly, subtitles in films serve as linguistic approximations of meaning. Expectedly then, much of the debate surrounding subtitling has been concerned with representational accuracy, fidelity and authenticity. In this article I argue that by encountering subtitles as affective bodily expressions, as opposed to approximate representations of pre-existent meanings or intentions, filmic experiences may be(come) transformed and differently transformational. As a result, meaning and accuracy in subtitles as superimposed signifiers or static representations become secondary to subtitles as spatially affective- and expressive-movements intimately part of filmic scapes.” (Curti, 2009)

In another essay named “Towards a Multidisciplinary Approach in Creative Subtitling” by Rebecca McClarty, she said that “Standard subtitling practices have long been influenced, if not governed, by norms and conventions such as the Code of Good Subtitling Practice (Ivarsson & Carroll 1998). Yet recent research into film subtitling has begun to take a creative turn: a trend that is matched by increasing numbers of fansubs and professionally produced creative subtitles. This paper seeks to demonstrate the need for a multidisciplinary approach to creative subtitling and, by drawing upon principles from film studies, suggests some key features for the development of a creative subtitling practice”. (McClarty, 2012)

In the book *The Semiotics of Subtitling* written by Zoe de Linde and Neil Kay gave the information about two kinds of subtitling, one is “intralingual subtitling” used for “deaf and hard-of-hearing people”, another is “interlingual subtitling” used for “foreign language films”. Interlingual subtitles transfer the meaning of utterances and rely on the soundtrack to carry out the basic meaning of scene in the movie. The main objective of interlingual subtitling is to achieve translation equivalence.

“In subtitling it is self-evident that only the linguistic element of an audio-visual ‘text’ is transferred but in its altered form must still relate to the source utterance, thereby warranting the same kind of analysis as a translation, including the introduction of concepts as ‘relevance’ and ‘equivalence’”. (Linde and Kay, 1999, 4)

“The constraints of space and time force the subtitler to analyse the source text material carefully and decide what should be conveyed and what can or must be deleted. Another important

aspect worth mentioning is that the translation of movies can be influential on the viewers of the target language and, as a consequence, “in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures” (Venuti, 1998: 67)” (Altahri, 2013). Kovacic later modifies the notion of omitting by drawing on Relevance Theory to rationalize larger variety of omission.

“A film is an amalgamation of visual images and an audio soundtrack including dialogues. The transformation of the dialogue of a movie into written subtitles must be done with respect to the relations between all the components of a movie. As well as a spatial balance between subtitle and image, there must also be a particular synchronization of image and subtitle, a procedure which is more than a matter of approximate timing as both systems are semiotically related” (Linde and Kay, 1999, 7). “The differences between dialogue and writing have been well documented by Biber and Halliday in research in this field. There have been two main approaches to the study of each language mode” (Linde and Kay, 1999, 27).

“While the early twentieth-century lexically oriented linguists concentrated on either oral or written language, those interested in the structure of language largely focused on the oral to the exclusion of writing. In the preceding century, scholars had regarded writing as the true form of language”. (Jonsson, 2016, vol:16)

In a book named *The Routledge Handbook of Translation*, in a chapter named “Text Linguistics, translating, and interpreting” written by Gregory M. Shreve, he explained the work of specific scholars whose frameworks have been adopted broadly into translation and interpreting studies like Teun van Dijk, M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, and Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Dressler. A common thread among these authors is the idea that speakers or writers of texts make deliberate, patterned language choices from the language system and that those choices are related to the situation in which the language is used. The pattern of choices is recognisable in the linguistic and semantic structures of a text. Translation Studies and linguistics are attached together and they are a part of systemic functional linguistics.

A fundamental idea of text linguistics is that sentences in a group of sentences exhibit connectedness at the structural and semantic levels. Sentences have relationships to one another at the level of the language forms including lexis and syntax as well as at the level of meaning. It is the



presence of these relationships in a sentence that allows the processing of texts as consistent carriers of meaning. “According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) a text must have texture, which is guaranteed collectively by cohesion and register. And in the process of discussing the relation between cohesion and texture, Halliday and Hasan put forward the standards for coherence. In their book *Cohesion in English*, they argue that: “The concept of cohesion can be usefully supplemented by that of register, since the two together effectively define a text. A text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore, cohesive. Neither of the two conditions is sufficient without the other, nor does the one by necessity entail the other. Just as one can construct passages which are beautifully cohesive but which fail as texts because they lack consistency of register—there is no continuity of meaning in relation to the situation. The hearer, or reader, reacts to both of these things in his judgment of texture.” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.23)” (Wang and Guo, 2014, p:461) The notion of functioning as a unity is important, because it emphasises that a text is perceived by its readers or hearers as a holistic communicative event and not as a disjointed random sequence of sentences.

