

Cultural Signs in Multilingual Drama Feature Films: Rendition Strategies

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Abstract

The contemporary international landscape is more accurately portrayed in the works of filmmakers who increasingly choose to incorporate multiple languages. However, this diversity introduces additional challenges during the translation process. This research describes the translation strategies employed in dubbing multilingual films and explore the differences in translating third language (L3) in Iranian national and private channels based on the models of Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) and Sanz Ortega (2011). Three films were selected which were dubbed and broadcast by two national TV studios: the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Company (IRIB) and an online Video on Demand (VOD) service, Filimo. The analysis revealed that the most prevalent verbal technique was neutralization (Ai), which reduced linguistic variety. Non-verbal signs were adapted to adhere to the sociocultural norms of Iranian culture. Filimo, in its dubbing efforts, maintains films closer to their original duration compared to IRIB. Filimo's commitment to preserving more scenes from the original film without compromising the plot exceeds that of IRIB, providing audiences with a more enriched viewing experience.

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1. Introduction

According to Diaz-Cintas (2011), filmmakers are increasingly creating films that reflect real-life society. These films depict contemporary social conditions, such as immigration, tourism, war, multilingualism, and multiculturalism, making multilingual films (MLFs) a more accurate portrayal of real-life society (Berger & Komori, 2010; Wahl, 2005). MLFs, as outlined by Khoshsaligheh et al. (2022), possess characteristics such as multilingualism, multiculturalism, multi-identity, multi-country, multi-ethnic, and multi-nationality. Filmmakers employ multilingualism to immerse audiences in “the foreign” and create a sense of authenticity (Szarkowska et al., 2013, p. 1).

While Iranian audiences express a demand for foreign films, the presence of languages other than the source language poses challenges for translators (Badstübner-Kizik, 2017). Translators encountering MLFs during the dubbing process may employ various strategies. The use of different languages in films remains an understudied area, with limited research, particularly in the Iranian context. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the strategies employed by translators in rendering multilingualism in the Persian dubbing of English films. Given the scarcity of research on translating MLFs for Iranian national channels and the absence of studies on translating MLFs for Iran private media, the findings can contribute valuable insights into how translators handle L3 translation in various media contexts in Iran.

The study compares the original films and their Persian-dubbed versions, examining those broadcasted on the IRIB and Filimo that allows users to stream videos online. Due to Iran's historical inclination for creating dubbed versions, this research primarily focuses on dubbed films, aiming to identify the dubbing strategies utilized by Iranian national and private channels in MLFs and investigate the divergences in methods between these two channels.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

The concept of multilingualism pertains to the capacity to communicate and understand multiple languages, involving the expression of linguistic content in various linguistic systems (Delabastita & Grutman, 2005). Grutman (2019b, p. 182) defines multilingualism as “the co-presence of two or more languages in a society, text, or individual”. As mentioned by Adams (2003), there are three primary types of multilingualism: a multilingual individual, a multilingual culture, and a multilingual text, whether written or spoken. According to O’Sullivan (2007), multilingualism, whether observed in film, opera, theatre, or literature, creates a *mise en abyme*, a narrative or symbolic structure that reflects or repeats itself within the work. This serves to inspire what Seyhan (2002) referred to as the multilingual imagination of the audience. The use of multiple languages in various forms of artistic expression enhances the complexity and depth of the audience's engagement, fostering a rich and nuanced experience.

Alosevičienė (2020) and Delabastita (2019) defined multilingual texts as those that incorporate sociolects, slang, pidgin, created languages, and official languages. Due to their utilization of various semiotic

modalities to convey meaning, audiovisual texts are considered multimodal (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1994; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). As highlighted by Mayoral et al. (1988), the intended meaning is produced through the interactive collaboration of channels for speech, sound, and vision. This interaction often involves subtitling, dubbing, or a combination of both techniques into a target language. As noted by Beseghi (2023) and Dwyer (2005), the subject of multilingualism has garnered increased attention from filmmakers and researchers in AVT in the last decade. There has been a notable rise in the number of articles exploring and discussing multilingualism in the context of AVT in recent years (Eriss & Khoshsaligheh, 2023; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2022; Mehdizadkhani & Chen, 2023; Monti, 2022; Ranzato & Zabalbeascoa, 2022). This trend reflects a growing recognition of the significance of multilingual elements in audiovisual content and the need for nuanced translation approaches to address these complexities. MLFs are characterized by the integration and juxtaposition of multiple languages within a single feature film. Multilingualism is strategically employed in narratives where it makes sense for speakers of different languages to interact or when the plot unfolds in diverse language contexts or nations. Plots in MLFs often incorporate various elements such as: history of migration: both voluntary and involuntary migration play a role; inclusion of tourism, vacations, and business trips abroad: settings involving travel and international business interactions; historical and contemporary conflicts: this includes themes related to war, colonialism, and terrorism, as highlighted by Badstübner-Kizik (2017) and De Bonis (2015).

