

## English Subtitle and Extra-linguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs) at Fajr Film Festival



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### Abstract

The complexity of culture, language, and the relationship existing between them develops Extra-linguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) as a very challenging task for a translator. Considering this, this study was intended to investigate the strategies applied by translators for rendering extra-linguistic references in the Iranian movies screened at international film festivals. To this end, several such movies were randomly selected and viewed to spot the extra-linguistic culture-bound references and extract their subtitled English translations. Then, the English-rendered equivalents of the identified Persian references were analyzed and classified according to Pederson's taxonomy of ECR transfer strategies to recognize which strategies the translators have used to render such items. The obtained results were presented in tables and diagrams to show the frequency and percentage of each utilized strategy. "Substitution" and "direct translation" were reported as the most and the least frequently applied strategies.

ترجمه ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی در زیرنویس انگلیسی فیلم‌های ایرانی  
پیدایی فرهنگی، زبان، و روابط موجود بین آنها "ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی" (ECR) را به عنوان یک امر چالش برانگیز برای مترجم توسعه می دهد (سلیمی، 2010). این مطالعه با هدف بررسی استراتژی های ترجمه شده برای ارائه ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی در فیلم های ایرانی اکران شده در جشنواره های بین المللی، مورد بررسی قرار گرفت. بدین منظور، تعدادی از این فیلم ها به همراه زیرنویس های ترجمه شده انتخاب، و جهت شناسایی "ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی" بررسی شدند. سپس، معادل های ارائه شده انگلیسی شناسایی شده بر طبق مدل پدerson (2005) استراتژی های بکار رفته توسط مترجمان مختلف مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند. در نهایت، نتایج حاصل از بررسی در جداول و نمودارهای مرتبط به منظور تعیین فراوانی و درصد اتخاذ هر یک از استراتژی ها، نشان داده شدند. استراتژی "جایگزینی" بعنوان بیشترین، و "ترجمه مستقیم" به عنوان کمترین استراتژی بکار رفته گزارش شده است.

واژگان کلیدی: زیرنویس، ارجاعات فرهنگی برون زبانی، ترجمه صوتی و تصویری

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## Introduction

The word misunderstanding writes Rabassa (1996), is crucial in most spheres of life. Misunderstandings are said to derive from incompatibilities in the processing of media that carry them: languages. Yet misunderstandings are not only the products of linguistic incompatibilities *per se* but of cultural ones as well. This means that misunderstandings generally occur in particular social structures, particular histories, and prevailing norms of language production and reception. All these can be said to make up the ingredients of the culture and the ideology subsumed within it. Culture involves the totality of attitudes toward the world, events, other cultures, and peoples and how the attitudes are mediated. In other words, culture refers to beliefs and value systems tacitly assumed to be collectively shared by particular social groups and to the positions taken by producers and receivers of texts, including translations, during the mediation process (Cited in Faiq, 2004, p. 1)

The first step towards an examination of the processes of translation must be to accept that although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to *semiotics*, the science that studies sign systems or structures, sign processes, and sign functions (Hawkes, 1977; cited in Bassnette, 2002, p. 22). Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach, that translation involves the transfer of ‘meaning’ contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria (Bassnett, 2002).

Edward Sapir claims language is a guide to social reality and that human beings are at the mercy of the language that has become the medium of expression for their society. Experience, he asserts, is largely determined by the language habits of the community, and each separate structure represents a separate reality (Bassnett, 2002, p. 22):

*No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Cited in Bassnett, 2002, p. 22).*

Culture-bound terms or as some call them Cultural-Specific Items (CSIs) refer to those which have no equivalents or different positions in the target reader’s cultural system, thus causing difficulties in the translation of their functions and meanings in the source text into the target text. According to Hatim and Mason (1990, p. 223-4);

*“It is certainly true that in recent years the translator has increasingly come to be seen as a cultural mediator rather than a mere linguistic broker. It is also true that, in any form of translation, translators tend to apply a general strategy that will favor either an SL-oriented approach or a TL-oriented approach.”*

There are many definitions of multimedia, hereinafter abbreviated as MM, as well as the fact that there exists quite a large number of multimedia project types such as electronic books and magazines, multimedia databases, interactive education, interactive art, and performance, etc. (Cattrysse 1992, cited in Gambier, 1998, p.7-12).

As far as Cattrysse (1992) is concerned, MM could be defined in a very wide sense as the processing and presentation of information in two or more media simultaneously. This process and presentation refer to text, graphics, and pictures, if not animation and motion video. He defined Audiovisual Translation (AVT) or MM translation in terms of translating a message into an audiovisual or multimedia message, arguing that this specific translation definition paves the way for the integration of linguistic translational aspects into the global AV or MM communication, and provides the possibility to identify and analyze what is common and what is specific to verbal and non-verbal translation.

