



CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN SUBTITLING “HAVAR”, “AUTUMN” AND “BAHOZ”*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at discussing cultural and political problems in subtitling Turkish films, such as “*Havar*”, “*Autumn*” and “*Bahoz*” for the European Film Festival in Italy. As it is known that translators should be careful about the political discourse which can be simply marked as the discourse of politicians, i.e. their text and talk, and their professional activities, prospective translators should be trained so well as to translate political discourse, too. Political Discourse (PD) relies on translation, in the sense that linguistic behaviour influences political behaviour. A wrong or inappropriate word choice in the context of politically sensitive issues can lead to great misinterpretations. Therefore, discourse analysis tries to define why a particular word, phrase or structure during the translation process has been chosen over another one. Besides, translators should be aware of socio-cultural values. A collaboration of translation studies and political discourse analysis is essential. Thus in the process of the training, the university students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Salento were asked to translate the subtitles of the above mentioned films into Italian language. Then their translations were corrected. Their translation was analyzed in terms of cultural and political problems in subtitling. The results show us that Italian student translators have had problems in translating some cultural and political subtitles. Therefore, it has been suggested that prospective translators’ cultural awareness should be raised to minimize translation problems.

Key Words: Film Translation, subtitling, Political discourse analysis, training of translators

HAVAR, SONBAHAR VE BAHUZ FİMLERİNİN ALTYAZI ÇEVİRİLERİNİN KÜLTÜREL VE POLİTİK SORUNLARI

ÖZET

Bu makale, İtalya’daki Avrupa Festivalinde gösterilen “*Havar*”, “*Bahoz*” ve “*Sonbahar*” filmlerinin alt yazılarındaki kültürel ve politik anlatımların çevirilerinde karşılaşılan sorunları tartışmaktadır. Çevirmenlerin, politikacıların mesleki etkinliklerini dile getirmek

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amacıyla kullandığı yazılı ve sözlü söylem olarak tanımlanan politik söylem (PS) çevirilerini yaparken dikkatli olmaları gerektiği bilinmektedir. Politik Söylem (PS) çevirisinde dil kullanımı politik biçimi etkiler. Politik duyarlılık gösteren bağlamlardaki yanlış ya da uygun olmayan bir sözcüğün kullanımı, yanlış yorumlamalara yol açabilir. Bu nedenle, söylem çözümlemesi, özel bir sözcüğün, öbeğin ya da yapının, çeviri sürecinde neden diğer kullanımlara tercih edildiğini açıklamaya çalışır. Dil kullanımı, sosyo-politik yapılar ve süreçler arasındaki bağı ortaya çıkarır. Ayrıca, iyi bir çevirmen, politik söylem çevirisinde sözcüklerin bir metinden diğer metine birebir çevrilmeyeceğini de bilir. Politik söylemde söylenmeden dile getirilen anlamlar vardır. Çevirmenler, gerek kaynak dilin gerekse hedef dilin sosyo-kültürel değerlerinin de farkında olmalıdırlar. Çeviri çalışmaları ve politik söylem eşgüdümü bu anlamda vaz geçilmez önem taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda, hizmet öncesi eğitim sürecinde olan Salento Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller ve Edebiyatları Fakültesindeki öğrencilerden, bu makalede sözü edilen filmlerin altyazılarının İtalyancaya çevirilerini yapmaları istenmiştir; çeviriler daha sonra düzeltilmiştir. Öğrenci çevirmenlerin filmlerdeki altyazı çevirileri, kültürel ve politik sorunlar açısından incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları bize öğrenci çevirmenlerin filmlerin altyazılarındaki kültürel ve politik çevirilerinde zorlandıklarını göstermiştir. Çevirideki sorunları azaltmak için çevirmen adaylarının kültürel farkındalığını artırmak gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Film Çevirisi, altyazı çevirisi, politik söylem çözümlemesi, çevirmen eğitimi

1.00.INTRODUCTION

The translation of films is not so easy as it seems. Therefore, translators are required to be aware of the socio-cultural context of both SL and TL in order to overcome the limits on translation. Besides, they should consider the cognitive, linguistic, visual, cultural and ideological phenomena in SL and TL.

1.01. THE DEFINITION OF TRANSLATION

Longman Dictionary (1995:1538) defines translation as “changing speech or writing into another language”.

Katan (2009:75) sees translation “as a universalist encoding-decoding linguistic activity, transferring meaning from the SL to the TL”.