Plot-based justified multilingualism in films may also arise in situations involving: parallel events occurring at different locations: the narrative may involve simultaneous events in various locations with a direct or indirect connection, films set in border regions and multilingual areas- these films explore the linguistic diversity and cultural dynamics of regions with multiple languages in use; economic, political, and cultural globalization aspects: the need for authentic multilingualism in film can be driven by globalization factors, including international institutions, as highlighted by Badstübner-Kizik (2017). These elements contribute to the authenticity of the multilingual experience in films and reflect the complexities of real-world linguistic and cultural interactions.

The prevalence of films featuring multiple languages has increased since the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in Hollywood (Meylaerts & Serban, 2014). Many film studies scholars attribute this rise in multilingualism in films and literary works to globalization (Bleichenbacher, 2008; Díaz-Cintas, 2011; Dwyer, 2005; Heiss, 2004; O'Sullivan, 2011). As noted by Cenoz (2013), multilingualism has gained prominence due to several factors, including the influence of new technologies, globalization, and transnational migration. These elements have far-reaching effects on political, social, and educational aspects, contributing to the increased visibility of multilingualism in various forms of media, including films.

Bandia (2008, p. 165) highlighted reasons beyond globalization that have drawn scholars' attention to multilingualism, including "migration and the ensuing cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism of today's global societies". Thus, multilingualism, as a social phenomenon, has the potential to influence the perspectives of individuals and societies (Cenoz, 2013). The interconnectedness of migration,

cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism contributes to the richness of linguistic diversity, making multilingualism a significant aspect of contemporary global societies.

The influence of multilingualism on films is manifest in the rising occurrence of audiovisual compositions that incorporate a minimum of two languages concurrently, underscoring the evolving dynamics of language representation in cinematic narratives. (Corrius et al., 2019). Delabastita and Grutman (2005) define a multilingual text as a textual composition expressed in multiple languages. Rainier (1998) suggests that at least a single foreign word is necessary to identify a text as multilingual, where more than one language is used. Beyond texts, multilingualism extends to individuals and society as a whole (Grutman, 2019a).

MLFs are created in a manner that involves the use of more than one language (Heiss, 2004). As Díaz-Cintas (2011) notes, films with multiple languages spoken by characters, even if it's just one character, are considered MLFs. MLFs possess various characteristics, including multilingualism, multiculturalism, multi-identity, multi-country, multi-ethnic, and multi-nationality (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2022). Wahl (2005) terms this genre as polyglot films. Apart from MLFs, other terms like hetero-lingual films (Grutman, 2006) and plurilingual films (Bleichenbacher, 2008) are also utilized to describe films with similar multilingual features.

As Aloševičienė (2020) has pointed out, it is expedient to classify MLF as a formal genre, a categorization substantiated by extensive analyses conducted on both the genre itself and its various subgenres. According to Wahl (2005), the ‘polyglot film’ genre is so named due to the repetitive nature of the narratives and characters. Wahl (2005) further explains that the term “polyglot” denotes the presence of multiple languages, while, in contrast, the term “multilingual” refers to the presence of three languages. Grutman (2019b), on the other hand, dismisses any distinction between “multilingual” and “polyglot”.

Translating and dubbing MLFs represent a particularly “new challenge”, as described by Heiss (2004, p. 218). Dubbing often conflicts with dialogues originating in multiple languages or even dialects (Ranzato, 2020). Language flattening and homogenization seem to be more prominent in dubbing (Cronin, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2011). Barnes (2012, p. 247) defined code-switching as “the alternation between two languages, dialects or language varieties”. During the plot development and to ensure audience reach, the transition from one language to another is crucial in these types of films. Dubbing cannot employ code-switching due to a technical constraint. However, it is a common discourse strategy for representing multilingual communities: Harmonizing the original actors and dubbing the actor's voices (Savoldelli & Spiteri Miggiani, 2023).