In chapter 20 of the same book named “Language and Translation in Film” by Rocio Banos and Jorge Diaz Cintas gave an insight about the technical constraints in subtitling. “The two main constraints that impinge on the delivery of subtitles are spatial (governed by the amount of space available on screen for the text) and temporal (dictated by the time that a given subtitle remains on screen). Although there is no universal agreement on the way in which the subtitles should appear on screen, a number of trends can be discerned. The situation is one of change within a generally accepted practice, mainly triggered by the untapped potential released by digital technology and the uncontested prevalence of subtitling as the preferred AVT transfer on the internet to cater for all sorts of programmes, be they political, educational, fictional or commercial”. (Rocio and Diaz Cintas, 2018)

“In another book named *The Translation Studies Reader* edited by Lawrence Venuti, where he has explained what is translation theory and he has given the reference of Louis Kelly’s theory of translation that there “has three components: specification of function and goal; description and analysis of operations; and critical comment on relationships between goal and operations” (Kelly,

1979, 1). This excerpt is taken from the introduction of Venuti’s book *The Translation Studies Reader* which explains two important concepts in translation theory”-

“The history of translation theory can in fact be imagined as a set of changing relationships between the relative autonomy of the translated text, or the translator’s actions, and two other concepts: equivalence and function. Equivalence has been understood as “accuracy,” “adequacy,” “correctness,” “correspondence,” “fidelity,” or “identity”; it is a variable notion of how the translation is connected to the foreign text. Function has been understood as the potentiality of the translated text to release diverse effects, beginning with the communication of information and the production of a response comparable to the one produced by the foreign text in its own culture. Yet the effects of translation are also social, and they have been harnessed to cultural, economic, and political agendas: evangelical programs, commercial ventures, and colonial projects, as well as the development of languages, national literatures, and avant-garde literary movements. Function is a variable notion of how the translated text is connected to the receiving language and culture. In some periods, such as the 1960s and 1970s, the autonomy of translation is limited by the dominance of thinking about equivalence, and functionalism becomes a solution to a theoretical impasse; in other periods, such as the 1980s and 1990s, autonomy is limited by the dominance of functionalisms, and equivalence is rethought to embrace what were previously treated as shifts or deviations from the foreign text.” (Venuti, 2004, 5)

In Venuti’s book in a chapter named “A Misery and Splendour of Translation” José Ortega y Gasset and translated by Elizabeth Gamble Miller, gave insights about different methods of translation. To prove my point, I have taken the reference of the difficulties of a book translator as well. In Gasset’s words,

“I have based the utopianism of translation on the fact that an author of a book—not of mathematics, physics, or even biology—is a writer in a positive sense of the word. This is to imply that he has used his native tongue with prodigious skill, achieving two things that seem impossible to reconcile: simply, to be intelligible and, at the same time, to modify the ordinary usage of language. This dual operation is more difficult to achieve than walking a tightrope. How can we demand it of the average translator? Moreover, beyond this first dilemma that personal style presents to the



translator, we perceive new layers of difficulties. An author's personal style, for example, is produced by his slight deviation from the habitual meaning of the word. The author forces it to an extraordinary usage so that the circle of objects it designates will not coincide exactly with the circle of objects which that same word customarily means in its habitual use. The general trend of these deviations in a writer is what we call his style. But, in fact, each language compared to any other also has its own linguistic style, what von Humboldt called its 'internal form.' Therefore, it is utopian to believe that two words belonging to different languages, and which the dictionary gives us as translations of each other, refer to exactly the same objects. Since languages are formed in different landscapes, through different experiences, their incongruity is natural."

