



A Comparative Study of Taboo Rendition in 3 Dubbed Versions of 'Deadpool' Movie: A Case Study of Swearwords

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ABSTRACT

Language, besides being a means of expressing thoughts and ideas, can be used to prevent the dissemination of specific ideas, thoughts and ideologies. One relevant example is the taboo, which is rooted in the worldview and beliefs of different nations in a particular category. In fact, taboo-to-taboo translation can, at times, create linguistic and cultural problems. Since audio-visual products are one of the main channels of transmission of culture-based terms such as taboos, the issue of subtitling and dubbing these products is of great importance. The present research is a comparative corpus-based study which intended to examine the translation of a specific category of taboo words, i.e. swearwords, based on Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model. For this purpose, using purposive and availability sampling, three dubbed versions of an American movie namely *Deadpool* (2016) were selected and compared in terms of the quadratic classification of the aforementioned model. To answer the research questions, frequency and percentage scores as well as Chi-square tests were used. The results of the study indicated that 'taboo to non-taboo' (substitution) is the strategy used most frequently by Iranian audio-visual translators to render western taboos into Persian. Another finding was that 'euphemism', except for QD1, was also a strategy that Persian translators used to mitigate the tabooeness of swearwords.

Keywords: Translation studies; Subtitling; Dubbing; Taboo; Swearwords; *Deadpool*.

1. Introduction

Translation is the process of transferring messages, ideas and meanings from one language into another. This process involves a series of other considerations as well which are mostly related to accuracy, clarity, and naturalness of ideas, messages and meanings of the translation. The main challenge in translation is to create a feeling in the readers of the target text (TT) that is similar to that built in source text (ST) readers. Some language experts have clarified these considerations in their definitions of translation.

Translation has been defined differently by different researchers. Newmark (1988), for instance, defined it as "Rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (p. 5). In his definition he emphasized on rendering the ST author's ideas into the TT. Similarly, Hatim and Munday (2004, p. 6) emphasized on the process of translation and defined it as "the process of transferring a written text

from the source language (SL) to target language (TL)". Further, Nida and Taber (1982) argued, "translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message" (p. 12). In this definition, the relationship between translation and the problems of language, meaning, and equivalence was established. But translation is not an easy task. As posited by Hatim and Munday (2004, p. 34), "one of the key problems for the analyst was in actually determining whether the source text meaning had been transferred into the target text".

Culture is also a fundamental element of any approach to translation. If translation is defined as source text induced text production, translation into a foreign language will always be an instance of intercultural communication. Due to the undeniable role of culture in translation process, some scholars introduced a culture-based definition of the term 'translation'. For example, like Wojtasiewicz (1992, p. 26) posited that translating "a text *a* formulated in the language *A* into the language *B* means formulating the text *b* in the language *B* so that the reader would have the same or similar associations as the reader of the text *a*". Thus, the translator should reduce the gap between the two cultures to the extent possible. Here, the term culture covers a wide range of topics including politics, history, education, religion, customs, etc. Since translation deals with culture-specific items, Wolf (1997) believed that the main job of the translator was to understand first the foreign cultural units embedded in the source text and then render them into equivalent target language cultural units so as to enable target readers to understand them.

People who have no access to the original text, read the translated version in a different way. All this increases the responsibility of the translator. In fact, the translator should decide on the issues that need to be prioritized, i.e. the cultural aspects of his/her community, the cultural aspects of the foreign community, etc. Accordingly, the translator may use foreignization, domestication or a combination of the two (Schäffner & Adab, 1997).

People use language in different situations and under different conditions for a variety of purposes with certain and specific vocabulary and grammar. One of the tools they use to express their feelings, regarding sadness, anger, stress, hunger, etc., is swear words. Swearing (e.g. shit, fuck, hell, etc.) is considered as a unique tabooed language. However, "it is a complicated linguistic phenomenon" (Hughes, 2006, p. xv; Wang, 2013, p. 71). Its uniqueness is because of the various meanings that change in the context in which it functions. The word *fuck*, for example, can be used for emphasis, anger or even insulting an individual. Keeping this in mind, every swearword needs an appropriate interpretation.

Following this brief introduction, the present research sought to compare and contrast the translation of swearwords and curses in three different dubbed versions of *Deadpool (2016)* movie based on Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model. Two of them were introduced in Iran by *Qualima Dubbing Studio* in 2016 and 2018 and the third dub was produced and released abroad by the *GEM TV Network* in 2016. To undertake the study, first, the frequency of each strategy was checked and reported. Then, the significance of the difference between the translations was investigated. Finally, considering the 'taboo to taboo' strategy as a criterion, the researchers assessed the translations in terms of completeness which refers simply to producing a better translation of the terms in taboo to taboo translation. In this research, three questions were introduced as follows:

- Q1. What is the frequency of each kind of strategy (taboo to taboo, taboo to non-taboo, censorship, and euphemism) in each translation?
- Q2. Is there any significant difference among the translations regarding the four strategies?
- Q3. In which dubbed version did the translator preserve taboo terms most?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Sharifi and Darchinian (2009) reported that Iranian translators were inclined to face a wide range of taboo terms as briefed below:

- a) Legal or illegal relationships between men and women and words related to them like kissing, hugging, sleeping with, cheating on, etc.
- b) Relations between boys and girls before marriage such as boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.
- c) Uttering sexual organs and related words and expressions
- d) Words and expressions related to forbidden drinks and drugs like alcoholics
- e) Impolite expressions, i.e. curses, swears
- f) Calling features of immoral actions and behaviors like thieving, etc.
- g) Cultural and religious issues which are opposite to those of the translator's society
- h) Stating some issues which may threaten the translator's society politically and disrupt the political situations.