2.1. Verbal level

According to Corrius (2008) and Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), the L3 accounts for language variation in translation and represents linguistic expressions that are not neatly classified as either L1 or L2. The

new translation equation is $L1 + L3 \rightarrow L2ST + L3TT$. To summarize, the new equation follows the following conceptual framework:

1. Only one primary language (L1) is used to utter the ST. A multilingual text may have multiple L1s (L1a, L1b, and ...), where they are considered equally important. Any other secondary language (L3ST) turns the equation into $L1 + L3$. There is a difference between L1b and L3 in terms of how much each language occurs in a text;
2. The translation from L1 to TT is L2;
3. Compared to L1, L3 has fewer words than L1. It is also not uncommon for a text to contain more than one L3 (for example, L3a, L3b, L3c, etc.);
4. It is also possible for L3ST to be a dialect of L1 (like L3TT concerning L2).

Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) have proposed a model that encompasses various solutions, functions, and consequences to address the challenge of L3 in audiovisual translation. These solutions, as categorized by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), are detailed in Table 1, a framework employed by Khoshsaligheh et al. (2022, p. 5).

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

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

Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) highlight various factors, such as the connection between L1 and L3, which can impact the selection of solutions for dubbing. The importance of L3's function within the narrative, as emphasized by Raffi (2019), must be considered. Viewer expectations play a crucial role, and decisions about translating L3 and the chosen strategy can be influenced by the linguistic background and proficiency of the target audience (Díaz-Cintas, 2011; Vermeulen, 2012). Rendering L3ST in dubbing

can indeed have unintended consequences for L2 and its audience in comparison to the original content. The introduction of multilingualism in dubbing versions necessitates careful consideration of how the translator's decisions will impact the final product and its reception by the audience (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2022).

2.2. Non-verbal level

To facilitate interpretations and occasionally augment credibility and coherence, components encompassing auditory, visual, nonverbal, and paralinguistic elements are incorporated (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014). As Chaume (2004) mentioned, visual images and audio paralinguistic information are non-verbal. Eco (1977) and Poyatos (1997) argue that verbal communications are accompanied by kinesics, proxemic, and paralinguistic factors that reinforce meaning and utterances. Thus, Perego (2009) emphasizes the importance of considering these factors in dubbing and subtitling vocal statements due to their practical and emotional roles. Nord (1991) states that non-verbal features are culture-specific and may require adaptation when translated into a target language. This helps translators choose the most effective translation technique and verbal solutions. Sanz Ortega (2011) categorizes the different types of non-verbal signs, as shown in Table 2, which is used by Khoshsaligheh et al. (2022, p. 5).

Table 2. Non-verbal signs

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

Religion, politics, sexual content, and profanities are among the topics that have been altered in the dubbed versions of films in Iran. According to the investigation by Kenevisi et al. (2016), translators of Persian-dubbed versions of English-language films have employed manipulation techniques to modify linguistic features and references that are prohibited for the Iranian population. Various elements, including religious and political considerations, impact how films are dubbed into Persian. Bogucki and Díaz-Cintas (2020) also emphasize that viewers' limited language proficiency, reluctance to explore diverse languages and societies, and broader social, cultural, and belief systems can collectively lead to the censorship of the original soundtrack by authoritarian governments (Perego & Pacinotti, 2020).

3. Method

The study adopts a qualitative research design to address the research questions, aiming to identify common translation strategies employed in the Persian dubbing of MLFs across different channels in Iran. Employing criteria sampling, three films spanning the years 2000 to 2018 that were dubbed on both channels were found. Three MLFs were found as the primary focus of the study, and the audiovisual and

textual materials from these films were utilized as the primary data sources. The study also seeks to assess the variations in translation and dubbing strategies between MLFs aired on private and national channels. These films were dubbed and broadcast by both national TV studios: IRIB and Filimo. The film selection criteria were designed to include films that utilize at least two to six languages, with English serving as the primary language. Although the films were originally in English, Persian was chosen as the language for translation, and other languages played a secondary role. The selection also emphasized films with a multifaceted nature, encompassing multiple languages, cultures, countries, religions, identities, and societies. Table 3 provides a list of the selected films along with additional relevant details. The main reason for the variation in run times between the original and dub versions is censorship.