Ascending Movie Subtitling to the Level of Literary Translation

There are two main division in the process of subtitling. The first is how subtitles are really produced that can be divided into three parts. In the first part, the actual dialogues of the movie are divided into the movie scenes. In the second part, the dialogues are translated by the experts. The third part, subtitle experts try to fit the translated dialogues in the movie. The second division in the process of subtitling that I would like to mention is that there are three main factors that makes it difficult to the viewers to comprehend the translated dialogue. These three factors are "Internal cognitive ability", "Needs based on inner motivation" and "External conditions".

Internal cognitive ability includes those factors that somewhat influence the consumption of the information of the dialogue by the viewers. In the category of needs based on inner motivation, which looks into whether the viewers can keep pace with increasingly fast subtitles and whether they can manage to understand the subtitled content depends on their familiarity with the process of subtitling and on their knowledge about the reception of the viewers. There are many external conditions that affect the process of subtitling such as subtitling expert's credentials, multilingual source files, language pairs, audio quality.

Film festivals constitute a privileged vantage point for thinking about "the transnational dynamics of cinema." In screening films from all over the world, they shape film traffic. As cultural gatekeepers, festivals presuppose a form of cinematic knowledge organized in discrete and distinct programmatic categories; through their curatorial decisions and selections, programmers order the grids of intelligibility through which we

come to understand particular films. Liz Czach eloquently argues that "programmers are making powerful decisions. . . . The programming decisions amount to an argument about what defines that field, genre, or national cinema" (Czach, 2004, 85). While many scholars have argued that international film festivals translate the idea of world cinema or define what we mean by "national" cinemas but the question of actual translation made by festivals has remained significantly undertheorized. This is quite paradoxical that festivals routinely position themselves as dioramas of international films as they presuppose the coexistence of different languages. In other words, the soundscape of the festival theatre is fundamentally multilingual. In turn, this plurality of languages both refracts the imagined geography of world cinemas and reinforces festival locations as key nodes shaping film traffic and cinematic knowledge.

Translation at festivals is thus both a necessity and a mechanism that shapes how festivalgoers perceive world cinemas; it simultaneously enables curators to screen foreign films and positions festival going as a local experience of international cinematic cultures. In that context, international festival organizers have used several techniques to translate and revoice world cinemas for a festival's, local and international audience. Ranging from simultaneous transcription to interpretation to subtitles, these techniques cannot be thought of as neutral devices that simply enable festival goers' experiences of world cinemas. For in fact the translation technique chosen by a festival's organizers fundamentally influences how festival goers understand a foreign film and its relationship to a festival's ultimate focus. To that end, I argue that translation techniques at festivals revoice films as an experience of being in the world, thereby reinforcing the discursive and political parameters through which a festival operates. I contend that the translation techniques used by large international festivals exemplify how a festival defines transnational cinematic cultures: "these festivals' use of subtitling often both bolsters their international prestige and localizes or domesticates world cinemas" (Venuti, 1995). I contrast the ideological effects of such festival translation to the amateur techniques used by comparatively smaller, country-based festivals. These smallerevents have developed ways of translating films that both visualize the work of translators and "give voice" to a festival's imagined audiences as they are not able to professionally subtitle films.



In the essay named “Subtitles as Revoicing: Film Festivals and the Globalization of Film” by Antoine Damiens, he said that since the 1980s, festival goers most commonly experience international films through subtitled translation. Subtitling can be a particularly advantageous technique, as it enables festival organizers to address at least two linguistically situated communities at the same time. Furthermore, subtitles help in making a film more apprehensible for deaf viewers. Most important, the use of subtitles in festivals shifts the burden of translation from festival organizers to distributors, as festivals rarely translate films to lessen their burden and they simply screen already subtitled prints of the movie. As a translation technique, subtitling typically reinforces festivals’ prior ideological discourses and geographic imaginaries. According to Abé Markus Nornes, as Damiens puts in his essay “subtitling conceals the ideological effects of translation. Indeed, the presence of a subtitled translation maintains a film’s original soundscape, thereby contributing to the illusion of immediate access to a foreign culture. In the process of converting a film’s sound-scape into a translated text, however, subtitles adopt the conventions of the target language” (Damiens, 2020). This semblance of immediate access and domestication of a foreign language echoes international festivals’ self-positioning as dioramas of international cinematic cultures. International film festivals routinely claim to be bringing “new” cinemas into focus; they require what Julian Stringer calls the “projection and management of cultural otherness.” Subtitling simultaneously helps position festival going as an experience of aurally diverse cinematic cultures and enables festivals to provide their audiences with localized understanding of international films. In both maintaining a film’s national language and providing the audience with a written translation, subtitling enables festivals to make national cinemas “legible, but inescapably foreign.”

