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To cite this article: Masood Khoshsaligheh, Azadeh Eriss, Milad Mehdizadkhani & Elnaz Pakar (2022): Translation of multilingual films in Iran in Persian dubbing, International Journal of Multilingualism, DOI: [10.1080/14790718.2022.2155171](https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2155171)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2155171>



Published online: 20 Dec 2022.



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Translation of multilingual films in Iran in Persian dubbing

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ABSTRACT

Filmmakers increasingly resort to using multiple languages in their work to realistically reflect today's globalised world. However, this multiplicity poses specific challenges in the process of translation for dubbing. This study explores the rendition of Western multilingual films into Persian dubbed versions for the Iranian audience. Films as audiovisual texts have multimodal content, so both verbal and non-verbal elements were analysed. We compared the original versions of a selection of ten multilingual films with the Persian dubbed versions based on two models of analyses [i.e. Sanz Ortega, E. (2011). Subtitling and the relevance of Non-verbal information in polyglot films. *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 7, 19–34; Zabalbeascoa, P., & Voellmer, E. (2014). Accounting for multilingual films in translation studies. Intratextual translation in dubbing. In D. Abend-David (Ed.), *Media and translation. An interdisciplinary approach* (pp. 25–51). Bloomsbury Academic]. The results reveal that the most frequently used solution for translating multilingual films at the verbal level is neutralisation, which eliminates linguistic variation, and consequently, the multiplicity of languages in multilingual films is not maintained. Incidentally, a vast range of non-verbal signs is altered to conform to the socio-cultural norms of the target culture.

Abbreviations: MLF: Multilingual Film; TL: Target Language; SL: Source Language; TT: Target Text; ST: Source Text; L1: Primary Language; L2: the translation of L1 in the target text; L3: Secondary/Third Language; L1a/L1b, and...: if the text is multilingual, there may be different L1s; AVT: Audiovisual Translation; IRIB: Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 16 June 2022

Accepted 30 November 2022

KEYWORDS

Multilingual films;
audiovisual translation;
multimodality; Iran

1. Introduction

Throughout history, societies have become increasingly multilingual due to immigration, technological advancement, tourism, social mobility, and even war. Subsequently, multilingualism as a language contact seems to be regarded as a further communication (Díaz-Cintas, 2011). Hence, many of the world's population use two or more languages in their everyday lives. Accordingly, filmmakers are increasingly inclined to produce multilingual

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films (MLFs) which mirror a more authentic and real-life society (Díaz-Cintas, 2011). Multilingualism plays a crucial role in storytelling, characterisation, creating 'mixed sensations' (Chiari, 2012), humorous effects, conflict, confusion, and suspense (De Bonis, 2014, 2015) by triggering specific emotions through the use of more than one language in their audiences (Bleichenbacher, 2008; Sanz Ortega, 2011). Since multilingualism is an instrumental feature for films to unfold the plot, it is intriguing to explore how audiovisual translators work and localise MLFs to be dubbed and broadcast nationally in Iran and overcome the translational challenges of MLFs.

The paper opens with the theoretical framework used to define and interpret the role and effect of multilingualism in film. Then it moves on to compare the original films and their dubbed Persian versions. In this study, we focus exclusively on the dubbed versions because Iran has traditionally been a dubbing country, and we aim to examine the dubbed versions through Iranian national television, which is supposed to target a broad audience. Subsequently, the paper provides a detailed analysis of the different solutions adopted by the translators for the respective target version.

2. Theoretical framework

Cinema is an art form that persistently mirrors changes in society (De Higes-Andino et al., 2013). Multilingualism, as a complex social phenomenon that meets the needs of globalisation in a society or worldwide (Sana Mansoor et al., 2016), can impact both individual and societal viewpoints (Cenoz, 2013). Film industries worldwide are aware of this phenomenon, and filmmakers increasingly incorporate the contemporary context of cultural exchange, characterised by cross-border flows of people, commodities, and culture, into the film's story-world. Filmmakers use the phenomenon of multilingualism (Bleichenbacher, 2008; Martínez-Sierra et al., 2010; O'Sullivan, 2011; Sanz Ortega, 2011; Şerban, 2012; Wahl, 2005) to further storyline, characterisation, an aesthetic purpose. Multilingualism has different functions, which may vary significantly according to the film considered: factual presentation of linguistic diversity (Beseghi, 2020; Kiran, 2020), establishing conflict and confusion (Chiari & De Bonis, 2020; De Bonis, 2014), humorous (Beseghi, 2020), suspense, and mystery (De Bonis, 2014; Delabastita & Grutman, 2015). All the functions mentioned above operate on two different levels: the interaction between the film's characters (i.e. the diegetic level) and viewers' perception of the reality depicted on screen (i.e. the extra-diegetic level). In other words, they function both on the horizontal and the vertical level of communication (Bubel, 2008; Kozloff, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2011; Sanz Ortega, 2011; Vanoye, 1985).