Table 3. Description of the study's information corpus

Films	Country	* Runtime	Year	Directors	Languages
Arrival	United States	• 2:07	2016	D. Villeneuve	English, Russian, and Mandarin
	Canada	• 1:45			
	(22)				
Blade Runner 2049	United States	• 1:54	2017	D. Villeneuve	English, Finnish, Japanese, Hungarian, Spanish, Russian, and Somali
	United Kingdom	• 1:13+4			
	Canada	(1:18)			
	Hungary	• 2:19			
	Spain	(12)			
	Mexico				
The meg	China	• 1:53	2018	J. Turteltaub	English, Japanese, Mandarin, and Thai
	United States	• 1:28			
	(25)				
		• 1:50			
		(3)			

*Run times are written in sequence according to the runtime of the original film, the dubbed version of the film by the national channel, and then by Filimo.

In this study, the authors compare the original film's audiovisual text with its dubbed versions in both national and private channels (Filimo). We employ a model developed by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) to assess how the linguistic diversity of MLFs is manifested in the official Persian dubbing by translators. As this model involves examining how they handle multilingualism, i.e., the interaction of L1, L2, and L3, all in reference to ST and TT, within this model. Each language in each film will be analyzed independently to identify any discernible patterns.

The objectives of this study are threefold: firstly, to examine the representation of multilingualism in films officially dubbed and broadcasted on national and private channels in Iran. Secondly, to illustrate how multilingualism is portrayed in dubbed films published in Iran's national and private media, especially Filimo. Thirdly, to investigate whether there is a difference between the L3 translation strategies of national and private media. All three MLFs were meticulously matched sentence by sentence to the

dubbed versions in both channels. The acquired information was organized using the classification scheme for translation solutions developed by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) and the classification for the non-verbal level by Sanz Ortega (2011). The ensuing tables present all solutions applied across all MLFs.

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

In this film, L1 is English, and different L3s are used in other scenes, both verbally and non-verbally:

4.1.1 Non-verbally

Non-verbal signs, encompassing elements like women's groans, body gestures of prostitutes, physical characteristics of replicas, and proxemics, undergo censorship in both channels, aligning with Iran sociocultural and religious norms. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that these nonverbal forms of communication, which collaborate with spoken dialogue, play a crucial role in augmenting storytelling and contributing to the creation of a rich and immersive cinematic experience in *Blade Runner 2049*.

The duration variance between the dubbed film on IRIB and the original film amounts to 1 hour and 18 minutes. Notably, approximately 58 minutes from the film's commencement are omitted, a modification likely attributable to both editing for brevity and content censoring. The original film includes scenes featuring explicit content, including nudity and sexual depictions, in violation of the regulations set by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (MCIG). It is essential to emphasize that any film showcased on Iran national and official channels must adhere to the stipulations outlined by the Iranian MCIG to secure broadcasting permission. While there seems to be some flexibility in the standards of Iranian dubbing studios regarding acceptable ideological content, it is crucial to note that they may not strictly adhere to the guidelines set by MCIG.

In contrast to the national channel, Filimo not only retained the initial 58 minutes of the film but also undertook the translation and vocal dubbing of written content in the film's opening scene concerning *Blade Runner 2049*. The temporal discrepancy between the dubbed version of Filimo and the original film is a mere 12 minutes, signifying a more concerted effort to maintain the integrity of the film with fewer omissions. However, Filimo has opted for complete removal or censorship of entire scenes, particularly those featuring sexual content, except for a scene at the 2:17-minute mark.

In *Blade Runner 2049*, multiple languages are employed non-verbally to enrich the film's visual world-building. These languages contribute to the portrayal of a globalized society, illustrating a future where diverse cultures and languages have converged. Table 4 provides examples of various languages, including Russian, Japanese, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Bulgarian, Hebrew, Hindi, and Bengali, utilized in nonverbal contexts.

