THE TRANSFER OF HUMOUR IN COMEDY ANIMATIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO PERSIAN DUBBED AND SUBTITLED VERSIONS

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THE TRANSFER OF HUMOUR IN COMEDY ANIMATIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO PERSIAN DUBBED AND SUBTITLED VERSIONS

by

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To My Much-loved Grandfather

who always believed in me

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVT	Audiovisual Translation
AV	Audiovisual
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
SC	Source Culture
TC	Target Culture
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
IRIB	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
MCIG	Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance
ECRs	Extralinguistic Cultural Elements
GTVH	General Theory of Verbal Humour
TV	Television
DVD	Digital versatile disk

PEMINDAHAN UNSUR HUMOR DALAM KOMEDI ANIMASI BAHASA INGGERIS KEPADA VERSI ALIH SUARA DAN SARI KATA BAHASA PARSI

ABSTRAK

Tesis ini mengkaji tahap keberkesanan pemindahan ungkapan humor linguistik dan budaya serta humor yang berasaskan Rujukan Ekstralinguistik dan Budaya (ECR) dalam alih bahasa dan sari kata 17 program komedi animasi daripada bahasa Inggeris kepada bahasa Parsi. Kajian ini turut menganalisis prosedur terjemahan yang digunakan untuk memindahkan ungkapan berbentuk humor terpilih serta mengenal pasti prosedur terjemahan yang paling efektif untuk memindahkan mesej sumber. Kajian ini turut bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti teknik yang lebih baik (alih suara atau sari kata) untuk memindahkan ungkapan humor dalam komedi animasi yang dipilih. Analisis bermula dengan mengenal pasti ungkapan humor linguistik, budaya dan humor yang berasaskan ECR dalam teks sumber, kemudiannya diklasifikasikan berdasarkan pendekatan oleh Nedergaard Larsen (1993). Akhirnya, perbandingan dilakukan untuk mengenal pasti semua padanan ungkapan yang dihasilkan dalam bahasa Parsi, diikuti dengan penentuan sama ada pemindahan mesej humor ini berjaya dilakukan atau tidak. Prosedur terjemahan yang digunakan dianalisis menggunakan kerangka yang telah dikenal pasti untuk alih bahasa dan sari kata, serta seperti yang disarankan oleh Pedersen (2011) untuk penyarikataan ECR. Penentuan prosedur terjemahan yang paling berjaya dilakukan menerusi pendekatan fungsian oleh Reiss and Vermeer (1984), yang kemudiaannya membolehkan teknik yang lebih baik untuk terjemahan humor dalam komedi animasi dikenal pasti. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa penterjemah telah menggunakan pendekatan yang berorientasikan sasaran dalam versi alih bahasa, manakala pendekatan yang berasaskan sumber digunakan untuk versi sari kata. Namun begitu, kedua-dua teknik ini kelihatannya belum berjaya memindahkan elemen humor teks sumber dengan sepenuhnya, tetapi mendapati tahap pemindahan humor yang lebih baik adalah menerusi versi alih bahasa dan bukannya sari kata. Akhir sekali, kajian mendapati bahawa penggantian merupakan strategi yang paling praktis dalam alih bahasa dan sari kata bagi pemindahan ungkapan humor linguistik, budaya dan ECR daripada bahasa Inggeris kepada bahasa Parsi.

THE TRANSFER OF HUMOUR IN COMEDY ANIMATIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO PERSIAN DUBBED AND SUBTITLED VERSIONS

ABSTRACT

The study examines the degree of the adequate transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous expressions that are based on Extralinguistic and Cultural References (ECRs) in the dubbed and subtitled versions of seventeen comedy animations from English into Persian. The study also analyses the employed translation procedures in the transfer of those humorous expressions, and consequently identifies the most effective translation procedures utilized to transfer the source message. The study aims to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions in the comedy animations more adequately. The study was carried out by identifying the humorous linguistic, cultural and ECRs-based expression in the source texts. Next, they are classified into eight groups based on the selected classification of humour by Nedergaard Larsen (1993). Finally, a comparison was made to identify the equivalence of the humorous linguistic, cultural and ECRs expressions in the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions, in order to examine whether they were transferred adequately or not. The employed translation procedures were analysed using selected translation procedures chosen for the current study and Pedersen`s (2011) translation strategies for subtitling ECRs. The most effective translation procedures were then identified through functional theory by Reiss and Vermeer (1984), and a better technique that transferred the humorous expressions more adequately into the target texts was identified. The findings show that translators employed a target-oriented approach in the dubbed versions and a source-oriented approach in the subtitled versions. However both techniques could not retain the humorous criteria of the source text. At the same time, the findings reveal that the quantity of the humorous expressions in the dubbed versions is more than the subtitled versions. Finally, the study finds that substitution is a practical strategy in the transfer of the humorous

linguistic, cultural and humorous ECRs expressions in the comedy animations from English into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Translation studies was treated as only a branch of linguistics until Holmes (1988) published his seminal paper, ‘The Name and Nature of Translation Studies’, in 1972. His article was a milestone in establishing a new field, i.e. translation studies. Since then, scholars from different areas have conducted studies on various aspects of translation. For instance, Baker (1992), Munday (2008) and Diaz Cintas (2009) worked on various concepts of translation studies and they proposed different translation strategies. The most recent studies have been on the translation of allusions (Leppihalme, 1994), idioms (Carter, 2000), metaphors (Newmark, 1988), wordplays (Delabastita, 1996) and extralinguistic cultural references (Nedergaard Larsen, 1993; Pedersen, 2007; Chiaro, 2009). Among the different areas in translation studies, audiovisual translation (AVT) has received particular attention in the last two decades in response to the rapid growth of the film industry (Diaz Cintas, 2009:3).