Before initiating a discussion on the investigation of translating multilingualism in audiovisual texts, it is essential to clarify what we mean by MLFs. The term 'multilingual' can be used to describe texts incorporating official languages, dialects, sociolects, slang, pidgin, and invented languages (Aloseviciene, 2020; Delabastita, 2009). According to Wahl (2005), multilingualism is referred to the presence of at least three languages. In the same vein, Dwyer (2005, p. 296) believes that the 'naturalistic presence' of two or more languages at dialogue and narrative level in a film is MLF. MLFs refer to those films which depict an intercultural encounter as their plots and are often related to immigration, tourism, war, and the multi-cultural aspect of current society (Berger & Komori, 2010; Wahl, 2005). It can incorporate two or more official languages in its dialogue and

narration, and the whole range of language subsets and varieties (Delabastita & Grutman, 2005) such as dialect, pidgin, and slang in itself. Other coinages adopted for these films are heterolingual (Grutman, 2006) and plurilingual (Bleichenbacher, 2008).

Scholars from the fields of Translation Studies, Linguistics, as well as Film Studies increasingly rely on Chris Wahl's argument first made in 'Discovering a Genre: The Polyglot Film' (2005) as a genre (2008), that the analysis of MLFs benefits from the acknowledgment of affinities between them with a specific focus on the functions of verbal language. Polyglot genre (Dwyer, 2005; Wahl, 2008) is a kind of cinema that maintains the original cultural aura and the actors' voices and delivers a naturalistic depiction (Wahl, 2008). The films that contain characters or voices speaking in at least three languages in the soundtrack are known as multilingual. 'meta-genre' is a genre that De Bonis uses to describe all MLFs in Film Studies (2015, p. 52). MLF is multiplex, consisting of multilingualism, multi-cultural, multi-identity, multi-country, multi-ethnic, multi-nationality features.

In MLFs, there are often bilingual characters and rely on code-switching to depict their multiplexity (Monti, 2016). Since language diversity commonly poses communication problems between people from different cultures, these films tend to include non-verbal information to overcome this idiomatic barrier. As Zabalbeascoa (1997) and Perego (2009) have pointed out, non-verbal elements cannot be ignored in audiovisual products as they add meaning and reinforce linguistic statements; both non-verbal information and linguistic code should be considered for the understanding of MLFs (Wahl, 2008). Since the characters' non-verbal language enhance the audience's comprehension (Sanz Ortega, 2011); also, different factors such as the polysemiotic nature of films, the process of dubbing and subtitling as well as audiovisual features may refrain the choices of translators (Corrius, 2008; López Delgado, 2007; Zabalbeascoa, 2012; Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2012). Hence, many researchers introduce the concept of constraint (Mayoral et al., 1988; Titford, 1982; Zabalbeascoa, 1996) in the analysis of translated MLFs.

Audiovisual texts are multimodal since they convey their meaning by the amalgamation of different semiotic modes (Gunther & Leeuwen, 1996; Halliday, 1994). The intended meaning emerges from the interactive cooperation of the verbal, auditory and visual channels (Mayoral et al., 1988), often with dubbing, subtitling, or both into a TL. MLFs portray the communication problems and cultural misunderstandings (as a recurrent feature of the genre) of the current world. Where communication is impeded due to linguistic barriers, the importance of non-verbal components becomes more prominent as characters will tend to resort to these elements to surmount such communication problems. Verbal and non-verbal components facilitate communication between characters (Chaume, 2020; Taylor, 2020). Also, they enable audiences to comprehend the multilingual and multi-cultural complexities portrayed in this film genre. Consequently, translation of MLFs presents problems for translators, especially when dubbing is involved. Using this audiovisual translation mode involves a necessary technical manipulation (Díaz-Cintas, 2011). Translation strategies should carefully assess against political, religious, historical, cultural, and language sensitivities (Delabastita, 2002). The translation of MLFs has been investigated from different aspects: the visibility of translation in MLFs (Cronin, 2009; Meylaerts & Şerban, 2014; Raffi, 2019; Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014; Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2012), the role of multilingualism as a tool for different

reasons (Beseghi, 2020; De Bonis, 2014; Dore, 2019; Magazzù, 2019; Martínez-Sierra et al., 2010; O'Sullivan, 2011; Sana Mansoor et al., 2016), from an aesthetic point of view (Şerban, 2012), and their multimodality (Sanz Ortega, 2011, 2015).

A model of analysis that takes all signifying codes into account is needed. A multimodal approach helps unveil the interplay of the linguistic code with the other semiotic modalities of MLFs. The researchers have chosen the multimodal analysis (Baumgarten, 2008; Taylor, 2003, 2004) as the most appropriate for our purposes. A multimodal analysis of the Persian version of the film is adopted by considering the interplay of dubbing and other semiotic codes. In this way, this article also hopes to highlight the necessity of abandoning a purely linguistic approach to audiovisual material. The multimodal analysis will be conducted with the twofold purpose of this article. Initially, the research aims to identify various strategies for dubbing MLFs by which these languages are conveyed to Iranian audiences. The second is comparing the original MLFs with their dubbed Persian version to understand the role and impact of multilingualism. Thus, there is a need to rely on the information provided by the visual and auditory channels. With these objectives in mind, two channels have been used to analyse the data: verbal and non-verbal. For the verbal analysis, Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer's (2014) model of classification of solutions, and for the non-verbal level, Sanz Ortega's (2011) recommendation has been employed.