Based on the above 8 classes of taboos, Sharifi and Darchinian (2009) introduced their taboo term classification system as follows:

- 1) Translating the source culture taboo to a target culture taboo ('taboo to taboo' also called 'maintaining'): In this strategy, the original taboo is translated directly into a target taboo item with a similar force like that of the source culture.
- 2) Omitting the source culture taboo ('Censorship' or 'deletion'): During translation the translators decide to exclude some words, sentences or bigger text units to create a target text that is appropriate for the recipient's language, culture and ideologies from certain perspectives. Thus, it is considered the first and easiest way of translating taboo words and expressions. In this case, the translator ignores the taboo terms and concepts easily and censors them as an extra term (Dukate, 2007).
- 3) Substituting the source culture taboo with a non-taboo word or expression ('taboo to non-taboo' or 'replacement'): The translator replaces the taboo concepts with different concepts. Sometimes, substituting the taboo concepts in the first language with another term in the second language certainly distorts the meaning (Dukate, 2007).
- 4) Conveying the source culture taboo in a form of target culture euphemistic equivalent ('Euphemism' or 'mitigating'): Euphemism is a means of censoring the use of language in order to achieve political correctness. Euphemistic usages are the ones chosen as an alternative to the expressions that are not preferred (Allan & Burridge, 2006). As a translation approach, the strong language, the insulting terms, vulgar expressions, etc. are toned down in the source text and a euphemized target text is created and used.

2.2 Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling and Dubbing

The term audiovisual translation (AVT) is a well established term in contemporary translation theory which as stated by Chiaro (2009) covers a number of other terms like 'media translation', 'multimedia translation', 'multimodal translation' and 'screen translation'. Many scholars and theoreticians have used this term to distinguish it from other branches of translation. For example, according to Orero (2004), AVT covers different types of media like films, TV shows, opera, shows for people with hearing problems and the blind, etc.

With the appearance of the dialogue in films, the use of AVT became more popular. As stated by Díaz-Cintas and Anderman (2009, p. 4), "in the era of silent films, translation only concerned the intertitles but with the quick rise of the talkies different forms of language transfer on the screen have been required" (Díaz-Cintas & Anderman, 2009, p. 4).

This area of translation studies mainly includes two basic approaches: The replacement of the original voice with a new soundtrack which Díaz-Cintas and Anderman (2009) call it 'revoicing', and a written version which is known as 'subtitling'. The first research works on AVT dated back to the late 1950s and then flourished in the late 20th century. The early studies on AVT are not available today due to the irregular publication of newspapers and journals. The first conference on dubbing was held in Stockholm in 1987 which motivated scholars to publish an array of books and articles on this subject. Delabastida (1989) certainly was the first scholar who expressed semiotics in audiovisual products from a descriptive point of view. He focused on cultural perspectives and analyzed translation as a process. In 1989, Lambert introduced a similar work in which he described the power of media and the role of language and translation. In his book, Lambert showed the effects of ideological forces on audiovisual products from a new perspective. Generally, AVT is the process of translating verbal components of the video. The main feature in this process involves the synchronization of verbal and non-verbal elements. During working with audiovisual products, translators deal not only with text but also with media art which are of polyphonic nature. Gotlieb (1998) offered four channels of information while translating:

- 1) Verbal audio channel: Dialogues, off-screen voices, songs
- 2) Nonverbal audio channel: Music, sound effects, off-screen sounds
- 3) Verbal and visual channel: Subtitles, signs, notes, inscriptions that appear on the screen
- 4) Non-verbal visual channel: Picture on the screen.

As mentioned above, AVT involves two main methods: Revoicing and subtitling. Revoicing itself can be undertaken in two ways: 1) dubbing in which the original soundtrack is totally lip-synchronized and replaced by a target soundtrack and 2) voice-over, similar to dubbing but the original voice can still be heard in the background.

The preference of one method rather than another depends on the tradition and popularity (some scholars divide countries into "dubbing" and "subtitling" countries), the variety of the audience's taste in the target country (there are dubbed products for children in subtitle countries as well), genre (typically, movies and TV shows are totally dubbed except documentaries and other informative programs to which voice-over is applied), media (cinema, DVD, television) and some other factors like financial issues.

Both techniques are still used and have their cons and pros but "Today, it is generally accepted that [the] different translation approaches make their own individual demands while remaining equally acceptable" (Díaz-Cintas & Anderman, 2009, p. 5).

