

A Study on Audio-visual Translation Approaches in Translating Songs for Children's Films and Cartoons

Amaya Nanayakkara

Department of Linguistics, University of Kelaniya

amaya95d@gmail.com

Audio-visual translation (AVT), a novel branch in translation studies is concerned with the translation of audio-visual material from one language to another. The two most prominent approaches of this transference are subtitling and dubbing. Among the many viewers in the audio-visual entertainment industry, children are identified as one of the most significant target audiences. A prominent feature in children-oriented films is its employment of songs to improve the cinematic experience. Translation of songs is commonly believed to be a challenging task in the field of translation. Hence, this research seeks to examine the attempts in song translation in AVT, with special reference to the translation of the theme songs in two popular children's films and cartoons in Sri Lanka, which have been translated from English to Sinhalese under the two approaches; subtitling and dubbing. It further explores the behaviour of each approach in translating songs by analysing the strategies employed by translators and their effectiveness based on the theories of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir. A qualitative methodology has been followed in conducting the study, where the source texts and the translated texts are comparatively analysed. Across the comparative analysis, it could be perceived that both the subtitle translator and the dubbing translator have followed several strategies to transfer songs into Sinhalese. The dubbing approach follows an adaptation strategy to nativise the song according to the Sri Lankan context, whereas the subtitling approach follows a faithful translation strategy, where the translation is conducted with strict precision to the source text. The study concludes that the two approaches of AVT behave in a significantly unique manner from one another. Accordingly, the subtitling approach becomes prominent as a result of its accuracy and faithfulness to the source text, whereas the dubbing approach becomes distinctive due to its creativeness and sense of appeal to the audience.

Keywords: Audio-visual Translation, Children's cartoons and films, Dubbing, Song translation, Subtitling