Recent technology developments have led to the mass distribution of audiovisual products in the world and more specifically in Iran. As a result, audiovisual translation has been continuously in demand, and Persian scholars are becoming more interested in the field. Many studies have been conducted on audiovisual translation in Iran such as those of Aminzadeh (2006), Ardeshiri and Zarafshan (2014), Motevasel and Nemati (2015) to name a few. However, the number of these studies is not adequate with respect to the importance of audiovisual translation and its significant impact on the Persian society.

Humour translation in audiovisual texts appears to be a problematic area in the realm of translation. The transference of humorous expressions across languages and cultures has always been a great challenge for translators. Persian scholars have conducted many studies on the translation of humour in audiovisual texts for dubbed and subtitled movies, for example, Shakernia (2011), Jabbari and Ravizi (2012) and Shariati, Amirian and Eslamirasekh (2015). Nevertheless, there are many remaining issues which require further studies to be carried out.

The aim of the present study is to examine how adequately the humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous expressions that are based on extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) in the comedy animations have been transferred from English into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. In addition, the study analyses the employed translation procedures in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions in the comedy animations from English into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. The study also identifies the most effective translation procedures in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions in the comedy animations from English into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. Finally, the study aims to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions, in the comedy animations from English into Persian, more adequately into the target texts.

1.2 Background of the Study

The appearance of the talkie movies was a great challenge for the film industry since not all audiences understood the original language of the movies. Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 8) stated that "common companion of the image since the 1930s has been the word, and with the word comes the need for translation". The high demand of the film industry for international marketing has led to the invention of two principal methods of audiovisual translation, namely dubbing and subtitling.

Nowadays, audiovisual products have become an integral part of everyday life. Fans wait impatiently for new episodes of audiovisual (AV) series, such as '*The Walking Dead' or 'Game of Thrones'.* Expressions from the movies are used in daily conversations and it is possible to access different forms of media such as TVs, satellite programmes, private cable channels or digital versatile discs (DVD). The shift from analogue to digital technology has enabled the film industry to produce many types of AV products such as animations, movies, documentaries, sitcoms, soap operas, etc. Consequently, the demand for the translation of AV products is more compared to other forms of translation for as Diaz Cintas (2004: 50) argued "because of the number of people they reach and a large amount of translated products distributed worldwide, AVT is the most proliferated translational activity of our time". However, he pointed out that, considering the significance of audiovisual texts in our lives, the number of studies done have been few:

> A clear paradox exists which emphasises the surprising imbalance between the little research on audiovisual translation and its enormous impact on society. In numerical terms, the translation carried out in the audiovisual realm is the most important translational activity of our time. Firstly, because of the high number of people, it reaches, mainly through television. Secondly, because of the large quantity of translated products which cross over to other cultures: documentaries, films, news, debates, concerts, television series, etc. Thirdly, because of the immediacy of its reception: television, cinema, DVD (Jorge Diaz Cintas, 2004: 50).

Audiovisual translation has some differences with conventional methods of translation such as literary translation. The differences arise from the nature of the audiovisual texts. They are consumed as polysemiotic text (Gottlieb, 1998: 245) that consist of four channels of communication in the transference of the messages. Delabastita (1989: 199) presents the channels in the audiovisual texts as follows:

1) Visual channel – verbal signs: e.g. credits, letters shown on screen.
2) Visual channel – non-verbal signs: e.g. gestures, costumes, make-up.
3) Acoustic channel – verbal signs: e.g. dialogue.
4) Acoustic channel – non-verbal signs: e.g. background music, sound effects.

Comprehension of the audiovisual texts may also be a challenging task for some viewers. Although the presentation of the information via visual and oral channels could help viewers better understand a movie, different accents, jargon and other sounds in the movies may intervene to prevent full comprehension of the message. Diaz Cintas (2009: 4) mentioned that "even for those with an adequate command of the foreign language, audiovisual productions bring with them a whole range of obstacles". He then went on with the reasons and argued that "they may hamper comprehension of a given scene due to the fast-paced dialogue exchanges among characters, the use of unknown dialectal and sociolectal variations, instances of overlapping speech and interfering diegetic noises and music"(Diaz Cintas, 2009: 4). Considering the variety of audiovisual products and the great consumption of them in the world on the one hand and the difficulty of understanding those products, on the other hand, can play an important role in audiovisual translation helping to bridge the gap.

Translation has always been a cultural transfer between the languages and cultures. Trivedi (2007: 280) stated that language is merely "a vehicle of the culture". Translation is not only the transfer of the meaning between the languages, but it is also a cultural exchange between the cultures. Translation has influenced every society throughout history. However, cultural exchange is more significant in audiovisual translation compared to other forms of translation. Furthermore, audiovisual texts influence the societies more than other forms of translation.

People learn other cultures unconsciously while watching a foreign movie. As long as Hollywood dominates the film industry of the world, many aspects of American culture enter other cultures via audiovisual translation. Besides, the status of Hollywood movies also prove a challenge to the film industry of the other countries. Gottlieb (2009: 21) stated that "onscreen, English is the all-dominant foreign language and threatens the film industry of other countries and unlike all others, they do not enjoy foreign-language productions, whether dubbed or subtitled". The borrowing of the English words and expressions by other languages such as **chat, message, miss you** and **honey,** and many cultural customs such as the **Valentine`s Day** and **Halloween** are some examples of the one-way cultural exchange (from American culture into other cultures) through audiovisual translation. The entry of foreign cultural elements, specifically American cultural elements, into Persian society is considered by some to be a threat to Islamic-Iranian culture. Many foreign cultural elements are in contradiction with Islamic-Iranian cultural values and beliefs, and many have a bad influence on the younger generation in Iran. For instance, causal boy-girl relationships and unmarried couples living together are just some examples of the adverse effect of American culture on Persian society.