What Meckel (1996) stated is that if a translation is expected to be a communicative process, the translation theory needs to pay more attention to other than verbal code so that the target of maintaining and boosting translation position in the field of communication could be realized (cited in Gambier and Gottlieb, 2001, p. 65-72). Subtitling, as a very significant sub-category of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), is the translation of spoken (written) source of the text of an audiovisual product into a written target text which is added to the images of the original product at the bottom of the screen.

Gottlieb (1998), enjoying the translation model proposed by Jacobson (1959), classified subtitling in terms of interlingual and intralingual types. Accordingly, the target language is the same as the source language in the intralingual subtitling while, in interlingual subtitling, the target language is different from the source language.

### **The Rationale of the Study**

The reason for choosing such movies as the study's corpus was that the movies produced and directed by nationally and internationally accredited Iranian directors and filmmakers, like almost every type of artistic work, contain a specific range of cultural content. Therefore, these people

along with their art products are among the Iranian cultural messengers. And since these movies have to be dubbed or subtitled to be understandable for the target audience, the translator's mission in such a case would be highly significant and effective in transferring the message which has been intended to be explicitly or implicitly conveyed by the film.

Another rationale for researching the subject of Extra-linguistic Culture bound References (ECRs) based on such corpus is that so far there has been a couple of studies done in the area investigating the translation strategies applied in movie subtitle translation from English to Persian, and even fewer researches have been performed to find out about those strategies used by Iranian translators to render culture-specific items existing in Persian movies from Persian into English. And finally, as far as the current study was concerned, no research paper or study has been written to investigate translation strategies and techniques of such items in the translation of Iranian Persian language movies which have been screened at international film festivals. Therefore, the potential results of this study could contribute to professional translators and those fresh and just-graduated translators planning to start a career in the field of movie subtitle translation. More specifically, those translators whose most interesting and expert translation field is to translate the would-be screened Iranian movies at international film festivals could enjoy the descriptively analyzed results of this study.

### **Significance of the Study**

The movies produced and directed by nationally and/or internationally accredited Iranian directors and filmmakers, like almost every type of artistic work, contain a specific range of cultural content. Therefore, these people along with their art products are among the cultural messengers of the country. And since these movies have to be dubbed or subtitled to be understandable for the target reader, the translator's mission in such a case will be highly significant and effective in transferring the message which has been intended to be explicitly or implicitly conveyed by the film director and/or writer using the source language. In other words, if the translator fails to do his task sufficiently in the movie translation, it could be deemed that the movie has failed to say what has been intended to express, perhaps reducing the respective success level of the artistic production among the target audience and festival juries.

Therefore, the potential results of this research may contribute to professional translators or novice ones, and just-graduated translators planning to start a career in the field of movie subtitle

translation. More specifically, those translators whose most interested in the translation field could enjoy the descriptively analyzed results of this study.

### **Problem**

Different translators, depending on many criteria such as background knowledge, experience, academic education, respective context, target audience requirements, and the like, may render extra-linguistic culture-bound terms in several various ways using different techniques and strategies. Furthermore, the complexity of a typical culture-bound item and its dependency on the multiple cultural values and traditions of source language-speaking people could be in such a way that leaves the translator no option other than deleting the item in question during the process of translation. Therefore, Failure to identify culture-bound items and remove them may distort meaning.

So far, there has been a couple of studies done in the area investigating the translation strategies applied in movie subtitle translation from English to Persian, and even fewer researches have been carried out to find out about the strategies used by Iranian translators to render culture-specific items existing in Persian movies from Persian into English. And finally, as far as the current study was concerned, a few research papers or studies have been written to investigate the translation strategies and techniques of such items when translating the Iranian Persian language movies which have been screened at international film festivals. Accordingly, due to the lack of studies in this field, the main concern of this project was to investigate the strategies along with their frequencies that are used by different translators in rendering ECRs.

The present study intended to investigate some Persian translations of movies screened at international film festivals in terms of extra-linguistic culture-bound references (ECRs). In the other words, this research aimed at investigating the applied strategies used by Iranian translators in rendering ECRs. Also, highlighting the frequency of each strategy is another objective of it. Moreover, the present project tried to identify the most and the least applied strategies in the translation of ECRs.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the above research objectives, the following research questions were addressed:

**Q1.** What types of strategies have been used by Iranian translators to render ECRs in Persian language movies screened at international film festivals?