In an article named “How Do You Subtitle a Movie at Cannes? Henri Behar Explains All”, written by Eric Kohn he explains what Henri Behar has said about at the Cannes how movies are translated. In his words-

“The first thing you need when you go to subtitle a movie is the dialogue and edit of the movie. It has to be picture-locked. The first person who comes into the process is called a spotter, who spots the line as it is spoken. The subtitle is perceived to be wiped off the screen once the line is spoken. The key word is ‘spoken.’ If someone says,

‘Well, hi, hon, huh?’ you can stop at ‘Hi,’ or ‘hon,’ and if necessity you can include the ‘huh.’ The number of feet and frames give you the number of characters that you’re allowed. You can go over by one, two or three characters, but that’s it” (Kohn, 2012).

Estella Oncins studied about the beginning of the electronic subtitling in her essay “The Process of Subtitling at Film Festivals: Death in Venice?”. As she puts in her words in her essay-

“Until 1985 with the introduction of the electronic subtitling, the creative process of subtitles was difficult and costly, these surprised given the fact that its use was ephemeral: usually one or two showings. While, on the other hand the final product itself was used only for the festival². After the film premiere at the festival, the print could not be further distributed in Italian, which has mainly a dubbing tradition. Furthermore, the elaboration process of the subtitles for a film festival presents three main particularities: timing, material available and medium of display. These features rarely have the same impact in other subtitling practices. Finally, over the last two decades a digital process has emerged to challenge photochemical filmmaking, affecting all stages from the film script to the screening of the film” (Oncins, 2013)

The Bengali film industry is prominent for some of the greatest directors in the Indian film industry, if not the world. But directors such as Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak are not the only stars of Bengali cinema. This industry is survived by many more brilliant directors who discovered the simple, yet meaningful lives of humans and portrays it in screen. It is in simplicity that the Bengali film industry has found its greatness. If we start to trace the rise of Bengali Art films, a decade had finally come to an end and it’s that time to compile the Best of what Bengali cinema had gifted us from 2010 to 2019. It can be the shocking early death of Rituparno Ghosh in 2013, or the rise of two of the most prolific Tollywood filmmakers such as Kaushik Ganguly and Srijit Mukherji with loyal and captive audience. The final outcome of these two filmmakers is the blurring line between commercial and parallel cinema.

The movie for the case study of this research paper is “*Shabdo*^[4] (*Sound*) is a 2013 Indian Bengali film directed by Kaushik Ganguly. The film revolves around the life of Tarak, a foley artist of Bengali film. Tarak’s job is to create ambient sounds for films, but, he gradually gets trapped in his own world, a world full of sound (i.e. *Shabdo*).^{[3][4]} It won the 60th National Film Awards for Best Feature Film in Bengali^[5] and the Best Audiography. It went



on to KFF 2011, IFFI 2012, Goa, Dubai Film Festival, Singapore Film festival 2012g”. (Wikipedia)

Kaushik Ganguly's *Shabdo* undoubtedly opens up a new horizon for Bengali cinema because of its unique plot and this is why the movie is not only worth a watch but worth atheoretical study. According to the nature of a sound wave, “sound is a mechanical wave that requires a material medium to reach our ears”. However, we hear a variety of sounds throughout a particular day and we realize very few of those sounds. We only hear those sounds what we feel like hearing or we want to hear, but for some people, the world of sound becomes the only exotic reality for them while the rest holds no meaning. *Shabdo* explores this reality of sound in the life of Foley artist such as Tarak Dutta, who resembles many other Tarak's lives in our society.

Halfway into the movie, psychiatrist Dr Swati's professor reflects, “Acoustics is the science of sound and the control of it. Control is the keyword” (*Shobdo*). But control is just for the effects that our mind creates but sound is the only reality, which Tarak Dutta will tell throughout the movie. The unsung hero, who recreates sounds of flickering flames by crushing a paper, he thumps through the tooth of a comb to create the sound of a Rubik's cube. As he always strips to the basics, when he takes a bunch of dry leaves on both hands, shakes them violently, he is actually recreating the flight of a hundred pigeons sound real on celluloid. But Tarak's creativity, doesn't take a flight of fancy like the birds in the movie. His fancy gets trapped in the world he himself created.