Modern Translation Studies (TS) are concerned with the relationship between translation behaviour and sociocultural factors. They also discuss ‘the ambit of translation’ defined as:

The process of transferring a written text from SL to TL, conducted by a translator, or translators, in a specific socio-cultural context.

The written product, or TT, which results from that process and which functions in the socio-cultural context of the TL.

The cognitive, linguistic, visual, cultural and ideological phenomena which are an integral part of 1 and 2. (Hatim and Munday (2004:6)

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Additionally, as Hermans (2009:83) indicates translators should be careful about “professional ethics which requires a commitment to adequate expression, the creation of a truthful resemblance between source text (ST) and target text (TT) and the minimization of misunderstanding”.

Translators should also be careful about the political discourse which can be simply marked as the discourse of politicians, i.e. their text and talk, and their professional activities. It is because Political Discourse (PD) relies on translation, in the sense that linguistic behaviour influences political behaviour. A wrong or inappropriate word choice in the context of politically sensitive issues can lead to great misinterpretations. Therefore, discourse analysis tries to define why a particular word, phrase or structure during the translation process has been chosen over another one.

The competent translator should be aware that translation of PD is not a mere process of transferring words from one text into another.

PD conveys additional material. Politicians use language as a means of persuasion, manipulation and control.

Christina Schaffner stresses that the collaboration of translation studies and political discourse analysis:

helps to explain that different lexical choices and omissions may point to different ideological and socio- cultural values,

reveals the connection between linguistic choices and socio- political structures and processes.

Related with intercultural and political discourse, the subtitling may be another instance of phenomena which cross the boundaries. Munday (2009:6) points out “as well as being either intralingual or interlingual, subtitling is also a form of intersemiotic translation, the replacement of an ST spoken verbal code by a TT written verbal code with due regard for the visual and other acoustic signs.

1.02. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are some cultural and political problems in subtitling some Turkish films.

1.03. AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims at discussing some cultural and political problems in subtitling some Turkish films, such as *Bahoz*, *Havar* and *Autumn*.

1.04. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the cultural problems in subtitling Turkish films *Bahoz*, *Havar* and *Autumn*.
2. . What are the political problems in subtitling Turkish films *Bahoz*, *Havar* and *Autumn*.

1.05. METHOD

For the 9th European Film Festival, the subtitling of the Turkish films, such as *Bahoz*, *Havar* and *Autumn*. was tried by the university students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Salento. Then their translations were corrected. Their translation problems were defined.

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2.00. THE PLOT OF FILMS

2.01. Bahoz

This film talks about the portrait of student activism during '90s Turkey. During the film, there are some scenes of meetings, discussions, secret lectures on Kurdish history and self-criticism. Turkish and Kurdish utterances are used throughout the film. During the film, the right tone of campus idealism and hormonal confusion have been felt easily.

2.02. Havar

Havar is a teenage girl living in a remote and hugely old-fashioned and conservative village in south-east Turkey. She is wrongfully accused of having acted inappropriately towards a man from a neighbouring village. The whispers soon reach the ears of her uncle who has agreed to pay the marriage price for Havar so that his son can take her as his wife. Apparently, this makes them the self-appointed guardians of her honour, allowing him to demand of his brother Osman that Havar's life be taken so that the family are no longer disgraced.

2.03. Autumn

Autumn is story of Yusuf who was accused of his political ideas and released from Prison ten years later. Besides, his love story with the prostitute, Eka, who comes nearby Batum.

3.00. THE DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL CULTURAL AND POLITICAL TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN SUBTITLING OF THREE TURKISH FILMS: *AUTUMN*, *BAHOZ* AND *HAVAR*

Generally speaking, the student translators of *Autumn*, *Bahoz* and *Havar* had difficulty in finding out appropriate expressions in TL. It is because:

1. the translators were exposed to double translation, where SL was English instead of Turkish. Since they did not know Turkish, at first they were to ignore the audio description in audiovisual translation;
2. the translators' comprehension competence was inhibited by their lack of cultural and political background of Turkey in the production competence;
3. the cultural filter did not seem to be more functional due to the three used languages as source language;
4. the names of the characters, such as Yusuf "Joseph", Eka, İsrail "Michael", Maria "Mary" in *Autumn*; Rojda, Helin and Cem in *Bahoz*; Havar in *Havar* reflect the ethnocentric ideas;
5. some values of a group of people living in Hemsin in *Autumn* are reflected by some noun phrases, proverbs and idiomatic expressions: the time is out of joint; "Go mad"; "May you recover soon"; "May it bring you beneficial effects: congratulations"; "May God let you go in safe and sound".