**Q2.** What is the frequency of each strategy?

**Q3.** What is the most and the least applied strategy in the translation of ECRs?

### Literature Review

The term “Audiovisual Translation” (AVT), also called ‘screen translation’ or ‘film translation’ could be applied to refer to all translation activities tightly related to audiovisual aspects of the communicative mode. In this type of translation “both the acoustic channel through air vibrations and the visual channel through light waves are simultaneously utilized”, making AVT different from other types of communication such as communication via books, radio, telephone, etc. (Delbastita, 2002).

Gottlieb (as cited in Baker, 1998, p. 247) provided a general typology of forms of "Audiovisual Translation":

To show a film in the language it was produced;

Dubbing;

Voice-over, narration, and commentary; and

Subtitling

Of the aforesaid typology, subtitling is the most widely used method of course except dubbing. According to Baker (1998), subtitling involved the superimposition of written text onto the screen. The film is shown in the original language while there are usually 30 to 40-character lines at the bottom of the screen which contain text in the language of the audience. The subtitle is defined by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) as the process of providing synchronized captions for films and television dialogue. Samacharkar (2010) carried out a case study using Pederson's (2005) framework to investigate ECR translation strategies in the English subtitle of a Persian-speaking movie entitled "The Lizard" (2004) directed by Kamal Tabrizi. As it was pointed out, the author has used Pederson's (2005) taxonomy of ECR transfer strategies to analyze the data collected in the course of his descriptive study, suggesting that the identified ECRs of the Persian movie subtitle in question have been analyzed against the main six strategies of Retention, Specification, Direct Translation, Generalization, Substitution, and Omission (Samacharakar, 2010). Samakar's (2010) conclusions indicated that out of 77 instances of culture-specific elements identified in the film in question, 36 instances were rendered-oriented strategies and the remaining 41 instances were rendered by means of-oriented strategies (Samachar, 2010).

The study's results also showed that Substitution, Direct Translation, Retention, Specification, Omission, and finally Generalization are respectively rated the most to the least applied ECR translation strategies. Samachar (2010) also maintained that a probable reason for Substitution and more specifically Paraphrasing to be the most frequent strategy is that since most of the Persian culture-bound elements do not exist in the target culture, the subtitler preferred to replace them with some sort of paraphrase which does not necessarily involve a target culture-bound term so that the intended meaning could be transferred. He also believed that although Paraphrase is used frequently in subtitling, it has its shortcomings because of the conflicting nature between subtitling and paraphrase as paraphrase deals with using a TL phrase or sentence to replace one SL cultural term while subtitling is a condensed form of translation in which parts of the original dialogue are usually omitted.

### Method

This research fell under the category of corpus-based descriptive translation Studies (DTS). To identify the strategies and techniques used by Iranian translators to render the extra-linguistic culture-bound references, Pederson's (2005) taxonomy of ECR Transfer Strategies was applied. A corpus consisting of 11 Persian movies, is discussed in detail in the next sections of the research.

As the research title denoted, the corpus of the study comprised of English subtitles and in particular the ECRs in such subtitles, of the Iranian Persian-speaking movies which have been screened at international film festivals. The Iranian movies, with their English transliteration in parenthesis that were used for data collection during the study, were;

Bashu, the Little Stranger (Bashu, Gharibeh-ye-Koochak), directed by Bahram Beyzaei (1990)

Offside (Offside), directed by Jafar Panahi (2006)

Taste of Cherry (Ta'm-e Guilass), directed by Abbas Kiarostami (1997)

Ten (Dah), directed by Abbas Kiarostami (2002)

The Lady (Baanoo), directed by Darius Mehrjooi (1999)

The Mirror (Aayeneh), directed by Jafar Panahi (1997)

The Pear Tree (Derakht-e-Golabi), directed by Darius Mehrjooi (1998)

The Runner (Davandeh), directed by Amir Naderi (1990)

The Song of Sparrows (Avaz-e Gonjeshk-haa), directed by Majid Majidi (2008)

The Travelers (Mosaferan), directed by Bahram Beyzaei (1993)

The Wind Will Carry Us (Bad Ma Ra Khahad Bord), directed by Abbas Kiarostami, (1999)

### Results

The collected data were presented in the form of different tables, each one about one single movie from among the 11 movies which have been selected as subjects of the present research. Apart from the first column which contains the item number of each row, there are three columns namely, Source Language ECRs, Translation, and Translation Strategy. The second column i.e. Source Language ECR includes each movie's extra-linguistic culture-bound references aurally spotted and written down. The equivalent translations of such references, extracted from the English subtitles of the movies in question, are provided in the third column. And finally, the third column includes the translation strategy used by the translator to render such Persian ECR into English for a typical English language user.