The degree of foreign cultural elements introduced through audiovisual translation could be minimised by selecting a proper AVT technique. According to Danan (1991: 612) "dubbing, in short, is an assertion of the supremacy of the national language and its unchallenged political, economic and cultural power within the nation`s boundaries”. The other factor that minimises the degree of foreign cultural elements introduced is the translators` approach towards the source and target texts. The translators who have a target-oriented approach will endeavour to produce a more localised translation by substituting the source cultural elements with the target cultural elements.

A positive impact of audiovisual translation on the societies is to educate people. Many scientific programmes with the purpose of education have been produced and distributed worldwide. Documentary programmes produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) are good example of those programmes that enhance the level of general knowledge of their viewers. BBC covers AV programmes in a variety of fields such as physics, biology, history, wildlife, and technology just to name a few. People who watch these programmes for their entertainment value get educated simultaneously. In fact, education through audiovisual translation is a practical method for people who are not fond of reading, for besides gaining knowledge about the fields mentioned above, they also get to learn about cultures, traditions, customs and religions with which they do not normally come into contact.

Munoz-Calvo (2010: 2) argued that “translators need cultural literacy, communicative language competence, and cross-cultural competence as well because they have to interpret sociocultural meaning in cross-cultural encounters”. Translators not only need general skills of translation such as linguistic competence but they also need familiarity with the source and target cultures in order to find the equivalent cultural elements in the target texts. Considering different items in translation, Bassnett (2011: 96) stated that “the translator is engaged not only with the words, but with the context in which those words appear, and any equivalent will have to take into account the two different contexts, that of the source and that of the target”. The context of the dialogues is imperative in the audiovisual translation. Translators need to translate in line with the oral/visual context of the movies and if they fail to recreate the context of the movies in the target text, the message would not transfer.

In audiovisual translation, many sentences of the translation are modified, condensed or even changed for the sake of synchronisation in dubbing or lack of space and time (technical aspects) in subtitling. Audiovisual translation has been thoroughly discussed by scholars like Delabastita (1989), Gottlieb (1997a), Diaz Cintas (2007), and many taxonomies have been proposed for this new branch of translation studies. Some studies in audiovisual translation have also been conducted in Iran for example, by Shakernia (2011), Salehi (2013), Jafari (2013), Sedighi and Najian Tabrizi (2012), Ghaemi and Janin (2010), and Amirian and Shariati (2013). However, still more studies need to be done in order to assist the translators who are active in this field.

One of the most challenging areas in translation is the transfer of humour across languages and cultures. Despite the popularity of the comedy genre among people, humour does not transfer easily in translations. Chiaro (2006: 570) described the difficulty of humour translation as follows:

> Whether the kind of verbally expressed humour (VEH) to be translated is a short text such as a joke, whether it is a longer text such as a novel or a more polysemiotic entity such as a film, a play or a sitcom and whether we are dealing with puns or irony, satire or parody, the transposition from source language (SL) to target language (TL) will present the translator with a series of thorny problems which will be both practical and theoretical in nature.

Analysis of earlier translated products in the comedy genre either in the dubbed or subtitled versions in previous studies by Zabalbeascoa (1996), Martinez-Sierra (2005) and Pedersen (2011) showed the difficulty of humour translation. Besides, analysis of the humour translation of the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions in the previous studies by Shakernia (2011), and Kianbakht (2016) verified that a significant amount of humorous expressions are lost in the Persian translations. Hence, research in this realm is necessary in order to find better solutions for the transfer of humorous expressions.

In recent decades, a vast amount of comedy movies and series especially situation comedies (sitcoms) such as '*Friends', 'How I Met Your Mother', 'Will and Grace'* have been produced and distributed worldwide, and most of them have been dubbed or subtitled into many languages. It is hoped that the ever-growing production of audiovisual texts in the comedy genre and the need for translation of such products will motivate scholars to conduct more studies on the topic. In this regard, scholars such as Attardo (2002) and Chiaro (2004) have conducted research on humour translation from different perspectives but there is still a long way to go since many problems remain unsolved.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The demand for audiovisual translation has recently increased in the world due to the modern technologies in communication and the globalisation process. Thus, more comprehensive studies are required in this field to assist translators to tackle the challenges of linguistic and cultural barriers between different languages and cultures. Some of the factors that influence the transfer of humour in audiovisual translation are discussed in this section. One of the fundamental issues in humour translation is rooted in the nature of the languages. In other words, languages use different ways of communication and they assign different signs for the same concepts. Therefore, many concepts are not easily understood in another language and may cause difficulties in the translation. Vandeal (2002: 164-165) claimed that meanings are attached to codes in four ways that are 1) the force of reality: different languages create different concepts for different realities (if a culture does not know some type of tree, it may not have a word for it), 2) the conceptual freedom of language: different languages create different concepts for the same reality (think of different colour systems), 3) sociolinguistic force: different languages attach different connotations to similar denotations, and 4) metalingual force: different languages adopt different ways of joining various realities in one form (e.g. wordplay).