2.3 Audiovisual Translation and Culture

Today, the importance of translation has doubled. Translation should not be considered as mere transference of the ST into the TT, rather cultural and religious elements must also be taken into consideration. This issue is particularly important in the audiovisual translation, especially the dubbing of movies because the audience of these products are of different age groups and the translator should consider the audience's expectations and norms of the society in translation. Translation and dubbing of foreign movies have always imposed problems on translators since they encompass cultural and ideological elements of a different society. Accordingly, Iranian translators adapt, at times, the elements of Western and foreign culture to the Islamic culture of their audiences by making a series of changes in the ST and manipulating the main dialogues during the translation. Among these problems and troubles are taboo words and profanities.

2.4 Taboo Language in Iran

There is no doubt that each society has its own cultural taboos that may not be considered taboos

in other cultures. For instance, while drinking alcohol in western societies is free, this is prohibited among Iranians and is, in fact, taboo. Persian language has not been substantially examined in terms of taboo and there are not many documents on this subject. Arbab (2012) asserted that Persian has its own taboos and categorized them into sex, family, animals, religion, death, and food, among others. In his article, he studied the daily utterances which undergo a certain level of taboo force, not those that occurred in scripted content on public media. However, due to cultural and legal constraints, taboo language is less used or simply never used within national media.

As a general rule, in Iran, authorization is mandatory for exhibition and distribution of any domestic or foreign cultural product, including original or translated films and literature in the Iranian market (Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2016). A set of rules and regulations have been established by Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to monitor the cultural products of any kind and the publishers of them cannot commit insults to (1) religion and ethics, (2) politics and society, and (3) individual and public rights. Therefore, the taboo language is a red line for the official media in Iran, and naturally, they are reluctant to use it.

Encountering taboo terms in the SL, the translator may not be able to convey the exact concept into the TL. To solve this problem, he/she must be familiar with both source culture and especially target culture to see if the taboo expression in the SL is considered taboo in TL too. Professional and hard-working translators, who understand the culture and norms of the Iranian society, are often able to handle this issue properly to the end. In the case of dubbing, taboos are almost present in all Hollywood movies of different genres and it is up to the translators to soften these profanities and make them compatible with Iranian culture or render them directly into their translation. Thus, there are three possibilities here: a) taboo term in SL is not taboo in TL, b) taboo term in SL is taboo in TL too, and c) the term which is not a taboo in SL is considered as taboo in TL. Considering these possibilities, the translator chooses proper strategies to transfer the meaning of the original.

2.5 Swearing and Swearwords

Taboo language has several forms, among which one can be swearing. Swearing and swearwords are not separated from each other. In fact, swearing activities result in the production of swearwords. According to Andersson and Trudgill (1990, p. 53), "swearing is a type of language use in which the expression:

- a.refers to something that is taboo and/or stigmatized in the culture
- b.should not be interpreted literally
- c.it can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes."

Gao (2013) considered cursing and swearing as linguistic forms. He explained that a set of swearwords and phrases can be found in legal, religious and other formal contexts, i.e. 'heck' and 'dash' (mild forms) and 'fuck' and 'shit' (strong forms). In parallel, taboo language is used every day for many instances expressing feelings such as hate, frustration, and surprise. The most popular speech includes single words or brief sentences, which convey distinct intensities and attract various levels of social acceptance. In these social contexts, since swearing implies sex, excretion, and offense, it belongs to the taboo language. Some of them are related to body parts and four-letter words such as 'ball', 'damn', etc. and some others refer to devils, etc. like 'goodness', 'hell', and 'heavens'.

In addition, Karjalainen (2002) explained, "swearwords are part of taboo words. Taboo words or words that refer to taboo are swearwords. Although all swearwords are taboo, not all taboo words are swearwords" (pp. 18-20). On the same pages he added "when defining a swearword, it is important to keep in mind that not all foul language is swearing. Most people would agree that the use of swearwords is an instance of foul or poor use of language. However, the reverse is not true – foul language does not always automatically involve swearing, that is, at times the taboo word is not a curse but has a real meaning.

As cited by Ljung (1984), an important feature of the swearword is that it should be used in a

non-technical sense. Accordingly, when the referent of the word 'bitch' is a female dog, it cannot be considered a swearword. In contrast, when it is used to disparage a woman, it can be labelled as a swearword. Ljung (1984) further classified swearwords, from an emotive point of view, into two classes namely emotive and emotional. According to him, an emotional swearword is harsher and stronger than an emotive one. For example, when a person, while walking slowly, hits the door or a window, he may show a reaction by uttering a term like 'damn'. But if in the same scenario the person was on a bike he would utter another type of reaction. He might either use an inarticulate groan or reveal a severe cry of pain. Ljung referred to the former as 'emotive' and the latter as 'emotional'.

Jay (2009, p. 2) listed characteristics of swearwords as follows:

- a) sexual references (e.g., 'bl*w job', '*unt'), b) profane or blasphemous (e.g., 'god**n', 'Jesus Chr**t'), c) scatological referents and disgusting objects (e.g., 's**t', 'cr*p', 'd**che bag'), d) some animal names (e.g., 'b**ch', 'p*g', '*ss'), e) '-racial-gender slurs (e.g., 'n*gger', 'f*g', 'd*go'), f) insulting references to perceived psychological, physical/social deviations (e.g., 'ret*rd', 'w*mp', 'l*rd', '*ss'), g) substandard vulgar terms (e.g., 'f*rt face', 'on the r*g'), h) offensive slang (e.g., 'cl*ster', 't*t run').