2.1. Verbal level

At the first level, the data gathered in this research were subjected to Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer's (2014) model of classifying solutions in translation. According to them, the traditional translation equation applied to some texts is $L1 \rightarrow L2$ which is called interlingual translation or translation. In comparison, audiovisual texts utilise different components (audio, visual, nonverbal) and linguistic varieties to provide coherence. L3 (third language) is proposed by Zabalbeascoa and Corrius (2012) for demonstrating language variation by categorising all languages that are not standard L1 and L2. The new translation equation is $L1 + L3ST \rightarrow L2 + L3TT$. The conceptual framework for the new equation is summarised below:

1. The ST is uttered in one primary language (L1). There may be different L1s if the text is multilingual (L1a, L1b, and ...), with relatively equal importance. In the presence of any other secondary languages (L3ST), the equation turns to $L1 + L3$. The disparity between L1b and L3 is the amount of each language that is present in the text.
2. L2 represents the translation of L1 in TT.
3. L3 is defined as a secondary language with much lesser words than L1. Similar to L1, each text might have more than one L3 (L3a, L3b, L3c, and ...).

This model aims to include a wide range of solutions for tackling the third language (L3) problem and the possible functions and effects. They (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014) classify possible solutions to render the L3ST into the target language (Table 1).

Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) indicate that these solutions are often used in dubbing, and different factors like the relationship between the L1 and L3 can impact it (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014). Furthermore, technical constraints of different

Table 1. Possible solutions to render the L3ST into the target language.

Scenario	Solutions and explanation
A: (L3TT = L2) <i>Neutralisation:</i> the secondary language (L3) vanishes.	Ai: (L3ST = L3TT = L2) L3=invisible, Replacing it with L2 words Removing the L3ST segments Aii: Indicating that a character is speaking a different language by conspicuous pronunciation, accents, or vocabulary Aiii: It indicates that a character has a specific ethnicity or nationality by conspicuous pronunciation or vocabulary.
B: (L3TT = L1) <i>Adaptation:</i> providing a different language from L2 to maintain L3 visibility.	B: It is an unlikely solution where native English-speaking characters in an ST were given some words in English in a dubbed version.
C: (L3TT = L3ST) <i>Transfer unchanged:</i>	Ci: Transcribing word for word (or different words in the same L3). Cii: Conveyed accent (stronger or weaker, but recognisable)
D: (L3ST#L1, L2, L3ST) <i>Adaptation</i>	D: L3TT could theoretically be any other language.

translational modes also play a vital role in coping with the translation of a film which may bring about technical or ideological manipulation in the TT (Díaz-Cintas, 2011). Rendering L3ST may induce implications for the L2 and its audiences, which were not aimed in the source text. It is, therefore, worth exploring how to cope with multilingualism in dubbing versions and what consequences and significant ramifications may entail by the translator's decisions.

2.2. Non-verbal level

Non-verbal information comprises the paralinguistic information conveyed through the acoustic channel and the visual information provided by images (Chaume, 2004). Authors such as Eco (1977) and Poyatos (1997) state that verbal messages are always accompanied by kinesic, proxemics, and paralinguistic elements that convey meaning while reinforcing verbal utterances. Consequently, as Perego (2009) highlights, these elements are essential given their pragmatic and emotional functions, and therefore, they need to be taken into consideration when dubbing and subtitling verbal statements. Chaume (2004) suggests that the limited attention paid to non-verbal information might be because it is generally believed that iconic language is universal and semiotically understandable for nearly all cultures. However, Nord (1991) states that non-verbal elements are culture-specific and, therefore, at least some of them will have to be adapted when translated into a target language. By doing this, screen translators can decide the best translation strategy to follow and the different solutions adopted at the verbal level. The different types of non-verbal signs can be categorised into the following (Table 2) (Sanz Ortega, 2011).

Table 2. Non-verbal signs.

1	Paralanguage	Acoustic Channel	Non-verbal features of voices like intonation, rhythm, or tone of voice that related to emotions, such as screams
2	Kinesics	Visual	Body movements and gestures such as a smile or a wink that bear meaning and accompany words
3	Proxemics	Visual	Physical space and privacy (Interpersonal space), depending on the context and the socio-textual practice of every community
4	Cultural signs	Visual	Meaning of colours, places, physical appearance

In the Iranian AVT context, in addition to interpret the gist of the story, translators, as the first agent, were employed to manipulate and censor the films which violated the political, cultural and religious expectations of Iranian and Islamic society. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Iran does not give official permission for broadcasting motion pictures in 14 situations which is mentioned by Azimi (2010), Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2016), and Khoshsaligheh et al. (2017). Pakar and Khoshsaligheh (2021) categorised the scenes containing visual (non-verbal) items that are cut out, reframed or painted out due to the religious and socio-cultural considerations. The religious category includes three subcategories of '(a) physical contact or extra-marital and marital sex, (b) distant or immediate sexually related scenes, and (c) clothing are placed under the main category of explicit or implied sexual items that are directly prohibited in the Islamic thoughts and rules' (p. 8). The socio-cultural category contains the scenes that are unacceptable in the context of Iran based on cultural and social norms (Pakar & Khoshsaligheh, 2021). State-run companies have to respect the rules due to political, cultural, or religious issues (Kenevisi et al., 2016; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2014, 2016; Sedighi & Tabrizi, 2012). Furthermore, studies on non-professional AVT into Persian have showed that they do tend to contravene the said rules and opt to more source text-oriented approach highlighting the foreignness and otherness of the original film (Nord et al., 2015).

