

The Americanization of Film Subtitles: A Sociocultural Linguistic Perspective to Subtitling Translation in the Arab World

The amount and diversity of mass media that our age witnesses have created a great deal of challenge to the process of translation all over the globe. As an autonomous discipline of translation, the audio visual translation (AVT) has been flourishing due to the thousands satellite channels which are in a continuous pursuit of new subtitled programs. Subtitling translation, accordingly, has exceeded its previous limited scope of films to include various types of reality TV shows, sports, documentaries, fashion programs etc. consequently, the need for professional expert subtitlers has become one of the hallmarks of our modern age of globalization.

Venuti (1995) proposes two techniques in translating the written texts, the translator might choose to draw the author's modes of thinking towards that of the reader as close as possible without paying much attention to the various aspects of meaning associated (the demonstration technique), this technique has been criticized by Venuti for its denial to the visible role of the translator in his/her translated text. As a substitute, a translator might foreignize the reader's modes of thinking and introduce him to that of the author (the foreignizing technique). In parallel, a film subtitler is doomed to choose one of these preferences either to satisfy the target language audiences linguistically and culturally, or to impose on them the source language foreign structures and modes of thinking.

This paper is an attempt to investigate the subtitling translation of the American films in the Arab world in terms of Venuti's distinction. It is based on a case study which examined the Arabic subtitles of two American films, "The Aviator" and "The Departed", and the English subtitle of the Egyptian Arabic film "Hassan and Murkis". The translation strategies suggested by Pedersen (2005) and Newmark (1988) such as retention, literal translation, specification, explicitation, and addition have been placed on a binary scale of domestication (target language oriented) and foreignization (source language oriented) to investigate the structures used by the subtitlers in these films.

Key words: subtitling translation, domestication, foreignization, Venuti, Arabic Best

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