Finally, Anderson (1985) states that in western cultures, people generally take taboo words, and swearwords, from one or more of the following categories: a) sexual organs and sexual relations, b) religion and church, c) excrement, d) death, e) the physically or mentally disabled, f) prostitution and g) narcotics and crime (p. 79).

2.6 Some Related Studies

There are many scholars and scientists who have done their studies on taboo and its various types in various research fields. However, during recent years the researchers have focused on each type of taboo in different areas.

Jay (1992), for instance, in his book *Cursing in America* examined taboo words from the psycholinguistic-contextual point of view. He concentrated on the connection between cursing and language learning, rage, sex stereotype, semantics, and offensiveness. Censorship, the language content of movies, first-amendment fighting words, sexual harassment, obscene telephone calls and cursing in public schools and their relation to sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics were also discussed and analyzed in his book. Jay (1992) was the first scholar who studied taboo words in movies. Further, Mattsson (2006) focused on swearwords and discourse markers and their translations in Swedish subtitling both quantitatively and qualitatively. He worked on one source text, the American film *Nurse Betty*, and three translations of this film. He concluded:

A high frequency of omission of both features in all three target texts may have its origin in a system of norms governing Swedish original written works and translations, and that the subtitling of swearwords, for various reasons, is more inclined to abide by these norms than is the subtitling of discourse markers, which in turn is governed by additional factors. (p. 1)

In a similar study, Alkadi (2010) fulfilled his doctoral thesis on subtitling and dubbing different types of English AV products (feature films, a TV sitcom, and an American series) into Arabic and the problems a translator may face during the translation process as he also suggested some solutions for these problems. Also, Mardani's (2012) thesis investigated the strategies used by Iranian AV translators in the translation of western linguistic and cultural taboos through a descriptive study. For this purpose, the Persian versions of 3 contemporary English films were selected and compared with the original versions. Then, the strategies used to translate the taboo terms were examined based on Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) classification of eight types of taboos. The results of his research indicated that 'taboo to taboo' and 'compensation' for linguistic taboos, and 'taboo to non-taboo' as well as 'manipulation' for cultural ones were the most common strategies used by the translators for the dubbed versions. He also argued that private dubbing institutions and Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting (IRIB) use a different level of these strategies as IRIB tend

to wield more moderated and indirect strategies to translate linguistic and cultural taboos into Persian. Yet as another example, Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2014) conducted a study on the Persian translation of taboo terms in some dubbed American crime movies. In fact, they investigated the strategies employed by Iranian AV translators in the translation of taboo words. After collecting the data and analyzing them, they found that Iranian AV translators used four different methods in the rendition of original taboos into Persian encompassing. a) Translating the source culture taboo to a target culture taboo, b) deletion of the source culture taboo, c) substituting the target culture taboo with a target culture non-taboo, and d) rendering the source culture taboo to a target culture euphemism. In sum, the descriptive statistics revealed that not all but most of Iranian AV translators were interested in toning down the strength of taboo language, in line with the target culture norms particularly by eliminating or replacing the source culture taboo as the most common strategy with a non-taboo or euphemism, even if almost one-third of these taboos were kept in the dubbed versions.

3. Method

3.1 Data Collection Procedure

Using purposive as well as availability sampling, the researchers selected *Deadpool (2016)* movie as the main data source of the study. It is an American comic-based movie released in 2016 by Twentieth Century Fox Corporation. The reason for selecting this film was that it encompassed abundant taboo expressions. Besides, three different dubbed versions of this film were also used – two versions by Qualima Studio in 2016 and 2018 and one further version by GEM TV network in 2016. The original movie and its dubbed versions were all downloaded from the Internet. In fact, the original movie was downloaded from *Mkvcase* which is a famous website providing access to original movies and series. Similarly, the dubbed versions were retrieved from the Internet TV channels namely Tinymoviez, Namava and GEM. Further, the version of the original movie that had English subtitles was used to increase the accuracy of data extraction. Afterward, the researcher took the following steps to undertake the study.

First the original movie together with its three dubbed versions were watched carefully. At this stage, the researchers watched the movies as many times as it was necessary to hear, understand and record the dialogues. After completion of this stage, the swearwords were extracted and listed. Finally, the terms extracted were analyzed based on the framework of the present study.

3.2. Reliability

To extract the swear words from the original English movie, all the three researchers were involved and hence if there were disagreements between the researchers on whether or not to extract a term as a swear word, they discussed the issue and tried to reach a compromise. This process resulted in a list of 12 swearwords with the total frequency of 136. To compute the inter-rater reliability, the researchers used kappa coefficient and considered themselves (their collaborative performance) as 'rater1' and compared the accuracy of their data with that of Adelia Januarto 'rater2' who had conducted a study on swearwords in *Deadpool (2016)* film in 2017. Table 1 shows the list of swearwords extracted by each side along with their frequencies and Table 2 shows the result of the inter-rater reliability.