3. Method

The current study was an attempt to partly fill both the conceptual and empirical dimensions of a gap in the state of multilingual film localisation in the Iranian context by exploring the issue of rendering MLFs into Persian. The corpus of the study comprised ten MLFs produced between 1999 and 2018. Based on a criterion sampling technique, the films were mainly selected so that all the films are dubbed and broadcast by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and involve at least two to six languages, while the primary language is English. English is the primary language in all of the films is substituted with Persian (translation's primary language) and other languages used as L3. Another factor in choosing these films was their multiplexity (multilingual, multi-cultural, multi-country, multi-identity, multi-religion, multi-society). The list of the films and other relevant information regarding them can be found in Table 3. The difference between the run time of the original and the dubbed version is also shown in the table. The main reason for most of this difference was due to censorship. The study is built on comparing the audiovisual text of the original film with their dubbed version via the model introduced by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) to recognise how multilingualism is rendered in official Persian dubbing – in other words, how translators deal with the linguistic diversity of the MLFs. According to this model, there is a distinction between L1, L2, and L3 which refers to other languages in the ST and TT. Furthermore, multiplexity has different functions in film industries, and meaning in MLFs is perceived through different semiotic modes, such as acoustic and visual channels (Gunther & Leeuwen, 1996; Halliday, 1994), and in most cases, these elements are culture-specific that refer to their multiplexity. Sanz Ortega's (2011) categorisation is also utilised for investigating nonverbal signs which is classified into four groups namely paralanguage, kinesics, proxemics, and cultural signs. By comparing the original version with the dubbed one, the effects of multilingualism

Table 3. The descriptive information corpus of the study.

	Films	Country	Run time	Year	Directors	Languages
1	The 13th Warrior	US	1:38 1:30 (8)	1999	J. McTiernan M. Crichton	English, Latin, Swedish, Norse (Old), Danish, and Arabic
2	The Interpreter	UK France Germany US	1:56 1:49 (7)	2005	S. Pollack	African language (Ku), English, French, and Russian
3	Blood Diamond	United States Germany United Kingdom	2:15 1:41 (35)	2006	E. Zwick	English, Mende, and Afrikaans
4	Babel	US Mexico France Morocco Japan	2:20 1:22 +19 (98)	2006	A. G. Iñárritu	English, Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, Berber languages, French, and Russian
5	The Bourne Ultimatum	US Germany France Spain	1:46 1:37 (9)	2007	P. Greengrass	English, French, Arabic, Russian, and Spanish
6	Arrival	US Canada	2:18 1:44 (74)	2016	D. Villeneuve	English, Russian, and Mandarin
7	Tourist	US France Italy UK	1:36 1:10 (26)	2010	F. von Donnersmarck	French, Italian, and English
8	Life of Pi	US Taiwan UK Mexico Canada France India	1:59 1:42 (17)	2012	A. Lee	English, Tamil, French, Japanese, Hindi, and Chinese
9	Blade Runner 2049	US UK Canada Hungary Spain Mexico	2:31 1:13+4 (1:18)	2017	D. Villeneuve	English, Finnish, Japanese, Hungarian, Russian, Somali, and Spanish
10	The Meg	US China	1:42 1:28 (14)	2018	J. Turteltaub	English, Mandarin, Thai, and Japanese

on the plot of MLFs and how it is rendered in dubbed versions is investigated and identified.

4. Results

The aim of this study was twofold: first, to unveil how multilingualism is treated and rendered in official dubbed films in Iran. Secondly, how hints or instances of the multiplexity are illustrated in the dubbed films. In so doing, all ten MLFs were compared to the dubbed

versions sentence by sentence. The gathered data were subjected to Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer's (2014) model of classifying solutions in translation and Sanz Ortega's (2011) classification for non-verbal level. The total solutions that were used in all MLFs are shown in the following tables.

4.1. *The 13th Warrior (McTiernan & Crichton, 1999)*

The role of multilingualism in this film contributes to confusion because Ahmad ibn Fadlan does not know the language of the people, and with the presence of his translator, he finds out what they said. Indeed, the best way to convey confusion to the target audience is to follow the director's strategy and not interfere with the storytelling by dubbing L3. In the multilingual part of the film, by the presence of an interpreter (intratextual translation), the dubbing team tried to maintain the L3s except in one case, so the primary solution is Ci. Only in one part of the film (Latin), it is preferred to translate the dialogue into standard Persian, it can be due to reducing the misunderstanding of the film, or the translator has recognised that translating this part of the film into the L2 does not interfere with the narration of the plot. Parts of the story that show the cultural differences of the source and target community, such as interpersonal space that is called 'proxemics' (Sanz Ortega, 2011) which is a representative of multiplexity and depends on the socio-textual practice of every community, have been censored from the dubbed film due to socio-cultural and religious issues of Iran. The adopted solutions are shown in Table 4.

4.2. *The Interpreter (Pollack, 2005)*

Multilingualism has different functions in this film: realistic rendering, mystery, and suspense. For the multilingual scenes of the original film, there are two strategies for transferring the meaning to the audience: intratextual translation and English subtitles. The Persian dubbing team's approach in the first strategy is to follow the director's directive and to preserve the multilingual elements of the film, which means that they dubbed only the translated dialogues and transferred the L3 unchanged from the film. Therefore, the primary solution is Ci. However, for the second situation (English subtitle), where the translator is not present in the scenes in order to translate it, there are three strategies: first, omit the English subtitle and transfer the L3s unchanged without any translation (Ci), which makes it harder for the Iranian audience to understand the meaning except small parts (just a few words). For example, at the beginning of the original film, the location is written 'Matobo, Africa'; however, it is omitted and mentioned in Persian by

Table 4. Language distribution in *The 13th Warrior* (McTiernan & Crichton, 1999) and its Persian dubbed version.