Table 4. Non-verbal signs in *Blade Runner 2049*

Non-verbal Signs		
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holographic advertising - Signage and labels - Visual interface - Textual documents 	
Russian	Signs advertising "girls" in downtown scenes are in Russian.	
Finnish	Not used non-verbally	
Japanese	Signs and advertising	
Hungarian	Not used non-verbally	
Spanish	On billboards and signage	
Somali	Not used non-verbally	
German	Not used non-verbally	
Languages	Korean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage and advertisement at the casino - The presence of Korean characters
	Chinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holographic advertising - Signage - various written texts throughout the futuristic cityscape
	Arabic	The buttons Luv applies to Wallace are written in Arabic.
	Bulgarian	The term “Целина” on the greenhouses is in Bulgarian and means "celery." Although it is utilized in the film as a fictional language, the script is the same as the one used in Bulgarian.
	Hebrew	Advertising Coca-Cola is in Hebrew
	Hindi	The police station signs are in Hindi
	Bengali	During a Sony advertisement

In addition to the visual representation of various languages in *Blade Runner 2049*, there are other non-verbal forms of communication, such as the film's sound design. This encompasses background music, ambient sounds, and electronic tones, all contributing to nonverbal communication. Furthermore, the film incorporates advanced technology and futuristic interfaces, with characters interacting through touchscreens and other nonverbal means. These interactions serve as a form of nonverbal communication between characters and their environment, providing insight into the evolution of technology in the film's universe.

4.1.2 Verbally

Table 5 illustrates the predominant verbal languages in *Blade Runner 2049*. It is evident that English is the primary language throughout the film, encompassing crucial conversations and plot developments. In both dubbed versions, English dialogue is translated into Persian. Regarding other dominant languages in the film, they are either translated into Persian or omitted, with Ai being the predominant transfer type employed. It is important to note that the film contains a significant amount of futuristic jargon and slang that is not based on actual languages. Even though various languages are utilized in the film, English remains the most common language for dialogues and interaction between most characters.

Table 5. Dominant L3s in *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve, 2017) and their Persian dubbed versions

Language	Type	TT Persian in IRIB	TT Persian in Filimo	Transfer type in IRIB	Transfer Type in Filimo
English	Verbal	Standard Persian	Standard Persian	L1 → L2	L1 → L2
Somali	Verbal	Standard Persian	Standard Persian	Ai	Ai
Spanish	Verbal and non-verbal	Delete	Delete	Ai	Ai
Finnish	Verbal	Delete	Standard Persian	Ai	Ai
Russian	Nonverbal	Delete	Delete	Ai	Ai
Hungarian	Verbal	Delete	Standard Persian	Ai	Ai
Japanese	Verbal and nonverbal	Delete	Delete	Ai	Ai

4.2. *The Meg* (Turteltaub, 2018)

In this film, L1 is English, and three languages are used as L3: Mandarin, Thai, and Japanese. Like the film reviewed in the previous part, when the L3 is spoken in a scene, English subtitles are used in this film. Using part subtitles in English for different languages and keeping those subtitles in Persian dubbing can be a clue for the viewer that different languages are used in the film. These English subtitles are preserved in both national and private channels.

4.2.1 Non-verbally

Throughout the film, the cityscape is adorned with vibrant neon signs, many of which display Chinese characters or incorporate Chinese symbols. These signs contribute to the multicultural atmosphere of the setting and provide visual cues that add to the immersive experience.

In IRIB, the runtime of the film is shorter than in Filimo because IRIB censored and deleted more non-verbal scenes that are against the laws of the Iranian MCIG, like the kinesics and proxemics of Jonas, when the male character is naked from the waist up in 40 min, but it is not censored in Filimo. Also, cultural signs such as, the Chinese wedding scene and people at Sanya Bay are deleted and censored in IRIB's dubbed version but not deleted in Filimo's dubbed version most often. Table 6 provides examples of various languages utilized in nonverbal contexts of *The Meg*.

Table 6. Non-verbal signs in *The Meg*

		Non-verbal Signs	
Languages	English	-	Visual interface Textual documents
	Mandarin	The cityscape is adorned with vibrant neon signs in Chinese.	
	Thai	Not used non-verbally	
	Japanese	Toshi wrote a letter in Japanese to his wife just in case he died.	