The other issue is the subjectivity and relativity of humour. That is to say, the concept of humour is different among societies and even from person to person. Veiga (2009: 163-164) claimed that “humour differs from individual to individual, from context to context and from culture to culture”. People in every culture construct reality in a variety of ways, so their understanding of the world is different. Therefore, a concept which is considered humorous in one culture may not be humorous in another culture. In other words, the perception of humour differs from person to person and that makes the transfer of humour challenging. This is clearly visible within the borders of any country. People in different regions of each country have their customs, traditions and distinct cultural behaviours inside their communities in spite of what they share with others in a broader sense in the country. For example, think of Iran with six different races, namely *Fars, Kurd*, *Lur*, *Balooch*, *Torkaman* and *Azari*. As Iranians, they all share many cultural behaviours, and they all speak the Persian language as the official language of the country. They all celebrate the New Year on the first day of spring and they all celebrate national ceremonies such as *Chaharshanbeh Souri, Jashn Mehregan, Shabe Chele* and *Sizdah Bedar.* However, each have their own customs and beliefs, different styles of dancing, various minor languages, different views of the world and a different sense of humour. The cultural diversity results in a different comprehension of humour among different races in Iran and it causes many obstacles to humour translation. When the concept of humour can be different within the borders of a country where there are similarities in language and culture, one can imagine what happens when it comes to different countries with completely different languages and cultures. Hori (2006: 16) considered culture as one of the most important factors in the untranslatability of humour and called it 'culture-bound'; this implies that whatever is considered humour in a particular culture may not necessarily be humorous in another culture. The following example will demonstrate the issue clearly.

The Persian language is spoken in three countries as the official language: in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. Despite sharing the same language and similar cultures, still, they have their distinct culture and behaviour. The series titled *Bitter Coffee* (*Ghahveh Talx* in Persian) is an Iranian comedy series with many references to cultural elements. *Bitter Coffee* was broadcast by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) satellite channel in 2010 and was distributed on DVDs at the same time. Despite its great success in Iran, it was not successful in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The failure of the movie in Afghanistan and Tajikistan shows that cultural differences can lead to a different comprehension of humour. Chiaro (1992: 77) pointed out that "problems may arise even if the audience does share the same language but not the same 'sociocultural knowledge', as in the case of British programmes shown in the US and vice versa.

Recognising humorous expressions in the source texts is a big challenge for the translators. As discussed earlier, something may be considered funny in one culture but not in another culture. This may cause difficulties for translators for they may not be able to spot the humorous expressions in the source texts since they themselves do not consider it funny. Besides, humorous expressions are created by a variety of rhetorical devices such as pun, alliteration, homophony, allusion, parody, etc. which makes it more difficult for the translators to detect them in the source texts. Translators need in-depth knowledge of the source language and culture to identify the humorous expressions in the source texts. It needs to be pointed out that recognising humorous expressions in sitcoms may not be a problem since canned laughter (previously-recorded laughter that is edited into the soundtrack of a TV programme) signals that something funny has just been said. However, canned laughter has its pitfalls. For example, if the translators fail to reproduce the humour in the target text, viewers might end up feeling confused and losing interest.

The other issue in humour translation of audiovisual texts is the dependency of humour on its context. Ross (1998: 1) stated that "a certain joke can be found tremendously funny in one context but it does not result in laughter or even a smile in another". In other words, humour can only act in its context and if it is separated from its context it is not considered humorous anymore. Hence, recreating the context of humour in the translations is an important task for the translators in order to make the humorous expressions understandable for the target viewers. Failure in the reproduction of the context of the humour in the translation would result in the loss of the humorous effect of the source text in the target text.

Some of the humorous expressions rely on linguistic elements. This type of humour is called linguistic humour (Raphaelson-West, 1989: 130). Transfer of humorous linguistic expressions create difficulties in humour translation of audiovisual texts. Raphaelson-West (1989: 130) mentioned the difficulty of the translation of linguistic humour and argued that "linguistic jokes are puny as hell". The problem is that the structure and syntax of the languages are different. Therefore, the equivalent counterpart of a humorous linguistic expression may not have the same function in the target text as it has in the source text. For instance, there is a low possibility that the translation of a wordplay has the same function and effect in the target text as in the source text. The problem gets worse when it comes to the languages that belong to different families such as Chinese and English. Furthermore, some expressions and even words do not exist in every language, for example, the word rosemary does not exist in the Persian language since this plant does not grow in Iran. Delabastita (1994: 223) mentions the difficulty of the translation of wordplays:

> The semantic and pragmatic effects of source text wordplay find their origin in particular structural characteristics of the source language for which the target language more often than not fails to produce a counterpart, such as the existence of certain homophones, near- homophones, polysemic clusters, idioms or grammatical rules.

The following example shows the obstacle of transferring linguistic humour in the audiovisual translation:

Example

Context:

Puss in Boots and Donkey accompany Princess Fiona. Puss in Boots sees the food cart and asks Donkey to go faster.

English version	**Dubbed version**
00:58:46 → 00:58:49 Puss in Boots: Look Donkey, the *Chimichanga* cart! Quick	خره اونجا.رو غذا Gloss: donkey there food Back translation: Donkey, there is food there.
00:58:49 → 00:58:52 Pussy in Boots: *Andale*! After him *burro*! Donkey, Vamonos!	هی برو برو هی Gloss: hey go go hey Back translation: Hey go go.
00:58:52 → 00:58:54 Donkey: Man, you are a cat-astrophe!	به خرمگس گفتی زکی Gloss: to gadfly you.said unbelievable Back translation: The gadfly is nothing compare to you.
00:58:55 → 00:58:57 Puss in Boots: And you are ri-donkey-lous!	تو که خودت خیلی خری Gloss: you that yourself so you.are.donkey Back translation: You are so donkey.

Source: *Shrek 4 (Forever After)*

There are four humorous linguistic expressions in this excerpt. The word '*Andale*' is a Mexican expression and it means to go for it. It is a code-switching between Mexican and English languages. The word '*Vamonos*' is a Spanish word and it means let us leave this place. It is a code-switching between Spanish and English languages. The two above-mentioned humorous linguistic expressions were omitted in the dubbed versions.