Since Tarak leads a less ordinary life, his problems are fascinating. Like such as when he was meeting up a friend at a roadside tea shack, he wasn't actually talking about being an LIC agent, because his ears only accept the sound of the tea falling into the bhar, the moving wheels of the rickshaw and people walking. Tarak is going through acoustic neuroma in this movie. He has started to respond to the ambient noise which is not audible to a normal human being. The plot of the movie is about the unique journey of a man fighting his own obsession. Tarak, for the most part of the movie, dwells in his own world of sounds, embracing sounds with such vitality that it seems to him as the rest of the world doesn't belong. He was able to find accompaniment in Ratna, his wife, who stands by him in all his troubles and simply offers to take over Tarak's job as an LIC agent once misfortune falls on the family. In the second half of the film doesn't make the audience oscillate between despair and

hope. The climax, however, catches the audience totally vigilant. In the end of this movie, the protagonist is able to make us understand how sound makes a film.

The original idea of Ganguly's *Shabdo* came from the English movie *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012) directed by Peter Strickland. This story is about a sound engineer, who had recently got a work in an Italian horror film and while working he found his work striking on his life with scary effects. Ganguly made a fine piece of work out of this movie of Strickland. “Peter Strickland's *Berberian Sound Studio* is one horror film that opts to skip the usual frolic among those metaphorical monsters in favour of a deeply unsettling dive into the subconscious.

It's also a movie about horror films themselves, and it accomplishes the tricky task of paying homage to one type of scary movie while indulging in an entirely different style itself. Strickland sets his story in Italy in the 1970s, at the height of that country's boom in *giallo* cinema — pulpy, gory, lurid murder mysteries made on the cheap, with the sound often sloppily added in during post-production rather than on set.

Toby Jones plays Gilderoy, a British sound man who's just arrived at the titular facility to work on creating the soundscape for *The Equestrian Vortex*, a bloody tale of horse-riding, witchcraft and gruesome killings”. (Buckwalter, 2013)

In an essay named “Empirical study of Subtitled Movies” written by Maria Bernschütz, she takes the reference of Luyken as she writes-

“Due to the complexity of the process of subtitling, many researchers believe that translating films is equivalent to literary translation (Luyken, 1991). If the translator is familiar with both cultures, the risk can be reduced. It is even better if he or she has literary skills.

Translating a different culture's language in the movie and spoon-feeding the translation to the actors, however, can become neither understandable nor true, and therefore useless. The difficulty of translating humor (sitcom [2] series like *Friends*, which is specifically mentioned in the research) is so great that the punch lines almost need to be recreated.

Antonini (2005) dealt with the difficulties of translating humor. He pointed out too many examples from sitcoms from Italian and British cultures, using which he demonstrates how wrong a translation can be, or how the punch line can be totally killed. In dubbed films, verbally expressed humor [3] can be hard or impossible to deliver. Laughter on screen often loses its meaning”. (Bernschutz, 2010, vol: 14)



In an essay named “Subtitling “Culture” by Means of Explicitation: Different Ways of Facing Otherness” by Elisa Perego, she introduced us to the notion of exploitation and she did it very briefly by saying that it is a phenomenon that allows covert source text information to be overtly expressed in the translated text. Explicitation is a Universal of Translation, that is a linguistic feature common although not obligatory – to all translated texts, independent of the languages involved in the translation and the direction of translation. Universals of Translation are peculiar “behavioural patterns” (Ulrych 2000: 409) which typify any translated text. Apparently, they are “almost inevitable by-products” (Laviosa 2002: 43) of the translational process, which inevitably gives rise to a new linguistic code different from the original one. Amongst the various types of explicitation, in this paper, the paper will concentrate on cultural explicitation and on its use in subtitling as a possible way of overcoming potential cultural barriers and fostering intercultural understanding and exchange. In doing so, I will consider Bengali as the source languages or cultures and English as the target language or culture. Cultural explicitation has been widely studied both in the field of literary or written translation and, more recently, in that of audio-visual translation as well. “Cultural explicitation is extra-linguistic in nature, as it is triggered by the cultural gap between the source and target culture.” (Perego, 2004, 146). Although traditionally it has mainly been studied in relation to monosemiotic literary texts, it also occurs in polysemiotic, subtitled texts. In both cases it is a strategy for filling culture-related gaps that require unequivocal clarification: what may be inferred from a film by an “original” viewer is not necessarily immediate to, or identifiable by the new audience because of lack of shared background knowledge and values. Accordingly, cultural explicitation is the result of an adaptation of the original to the target cultural system, also at a linguistic level. I will concentrate on the way explicitation is manifested in one of the following sections.