In *Bahoz*, "God bless you." Yurdal: one who sacrifice his life for his country. (This character was born in Samsun, where the Independence War started); "Cemal: beauty";

"Helin: nest" (indicating a shelter for her friends); "Rojda: sunshine" (hope for the friends, since his father is a deputy); "Bahoz: storm" (These three Kurdish names indicating the film characters' political tendency.).

In *Havar*, "Havar: screaming for help, the rebellion"; "henkerchief: a local scarf"; "Bibi: aunt, the sister of the father"; "uncle: sir, agha: brother" (these words are used as addressing words, nothing to do with the names of relatives);

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“Hit it off (with sb): blood flow evidence”; “Once upon a time when the camel was a town crier, the flea was a barber and when I was rocking in my granny's cradle”: folk tale's beginning; “there is no smoke without smoke”: there is no fire without smoke (is used for gossiping.); “so-called brideprice”: money paid by the groom's family to the bride's. “Want blood”: honor killing; If a bitch dog doesn't wag her tail, the male won't run after her. (temptation for courting); “Do not worry”: do not feel un uneasiness when you leave;

6. the connotative meanings which depend on the film characters' territorial, political and religious beliefs:

a) AUTUMN

Table 1 The connotative meanings which depend on the film characters' territorial, political and religious beliefs in Autumn

Word	Meaning according to the Belief
Type F Prison Political	In high-security prison system
Russian Women territorial	Prostitutes
High plateau territorial	Summer camping ground
DISK Political	State Workers' Union

b) BAHUZ

Table 2 The connotative meanings which depend on the film characters' territorial, political and religious beliefs in Bahoz

Word	Meaning according to the Belief
Tunceli (Dersim) Political	The revolt in Dersim
September 12 political	coup
YÖK Yasası Law of High Education Council political	Higher Education Act
Herhele Square territorial	The name of the former canteen of the faculty of literature Istanbul University
Comrade, brother, agha political	One who shares left-wing

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Tirshic political	revolutionist
Newroz 5 years ago political	Kurdish political meeting 21st of March, the beginning of spring
Sabahattin Ali's Poem "Aldırma Gönül Aldırma" political	Favorit Song of the leftist people
Sabahattin Ali's Poem "Aldırma Gönül Aldırma" political	Favorit Song of the leftist people
Saved Zone political	Before 1980, especially in dense clusters of the right or the left-wing people, police, soldiers had difficulty to enter the territory of the state.people
Allah Allah Religious and Political	Scream in attacking

c) **HAVAR**

Table 3 The connotative meanings which depend on the film characters' territorial, political and religious beliefs in Havar

Word	Meaning according to the Belief
Virtuous Territorial and religious	Behaving in a very honest and moral way without courting male

7. the use of some linguistic ethnic categorizations in subtitling expresses the political identity of the groups implicitly:

In *Bahoz*, "Cuba Canteen" meaning the canteen of the leftist university students; CBS: those with unclear socialist identity; the so called onomatopoeic word "Kurdish" is derived from sound of footsteps on snow ,cart-curt;

8. addressing cuss words in SL do not have denotations in TL: In *Havar*, "cuckold; agha; Ah maşallah";

9. in *Autumn*, the word 'bridge' meaning "God takes care of us" violates the coherence;

10. in *Bahoz*, a taboo word "terrorist" is implicitly used by the one who goes to the mountain.

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4.00. CONCLUSION

Subtitling is an essential part of foreign films. In modern life, watching a foreign film means watching the subtitles. Then if the audience is unable to get the message through subtitling, a film may lose its attractiveness. Being aware of the ethics of translation, the translators have done their best. However, the above listed cultural and political problems in the translation of the three films, *Autumn*, *Bahoz* and *Havar*, have made the work difficult. Besides. Double language translation makes the discourse of the films more difficult. We hope that the audience will enjoy the films through our subtitling.

5.00. SUGGESTIONS

1. Pre-service translators should be trained for Political Discourse so well as not to cause misunderstanding;

2. It should be borne in mind that translation of subtitling is an art, which requires a special training; therefore in the departments of translation a special emphasis should be given to the translation of subtitling,

3. During the International Film Festivals, translations of subtitling of Turkish Films should be controlled by the Turkish University professors not to lead misunderstanding.

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