

## An assessment of audio-visual translation strategies in subtitling and dubbing of “Frozen” into Turkish

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### Abstract

Translation is essential for information transfer and its variety. For this reason, various things such as books, movies, magazines have been translated. Animation movies are significant for children, therefore, their translation have become more significant for translators to find suitable translation context. The aim of this study is to redefine certain translation strategies and find out which translation strategies were applied most in the dubbed and subtitled Turkish translation of “Frozen” (2013) within the framework of Bell’s equivalent theory; equivalent, and non- equivalent and also to understand to what extend meaning equivalent is possible. For dubbed and subtitled versions of the movie, the translation strategies redefined for this study have been applied. These are Exact Translation, Close Translation, Adaptation, Replacement, Addition and Deletion. The study is a descriptive qualitative and quantitative research. In the movie, all subtitles and dubbings, except songs, have been analysed. The results of the study have shown that statistically, there are no significant differences among the frequencies of the strategies in the dubbed and subtitled versions of the movie. The most common translation strategy in the dubbed and subtitled version is Exact Translation, which means that there is “meaning equivalent” in high frequencies. On the other hand, the least common strategy in the dubbed version is “Deletion” while it is “Replacement” in the subtitled version. Moreover, in the dubbed version, there are some additions unlike in the subtitled version. This study shows that with the use of simple sentence structure and vocabulary, meaning equivalent is possible.

**Keywords:** Animation movies, translation strategies, subtitling, dubbing, equivalent theory, audio-visual translation.

### “Frozen” filminin altyazı ve dublaj olarak Türkçeye çevirisinde görsel-ışitsel çeviri stratejisi değerlendirmesi

#### Özet

Çeviri, bilgi aktarımı ve çeşitliliği için esastır. Bu nedenle, kitap, film, dergi gibi çeşitli şeyler tercüme edilmektedir. Animasyon filmler çocuklar için önemlidir, bu yüzden bu tür filmlerin çevirilerinde, çevirmenlerin uygun çeviri bağlamı bulması çok önemlidir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, “Frozen” (2013) filminin dublajlı ve altyazılı sürümlerinde çeviri sürecinde kullanılan çeviri stratejileri yeniden tanımlamak ve hangi stratejinin daha çok kullanıldığını anlamak ve bunu yaparken de Bell’in eş değer teorisi çerçevesinde, eşdeğer ve eşdeğer olmayan, çevirinin ne kadar eş değer olabileceğini anlamaktır. Filmin dublajlı ve altyazılı sürümleri için, bu çalışma için seçilen çeviri stratejileri kullanılmıştır. Bunlar Tam çeviri, Yakın çeviri, Adaptasyon, Değiştirme, Ekleme ve Silmedir. Çalışma

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tanımlayıcı niteliksel ve niceliksel bir araştırmadır. Filmde, şarkılar hariç tüm alt yazılar ve dublajlar analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonucu, istatistiksel olarak filmin dublajlı ve altyazılı türlerinde stratejilerin sıklıkları arasında anlamlı bir fark olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Filmin dublajlı ve altyazılı türlerinde en yaygın kullanılan strateji, Tam Çeviridir, bu da demektir ki filmin hem dublajında hem de altyazılı türünde yüksek oranda anlam eşitliği vardır. Diğer yandan, en az kullanılan strateji dublajlı versiyonda “silme” ve altyazılı versiyonda “Değiştirme” dir. Ayrıca, dublajlı versiyonda, altyazılı versiyondan farklı olarak bazı eklemeler de vardır. Bu çalışma, basit cümle yapısı ve kelime hazinesiyle, eşdeğer anlamın mümkün olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Animasyon filmler, çeviri stratejileri, altyazı, dublaj, eşdeğerlilik teorisi, görsel-işitsel çeviri.

## Introduction

Translation has always been very essential as it has an essential role to play in communication across cultures and languages. As Taşdan (2018, 2) states, “today, it is acknowledged in the academic field that translation is not a simple transfer of the words and sentences in a language into another, but in fact it is a social process influenced by numerous cultural factors and different actors such as authors, translators, editors, publishers, and readers”.

There is a need for new researches on audio-visual translation, which is a part of translation studies, because technological developments have made it a very important field. As Baker (2001, 277) states, “translation studies is now understood to refer to the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation various forms of oral interpreting, as well as Dubbing and Subtitling”. Moreover, Delabastita (1990, 97) assumes that “translation process in mass communication plays a very effective part in both the shaping of cultures and the relations between them”.

This research aims to redefine certain audio-visual translation strategies for animated movies and to understand if equivalent meaning is possible between the original audio scripts and translated versions.