As mentioned above, the aim of this paper is to illustrate how explicitation works in subtitling when cultural issues are involved, that is when the subtitler has to convey culture-specific information in favour of a new, target audience. Subtitling, at times referred to as a selective translation (Gambier 1994; Lung 1998; Mason 2001), or else, as a keyword translation represents a constrained mode of translation subdued to strict spatio-temporal limitations, which often requires compression of the original dialogue or omission of some elements.

Nevertheless, explicitation, in the form of expansion or reduction, is apparently productive in this field (Gottlieb 1992; Goris 1993; Lomheim 1995, 1999; Álvarez 2001; Tomasziewicz 2001; Bussi Parmiggiani 2002; Danesi 2002; Perego 2003a, 2003b). In order to make the viewers the meaning of a particular phrase, the subtitle maker has to use some diverse word in the translated language which is a little different from the original language. In this way the proper transience of translation can't be maintained.

Another strategy for overcoming potential inconsistencies is through reformulating the target text by means of a descriptive, paraphrastic translation (Tomasziewicz 2001; Klaudy 2003), using target-culture and more accessible frames in order to orient the audience and to provide it with a framework for a more conscious interpretation of the scenes (Katan 1999: 133). A further device that can be used is that of distortion. When in the source text the message is conveyed by a linguistic form that is unfamiliar to the target audience, it is necessary to distort the translation and to elucidate source text values. This may happen when culture-markers (“*marcadores culturales*”, Herrero 2000) have to be transferred.

It is possible for the subtitler to act likewise when a meaningful foreign term is employed purposefully in the original. In both cases the English translation is more culturally target-oriented than the Bengali film dialogue as it replaces the Bengali word ‘chokra’, denoting a male figure, could not be perfectly translated into English and the subtitler just use the word ‘him’ to denote the word. Thus, translation is easier to decode, but it loses the flavour – and the function – of the original: it surely is more viewer-friendly, but it is also less respectful of the sociolinguistic dimension which characterises the original. In other words, the English subtitles are more neutral in their explicitness, as they get rid of the English-Bengali code-mixing in the original dialogue whenever cultural-bound items are mentioned. Despite the loss on the sociolinguistic dimension, the subtitle is easier to process as it is formally and cognitively more explicit.

When subtitlers need to convey the value of compact, culturally connoted words, they can do it by distributing the meaning of the original, resorting to a paraphrasing translation whereby the complex lexical meaning of a source language word is distributed over several words in the target language (Klaudy 2003: 223; cf. Vinay and Darbelnet 1958/1995). Cultural factors which influence explicit formulation of an element in different languages, at the textual level, different languages



have different rhetorical preference and use different logical procedures (Polito 1999: 36). Therefore, they perform the same speech act in terms of different linguistic means. In the example I have given earlier, we observe the following:

1. A linguistically indirect original text employs the interrogative mode to perform the same speech act (reason-giving), whereas the subtitles employ a more direct linguistic device (assertive mode).

2. A direct suggestion is preferred in the subtitles over an indirect hypothetical, conditional structure in the original dialogue: the translation uses a plain assertive mode and replaces the original device with more direct assertive expressions in English.

Further research is in fact needed on whether different languages inherently tend to be more or less explicit in the way they express meaning and in which way subtitling constraints can affect this tendency for explicitness. Subtitling constraints are, in fact, expected to act as a filter which may or may not allow culturally preferred linguistic behaviour to be manifested in subtitling texts. The terms and conditions of this practice are to be further investigated.