The next humorous linguistic expression is 'cat-astrophe'. The original word is 'catastrophe' and it means disaster (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2015). The humorous expression was transferred by a colloquial expression into the target text. The last humorous linguistic expression in this excerpt is lexical blending 'ri-donkey-lous'. This word is a combination of the words 'donkey' and 'ridiculous'. Puss in Boots wanted to emphasise Donkey`s silliness. Hence, he played on the word 'ridiculous' and inserted the word 'donkey' in it, which creates the humour in the source text. Persian translators transferred the humorous expression by means of a wordplay which is in line with the oral/visual context of the movie. The word *Khari* meaning 'donkey' is a homonymy in the Persian language and it refers to two things. First the name of an animal and second it refers to the stupid people (Persian Dictionary of Dr Mohammad Moein, 2009).

Some of the humorous expressions rely on cultural elements. This type of humour is called cultural humour (Raphaelson-West, 1989: 130). The transference of humorous cultural expressions is a problematic area in humour translation of audiovisual texts. Leppihalme (1997: 8) argues that "since allusions and cultural references rely on collective assumptions or memories, what is meaningful to a given cultural group might not be translatable into the language of another culture because its members would not be expected to decode it". This type of humour can only be understood in the particular culture it belongs to, and its function is limited beyond the scope of that specific culture. Understanding humorous cultural expressions requires knowledge of the source culture, and if the audiences are not familiar with the source cultural elements, they may not grasp the humour. Kovacic (1996: 300) stated that "the target audiences` knowledge of the source culture (SC) and the cultural relatedness between the source language (SL) society and the target language (TL) society are believed to be the major factors affecting a translators` decision-making”. When cultures are close to each other, people share more cultural elements. The familiarity of the target viewers with the source cultural elements assist the translators in the transference of humorous cultural expressions. Cultural elements evoke some information in the viewers` mind which is necessary for understanding the humorous cultural expressions. For example, when Iranians hear word *Lur*, which is the name of one of the six races in Iran, they equate it with honesty and naivety. Therefore, when viewers hear the word *Lur* in a humorous expression, they expect to see certain characteristics based on their presuppositions of *Lur* people. The following example shows the difficulty of the transference of humorous cultural expressions in humour translation of audiovisual texts.

Example

Context:

> Alex, the lion and his friends are stuck on an empty island. Alex makes a statue of wood to ignite it when a ship passes by the island.

English version	**Dubbed version**
00:45:33 → 00:45:37 Alex: When the moment is right, we will ignite the beacon of liberty	در موقع مقرر ما این برج ازادی.را اتش می.زنیم Gloss: in time definite we this tower liberty fire we.do Back translation: When it is time. We ignite the liberty statue.
00:45:37 → 00:45:40 Alex: and be rescued from this awful nightmare!	و از این کابوس وحشتناک رهایی پیدا.میکنیم Gloss: and of this nightmare terrible free we.will. be Back translation: And we will be free from this terrible nightmare.

Source: *Madagascar 1*

Humour in this excerpt is based on a cultural element. ‘Beacon of the liberty’ is an allusion and it indirectly refers to the ‘Statue of Liberty’ in the United States of America. Persian translators opted for transfer procedure, but the humour was not transferred into the target text as the Persian viewers are not familiar with the source cultural element.

The next problematic area in humour translation of audiovisual texts concerns the transference of humorous expressions that are based on extralinguistic cultural references

(ECRs) (Pedersen, 2011: 46). ECRs refer to those elements outside the language such as religion, events in the history, places, and references to movies or actors/actresses and so on. Understanding this type of humour requires familiarity with the source extralinguistic cultural references. One may know a particular language but may not be familiar with the ECRs of that language. ECRs may refer to places such as the Persepolis (the capital city of the Achaemenid Empire), or they may point to famous people in history like *Ferdowsi* (a famous Iranian poet) and so on. The following example shows the difficulty in the transference of humorous expressions that are based on ECRs in the audiovisual translation.

Example

Context:

> Rafael, the parrot is talking with his friend Blu when he sees his son is shaking his little brother.

English version	**Dubbed version**
00:40:58 → 00:41: 01 Rafael: Hey! He’s not a maraca, stop shaking him up!	هی صد دفعه گفتم دست تو دماغ بابات نکن Gloss: hey hundred times I.said hand in nose your.daddy do.not Back translation: Hey, I told you hundred times not to put your finger in your daddy`s nose.

Source: *Rio 2011*

Humour in this excerpt is based on an ECR. ‘Maraca’ is a musical instrument from Latin America. Since Persian viewers are not familiar with this ECR, translators opted for situational substitution procedure. However, in spite of their attempt, the humour was not transferred into the target text.

The next issue in humour translation of audiovisual texts is the constraints of audiovisual translation. The technical constraints of audiovisual translation limit the translators’ ability to transfer information that is necessary for understanding the humorous cultural expressions and humorous expressions that are based on ECRs. Unlike the written form of the translation, translators cannot add supplementary information to elaborate on the source cultural elements due to space and time limitation in subtitling and time limitation and synchronisation in dubbing.

Textual constraints of audiovisual translation also limit the translators in the transference of humorous expressions. Translators need to transfer the humorous expressions and at the same time maintain the cohesion between the images, sounds, dialogues, and subtitles. A major problem is to switch from spoken dialogues to written subtitles. Tveit (2004: 17) argued that “reading speed is one of the main constraints and problems of subtitling”. He further stated that “the reason is that spelling cannot possibly compete with the human voice when it comes to expressing nuances. People tend to say in just a few seconds a lot more than there is room for in two subtitle lines” (Tviet, 2004: 17). That is to say; there is not enough time for the transference of the dialogues in subtitling let alone presenting additional information to describe cultural elements.

The third limitation of audiovisual translation is the linguistic constraint. On the one hand, translations tend to be longer than the original texts and on the other hand, there is not enough time and space available on the screen to present the information, which results in a high level of reduction in audiovisual translation. Bogucki (2004: 132) stated that “the goal of subtitling is to assist and not to complicate. The subtitles should represent the most important and relevant information, and nothing more or less”. Translators not only cannot add supplementary information in the audiovisual translation but also, they need to condense the text to fit in the small space provided on the screen.