It is to be pointed out that repetitive Persian culture-bound references of each movie with the same English translation are entered into the relevant table as one single entry unless such a Persian ECR in question has been rendered differently in different shots of the movie. In that case, there are different entries for that repetitive ECR since different equivalent translations of such items could be classified into different categories of translation strategies mentioned in the framework of the study, hence affecting the total number and frequency of each strategy application. Another guide on the tables, which are included in sections under Research Findings and Data Analysis, is that a large number of the identified ECRs and their renderings have been provided within some short statements or phrases articulated by the movie characters. The reason for so doing is that in many cases, it was almost impossible to detextualize and/or decontextualize the ECR in question; therefore, most of the ECRs and their translations have been underlined while placed within the related sentence or phrase. In some other cases, even the ECR along with that short phrase or statement has been underlined while the ECR itself is double-underlined since it has been linguistically impossible to apply, read, or understand such an item without some text or context around it. It is also to be noted that only some of the collected data of the study will be provided in the following tables. The complete set of the data collected will be presented per movie and also per ECR Transfer Strategy in the Appendices section at the end of the research. The first table 1 presents some of the extracted translation strategies of "ECR" from the movie entitled *Bashu*, the *Little Stranger* directed by Bahram Beyzaei (1990).



**Table 1***ECRs of Bashu, the Little Stranger*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	کیسی [کی هستی تو]؟ گبری؟	Who are you?	Omission
2.	هر آدمیزادی اسمی داره، اونی که نداره غول صحرايه [صحرا است]	Everybody has a name, except <u>giants</u>	Generalization
3.	خاله پسر [پسر خاله]	...	Omission
4.	چوب خط ات پره	It pays the debt, <u>you owe me a lot</u>	Substitution
5.	رو به قیله دراز کشیده	The boy is <u>dying</u>	Substitution
6.	کسی را نمی بینم ریاب بزندا!	Have you seen anybody playing the <u>flute</u> ?	Substitution
7.	خرمایزان میان آتش ها شنیده اید؟	...	Omission
8.	قران اضافه بود 8 جمع حساب تو	You always overcharge me	Omission
9.	کی بود نی میزد؟	Who was playing the <u>flute</u> ?	Substitution

Table 2 illustrates some examples of all the applied translation strategies in the movie called *Offside*, directed by Jafar Panahi (2006).

**Table 2***ECRs of Offside*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	نمی خواد فردین بازی در بیاری	Stop <u>acting the hero</u>	Substitution
2.	سلامتی آقای راننده صلوات بلند	Say <u>a blessing</u> for his health	Generalization
3.	من خودم ناموس دارم. تو عین آبجی من می مونی	<u>I'm not a bastard</u> . You could be my sister	Substitution
4.	به قرآن سه سوت ناکارش میکنما	I'll beat his arse so hard	Omission
5.	الان حاجی از راه می رسه	<u>The chief</u> will be here any minute	Generalization
6.	اصلاً همیشه دو تا نامحرم کنار هم بشینن	<u>A man and a woman</u> can't sit together	Generalization

7.	چادرت رو درآر	Take off your <u>chador</u>	Retention
8.	این هم مینی بوس نعلش کنشی ما ،فاتحه!	So, this bus is our hearse. <u>Amen!</u>	Substitution

Table 3 includes some translation strategies of the movie named *Taste of Cherry* which was directed by Abbas Kiarostami (1997).

**Table 3**  
*ECRs of Taste of Cherry*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	چرا تعارف می کنی؟	<u>Don't act so proud</u>	Substitution
2.	شما هم لرین؟	Are you <u>from Lorestan</u> too?	Retention
3.	ما هم یه جورایی لریم	You could say that	Substitution
4.	می ریم منزل خاله مون	To my <u>aunt's</u>	Substitution
5.	مزار کیه اونجا؟	Whose " <u>Mazar</u> " is it?	Retention
6.	طلبه	Seminarist	Substitution
7.	حوزه	Seminary	Substitution
8.	موعظه، نصیحت، و منبر	preach, guide, ...	Omission
9.	گناهان کبیره	<u>deadly sins</u>	Specification

Table 4 illustrates the translation strategies of ECR in the movie *Ten* directed by Abbas Kiarostami (2002).

**Table 4**  
*ECRs of Ten*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	امامزاده علی اکبر	<u>Ali Akbar's mausoleum</u>	Retention
2.	امامزاده علی اکبر	Ali Akbar's <u>mausoleum</u>	Substitution
3.	تسبیح رو؟	Just this <u>rosary</u>	Substitution
4.	به این شوم غریبون قسم به اون امام رضا قسم	I swear, on the Imam Reza	Omission
5.	لحاف کرسی	Quilt	Omission

6.	بو قورمه سبزی هم همیشه میده	She'll always smell of <u>Generalization cooking</u>
7.	حجابت رو سفت و سخت بستنی [چرا]؟	Why is your <u>veil</u> so <u>Specification tight</u> ?