The 13th Warrior	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Latin	Latin	Ci
	Standard Persian	Ai
Swedish	Swedish	Ci
Norse, Old	Norse, Old	Ci
Danish	Danish	Ci
Arabic	Arabic	Ci

a narrator. Second, some multilingual parts (conversations) are omitted without having social, cultural, and religious reasons behind them. Third, these multilingual scenes are translated into Persian (Ai).

Interestingly, in some parts of the dubbed film, instrumental music has been added to scenes while there is no song in the original version, which induces humour in the audience, although those parts are serious. Also, some of the African and western soundtracks have changed. We believe that the music of each country or community should be considered a cultural sign as each person can distinguish between Arabic, Spanish, Turkish, and other kinds of music. Furthermore, some violent scenes, such as where a schoolboy shoots a man, which reflects the actions and behaviour of the African tribe, are eliminated. The last point is that the translators did not distinguish between the different English accents in the dubbed film, representing the characters' different nationalities. In this film, some 'kinesics' (body movement and gestures that convey meaning non-vocally) like the scene of hugging in the film where Silvia and Philippe hug each other, and 'proxemics' where Silvia and Keller are talking to each other and shaking hands at the end of the film (Sanz Ortega, 2011) were eliminated because of Persian socio-cultural and religious factors. The preferred solutions are illustrated in the following (Table 5).

4.3. *Blood Diamond* (Zwick, 2006)

In this film, language diversity is used to show the mainstream African culture. At the beginning of the dubbed version, unlike the original one, a narrator explains the civil war for the possession of diamonds and its consequences in Sierra Leone 'audio introductions' (Greco & Jankowska, 2020, p. 71). It is remarkable that in some parts of the film, a voice-over technique is used as a solution to translate the multilingualism element. Despite the original film for displaying multilingualism, different strategies have been used to transfer them in the dubbed version. Since Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer's (2014) model has no solution for the voice-over technique, we did not regard it in the following table (Table 6). It is possible to regard voice-over as Aiiii because of the presence of L2. Furthermore, African music that refers to that culture and country is omitted, particularly those pieces of music that have beats.

Nevertheless, what matters is the variety of adopted solutions in the TT, as seen in Table 6. Many of the aggressive African behaviours that characterise the community have been omitted from the dubbed version or modified. Most non-verbal signs (paralanguage, Kinesics, proxemics, and cultural signs) are omitted in dubbed Persian version because of socio-cultural conflict. For example, for paralanguage signs, many of African women's screams and shouts at the beginning of the film when rebels attacked are

Table 5. Language distribution in *The Interpreter* (Pollack, 2005) and its Persian dubbed version.

Interpreter	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
African language (Ku)	African language (Ku)	Ci
	Standard Persian	Ai
French	French	Ci
	Persian	Ai
Russian	Russian	Ci

Table 6. Language distribution in *Blood Diamond* (Zwick, 2006) and its Persian dubbed version.

Blood Diamond	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Mende	Standard Persian	Ai
	Persian with a foreign accent of the same L3TT	Aiii
	Mende	Ci
Africans	Standard Persian	Ai
	Africans	Ci
	Persian with a foreign accent of the same L3 TT	Aii
Hebrew language	Hebrew language	Ci

eliminated or toned down which may be due to Iranian cultural issues, just as hearing the voice of a female singer is forbidden in Islam, so the sound of screaming and shouting is not very pleasant in Iranian Islamic culture. In addition, for kinesics signs, some African sex workers who try to attract Danni's attention with their flirtatiousness are also censored from the dubbed Persian version because of religious matters. Also, many cultural signs like the way Africans dress, part of which is naked, it has been censored because it contradicts Iranian cultural and Islamic beliefs. Additionally, African markets and many other cultural issues like night clubs are omitted thanks to political, cultural and religious issues in Iran which could be due to minimise the charm of African Culture for Iranian audience. Furthermore, different English accents have not been transferred in the dubbed version, even speaking incomplete English. Instead, it is spoken chiefly in standard Persian.

4.4. *Babel* (Iñárritu, 2006)

This film is an obvious example of an MLF: there are four different languages, cultures, and societies equally (L1a + L1b + L1c + L1d) (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014). The director uses different languages to show diversity between cultures and arouse suspense and confusion in audiences. At the beginning of the film, a narrator explains and analyses the storyline for 19 min 'audio introductions' (Greco & Jankowska, 2020). These off-screen narrative explanations with other metalinguistic references indicate and explain the characters' alienation (Moroccan, Japanese, Mexican, and American) for Iranian audiences, even though language differences disappear in most cases (different nationalities of passengers in Morocco). Despite its multilingualism (L1a + L1b + L1c + L1d), the immediate solution for this film is Ai. In a few cases (Arabic and Berber), the language transfer remains unchanged, which may be due to the fact that Persian and Arabic are neighbouring languages or because the two languages are part of the cultural domain and have taken many words from one another. Another noteworthy point is that Japanese sign language is translated into Persian speech which pronounced conspicuously.