“Visual information and sound effects may complement verbal information but also pose problems for translation, as visual, nonverbal information may not be universal, e.g. gestures and facial expressions can have different meanings in different cultures” (Cheng, 2014: 25). For example, the use of the thumb in many cultures such as the American culture shows approval, but this gesture refers to a taboo expression in the Persian culture. For example, an actor/actress shows his/her thumb to another person on the screen, and the gesture is accompanied by positive words. This scene would definitely cause a problem to the Persian translator as the gesture is an obscene one, yet the verbal message accompanying it is positive.

An important task in the transference of the problematic humorous expressions in the audiovisual translation is to substitute the humorous expressions in accordance with the oral/visual context of the movies. Chiaro (1992: 85) claimed that “the translator´s reluctance to go beyond the text and to replace an untranslatable joke with another one which is completely different from the original, but would be efficient and communicative is inevitable”.

There are some issues concerning the domestication of humorous expressions in the audiovisual translation. First of all, humour in AV texts is not restricted only to the dialogues. Images, gestures, sounds and interactions of the characters in the movies can produce humour as well. Therefore, if translators want to substitute humorous expressions with another type of humour, they need to make the changes in accordance with the oral/visual context of the movies. Second, there are technical constraints in different AV modes such as time and space limitation in subtitling and time and lip-synchrony in dubbing, which makes the process harder. Dubbing has an advantage in substituting the problematic humorous expressions as the viewers do not have access to the original soundtrack of the movies. Translators can substitute the problematic humorous expressions with other types of humour in accordance with the oral/visual contexts of the movies without being noticed by the viewers. However, viewers have access to the original soundtrack of the movies in subtitling, and if translators substitute the humorous expressions, viewers who have some knowledge of the source language may criticise them for that substitution.

The preference of dubbing or subtitling for audiovisual translation depends on many factors, and nobody can claim that one is better than the other in every situation and for every audience. What is important is that a method may be more effective for some particular genres/audiences than for others. For example, dubbing is preferred for children since they cannot read the subtitles. The answer to a better technique (dubbing or subtitling) for different audiovisual texts can be found in two ways: first by the analysis of the translated works previously done to examine the more suitable method for different genres. In this thesis, the researcher intends to analyse the employed translation procedures in the transference of humorous expressions in both techniques (dubbing and subtitling) separately. At the same time, the researcher compares the degree of the adequate transference of humorous expressions into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions of the comedy animation under study. The results lead us to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions, in the comedy animations from English into Persian, more adequately into the target texts. The second way to find the answer is by means of studies that focus more on audiences` perceptions and expectations. Recently many scholars such as Antonini (2005) and Gambier (2009) have highlighted the importance of audience-oriented studies in the field of translation.

To transfer the humorous expressions and to handle the linguistic and cultural barriers between different languages and cultures, translators use a variety of techniques inspired by various theories in translation studies such as Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). Skopos theory states that the aim of the source text has the main priority. The aim of humour translation is to reproduce the humorous effect of the source text in the target text. Therefore, to accomplish the task, in many cases, the form must be sacrificed for the sake of function and dynamic equivalence is preferred to formal equivalence. Skopos is a fundamental concept in describing the strategies that translators use in different situations to transfer humorous expressions. Generally speaking, the most important task in every translation is to transfer the message and function of the source text. It needs to be mentioned that the Skopos theory does not prescribe any specific method or any specific translation strategy.

Previous studies on humour translation of audiovisual texts in Iran were mainly focused on one technique either (dubbing or subtitling) with small corpora, and they were presented in the form of M.A theses or articles see (Armat, Armat, & Googol, 2012) or (Amirian & Soleymani Dameneh, 2014). To date, no large-scale studies that simultaneously focus on dubbing and subtitling techniques at a PhD level have been conducted in Iran and the current study would fill the gap in this area.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions appears to be a problematic area in humour translation of audiovisual texts due to the differences in the structures of the languages and the unfamiliarity of the target viewers with the source cultural elements. Furthermore, the transference of humorous expressions that are based on extralinguistic cultural references causes serious problems in humour translation of audiovisual texts. As discussed earlier in section 1.3, ECRs refer to the elements outside the languages and understanding the humorous expressions that are based on ECRs requires familiarity with those ECRs. Since the above types of humour are among the most problematic areas in humour translation of audiovisual texts, the current study aims to examine the degree of adequate transference of those elements in comedy animations from English into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. The study also analyses the employed translation procedures in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions in the comedy animations from English into Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. The study also intends to identify the most effective translation procedures in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions in the comedy animations from English into Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. Finally, the study aims to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions, in the comedy animations from English into Persian, more adequately into the target texts.

1.5 Research Questions

The following are the research questions to be addressed in this study:

1) Do humorous linguistic and cultural expressions transferred adequately into the dubbing and subtitling of the comedy animations from English into Persian?
2) Do humorous expressions that are based on extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) transferred adequately into the dubbing and subtitling of the comedy animations from English into Persian?
3) What are the translation procedures employed by Persian translators in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous

expressions that are based on ECRs into the dubbing and subtitling of the comedy animations from English into Persian?

4) What are the most effective translation procedures in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous expressions that are based on ECRs into the dubbing and subtitling of the comedy animations from English into Persian?

5) Which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions, in the comedy animations, more adequately into the target texts?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current study is a descriptive analysis of the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions of the selected American comedy animations. Varela (2002: 3) explained that descriptive translation studies (DTS) lead to "…the discovery of translation strategies, and rhetorical mechanisms unique to the construction of audiovisual texts is only possible from an analysis of audiovisual texts that look at their peculiarity; meaning constructed from the conjunction of images and words." Analysis of the corpus of the study reveals the translation procedures that were employed by Persian translators in different situations. The results of the similar descriptive studies could possibly lead to getting insights into some universals in humour translation of audiovisual texts.