Table 5 represents translation strategies in *The Lady* directed by Dariush Mehrjooi (1999).

**Table 5**  
*ECRs of The Lady*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	واه خانم، خیال می کنین نوه "اتل خان رشتی" اومده خونمون؟	Who do you think is coming here lady?	Omission
2.	از تو غبار، انگار رو آب، به سقا پیدا شد	from among dust there appear <u>one to help me</u>	Substitution
3.	ما رو کوچ دادن به باغ پایین	They <u>take</u> us to another garden	Generalization
4.	چرا بهش میگین کرمعلی خان؟ این کجاش خانه؟	Why do you call him Karamali <u>khan</u> ? He is not a khan.	Retention
5.	ایشالله به حق پنج تن ای سقط بشه	I hope this child to die	Omission
6.	آخرین باری که زیر کرسی نشستم	The last time I sat under the <u>stool</u>	Generalization
7.	کوفته تبریزی	Kofte	Retention/Omission
8.	مرصع یلو	Morasa polo	Retention
9.	صیغه ای هاش	his wives	Generalization

Table 6 highlights some cases of translation strategies from the movie called *The Mirror* directed by Jafar Panahi (1997).

**Table 6**  
*ECRs of The Mirror*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	یک مانتوی تمیز	a suitable <u>dress</u>	Generalization
2.	اگه حواست جمع نباشه ممکنه به هوویی سرت بیاره	I think he wants <u>a second wife</u>	Specification

3.	عقدکنون	...	Omission
4.	من خان و خان زاده ایم	I come <u>from a respectable family</u>	Substitution
5.	اونانو از میدون شوش ورداشتن آوردن	They had me come from <u>downtown</u>	Generalization
6.	مقنعه	<u>Scarf</u>	Generalization
7.	مال دوره فتحعلی شاه بود!	That must've been in the <u>Stone Age!</u>	Substitution
8.	هر روز آبخوشت درست میکردن، صبح بار میذاشتن ظهر استفاده میکردن	The days when women spent their lives <u>cooking</u> over	Generalization

Some of the translation strategies in *The Pear Tree* directed by Darius Mehrjooi (1998) are shown in the following table.

**Table 7**  
*ECRs of The Pear Tree*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	کاری نبود که برای این درخت ، برای این تحفه نطنز نکرده باشم	there's nothing I haven't done for this tree sir	Omission
2.	این کدخدا شاهده	The <u>chief of the village</u> can testify	Specification
3.	کله اش بو فورمه سبزی میده	<u>he was always looking for trouble</u>	Substitution
4.	و صبح تا شب به منقل اش میپردازد	All he ever does is attend his <u>fire grill</u>	Substitution
5.	چین میره روحشون	<u>They get exorcised</u>	Substitution
6.	یک صلوات بفرستید	let's <u>praise the prophet</u>	Substitution
7.	شیخ پیر	old <u>sheik</u>	Retention

Table 8 includes some translation strategies for *The Runner* directed by Amir Naderi (1990).

**Table 8**  
*ECRs of The Runner*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	نه. ولی سوار لنج شدم	No. I've boarded a <u>boat</u>	Specification
2.	مش رحیم چقدر میشه؟	How much?	Omission
3.	تومان 59 اینم	This is your money	Omission

4.	عامو غلام پولمو بده	Give me my money	Omission
5.	تومان 2	2 Tomans	Retention
6.	علاوه بر اینکه به تلت عقبی	besides being late 1 term	Substitution
7.	اکایر باید بخونی	You must join literacy classes	Substitution

Table 9 illustrates some of the applied strategies in *The Song of Sparrows* directed by Majid Majidi (2008).

**Table 9**

*ECRs of The Song of Sparrows*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	آب انبار	Watertank	Direct Translation
2.	بابا عشقی، یا مرام و ایسا	“thanks man, wait”	Omission
3.	من مشهدم، نزدیک حرم	I’m in Mashhad, near the haram	Retention
4.	خلاصه نایب الزیالرة شما هم هستیم	I’ll pilgrim for you	Substitution
5.	بابا دست مریزاد، حقا که سر سفره حلال نشست	you are a good man, your bread is earned honestly	Substitution
6.	کربلایی	Karbalae	Retention
7.	بر جمال محمد و علی صلوات	Salute to “mohmmad”	Generalization
8.	فردا صبح میخوام برم خونه رقیه خانوم برای حنابندون دخترش کمک	I’m going to mrs, “roghie” lace. To help for her daughter’s ceremony	Generalization

Table 10 includes the translation strategies in *The Wind Will Carry Us* directed by Abbas Kiarostami (1999).