4.2.2 Verbally

According to Table 7, English serves as the primary language in *The Meg*, with translation into Persian in both dubbed versions. The translation strategy for L3s shows no significant difference between the two channels, and the prevailing strategy is Neutralization (L3TT=L2), resulting in the nonvisibility of L3. In this strategy, L3 is substituted by its equivalent words in the second language, namely Standard Persian, or entirely omitted. IRIB translators aim to preserve the original Mandarin to maintain the plot and evoke a similar mood for the target audience.

The Thai song “Hey Mickey” plays when the scene switches to Thailand. This song is deleted and substituted with a song without lyrics in the IRIB version of the film due to its female singer and beats. However, in the Filimo version, the song's original voice is preserved, so the transfer type in IRIB is Ai, and in Filimo, it is Ci because of transferring the song in L3 (Thai) unchanged. The Thai boat crewman character says some words in Thai that are not understandable to the film's viewers, is not subtitled in English, and is not translated and dubbed in either version.

Table 7. Dominant L3s in *The Meg* (Turteltaub, 2018) and its Persian dubbed versions

Language	Type	TT Persian in IRIB	TT Persian in Filimo	Transfer type in IRIB	Transfer Type in Filimo
English	Verbal	Standard Persian	Standard Persian	L1 → L2	L1 → L2
Mandarin Chinese	Verbal and nonverbal	Standard Persian	Standard Persian	Ai	Ai
		Delete	Delete	Ai	Ai
		Chinese	Accent of Chinese	Ci	Ci
Japanese	Verbal and nonverbal	Standard Persian	Standard Persian	Ai	Ai
Thai	verbal	Delete	Delete Thai	Ai	Ai Ci

Upon examining the treatment of L3s in this film and their translations on both national and private channels, it becomes apparent that the national channel's dubbed version underwent more censorship and had more omissions compared to the Filimo version. The national channel's version included the removal of the female singer's voice, the Chinese wedding scene, all beach scenes, the scene featuring a male character naked from the waist up, and the censorship of women's clothing. In Filimo's version, there are

fewer omissions and less censorship; for example, Filimo did not censor or remove the male body. The primary reason for the shorter runtime of this film in IRIB compared to Filimo is the greater number of scene omissions in the IRIB dubbed version.

4.3. *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016)

Contrasting the two previously reviewed films with this one, fewer L3s are used, including Chinese Mandarin and Russian. These languages depict global communication efforts in the face of alien arrival. The film also includes significant portions featuring fictional alien languages. The alien language depicted in the film is called Heptapod. It was created by linguist Jessica Coon and is based on the concept of non-linear orthography. The Heptapod language is characterized by circular symbols representing whole ideas or concepts rather than individual sounds or letters.

4.3.1 Non-verbally

At the non-verbal level, the film did not include any instances of prohibited paralinguistic or kinetic signals. The censorship of proxemics in the IRIB dubbed version, but not in Filimo, can be attributed to cultural issues.

4.3.2 Verbally

The Heptapod language was specifically created for the film and is entirely unknown. According to Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), Heptapod is a constructed language (conlang), indicating that it has never been used before and lacks native speakers. Conlangs serve a rhetorical purpose in bringing fictional cultures to life. The Heptapod language remains unchanged in both the IRIB and Filimo dubbed versions, with the transfer type, according to the model of Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), being Ci. Heiss (2004) suggests that the primary reason for choosing this unknown language is to create an alienating impact. The language lacks subtitles or additional modes to preserve the original version's secrecy, suspense, and mystery. As it is not widely recognized, the examiners deliberately excluded it from the languages under analysis. Only in the final moments are English subtitles included to help viewers comprehend the unfolding events. At 1:08 min, the soldiers' dialogues in Russian, which were unintelligible, were omitted by IRIB. However, in Filimo, the Russian dialogues were fully translated into Persian. Therefore, the transfer type of L3, as per the model of Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), in IRIB is Ai, involving the omission of the Russian segments, while in Filimo, it is also Ai, but with the translation of Russian into Persian. In the 1:23 min scene, Agent Halpern's character played a Russian voice on the laptop. Since the voice was incomprehensible, both in IRIB and Filimo, this Russian voice was removed, indicating the removal of L3 segments in both dubbed versions, with Russian being treated as Ai. In the IRIB dubbed version, the segments in Mandarin Chinese are preserved, indicating a transfer type of Ci. However, in the Filimo dubbed version, the Mandarin Chinese segments are omitted, suggesting a transfer type of Ai. As shown in Table 8, the dominant transfer type of English as the film's primary language and other L3s used in *Arrival* is Ai in both dubbed versions.