The present study is target-oriented and it mainly focuses on the target texts. In fact, the emphasis of the studies in audiovisual translation is more on the target texts and communities that are the consumers of those products and hence deserve to get the priority. Hermans (1985: 10) described descriptive translation studies (DTS) as a "descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic approach to translation, with an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations".

The findings of the study could be a great help to the translators who are active in humour translation of audiovisual texts. Analysis of the previous translations provides the chance for the translators to examine the problematic areas in humour translation of audiovisual texts. Besides, the results of such descriptive analysis are significant in a way that they can assist the translators on how to deal with difficult issues in humour translation of audiovisual texts. It is worth mentioning that the aim of DTS is not to prescribe certain rules or translation strategies for the translators, and it only describes what has happened during the previous translations. Diaz Cintas (2004: 26) argued that “in DTS, translations are not judged as correct or incorrect; instead, DTS aims to explain why a translation has been translated in the way that it has been”. Analysing the previous mistakes in the translations would help the translators to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

Research on humour translation in audiovisual texts is significant because the comedy genre is popular among viewers. Besides, many audiovisual texts are produced in the comedy genre, and there is a high demand for the translation of those products around the world. It is hoped that research in this area can lead to discovering methods to transfer the humorous expressions more efficiently into the target texts.

Research on humour translation of audiovisual texts in Iran was mostly focused on one technique, i.e. either dubbing or subtitling. Researchers examined small corpora with mainly not more than five comedy movies involved and the studies were presented through articles or M.A. theses. In addition to that, no large-scale, in-depth research concerning the Persian dubbing and subtitling at a PhD level has been conducted in Iran so far, and this research would undoubtedly fill the gap.

The current study not only examines the translation procedures which were employed in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions in the comedy animations from English into the Persian but it also identifies the most effective translation procedures in the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. Furthermore, the study compares the degree of the adequate transference of humorous expressions in the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions more adequately into the target texts. The results of the study would be beneficial for dubbing and subtitling companies. If they know the more adequate technique for a particular genre, they can save time and money and they can produce higher quality products. The result of the study could be helpful for further research in this realm. Besides, it can assist translation students who are interested in humour translation of audiovisual texts.

1.7 Methodology and Frameworks of the Study

The current study is descriptive in nature. This section presents the theoretical Frameworks and the methodology that were selected for the study.

1.7.1 Theoretical Frameworks

Eclectic Frameworks were adopted to assist the researcher to achieve the purposes of the study. The selected frameworks of the study are as follows:

1) The study adopted a classification of humour proposed by Zabalbeascoa (1996: 251-254) and Martinez-Sierra (2005: 290-291) to classify the identified humorous expressions in the source and the equivalents in the target texts. The selected classification is a) the international joke, b) community-and-institutions elements, c) community-sense-of-humour elements, d) linguistic elements, e) visual elements, f) paralinguistic elements, g) sound elements, and h) the complex joke.

2) The study adopted the classification of Nedergaard Larsen (1993: 211) for ECRs to categorise the identified humorous expressions that are based on ECRs in the source and the equivalents in the target texts. The classification categorises the ECRs into four main categories and fourteen subcategories. The categories are a) geography: geography, meteorology biology and cultural geography, b) history: buildings, events and people, c) society: industrial level (economy), social organisation, politics, social conditions and ways of life, customs, and d) culture: religion, education, media and culture, leisure and activities.

3) The study opted for selected translation strategies from Schjoldager, Gottlieb and Kitgard (2008: 93-109) to analyse the employed translation procedures in the transference of humorous expressions into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions. The strategies are a) direct transfer, b) direct translation, c) paraphrase, d) condensation, e) adaptation, f) addition, g) substitution, and h) deletion.

4) The study also adopted Pedersen`s (2011: 77-97) translation strategies for the subtitling of ECRs to analyse the employed procedures in the transference of humorous ECRs expressions into the target texts. The strategies are a) retention, b) specification, c) direct translation, d) generalisation, e) substitution: cultural substitution (by transcultural ECR), cultural substitution (by target culture ECR) and situational substitution, f) omission, and g) official equivalent.

5) The study adopted Skopos theory of Reiss and Vermeer (1984: 119) to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions, in the comedy animations from English into Persian, more adequately into the target texts.

1.7.2 Methodology

Seventeen (17) American animated comedy movies were selected as the corpus of the study. The following procedures were taken to answer the research questions of the study, i.e. Humorous expressions were identified in the source texts. Next, they were classified into eight groups based on the selected classification of humour for the current study, which is a combination of the classification of humour that was proposed by Zabalbeascoa (1996: 251-254) and Martinez-Sierra (2005: 290-291). The identified humorous ECRs expressions were also classified based on the classification of Nedergaard Larsen (1993: 211) for ECRs. The next step was to compare theses humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions with their Persian dubbed and subtitled equivalents to examine the degree of adequate transference in the translations.

Translation procedures employed in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions in the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions were analysed using the selected translation strategies from Schjoldager et al. (2008: 93-109). Translation procedures employed in the transference of humorous expressions that are based on ECRs into the Persian dubbed and subtitled versions were also analysed using Pedersen`s (2011: 77-97) translation strategies for subtitling ECRs. Next, the most effective translation procedures were identified by examining which procedures transferred the humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous expressions that are based on ECRs more adequately into the dubbed and subtitled versions.

Finally, the Skopos theory of Reiss and Vermeer (1984: 119) was adopted to the findings of the analysis of the translation procedures to identify which technique (dubbing or subtitling) transfers the humorous expressions in the comedy animations more adequately into target texts.