**Table 10**

*ECRs of The Wind Will Carry Us*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	بیستون	the Boston	Retention
2.	چرا اسمش رو گذاشتن سیاه دره	Why it is called “Black Valley”?	Direct Translation
3.	"طناب بخت کسی را بافتند سیاه؛ به آب زمزم و کوثر سفید نتوان کرد"	“When you’re fated to be black..., ...Even holy water cannot whiten you.”	Generalization

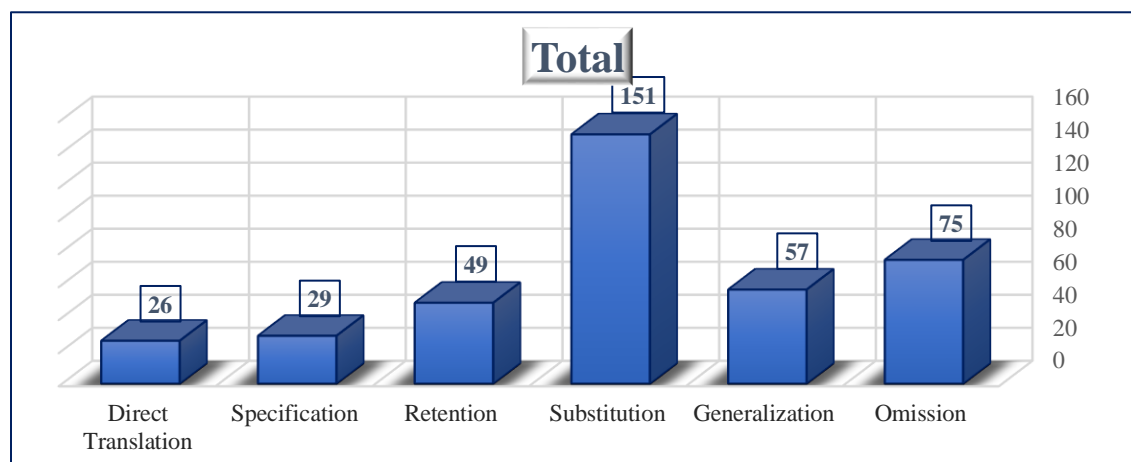
4.	کوه البرز	a mountain	Generalization
5.	نذران قبول بو [باشه]	May your wishes come true	Generalization
6.	شب هفت	seventh day of mourning	Specification
7.	مینشینند زیر کرسی چای می خورن	they sit around drinking tea	Omission

Table 11 below, includes some of the translation strategies of *The Travellers* directed by Bahram Beyzaei (1993).

**Table 11**  
*ECRs of The Travellers*

Item No.	Source Language ECRs	Translation	Translation Strategy
1.	سمساری	the second-hand shop	Specification
2.	خنچه	the wooden tray	Specification
3.	بشه که خودم تو جشنت لزگی برقصم	I'd dance the Lesghian on your wedding	Retention
4.	ریسه های چراغونی	the wires	Generalization
5.	سه تار مهتاب	Mahtab's sitar	Retention
6.	دسته دلبر فیروزه ای	turquoise beloved's hand vases	Direct Translation
7.	عدد؛ 01 پرده مصور چاپ دستی، نقش خسرو و شیرین و بهرام و گل اندام	10 hand printed illustrated tableaux of Khosrow & Shirin, Bahram & Golandam	Retention
8.	صور اسرافیل	Seraph's trumpet	Direct Translation
9.	حلوا	Sweetmeat	Substitution
10	از ما به دل نگیرین به مولا	For God's sake, don't blame us for it!	Substitution