Table 1. *Swearwords Found by Raters 1&2 in Deadpool (2016).*

| No. | Data | Rater1 (Researchers 1,2,3) | Rater2 (Adelia) |
|-----|------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Fuck | 66 | 63 |
| 2. | Ass | 12 | 12 |
| 3. | Bitch | 2 | 2 |
| 4. | Hell | 2 | 2 |
| 5. | Damn | 3 | 3 |
| 6. | Dick | 5 | 4 |
| 7. | Penis | 2 | 1 |
| 8. | Shit | 35 | 33 |
| 9. | Cock | 6 | 5 |
| 10. | Piss | 1 | 1 |
| 11. | Stupid | 1 | 2 |
| 12. | Douchepool | 1 | 1 |

Table 2. *Inter-rater Reliability between Raters 1&2.*

| | Value | Asymptotic Standard Error ^a | Approximate T ^b | Approximate Significance |
|------------------------------|-------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Measure of Agreement (kappa) | 0.51 | 0.14 | 4.85 | 0.000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 12 | | | |

The kappa coefficient and its statistical analysis is a numerical measure ranging from -1 to +1. A value of +0.5 or above is often considered as acceptable indicating a proportionate and direct agreement between the raters. As indicated in Table 2, the kappa coefficient computed was +0.51 which confirmed the consensus between raters 1 and 2 in extracting swearwords from the movie.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

In order to answer the research questions, the extracted data were entered into SPSS Version 23 and then descriptive (frequency and percentage scores) and inferential statistics (Chi-square tests) were used. The results obtained have been reported in the next section.

4. Results

Totally, 136 examples of swearwords were found in the original movie. The analysis of a sample portion of the collected data is provided below (QD and GD stand for Qualima Dub and GEM Dub respectively). The extraction process and determining the type of swearwords was based on the classifications proposed by Pinker (2010) and Andersson and Trudgill (1990) respectively. Moreover, the motivational factors were set based on Stapleton's (2003) classification and Januarto's (2017) analysis of swearwords in *Deadpool (2016)* movie.

4.1 Sample Swearwords Analysis

Here, five sample dialogues are provided to clarify the way the researchers analyzed the data.

Dialogue 1

DEADPOOL: Like two hobos fucking¹ in a shoe filled with piss².

Translations:

QD1:

ددپول: عین کیسه‌ی صند پیرمردی که زخم بستر داره.

QD2:

ددپول: چه میدونم پسر جون مگه من تا حالا خوردم که ازم میپرسی!

GD:

ددپول: مزه‌ی ادرار دوتا بی‌خانمان تو یه کفش.

Explanation:

Type¹: dysphemistic swearing

Fucking is used to talk coarsely instead of *having sex* or *sleeping with* and it is less acceptable in public than its synonyms.

Motivational factor¹: intimacy.

Context¹: The two characters are talking about their love but Deadpool suddenly changes the conversation towards having sex.

Type²: dysphemistic swearing

Piss refers to urine or pee literally and it is more impolite and coarser than other synonymous words. Thus, it is refused to be used publicly.

Motivational factor²: intimacy.

Context²: The two characters are talking about the effects of love in their life and how the absence of love could make life unpleasant.

Translation analysis:

In QD1's translation, in addition to the swearwords, the concept of the whole dialogue is changed in a way that the meaning is distorted. According to Dukate (2007), distortion is considered a part of substitution (taboo to non-taboo) strategy. In QD2's translation, same as QD1, the translator substituted the original dialogue with an irrelevant Persian phrase. GD's translation is more faithful to the original dialogue than QD1 and QD2. The translator, however, has ignored to translate *fucking* and rendered *piss* into *Edrar*. There are two words in the Persian language that convey the concept of urination, i.e. *Edrar* and *Shaash*. The latter is more tabooed than the first one in Iranian culture. Consequently, deletion (censorship) and euphemism are the two translation strategies picked up by the translator respectively.

Dialogue 2

DEADPOOL: This shit³.

Translations:

QD1:

ددپول: خودت ببین.

QD2:

ددپول: این کارو.

GD:

ددپول: این بلای مزخرفو.

Explanation:

Type: humorous swearing

This excretion word is used humorously because the speaker did not mean its literal meaning, i.e. feces, but to point to his own face and making fun of his facial expression.

Motivational factor: a way to shock.

Context: Dopinder asks Deadpool about the red suit that he is wearing. Deadpool unmasks his face to answer Dopinder's question.

Translation analysis:

This shit has been translated into *Khodet bebin* in QD1. The Persian phrase is completely irrelevant to the original meaning of the English dialogue. In other words, the taboo is rendered into non-taboo. For QD2, *shit* is translated into *Kar* which means *job* and it is not a taboo word in Persian culture. Therefore, taboo to non-taboo strategy has been applied. Translating the swearword into *Kare mozakhraf* in GD can be counted as a euphemism because *Mozakhraf* means *useless* in Persian with a little bit intensity in meaning.

Dialogue 3

MAN: Fucking⁴ mutant.

Translations:

QD1:

مرد: جهش یافته‌ی آشغال.

QD2:

مرد: جهش یافته‌ی عوضی.

GD:

مرد: هیولای عوضی.

Explanation:

Type: emphatic swearing

The swearword is used as an adjective to help the swearer to determine the addressee to whom he refers.

Motivational factor: aversion.

Context: Francis's cargo for the businessman is delayed. So, Francis suggests the man be patient by choking him.