Moreover, much of the story, occurred in Japan, has been removed in the dubbed version. Although the censored sections reflect cultural and social characteristics of Japan like nightlife in Japanese clubs and bars, these sections have been removed completely due to cultural and religious issues in Iran. Also, in other cultures there are parts that are removed like masturbation of the barbarian boy which is forbidden in Iran according to cultural and religious matters. Japanese and Mexican music (paralanguage signs), which is a part of the culture of these countries and reflects the cultural diversity

of the film, has been completely removed and replaced in parts of the film with other kinds of music such as gangster. It seems that playing percussion music is prohibited in the national media of Iran. As it is mentioned in Table 3, one hour of the film has been removed. Comparing the two versions, it can be found that many censored scenes are not necessarily due to crossing cultural and religious red lines of Iranian society (like Mexican weddings and customs or even when a Barbarian woman helps the American woman take drugs to reduce her pain, is eliminated). However, it can probably indicate the unwillingness of Iranian national media to show cultural differences such as playing volleyball by Japanese girls. Different English accents are also not portrayed in the dubbed film.

Furthermore, the last important point in the Persian version is the preferred solutions, Aii and Ci, are used for the sign language in the Japanese society. In most cases, it is translated into Persian by a noticeable pronunciation, making it more comprehensible. Other non-verbal signs (Kinesics, proxemics, and cultural signs) are not preserved as long as it does cross the Iranian social, cultural, and religious red lines. For example, when the Japanese girl smiling at the Japanese boys to grasp their attention are omitted which indicate the kinesics sign. As in case of proxemics signs all handshakes, hugs of men and women as the American man hugged her wife in Berberian house are censored for religious and cultural reasons in Iran. For cultural signs, like when, according to a Mexican wedding tradition, a bullet is fired into the air is eliminated. Since the multilingual parts of this film were considerable, the amount of censored non-verbal elements was equally extensive in this film compared to other films. Table 7 shows the adopted solutions.

4.5. *The Bourne Ultimatum (Greengrass, 2007)*

It seems that the role of multilingualism in this film is to create mystery and suspense in audiences, especially without intralingual or interlingual translation. The film's main character is being chased in several countries; viewers find out the locations (France, Spain, Russia, and Tangier) through linguistic differences and references to urban locations; otherwise, there is no direct reference to the location in the original film. It is noteworthy that in parts of the film where the locations of the film change and only point to the famous monument (for example, Arc de Triomphe) without referring to the locations by subtitle or narrator, the location is told to the Persian audiences. All languages except Arabic are translated into standard Persian; therefore, the solution for French, Spanish and Russian is Ai (Table 8). Here, same as the previous film (*Babel*), Arabic is

Table 7. Language distribution in *Babel* (Iñárritu, 2006) and its Persian dubbed version.

Babel	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Berber	Standard Persian	Ai
	Persian with an Arabic accent	Aii
Spanish	Standard Persian	Ai
Japanese	Standard Persian	Ai
French	Standard Persian	Ai
Arabic	Arabic	Ci
Sign Language	Sign Language	Ci
	Persian	Aii

Table 8. Language distribution in *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Greengrass, 2007) and its Persian dubbed version.

The Bourne Ultimatum	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
French	Standard Persian	Ai
Spanish	Standard Persian	Ai
Arabic	Arabic	Ci
Russian	Standard Persian	Ai

transferred unchanged, and the translators use Ci as a convenient solution. It seems that translators just wanted to render the content of dialogues, so they preferred to translate all the dialogues into Persian without conveying the multilingual features of the film. Non-verbal signs (Kinesics) are maintained as long as they do not question Iran's socio-cultural and religious values; as shown in Table 3, the censored time of the story is short (9 min). To exemplify the kinesics signs, when Nicky Pearson touches Jason Bourne's hand as a sympathy is omitted from the dubbed version.

4.6. *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016)

In this film, the number of languages used is less than in other films. There is an unknown language that is transferred unchanged. There are no subtitles or any other modes in the original version because it should remain obscure and cause suspense and give an air of mystery. Just in the last scenes, subtitles accompany these scenes for the sake of the audiences to understand the meaning of the scenes; since it is not a known language, the researchers preferred not to include it among the analysed languages. The Mandarin language used is transferred unchanged (Ci) to instil suspicion in the viewer; the translators tried to maintain it to induce a similar feeling in target audiences and not disturb the plot. There was no censored paralinguistic or kinetic signs in the film. However, proxemics is censored due to cultural conflicts (Table 9).

4.7. *The Tourist* (von Donnersmarck, 2010)

This film takes place in France and Italy and speaks in four languages (English, French, Italian and Russian). All the languages are translated into Persian, so the preferred solution is Ai, as shown in Table 10. Just in one case signalled by an Italian word (*grazie*: thank you) in a scene, as you can see the solution Aii. Except for this case, there is no L3 in a target film. The only reference to change of location (change of country) is with scenes from the film that have not been deleted, and if the viewer is familiar with urban architecture (Italy), she/he will find the desired location. At the beginning of the original film, the location (Paris, France) is written. The film's location is preserved and read to the Iranian audience

Table 9. Language distribution in *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016) and its Persian dubbed version.

Arrival	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Mandarin	Mandarin	Ci
Russian	Standard Persian	Ai

Table 10. Language distribution in *Tourist* (von Donnermarck, 2010) and its Persian dubbed version.