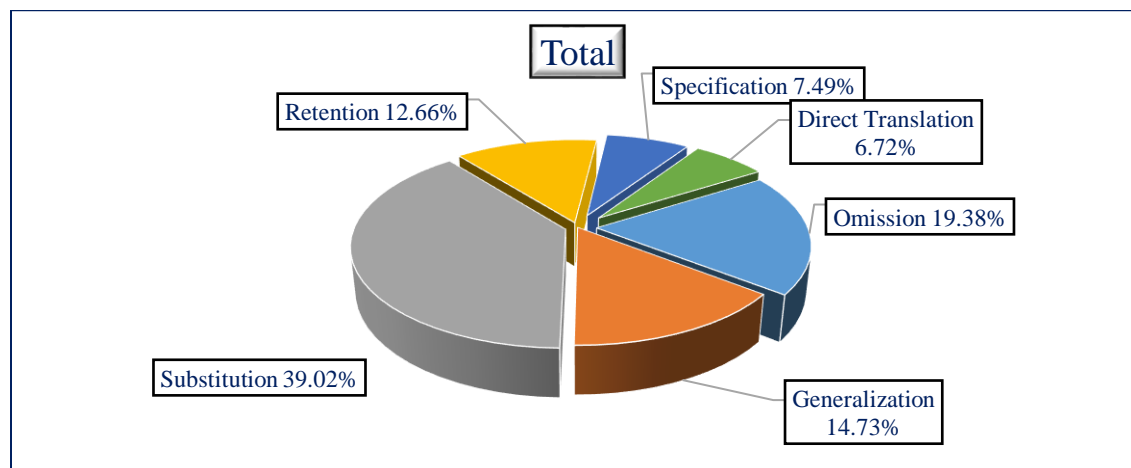
**Diagram 1**  
*Frequency of all the Translation Strategies*



As the above diagram illustrated, "substitution" has been applied more than other strategies in the mentioned movies by different directors (F=151). "Omission" was the most frequent strategy after "substitution" (F=75). After that, "generalization" received the third rank among all the translation strategies which applied in the mentioned movies (F=57). Then, "retention" was placed in the fourth rank (F=49). Eventually, "specification" and "direct translation" came in the two last ranks (F=29) and (F=26) respectively.

## Diagram 2

*Percentage of all the Translation Strategies*



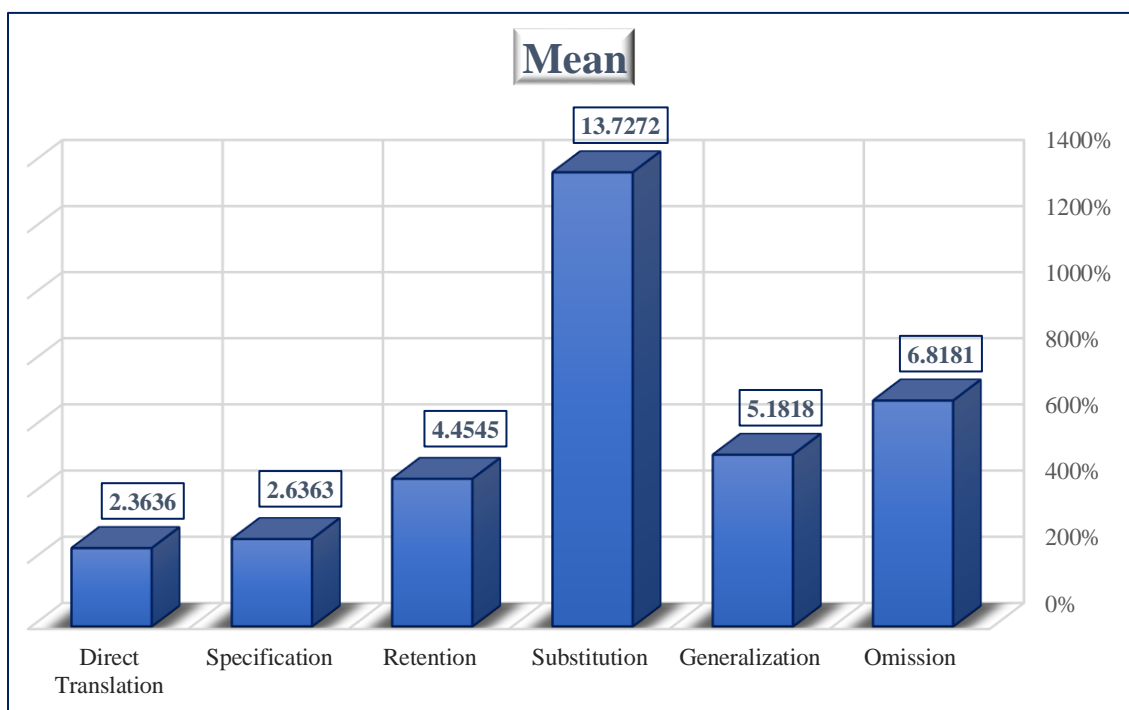
According to the above diagram, "substitution" was the most frequent strategy (39.02%), followed by "omission" (19.38%), and "generalization" (14.73%). Then, "retention" came after the three mentioned strategies (12.66%). In the end "specification" and "direct translation" were placed (at 7.49% & 6.72%) respectively.

### Comparison of the Mean Scores

The table presents the mean scores of all the translation strategies of the mentioned movies. That is to say, the following table ranked the highest strategy to the lowest one, based on their mean scores.