Table 8. Dominant L3s in *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016) and its Persian dubbed versions

Language	Type	TT Persian in IRIB	TT Persian in Filimo	Transfer type in IRIB	Transfer Type in Filimo
English	Verbal	Standard Persian	Standard Persian	L1 → L2	L1 → L2
Russian	Verbal	Delete	Standard Persian Delete	Ai	Ai Ai
Mandarin Chinese	Verbal and nonverbal	Chinese	Delete	Ci	Ai
Heptapod Language	nonverbal	Heptapod	Heptapod	Ci	Ci

Table 9 showcases the languages and their solutions employed during the analysis of the three films. While Chinese, Russian, and Japanese are the most frequently encountered languages, it's noteworthy that there isn't a single solution that uniformly applies to all languages.

Table 9. Languages and solutions in *Blade Runner 2049*, *The Meg*, and *Arrival*

N	Languages	Solutions in IRIB	Solutions in Filimo
1	Somali	Ai	Ai
2	Spanish	Ai	Ai
3	Finnish	Ai	Ai
4	Russian	Ai*2	Ai*3
5	Hungarian	Ai	Ai
6	Japanese	Ai*2	Ai*2
7	Mandarin Chinese	Ai*2/Ci*2	Ai*3/Ci
8	Thai	Ai	Ai/Ci
9	Heptapod Language	Ci	Ci

5. Discussions and conclusion

As highlighted by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), translating multilingualism poses unique challenges for translators, particularly in the context of dubbing, where each language serves a distinct purpose in the plot. The complexity of this task is further compounded in Iran, given the prevalent religious and cultural conditions, which impose additional constraints and restrictions. This research focused on the dubbing practices of IRIB and Filimo in handling three MLFs. This study reveals that Ai

(L3ST = L3TT = L2) is the predominant solution for translating MLFs in both IRIB and Filimo at the verbal level in Iran. To contextualize these findings, a comparison was made with two similar studies conducted in Iran on the Persian (L2) and English (L1) language pair by Khoshsaligheh et al. (2022) and Ebrahimzadeh Poustchi and Amirian (2021). Their studies indicated that the most common strategy employed by IRIB in dubbing MLFs is the replacement of L3ST with L2 (Ai). In employing Ai (L3ST = L3TT = L2) as a solution, L3 segments are either deleted or substituted with L2 words. This neutralization process obscures the functional and stylistic features of the original dialogues, as outlined by Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer (2014). In summary, the analysis reveals a significant lack of audience exposure to L3s, as most instances involve substituting the L3s with Persian as the second language (L2) in the study corpus. Tables 10 and 11 show the frequency of all solutions in both IRIB and Filimo channels.

Table 10. Frequency of solutions in IRIB

Solutions	Ai	Aii	Aiii	B	Ci	Cii	D
Numbers	11	0	0	0	3	0	0

Table 11. Frequency of solutions in Filimo

Solutions	Ai	Aii	Aiii	B	Ci	Cii	D
Numbers	13	0	0	0	3	0	0

The predominant use of monolingual dubbing by both channels suggests a tendency for ideological manipulation aligned with sociocultural and religious aims, as posited by Kenevisi et al. (2016). The adoption of Ai as a translation solution in both channels may also be influenced by MCIG rules prohibiting scenes involving sexuality, acts of aggression, vulgar speech, and extramarital relationships (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2022). The findings of this study align with research conducted outside of Iran by Ulrych (2000), Heiss (2004), Pavesi (2005), Chiaro (2008), De Bonis (2014), and Dore (2019). Similar to Persian dubbing, the most commonly employed strategies in Italian dubbing, classified under Group A according to the model of Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), aim to render L3s invisible and eliminate linguistic variations.