Tourist	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
French	Standard Persian	Ai
Italian	Standard Persian	Ai
		Aii
Russian	Standard Persian	Ai

in the dubbed one, unlike the previous films. Remarkably, they make no difference between British (Elise) and American (Frank) accents, which refers to their nationality and multiplexity. Maybe the translators can translate it with different dialects in Persian, but they did not.

Last but not least, the auras are not maintained in the film, and ambient sound (train station where people talk to each other in Italian or French) is completely removed. There is no change in the type of music, and the soundtrack is wholly preserved and transferred in the target film. Kinesics (like in the first part of the film, when the camera was zooming in on Liz's body and gait), proxemics (when the hotel doorman grabs Liz's hand to help him get off the boat), and cultural sign (many of the scenes that show Venice have been removed or reduced to the point where they do not interfere with the story) are eliminated because of socio-cultural and religious factors.

4.8. *Life of Pi* (Lee, 2012)

In the dubbed version of this film, the only solution is Ai, i.e. all the languages are translated into Persian (Table 11). Although Pi's childhood begins in India and ends in Canada, the translators did not transfer language diversities. In the original film, there are different accents for English, such as Hindi, Japanese and Canadian, but there is no difference between different accents, just in one case for a few words on the ship (an East Asian boy speaks with the conspicuous accent) that is maintained in the dubbed version. Indian music is transferred unchanged unless a female singer is singing, replaced by another Hindi song. Another point to consider in this film is the scenes that Pi experiences different religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) to learn about them; they are omitted in the Persian dubbed version; even though the religion of each country is part of that nationality, which represents the multiplicity. Kinesics and proxemics signs that refer to Pie and his girlfriend are omitted completely and in the dubbed version this character is not existed due to the facial expressions and coquettishness that are specific to Indian girls that is related to Pie which is forbidden in Iranian national media. Also, cultural signs such as Indian funeral ceremonies are completely omitted.

Table 11. Language distribution in *Life of Pi* (Lee, 2012) and its Persian dubbed version.

Life of Pi	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Hindi	Standard Persian	Ai
Tamil	Standard Persian	Ai
French	Standard Persian	Ai

Table 12. Language distribution in *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017) and its Persian dubbed version.

Blade Runner 2049	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Somali	Standard Persian	Ai
Spanish	Delete	Ai
Finnish	Delete	Ai
Russian	Delete	Ai
Hungarian	Delete	Ai
Japanese	Delete	Ai

4.9. *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017)

The story is narrated for four minutes in the middle of the film. Moreover, 1:36 min from the beginning of the main film is eliminated for the Iranian audience which may be due to shorten the length of the movie, and a narrator explains a part of what happened in the unplayed parts (1':18'') of the film and shows some scenes which are not broadcast on TV. All multilingual parts of the film except the Somali language have been eliminated from the film (A) in the dubbed version.

Regarding the part where the Somali language is used, English subtitles are provided in the original version. In the dubbed one, the subtitle is preserved, but the Somali language has been translated into Standard Persian. The remarkable point in the original one is that the Somali man speaks in Somali, but K answers in English, and both of them fully understand each other, which is not considered in the Persian dubbing of the film at all. The adopted solutions are shown in Table 12.

Furthermore, by removing other languages from the dubbed film, the multilingualism of the film is faded, and the audience is not informed. In other words, neutralisation has been done (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014), which refers to the invisibility of L3 by being omitted. Here Kinesics (of prostitutes), paralanguage (groans of women), cultural signs (physical appearance of the replicas), and proxemics are censored because of socio-cultural and religious factors.

4.10. *The Meg* (Turteltaub, 2017)

All references to the place are preserved in the dubbed version and are read to Iranian viewers. All the languages are translated into Persian (Ai) except a sentence in Japanese that is transferred unchanged (Table 13). Some scenes that speak in Japanese and have an English subtitle are translated into Persian, but the English subtitle has been maintained; by doing so, they may give the viewer a clue that they speak a different language. In parts

Table 13. Language distribution in *The Meg* (Turteltaub, 2017) and its Persian dubbed version.

The Meg	TT Persian	Transfer type
English	Standard Persian	L1 → L2
Mandarin	Standard Persian	Ai
	Delete	Ai
Thai	Standard Persian	Ai
Japanese	Japanese	Ci
	Standard Persian	Ai

Table 14. Languages and solutions.

	Languages	Solutions
1	Spanish	Ai*3/Ci
2	Japanese	Ai*3/Ci
3	French	Ai*5/Ci
4	Italian	Ai/Ci
5	Arabic	Ci*3
6	Hungarian	Ai
7	Japanese Sign Language	Aii/Ci
8	Hindi	Ai
9	Tamil	Ai
10	Mandarin	Ai*2/Ci
11	Russian	Ai*4/Ci
12	Berber	Ai/Aii
13	Danish	Ci
14	Thai	Ai
15	Latin	Ai/ Ci
16	Swedish	Ci
17	Mende	Ai/Aiii /Ci
18	Africans	Ai*2/Ci*2/Cii
19	Hebrew language	Ci
20	Somali	Ai
21	Finnish	Ai
22	Norse, Old	Ci

that happen in China (Sanya Bay), they are eliminated from the dubbed version because of socio-cultural and religious issues. Thai music is replaced with other kinds of music because of its female singer and beats. Again, Kinesics and proxemics are omitted even for male character (Jonas) where he is naked from the waist up in front of the female character (Su Yang). Cultural signs such as Thai wedding and also people at the beach are completely omitted in the dubbed version may be due to women's clothes.