### Diagram 3

*Mean Scores of all the Translation Strategies*



### Discussion

The descriptive statistics above displayed the strategies that were used in translations of the selected Persian movies. Based on the related tables and diagrams in the previous chapter, the first question can be answered by the fact that for rendering the "Extra-linguistic Culture-bound References" (ECRs) in Persian language movies screened at international film festivals, Iranian translators have used the 6 strategies which included: (1) Retention, (2) Specification, (3) Direct Translation, (4) Generalization, (5) Substitution, and (6) Omission.

This study also investigated the frequency of the applied strategies in Persian movies of international festivals. In the previous chapter, diagrams 4.1 and 4.2 detail the frequency and



percentage of all the applied strategies. The answer to the second question is that "Substitution" with 151 instances and 39.02% of the usage was the most frequent strategy among all of them. In other words, the translators used "Substitution" more than any other strategy. Then, "omission" with 75 samples (19.38%) was the second translation strategy in the related table. After that, "generalization" with 57 cases (14.73%) and "retention" with 49 samples (12.66%) were reported by the researcher. Finally, according to the careful analysis of the Persian translation of the mentioned Iranian movies, "specification" with 29 (7.49%), and "direct translation" with 26 items (6.72) was specified by the researcher.

And finally, the answer to the third question is that "Direct Translation" proved the least frequent strategy used by translators. The number of "Direct Translation" strategies registered 26 instances, and the percentage of adopting this strategy is measured at 6.71%, less than all the other strategies. The subtitlers have not been so comfortable giving a stringent literal translation that may seem exotic to the TT audience. However, as the related diagram (4.1) in the previous chapter highlighted, "substitution" was clarified as the most frequent translation strategy of "Extra-linguistic Culture-bound References" (ECRs).

### Conclusions

The first and foremost consultation that a translation teacher can take from this research is that there are several translation strategies namely Retention, Specification, Direct Translation, Generalization, Substitution, and even Omission available for a typical translation student to deal with an extra-linguistic culture-bound reference existing in a written text or uttered by different individuals including movie characters. Depending on the circumstances, the translator and/or interpreter can choose one or more than one of the said strategies to transfer the reference in question to another language as best as possible. The most frequent along with the least frequent strategies adopted for rendering ECRs identified during the current research can also be some valid indices for translation teaching and evaluation. This means that the most frequent strategy i.e. Substitution, can be more advised to be applied by translation students while the highest quality score for dealing with an ECR can be generally given to the adoption of this strategy rather than the other strategies of ECR translation. Accordingly, the opposite argument can be applied to the strategy of "Direct Translation" as the least frequent strategy used by translators to render ECRs in the Iranian movies screened at international film festivals. Therefore, the literal word-for-word translation would be less advised to be used for dealing with an ECR while the lowest score can

be assigned to the application of this strategy. All in all, translation teachers can rate the ECR transfer strategies according to the results of this study i.e. the frequency and percentage of adopting ECR transfer strategies. Of course, it should not be ignored that Omission is better to be excluded from this rating, and if included, the researcher firmly argues that Omission, and not Direct Translation, is to be assigned the lowest score if applied despite having identified Direct Translation as the least frequent strategy while Omission is the second frequent strategy used by subtitlers for rendering ECRs. Basically, from a dictionary point of view, 'strategy' is "a planned series of actions for achieving something" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2009) while Omission only leads to getting an item out of the way, and nothing is achieved using such a resort. Some other reasons for insisting on such argumentation, as mentioned earlier, could be the importance of such movies as the cultural representatives of a country around the globe, the prestige and reputation of such filmmakers among the 7<sup>th</sup> art international community as well as the significance of such movies' audience who are going to watch and deeply analyze such artistic works.

As repeatedly emphasized by different translation scholars and also practically addressed in the current study, the issue of culture and its complex relationship with language in terms of culture-specific items are among the most important subjects that a translator or interpreter may face. Accordingly, the issue will be also important to those people who are going to teach and/or evaluate how to render different texts or pieces of speech from one language into another. Therefore, the data analysis results and conclusions of this study can have several implications in the area of translation teaching and evaluation. It is also to be pointed out that the mentioned implications could be enjoyed not only for ECR translation in movie subtitles but also, perhaps with some slight adjustment, for the translation of several other item types within different modes of language. Hopefully, the results of this study could be enjoyed by professional translators, freelancers, those who are active in the field of translation teaching and evaluation, and specifically by motion picture translators/subtitlers. The researcher is also interested in humbly requesting all the translators, interpreters, and subtitlers to be more consciously concerned about the translation of extra- or intra-linguistic culture-bound items and the would-be translation strategy applied in any mode of translation.

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