Translation analysis:

In QD1, the translator has chosen a Persian swearword, i.e. *Ashqal*, to convey the meaning of *Fucking*. Thus, taboo to taboo strategy is used. However, in QD2 and GD translations, the translator has euphemized the sex word into *Avazi* because the intensity of this word is lower than *Ashqal* in the Persian culture.

Dialogue 4

DEADPOOL: Aw, shit!⁵*Translations:*

QD1:

ددپول: آه تو اون روحت.

QD2:

ددپول: آه، لعنتی.

GD:

ددپول: اوه لعنتی.

*Explanation:*Type: cathartic swearing

Deadpool sees it bad luck to forget the weapons. Therefore, the exclamation is performed for something unwanted.

Motivational factor: anger/tension- release.Context: During the mission, Deadpool forgets to bring his weapons with himself.**Translation analysis:**

Aay too oon roohet is a Persian slang equivalent by which the translator has toned down the meaning of *Aw, shit* in QD1. Besides, in QD2 and GD translations, *La'nati* is the exact meaning of the word *Damn* which is less intense than *Shit* in the English language. As a result, euphemism is applied to the three translations.

Dialogue 5

DEADPOOL: Nope, no time. Fuck it⁶.*Translations:*

QD1:

ددپول: نه. وقت نیس. جهنم.

QD2:

ددپول: نه نه. وقت ندارم. ولش کن.

GD:

ددپول: نه. وقت نداریم مهم نیس. به درک.

*Explanation:*Type: cathartic swearing

Here, misfortune caused swearing and provoked Deadpool to swear and express his emotion.

Motivational factor: anger/tension-release.

Context: Dopinder offers Deadpool to return so that he brings his weapons back, but Deadpool refuses because he has no time.

Translation analysis:

In QD1 and GD translations, *Jahannam* and *Be darak* are offered respectively as the meanings of the swearword. These words almost have the same connotation among the Iranian people but they do not possess the force as *Fuck it* does in English conversations. Hence, the euphemism strategy is applied. In QD2's translation, the translator picks up *Velesh kon* meaning *Leave it* or *Forget it*. This is a commonplace and polite expression. In other words, the substitution strategy is utilized.

4.2. Answering Research Questions

After analyzing the collected swearwords and identifying the strategies applied to their different translations, the researchers endeavored to answer the research questions of the study. The results have been provided below:

4.2.1 Frequency analysis of each Strategy

The first research question of the study was as follows:

Q1. What is the frequency of each kind of strategy (taboo to taboo, taboo to non-taboo, censorship and euphemism) in each translation?

Looking for the answer to the first question, the frequency of each strategy used in the dubs (QD1, QD2, and GD) was obtained. Tables 3-5 illustrate the frequencies and percentages of the strategies in each dub.

Table 3. *The Frequency of each Strategy in QD1.*

| Strategy | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Taboo to Taboo | 29 | 21.3% |
| Taboo to non-Taboo | 53 | 39.0% |
| Omission | 28 | 20.6% |
| Euphemism | 26 | 19.1% |
| Total | 136 | 100% |

As shown in Table 3, taboo to non-taboo strategy was used 53 times (39%) by the translator rather than other strategies. Moreover, taboo to taboo, omission (censorship), and euphemism ranked second to fourth respectively.

Table 4. *The Frequency of each Strategy in QD2.*

| Strategy | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Taboo to Taboo | 15 | 11% |
| Taboo to non-Taboo | 53 | 39% |
| Omission | 31 | 22.8% |
| Euphemism | 37 | 27.2% |
| Total | 136 | 100% |

In Table 4, like Table 3, taboo to non-taboo rendition ranked first with the frequency of 53 (39%). Further, euphemism and omission ranked second to third with 27.2% and 22.8% respectively. While translating the swearwords, the translator used taboo to taboo the least (15 cases, 11%).

Table 5. *The Frequency of each Strategy in GD.*

| Strategy | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Taboo to Taboo | 21 | 15.4% |
| Taboo to non-Taboo | 57 | 41.9% |
| Omission | 17 | 12.5% |
| Euphemism | 41 | 30.1% |
| Total | 136 | 100% |

Finally, in GD, taboo to taboo and euphemism were used more frequently by 41.9% and 30.1% respectively. Taboo to taboo ranked third (15.4%) and omission was used the least by the translator to render swearwords from English into Persian.

4.2.2 Checking Significance of difference Among the Strategies

The second research question of the study was as follows:

Q2. *Is there any significant difference among the translations regarding the four strategies?*

The purpose of the second question was to find if there was a significant difference between the three translations in terms of the application of the four strategies. The results obtained using Chi-square test have been provided in Tables 6 to 8.

Table 6. *Chi-square Results for QD1*QD2.*

| Chi-square | Value | Df | Asymp. (2-sided) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----|------------------|
| Pearson Chi- square | 29.42 ^a | 9 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 27.9 | 9 | .001 |
| Liner-by-Liner Association | 4.51 | 1 | .034 |
| N of Valid Cases | 136 | - | - |

As indicated in Table 6, the p-value computed was .001 ($p < 0.05$) and hence it could be concluded that the two dubbed versions of Qualima studio were significantly different in their application of the four strategies.

