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PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATING FILMS AND SONGS

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Abstract: The translation of films and songs has become increasingly important in the context of globalization and intercultural communication. Audiovisual materials not only entertain audiences but also transmit cultural values, emotions, humor, and artistic expression. This study examines the main peculiarities of translating films and songs, with particular attention to subtitling, dubbing, and lyrical translation. The article applies descriptive and comparative methods to analyze the linguistic and cultural challenges that arise during audiovisual translation. Special emphasis is placed on synchronization, rhythm, rhyme, idiomatic expressions, humor, slang, and culture-specific elements. The research also explores major translation strategies such as adaptation, omission, literal translation, free translation, and addition. The findings demonstrate that successful audiovisual translation requires more than linguistic competence; it also demands cultural awareness, technical precision, and creative ability. The study concludes that translators working with films and songs must balance semantic accuracy with emotional and artistic impact in order to produce natural and audience-oriented translations.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, film translation, song translation, subtitling, dubbing, adaptation, cultural transfer, rhythm and rhyme, idiomatic expressions, synchronization

Introduction:

In the modern world, films and songs play a significant role in intercultural communication. Through cinema and music, people become familiar with foreign traditions, lifestyles, values, and artistic perspectives. However, audiences can fully understand these audiovisual products only when they are translated effectively into their native languages. For this reason, translation has become an essential component of the global entertainment industry.

Unlike ordinary written translation, audiovisual translation combines linguistic, technical, and cultural elements. A translator must transfer not only the literal meaning of words but also emotions, humor, stylistic features, and cultural references. According to Susan Bassnett, translation should be viewed as a cultural act rather than a purely linguistic process. Therefore, the translation of films and songs requires a high level of creativity and intercultural competence.

Film translation mainly includes subtitling and dubbing, both of which involve specific restrictions. Subtitling is limited by screen space and reading speed, while dubbing requires synchronization with actors' lip movements and emotions. Song translation is even more challenging because the translated lyrics must fit the melody, rhythm, and rhyme of the original composition. In many cases, preserving the artistic and emotional effect becomes more important than maintaining literal accuracy.

The aim of this article is to analyze the main peculiarities of translating films and songs and to identify the most common challenges and strategies used in audiovisual translation. The study also examines how translators adapt cultural references, humor, idiomatic expressions, and poetic language for target audiences.

Methodology:

This research is based on descriptive and comparative methods of analysis. Different examples from films and songs were examined in order to identify the linguistic and cultural difficulties that emerge during translation. The study relies on theoretical approaches developed by well-known scholars in translation studies, including Peter Newmark, Jeremy Munday, Jorge Díaz Cintas, and Peter Low.

The analysis focuses on:

subtitling and dubbing techniques in films;
translation of rhythm and rhyme in songs;
adaptation of idioms, humor, slang, and metaphors;
cultural transfer in audiovisual materials.

Examples from English and Uzbek translations were compared to evaluate how meaning and artistic effect are preserved in the target language. In addition, several translation strategies such as adaptation, literal translation, omission, addition, and free translation were examined in practical contexts.

Results:

The analysis demonstrates that audiovisual translation involves numerous linguistic and technical difficulties. One of the major findings of the study is that subtitling requires considerable condensation of information. Because subtitles must appear within a limited time and space, translators often shorten sentences while preserving the core meaning.

For example:

Original dialogue: ***"I wanted to tell you everything, but I was afraid."***

Subtitle version: ***"I wanted to tell you, but I was afraid."***

In this example, unnecessary elements are omitted in order to fit subtitle limitations without significantly affecting comprehension.

The study also reveals that dubbing requires synchronization between translated speech and visual performance. Translators must ensure that the dialogue sounds natural while matching the actors' lip movements and emotional tone. This creates additional pressure compared to written translation.

Another important result concerns the translation of culture-specific expressions. Many films contain references to traditions, holidays, or social practices that may be unfamiliar to foreign audiences. In such cases, adaptation becomes necessary.

For example:

English: ***"It's raining cats and dogs."***

Meaning: ***"It is raining heavily."***

Uzbek: ***"Juda qattiq yomg'ir yog'yapti."***

A literal translation would sound unnatural and confusing, so the translator conveys the intended meaning instead of translating word for word.

The findings further indicate that song translation is particularly complex because lyrics must correspond to musical rhythm and melody. According to Peter Low and his Pentathlon Principle, translators must balance meaning, singability, rhythm, rhyme, and naturalness simultaneously.

For instance:

English: ***"Let it go, let it go."***

Uzbek: ***"Qo'yib yubor, qo'yib yubor."***

Although the translation is relatively direct, it also preserves the rhythmic structure and emotional tone of the original song.

The analysis additionally shows that humor and wordplay remain among the most difficult elements to translate. Many jokes depend on double meanings or phonetic similarities that cannot be reproduced directly in another language.

Example:

"Why was the math book sad?"

"Because it had too many problems."

Here, the humor depends on the dual meaning of the word *"problems,"* which may not function similarly in another language.

Discussion:

The results of the study confirm that audiovisual translation is a multidimensional process that extends beyond linguistic substitution. Translators constantly negotiate between fidelity to the original text and the expectations of the target audience. In many situations, achieving the same emotional or communicative effect is more important than preserving exact wording.

The research also highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in film and song translation. Audiovisual products are deeply connected to the social and cultural environment in which they are created. Therefore, translators often act as cultural mediators who bridge gaps between different linguistic communities. This idea corresponds with the views of Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday, who emphasize the intercultural role of translators.

Song translation deserves particular attention because it combines verbal meaning with musical form. Translators must recreate emotional impact while preserving rhythm and singability. As a result, song translation often requires creative reformulation rather than strict semantic equivalence.

Overall, the findings suggest that successful audiovisual translation depends on a balance between linguistic accuracy, technical restrictions, artistic expression, and cultural adaptation. A translator working in this field must possess not only language proficiency but also creativity, flexibility, and intercultural awareness.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the translation of films and songs represents one of the most challenging areas of translation studies. Audiovisual translators face numerous difficulties related to synchronization, subtitle limitations, cultural references, humor, rhythm, rhyme, and emotional expression. The study demonstrates that effective translation requires a combination of linguistic competence, technical knowledge, and artistic creativity.

Film translation involves methods such as subtitling and dubbing, both of which impose specific constraints on translators. Song translation is even more demanding because translators must preserve musicality alongside meaning. To overcome these challenges, translators apply strategies including adaptation, free translation, omission, addition, and literal translation depending on the context.

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