In another essay named “Subtitling of culture-bound terms: strategies and quality assessment” by Nouredin Mohamed Abdelaal, I have found some more points to explain my arguments further. As Abdelaal said in his essay that “Subtitles are one of the important areas of translation studies. In this regard, subtitles refer to texts that appear on the screen either in the same language of the audio-visual work (i.e., intralingual subtitling) or in another target language (i.e., interlingual subtitling). Subtitling should not, however, be confused with other audio-visual translation types such as dubbing...” (Abdelaal, 2019, vol: 5)

“Baker and Hochel (2001) note that dubbing is an oral translation activity that makes use of the acoustic channel in screen translation. However, subtitling is a visual translation activity that involves superimposition of a written text onto the screen. Subtitling is a process which entails technically transferring a SL movie or audio-visual media to a TL movie or audio-visual media, synchronized with the original verbal message (Gottlieb, 2004). According to O’Connell (2007), subtitling is “supplementing the original voice soundtrack by adding written text on screen” (p.169). As Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010) note subtitling overweighs dubbing in terms of cost. Subtitling is less costly and it can at the same time convey the SL audio-visual products (Kapsaskis, 2008). Diaz Cintas and Anderman (2009) state that subtitling has some characteristics that make it stand out from the other

types of translations. One of these characteristics is the economy of subtitling due to the limited space available on the screen, and which should not hinder seeing the screen well. Ivansson (1992) mentioned that the linguistic diversity and cultural awareness of the target audience should be considered when doing the job of subtitling.” (Abdelaal, 2019, vol:5). “Subtitling, however, is a demanding cognitive process that is loaded with problems and difficulties (Karamitroglou, 2000), and formal quantitative and textual qualitative challenges (Gottlieb, 1992). Formal constraints are seen in terms of the space limits, which is a maximum of 2 lines and 35 characters, while textual constraints and challenges can be viewed in terms of the visual context of the film. There are many technical problems in subtitling such as the average reading speed of the viewers. Another constraint is the synchronization process that is required to keep constant minimum interval between subtitles. Some suggest that the reading speed of a viewer is around 150 to 180 words per minute, and which may differ based on the lexical density and the linguistic information presented in text (De Linde and Kay, 1999: 6, Luyken et al., 1991: 43f). Subtitles of two lines should be displayed for no more than 6 seconds so as not to cause duplicate reading. It is also suggested that short subtitles be exposed for at least 1.5 seconds to avoid a flashing effect (Zojer, 2011). Zojer also argues that one of the challenges encountered by subtitlers is the visual cuts, as a subtitle should not be retained on a screen during a shot change. Instead, a clear margin should be left on either side of the visual cuts. Such a need for being economic in terms of subtitles requires intended omissions (Luyken et al., 1999).” (Abdelaal, 2019, vol:5)

In an article named “Qualitative research and translation dilemmas” written by Bogusia Temple and Alys Young, they have stated the qualitative nature of the process of subtitling. In their words “This article is concerned with qualitative research studies where data are collected in more than one language and the research process, at whatever stage(s), involves acts of translation between languages. Whilst situating the debates we raise within translation/interpretation studies in the broad sense, our primary focus is on the identification and exploration of key questions that the involvement of translation within a qualitative study will provoke”. (Temple and Young, 2004, vol:2, p: 161).

For the case study of this research paper is collected from the Bengali movie *Shobdo* (Sound), that was screened in 2013 and in this paper, I have explained



the cultural obstacles in the movie subtitles with the reference of Cintas and Remael and by their propounded theory. “Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) propose six strategies for translating cultural references or cultural bound terms, in their words. These strategies are”- (Abdelaal, 2019)

1. “Transposition: in transposition, the ST cultural items are subtitled into equivalent TT cultural concepts. For example, translating” (Abdelaal, 2019) some Bengali slangs in the beginning of the movie as using the word “stupid”. “The TT item may not be equivalent to the ST idiom but it sounds culturally acceptable in the target language.”. (Abdelaal, 2019)

2. “Calque or literal translation: this is a literal translation accompanied with little changes. For example, translating” (Abdelaal, 2019) the Bengali phrase “Ki shone ke jane” as “God knows what he listens to”.

3. “Explicitation: in this strategy, the subtitler attempts to explain the ST cultural item in a way that makes it comprehensible and accessible by the target audience. For example,” (Abdelaal, 2019) the Bengali song which was playing when Tarak and Ratna were in the car couldn’t be translated into English.

4. “Cultural adaptation: there are three types of cultural adaptation that are explained below.” (Abdelaal, 2019)

5. “Limited universalization: in this case, a subtitler replaces a ST culture-bound item with another cultural item from the source language which is more common and accessible for the target language viewers. For example-”, (Abdelaal, 2019) when Dr. Swati was watching the National Geography channel, the content of the channel is shown with English subtitles.