1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study

It is possible that with a larger and more varied corpus, the results of the study would be more widely applicable. However, due to time and resource limitations the researcher selected a corpus of suitable size which could be managed within the timeframe available for the study. The selected corpus is made up of the following:

1) One language pair only, that is, English to Persian.

2) Seventeen American comedy animated movies and their Persian dubbed and subtitled versions.

3) One genre only, that is, the comedy genre.

4) One sub genre only of the comedy genre, that is, animation. Sub genres of the comedy genre include animation, sitcom, comedy-drama, stand-up comedy and game show comedy. However, except for comedy animations, sitcoms and comedy movies, the rest of the sub genres of the comedy genre are not popular in Iran, therefore they are not dubbed or subtitled into Persian. Besides, sitcoms are not dubbed or subtitled officially in Iran. Only two English sitcoms have been dubbed into Persian by a satellite channel, titled *'Farsi 1'* but their dubbed versions are not available in the market.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

This thesis is presented in six chapters. The first chapter is a detailed introduction to the study and it includes the background of the study and the statement of the problem. It also discusses objectives of the study, research questions and a brief description of the methodology of the study. It then proceeds with the significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and definition of the key terms.

The second chapter presents a review of the related literature. The topic of audiovisual translation along with its main characteristics are reviewed. Besides, the concept of humour with its classification and the two fundamental theories (incongruity and superiority) of humour are discussed. The chapter proceeds with the notion of extralinguistic cultural references and its classification. Different translation procedures for humour translation are also discussed. Finally, the chapter discusses the Skopos theory of Reiss and Vermeer (1984) and its fundamental role in humour translation of audiovisual texts. A brief overview of dubbing and subtitling techniques along with their main characteristics are also reviewed.

The third chapter focuses on the theoretical frameworks and the methodology which were employed in the study. It includes the details on the selection of the subjects, procedures for data collection and how the data is analysed.

The fourth chapter addresses the first two research questions of the study. It begins by presenting the results relating to those research questions and answer the first research question. Next, it presents the rhetorical devices that created humorous linguistic and cultural expressions in the source texts along with some examples of each rhetorical device. Subsequently, the chapter presents different ECRs that created humorous ECRs expressions in the source texts along with some examples relating to those ECRs.

The fifth chapter presents the translation procedures in the transference of humorous linguistic and cultural expressions and humorous ECRs expressions along with some examples for each procedure in the dubbed and subtitled versions. Subsequently, the chapter addresses the last three research questions of the study and answer them. It also presents the analysis of the rest of the humorous expressions that were identified in the source texts.

The final chapter includes the summary and discussion of the findings. It then proceeds with the implication of the study, contributions, recommendations for further research, as well as the conclusion.

1.10 Definition of the Key Terms

Adequacy: In this thesis, adequacy is the ability to retain the purpose of the source text in the target text. In other words, adequacy is the ability to transfer the source humorous expressions into the target text.

Audiovisual Technique: Audiovisual technique in this thesis refers to dubbing and subtitling techniques.

Audiovisual Translation: Perez-Gonzales (2009: 13) defined audiovisual translation as "a branch of translation studies concerned with the transfer of multimodal and multimedia texts into another language and culture". Audiovisual translation in this thesis refers to the translation of audiovisual texts such as movies, animations, sitcoms, etc. into other languages in the form of dubbing or subtitling.

Comedy Animations: Refers to computer-animated movies in the comedy genre which their viewers are both children and adults.

Cultural Humour: Cultural humour in this thesis refers to those humorous expressions that are based on cultural elements, and their understanding requires familiarity with the source cultural elements. Cultural elements in this thesis would be the following rhetorical devices: idiom, allusion, parody and culture-rooted elements.

Dubbing: Diaz Cintas (2003: 195) argued that **"**dubbing involves replacing the original soundtrack containing the actors' dialogue with a target language (TL) recording that reproduces the original message, and at the same time ensuring that the TL sounds and the actors' lip movements are more or less synchronised". Dubbing in this thesis refers to the replacement of the original dialogues in the audiovisual texts with their translation by dubbing actors with respect to the lip-synchronization. The dubbed version is the production of dubbing and in this thesis refers to Persian dubbed version.

Effectiveness: in this thesis effectiveness is to retain the humorous effect of the source texts in the target texts.

Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECRs): Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 200) defined ECRs as "elements outside language that are bound by a country`s culture, society, history or geography”. ECRs in this thesis refer to the elements outside the language. They are tied up to culture, geography, society, and history of an individual community. References to the historical places, foods, customs and traditions, events in the history and living conditions are some examples of ECRs.

Humour: Degabriele and Walsh (2010: 225-226) defined humour as “a universal phenomenon in human interaction which starts at very early ages in children”. Humour in this thesis refers to the funny situations or expressions in the animations that result in laughter or smiles from the viewers. They may rely on visual or sound elements, cultural elements, linguistic elements, extralinguistic cultural references, paralinguistic elements or community-sense-of-humour elements.

Linguistic Humour: Depends on “features of natural language for their effect” (Zabalbeascoa, 1996: 253). In this thesis, linguistic humour refers to those humorous expressions that rely on linguistic elements. Linguistic elements in this thesis would be the following rhetorical devices: homonymy, homophony, paronymy, lexical substitution, idiomatic wordplay, simile, neologism, lexical blending, metaphor, rhyme, alliteration and code-switching.

Subtitling: Luyken, et.al (1991: 31) described subtitling as “condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue”. Subtitling in this thesis refers to the presentation of the translation of the original dialogues of the audiovisual texts in written form on the screen. The subtitled version is the production of subtitling and in this thesis refers to Persian subtitled version.

Translation Procedures: The term translation procedures in this thesis refers to whatever solutions that translators use to transfer the humorous expressions from the source text to the target text.