Following the Ai strategy, the second most common approach used by both IRIB and Filimo is Ci. This strategy aims to maintain the language barrier by transferring the L3 in its original form to TT. Meylaerts (2006) emphasizes that to preserve multilingualism, the L3 is expected to remain consistent after translation. With the Ci method, the original style and mode are retained in the dubbed versions, although only a few L3 words are transported unchanged to the target film compared to the Ai strategy. Andino (2014) notes that not translating the film's dialogue helps preserve the multilingual flavor, especially in films where the subject is based on a specific L3. The findings from the research by Nematī Lafmejani (2022) indicate that the most common translation method in some analyzed dubbed films on IRIB was

Ci, which involves preserving the L3 in the dubbed version. The reason for adopting this strategy is that in the majority of the films reviewed in her study, the L3s serve as the primary elements of the narratives. However, in the films analyzed in this study, the L3s were not the main elements of the narratives.

None of the films analyzed in this study employed Aii, Aiii, B, or D solutions as translation strategies in both channels. It is noteworthy that despite the substantial use of various English dialects in the source texts for character characterization, these dialectal differences are not expressed in the Persian dubbing versions in both channels. In the opinion of translators, this linguistic gap is addressed through adjustments in lexicon, grammar, tone, and intonation (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014). The inevitability of losing some meaning during dubbing is evident, given the inherent differences between the source and target languages. One illustrative example lies in the challenge of transferring the accent of the original language spoken by film characters. Since there may not be an equivalent accent in the target language, the strategy employed by dubbing managers involves removing the original accent and relying on dubbers to deliver the lines in Persian. However, there are still strategies to convey the presence of an accent. For instance, characters with distinct verbal contexts prompt the translator to use different vocabularies. To avoid a homogeneous context, the translator employs street talk in Persian. This approach aims to maintain the diversity of linguistic expression in the dubbed version. In conclusion, both Iranian national and private media endeavor to eliminate multilingualism and neutralize the presence of different languages in the original films by predominantly employing Ai as their translation strategy. In essence, it appears that Iranian translators and dubbing companies might not prioritize capturing the characteristics of alienation and multilingualism. The prevalent use of the Ai strategy suggests a focus on minimizing alienation among the target audience and maintaining consistency (De Bonis, 2014; Heiss, 2014).

Sociocultural and religious norms in Iran have exerted a notable influence on the portrayal of non-verbal signs in the three films under consideration, prompting adjustments in their depiction. Filimo demonstrated more dedicated efforts in preserving original non-verbal scenes, achieving greater success compared to IRIB in providing the audience with insights into the characters during moments of non-verbal communication. Compared to the IRIB-dubbed versions, the runtime of the analyzed films in Filimo is more aligned with the original versions. The primary difference between the original and dubbed runtimes lies in scene omission. This strategy involves removing offensive moments that are incompatible with TL culture. In essence, censorship in these films ranges from the exclusion of banned terms at the word level to the omission of specific scenes (Hashemian et al., 2014). The official authorization for the broadcast of films in Iran is subject to restrictions in 14 specific situations, as outlined by Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2016), and Khoshsaligheh et al. (2017). Pakar and Khoshsaligheh (2021) have categorized scenes featuring visual (non-verbal) elements that undergo modifications such as removal, reframing, or painting over, attributed to religious and socio-cultural considerations. Scenes falling within the socio-cultural category are deemed inappropriate within the Iranian context, aligning with cultural and social norms (Pakar & Khoshsaligheh, 2021). Adherence to regulations is imperative for state-run entities, driven by considerations of political, cultural, or religious nature (Kenevisi et al., 2016; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2014, 2016).

The findings of this research illuminate the strategies and methods employed in translating MLFs by two dubbing studios in Iran, namely IRIB and Filimo. The identification of differences in their translation strategies provides valuable insights. The comprehensive discussion within the essay has practical implications for translators, dubbing directors, studios, and translation students.

Future studies could explore the reception of MLFs within Iranian culture, examining the translators' motivations for frequently choosing Ai as a translation strategy and identifying the factors influencing their decisions. Further research might investigate the translation strategies employed by other private channels, such as Aparat and Namava, to assess potential differences in dubbing MLFs across various platforms. Additionally, within the realm of professional dubbing in Iran, analyzing the strategies of home entertainment distribution studios in dubbing MLFs could provide valuable insights. Now that the dubbing strategies of MLFs in IRIB and Filimo have been revealed, it is recommended that researchers conduct additional mixed-methods research among Iranian audiences, employing interviews and questionnaires to gain deeper insights into their attitudes. Additionally, interviewing translators and responsible institutions would help uncover the intentions behind the frequent use of Ai as a translation strategy.

Disclosure statement

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