Table 7. *Chi-square Results for QD1*GD.*

| Chi-square | Value | Df | Asymp. (2-sided) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----|------------------|
| Pearson Chi- square | 36.34 ^a | 9 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 34.32 | 9 | .000 |
| Liner-by-Liner Association | 6.89 | 1 | .009 |
| N of Valid Cases | 136 | - | - |

As shown in Table 7, the p-value computed was .000 ($p < 0.05$) and hence it could be concluded that the first dub of Qualima studio and the dub of GEM network were significantly different in their application of the four strategies.

Table 8. *Chi-square Results for QD2*GD.*

| Chi-square | Value | Df | Asymp. (2-sided) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----|------------------|
| Pearson Chi- square | 45.95 ^a | 9 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 40.83 | 9 | .000 |
| Liner-by-Liner Association | 20.3 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 136 | - | - |

Like Tables 6 and 7, in Table 8 the p-value computed was .000 ($p < 0.05$) and hence it could be concluded that the second dub of the Qualima studio is also significantly different from that of

GEM network. This difference among the three translations could be due to variations among translators, or better, translator perspectives and idiosyncrasies.

4.2.3 Preservance of taboo terms in translations

The third research question of the study was as follows:

Q3. In which dubbed version did the translator preserved taboo terms most?

To answer this research question, the frequency information of strategy application in research question 1 was utilized. Here, the main objective was to determine in which dub the taboo-to-taboo strategy had been used most by the translator(s). As indicated in Tables 3 to 5, taboo-to-taboo strategy was observed most in QD1. That is, the translator(s) of QD1 rendered the English taboo into a Persian one in 21.3% of the cases. In QD2 the rate of taboo-to-taboo strategy observed was only 11% while in GD this rate was 15.4%.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As indicated in the results, in all the three dubs (QD1 & 2, GD), the taboo to non-taboo (substitution) was most frequent – 53 (39%) for QD1 and QD2, and 57 (41.9%) for GD. Dukate (2007) calls taboo to non-taboo a two-fold strategy. The first one is that the translator translates the taboo words of the source text into meaningful but non-taboo elements and the second one is that the translator distorts the meaning and substitutes a made-up item. Both of these techniques were used in the three translations although these two sub-classes were not dealt with separately in this research. This shows that taboo to non-taboo is a publically accepted strategy and that maybe the social and cultural atmosphere of the Iranian society instigated the translators to use fewer taboos. In line with the findings of the present study, Abdi (2007), also, in his research focused on strategy types used by translators to render English taboos into Persian. He analyzed 10 movies dubbed from English into Persian and concluded that taboo to non-taboo was one of the most common strategies used by translators. Or in another study, Engliana (2012), using a contrastive design, studied strategies used by translators to translate swearwords and slangs of an American movie subtitles into Indonesian language. Having compared the English swearwords and slangs with their substitutes in the Indonesian subtitles, she found that generalization was the most common strategy used to deal with swearwords and slangs, that is, more general swearwords were used rather than harsher ones to reduce their harshness. Yet in another study, Cuenca (2016) analyzed translation strategies used to translate taboo words from English into Spanish in film subtitles. He concluded that in a large number of cases (43%), taboo words were omitted or softened – i.e. replaced by a neutral word. Finally, Elmgrab (2020) studied cultural untranslatability and strategies used to translate taboo terms from English into Arabic. In his study, he focused on the role of religion in translation of taboo terms and concluded that because of Islam, translators often soften taboo terms to preserve cultural bounds in the society.

Nevertheless, a number of taboo-to-taboo renderings also occurred in the three dubs (29 cases, 21.3% in QD1, 15 cases, 11% in QD2 and 21 cases, 15.4% in GD) although the percentages were lower than taboo to non-taboos. As mentioned in the literature review, the Iranian society and culture is not much tolerant of the application of taboo terms in public media. A review of QD1 and QD2 reveals an interesting finding. While in the first release (QD1), the rate of taboo-to-taboo was 21.3% in the second release (QD2) this rate was reduced by 50% and reached 11%. This might be due to the social and cultural atmosphere of the Iranian society, that is, people often prefer to watch a dub that has fewer taboos. This fact might have caused *Qualima Studio* to react by introducing another dub that contained fewer taboos.

Another point is that in all the three dubs, omission ranked third among the four strategies studied – 28 cases, 20.6%, in QD1; 31 cases, 22.8%, in QD2, and 17 cases, 12.5% in GD. The difference between QD1&2, on the one hand, and GD, on the other, is well justified. In fact, QD1 and 2 were dubbed in Iran and hence while encountering harsh taboo terms they were more inclined to delete them altogether, that is, they used more censorship. Cuenca (2016) also observed more omission/sensorship in translation of taboo words from English into Spanish in film subtitles. Unlike QD

1 and 2, in GD less censorship was observed. This could be due to the fact that GEM dubbing studio operates outside Iran and hence is not obliged, unlike Iranian tv channels, to abide by the terminology application regulations that are in place in Iran for Iranian radio and tv channels. Consequently, while some harsh and teasing taboos are censored in Iranian radio and tv channels, translators of GEM tv have more freedom to use them. A general finding of the present study is that the Iranian AV translators have a great tendency to suppress or, at least, tone down (or soften, as asserted by Cuenca (2016)) the force and intensity of the original swearwords. They do so to meet the target audience's expectations. Similarly and focusing on ideological and cultural issues, Miandoab (2017) studied the Persian translations of some dubbed Hollywood movies to determine the types of strategies used by translators while rendering English taboo terms into Persian. Having applied Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model, she observed that given the ideological and cultural features of the Iranian society, Iranian AV translators also attempted to moderate and soften the original taboo terms.