6. “Absolute universalization: in this case, a subtitler replaces the SL culture-bound item with another neutral item that conveys the meaning of the ST expression. For example, translating”, (Abdelaal, 2019) the Bengali phrase “kelohoyegache” which is a colloquial phrase in Bengali which is translated as “I have made a mistake”.

7. “Generalizations: in this case, a subtitler decides to use a hypernym for a ST word in the target language. For example, translating”, (Abdelaal, 2019) a scene where Tarak is talking to his senior, he mentions one Bengali film actor named Saswata but in the subtitle his name was omitted to make it more generalised to the international audience.

8. “Loan: this can happen with names that are transferred to the TL. For example, subtitling”,

(Abdelaal, 2019) ‘o to arseromkuenoi’ as ‘he is no big shot’.

Exploring these few techniques employed by film festivals to translate films, I have argued that translations made by the subtitler at international festivals draw our attention to the intercultural dialogue in action in festival screenings. But translation often works as an unmarked, invisible, and unnoticed agency by the audience, the techniques used by festivals shape specific experiences of the transnational nature of cinematic cultures. In visualizing or exemplifying festivals’ imagined relationship to world cinemas and their role in film traffic flows, these translation techniques comprise powerful execution that actuate and define a festival’s position within the larger cinematic circuit. Whereas international festivals’ use of subtitling process often covers up the ideological outcome of translation (its propensity for textual domestication), the movie *Shobdo* brings its politics and processes to light. From cultural explanations in the form of translators’ notes and glosses to the physical presence of a translator, *Shobdo*’s subtitles effectively “give voice” to the festival’s community.

There are some important aspects of subtitling that have been reevaluated in this research paper: syntax of the language and cultural differences effecting the translation, technological progresses in the field of subtitling, and response. The International Film Festivals can be considered as an important area in order to examine all these aspects and also the developments caused by the electronic subtitling process since the beginning of 20th century till today. The technological growth in the field of subtitling had aided the audio-visual translation to be prepared as per the requirements of new client and new trends. Films can be screened in any language at the international film festivals today and because of rapid development in the AVT field, it demands more attention of scholars to uphold the standards of translation. The successful screening of any movie depends on a decent translation of the language of the movie, and that will determine the film’s international success. In this context of a film’s international success, the first appearance of the electronic subtitling system in 1985 can be considered as a landmark. In recent times digitization has become one of the most important elements in the audio-visual industry. Technology has altered everything about the production of a film to the final screening at the festivals. The subtitling process has also been influenced by digitization. So, it is important to keep the quality standards of the subtitles in festivals and for that the involvement of researchers and professionals in the subtitling field



is required. Furthermore, in the era of internet the viewers attitude towards the audio-visual industry is changing. The festivals organisers use the Internet to launch new programmes online to attract the new audience. Programmes like the South Asian Literary Association Website launch in 2012 at the Venice Film Festival can be a good example. This digitization has its consequences on the subtitling pattern and also on the traditional consumer's acceptance towards the cinematic experience. Also, the number of audio-visual platforms is increasing day by day and the professionals of the subtitling field is finding it very hard to keep up with new technologies such as automatic translation processes. Though these translation processes are being improved over recent times. Moreover, European projects such as the EU-Bridge and EU-SUMAT are serving as fine agendas to improve the academic future of subtitling practice. Smartphones can also provide the display and visual range of subtitles which is very impactful. The new platforms allow the addition of different languages in each film and this way it adds to the further profit of technological development.

This process of translation may exhaust the translator to be so careful of these odds in order to serve a translation that keeps up with the desire of modality. AV translator knows how subtitles can be enhanced as they cover the main challenges as they can easily handle the local projects. Film festival experiences upgrade the ability of AV translator as subtitle launchers or even as viewers. They acquired knowledge and in-depth view on complexity of movies. Unless we are discussing on complexity of movies AV translator also face complications with their working ambiance –such as the accuracy of the original written text, the role of pivot titles, the deadlines or the payments– and also the economic condition. Uncertainty of festival and low budget films was making difficulties for the existence of the subtitle service companies. As the subtitle company and the freelancers of this field tried to hold a position, they provide quality services in minimum rate. In such positions a presupposition that should be supported by research is that the clarity of the past years is hard to attain.

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