After analysing the ten films, the languages and the frequency of solutions used are illustrated in Tables 14 and 15. It can be seen that French, Russian and African have the most frequency. However, there is no exact solution for none of the languages.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Dubbing MLFs with several different languages in a film, each of which has been used for a purpose in the storyline, poses specific translation problems for translators, which can be more challenging in Iran with different cultural, religious, and political conditions. The paper focused on how the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting dubs MLFs.

This study indicates that at the verbal level, the most widely used solution for translating MLFs in Iran is Ai (L3ST = L3TT = L2). In other words, L3ST is replaced by L2 in the TT. According to the approach used in Persian dubbing, as with the Italian norm, MLFs are neutralised and linguistic variations are eliminated (De Bonis, 2014; Dore, 2019; Pavese, 2005), and is reluctant to maintain the characteristics of the original film which is

Table 15. Frequency of solutions.

Solutions	Ai	Aii	Aiii	B	Ci	Cii	D
Numbers	29	2	1	0	18	1	0

approved by Ebrahinzadeh Poustchi and & Amirian (2021). It may be influenced by different factors such as viewers' unfamiliarity with languages, reluctance to know other languages and cultures, socio-cultural and religious motivations; as asserted by Bogucki and Díaz-Cintas (2020), that authoritarian regimes tend to censor the original soundtrack (Perego & Pacinotti, 2020). Each translational strategy is believed to have various effects on the perception of a multilingual text and the audience. In contrast, the TT viewers do not have access to functional and stylistic features of the ST (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014), which should be rendered in order to produce assumed results and effects. In most cases, it goes beyond text and style; instead, it has more to do with that community's view of alien culture and language (Grutman, 2006). On several occasions, it is preferred to omit the scenes totally due to socio-cultural and religious conflicts such as sexuality, violence, insults, out of marriage relationships (Pakar & Khoshsaligheh, 2021), but there is no justifiable reason in other cases. Solutions Aii, Aiii were used in a few cases.

The second most frequent solution is Ci, during which L3 is transferred unchanged to the TT to maintain the language barrier that has been shown in the recent Italian dubbed version (Beseghi, 2020; De Bonis, 2014; Monti, 2016). They try to follow the style and mode of the ST. It should be noted that the amount of L3 words that are transferred unchanged to the target film is minimal compared to Ai. Other solutions: B and D were not translator's choice at all in the analysed films. It is noteworthy that different English accents, since they contribute significantly to character portrayal in STs, were not reflected in any dubbed films. Unlike Spanish and Italian norms, The Persian dubbed versions do not convey the English-language dialectal differences, provided that they can be illustrated through lexical, grammatical features, voice tone, and intonation (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014). Generally, in those scenes, including intratextual translation, translators do not have difficulties as they tend to replace one language with L2 and the other language remains the same (the 13th Warrior and the Interpreter). The national media of Iran try to remove alienation or otherness and multilingualism from the films. It seems that some other considerations like cultural and political affinity will affect the choice of this strategy; for example, in all cases where the Arabic language has been used, it has been preserved in the dubbing version; this is not the case for other languages.

At the non-verbal level, MLFs often portray the misunderstandings and differences that exist amongst cultures. A further challenge for the translators of the Persian dubbed version is that metalinguistic references have to disappear from the target film due to censorship and socio-cultural, political, and religious issues, as proved by Pakar and Khoshsaligheh (2020); therefore, communication challenges of the source film are not perceived as the original conversation is changed for a new one or rescript. Dubbing decreases alienation for the target audience and does not let them notice differences, the same as the original audience does (De Bonis, 2014; Heiss, 2014). At the same time, non-verbal information plays an essential role in conveying information to the audiences, where fictional characters do not speak. According to the second classification, in all ten analysed films, non-verbal signs (namely, paralanguage, Kinesics, proxemics, and cultural signs) are altered to adjust Iran's socio-cultural and religious norms. Although music is an expressive language of each culture and reflects the cultural characteristics of a society, in the analysed films, wherever the singer is female or has a rhythm and beat, it is replaced by another song that does not belong to that culture (except in one case: Indian music in *Life of Pie* [Lee, 2012]).

This research can have actual implementation for both the local dubbing industry and filmmakers and can lead to insights into the prevailing norms in rendering MLFs. At the same time, we believe that a look at audiovisual texts in the light of current reception studies can open avenues for future research into the interdisciplinary research between multilingualism, reception studies, and audiovisual studies. Moreover, further research should be undertaken to conduct interviews with translators to uncover the reasons or investigate the factors underlying such decisions why they do not aim to represent the otherness and the multilingualism of the source material in Iran. Future studies can also try to compare the strategies between dubbing Persian MLFs and Foreign MLFs and investigate whether the translational strategies are the same or not and the reception of both kinds of films in the target culture.

Finally, now that these AVT strategies have been brought to light, it is recommended that further mixed-methods research be conducted with interviews, as mentioned above, and questionnaires among Iranian audiences to explore their attitudes in-depth. In that regard, the application of the concept of sociolinguistics in reception (Lippi-Green, 2012) to study the viewers' language attitudes towards the L3 used in the translation is suggested.

Acknowledgements

The study was supported by Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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