It should be noted that translation and dubbing of comedy-action movies steeped in swearwords are extremely difficult, especially in the case of American-made movies, due to the secular culture and excessive freedoms that exist in this country. It makes the translation even more complicated. Accordingly, Persian translators have to adapt foreign content to Iranian and Islamic culture in their translations to deliver a proper feed to their audiences, which despite its benefits may, at times, distort and damage the original. In fact, the Americans sometimes deploy some taboo terms simply to emphasize some of their utterances. This regular way of speaking is unacceptable and avoided in Iranian culture and taboo terms are either omitted or toned down using strategies like euphemism or taboo to non-taboo, a point which was observed abundantly in this research.

Finally, complexity of the terms used in the movie as well as the translator's lack of familiarity with the target language and culture, and his/her inadequate knowledge on translation could have played a role in abundant application of substitution strategy in the dubs under study.

The results reported in this research have a number of implications for different target groups. The first point is that in the model used in this study only four classes of strategies were introduced, i.e. taboo-to-taboo, taboo-to-non-taboo, omission and euphemism. Although the model was successful in describing all the instances of the swearwords observed in the data, it appears that it was not detailed enough to define different sub-classes within each strategy. Most importantly, it did not consider the translations in each strategy on a continuum – in terms of degrees. For example, a translator may use euphemism or non-taboo for a taboo term. But there are often potentially multiple equivalents that can be differentiated based on their degree of neutralization or euphemism. It appears that the results of this study can encourage model developers to think about this issue and introduce more detailed models that can classify terms in terms of their degree of non-tabooiness, euphemism, etc. Besides theoretical implications, the results of the present study can have a number of pedagogical implications as well. The first target group who can use the findings of the present study are AV translators. They can use the results reported in this study as a guideline and framework to render English swearwords into Persian. University professors of translation studies can also take advantage of the findings of this study. They can use the points made here to direct their syllabi towards the real needs of their students. They can incorporate cultural issues in their teachings and also endeavor to teach their students non-taboo terms and help them gain a good command of euphemized terms. Like the two groups mentioned above, students of translation studies can also benefit the results of this study. They can use this research and its findings as a guideline for their future translation activities. This research can raise their awareness of cultural variations and hence help them fit their translations to the target culture. Finally, dictionary compilers can also use the findings of this study and introduce multilingual dictionaries on taboo terms and endeavor to incorporate a variety of equivalents for each term, i.e. euphemized and non-taboo equivalents, etc.

While undertaking this study, the researchers faced a number of limitations as well. The first one is that they used only one English movie – *Deadpool (2016)* – along with its three Persian dubs. The researchers focused on this limited dataset due to shortage of time. Had they had more time they could have included more English movies in their study. Another limitation concerns the

procedure used which is likely to threaten the internal validity of the study as well. In fact, to select the data, the researchers focused on purposive and availability sampling techniques which are non-probabilistic measures. This was done since the researchers had to work with data sources that were available to them. Such sampling techniques can also exert a negative impact on the external validity of the study. That is, since the sampling techniques used were non-probabilistic, the authors and also the readers should be cautious in extending the findings of the sample to the whole population. Another point is that all the three authors of this paper are EFL learners of English. More studies need to be done to determine if analysis of the data by native or ESL researchers would bear the same results. Further, in this study from among the many models available, the model by Sharifi and Darchinian (2009) was used. The results obtained in this study could be trusted more if application of other relevant models also confirmed the findings of this study. Finally, the researchers did not have time to study application of swearwords in books, social networks, the web, etc. Inclusion of such new data sources may introduce new insights into the topic under study.

The present research investigated the translation of swearwords in a movie which falls within the realm of comedy and action genre. Other researchers may undertake a similar study using movies and TV shows of other genres, i.e. family, criminal, horror, etc. In this research *Deadpool* (2016) movie was used as the main data source. Other researchers may select other movies, along with their relevant translations, to investigate the translation of swearwords in those data sources. Further, in this research the authors used Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model to compare application of strategies by translators while rendering English swearwords into Persian. Certainly, other researchers can use other models, like Dukate's (2007), to investigate swearwords. Many English movies available in the market have already been translated into different languages. In the present study the authors only considered two languages namely English vs. Persian. Other researchers can consider more languages, e.g. translations into three or four languages. This can provide readers with good insights into application of swearwords in different languages. Also, in this research English was considered as the source language and Persian as the target one. Other researchers can use the opposite and work on a Persian movie, as the source text, and its translations into English as the target text. This can provide us with good information on how non-Iranian translators render Persian movies into English and other languages. Finally, in this study the researchers focused on movies, others may want to study swearwords used in books, emails, social networks, the web, etc.

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