### 1- Theoretical framework

There are many types of audio-visual translation such as subtitling and dubbing. Henrik Gottlieb (2001, 244) says, “Since 1929, when the first sound films reached an international audience, two methods of film translation have been dominant: subtitling and dubbing. The latter is sometimes referred to as post-synchronization”. De Linde and Kay’s (1996, 46) put forth that subtitling “supplements the dialogue of a film with written captions, while dubbing entirely substitutes an original dialogue with a phonetically-tuned synchronous oral translation.” Luyken et al. define subtitles 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 and are almost always added to the screen image at a later date as a post-production activity. (Luyken et al., 1991, p.31)*

Dubbing is oral translation. One of the most common type of audio translation is lip-synchronised dubbing. This type of translations are done by professional actors, and such translations’ aim is to create the same effect- as in the original- on the target language audience.

Subtitles has the following characteristics:

- a. Subtitling is a type of language transfer and one of the most common modes of audiovisual translation.
- b. Subtitles are transcriptions of film or TV dialogues, rendering seemingly oral source texts into written target texts and giving an account of the actors' dialogue as well as other linguistic information conveyed by the visual image and the soundtrack, such as letters, graffiti, captions and songs.
- c. Subtitles or the written target texts do not replace the source texts, but appear simultaneously on the screen, along with the picture sequence, synchronized with the original dialogue and the action.
- d. Subtitles, as lines of text, are usually placed at the bottom of the screen, immediately below the picture itself, or left-aligned (in some countries).
- e. Subtitles are run at a maximum speed of eight syllables per second for reading time (Nida, 2005), or with an average maximum length of 35 characters, usually consisting one or two lines (Gottlieb, 2005).

As Özcan-Dost (2016, 135) states, “Translation can be considered as a journey between two different languages and cultures. Therefore, the translator is required to have competence in both languages and cultures in this journey.” This shows that the translator, who is interested in subtitling and dubbing, not only deals with general difficulties such as cultural differences but also copes with some difficulties in the process of translation such as time and space constraints. Besides, Özer – Erdoğan and Tarakcioğlu (2018) point out the translator should be experienced and improve himself / herself in a specific field such as legal translation, audio visual translation, etc.

Gottlieb (1992) has a different terminology for time and space constraints, and he notes that “a subtitler is faced with formal (quantitative) and textual (qualitative) constraints. Textual constraints are those imposed on the subtitles by the visual context of the film, whereas formal constraints are the space factors (a maximum of 2 lines and 35 characters) and the time factor” (cited in Spanakaki, 2007).

According to Schwarz (2003), the important problem in subtitling emerges because of the difference between the speed of the spoken language and the speed in reading; there should be a reduction of the text. People’s speech speed is not the same as their reading speed. They speak more quickly than they can read. On the screen, there is a place for only about 30 or 40 characters, so it causes space constraints, and also because of the technical constraints, there are only maximum two or three lines for the text across the bottom of a screen.

There are many scholars who study on translation strategies such as Krings (1986a), Höniç (1995), Kiraly (1995), Schaeffer and Carl (2013). Lörşcher defines translation strategy as follows:

*“Translation strategies have been defined by me as procedures which the subjects employ in order to solve translation problems. Accordingly, translation strategies have their starting-point in the realization of a problem by a subject, and their termination in a (possibly preliminary) solution to the problem or in the subject's realization of the insolubility of the problem at the given point in time. Between the realization of a translation problem and the realization of its solution or insolubility, further verbal and/or mental activities can occur which can be interpreted as being strategy steps or elements of translation strategies.” (Lörşcher, 1996, p. 27, emphasis in original)*

Moreover, some scholars study on specific fields in translation study. For example, Gottlien is one of the well-known scholars who studies on audio- visual translation. The strategies below are Henrik Gottlieb's translation strategies (1992, 161-170):

1. Expansion is used when the original requires an explanation because of some cultural nuance not retrievable in the target language.
2. Paraphrase is resorted to in cases where the phraseology of the original cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language.
3. Transfer refers to the strategy of translating the source text completely and accurately.
4. Imitation maintains the same forms, typically with names of people and places.
5. Transcription is used in the cases where a term is unusual even in the source text, for example the use of a third language or nonsense language.
6. Dislocation is adopted when the original employs some sort of special effect, e.g. a silly song in a cartoon film, where the translation of the effect is more important than the content.
7. Condensation is the shortening of the text in the least obtrusive way possible. It might seem to be the typical strategy used, but as we shall see later, this is not necessarily the case.
8. Decimation is an extreme form of condensation where, perhaps for reasons of discourse speed, even potentially important elements are omitted.
9. Deletion refers to the total elimination of parts of a text.
10. Resignation describes the strategy adopted when no translation solution can be found, and meaning is inevitably lost.

The other well-known scholar is Tomaszewicz who (1993, cited in Pettit, 2008, pp.223-227) has some strategies in operation in film subtitling. The strategies are:

- (1) Omission, where the cultural reference is omitted altogether.
- (2) Literal Translation, where the translation in the target text matches the original as closely as possible.
- (3) Borrowing, where original terms from the source text are used in the target text.
- (4) Equivalence, where translation has a similar meaning and function in the target culture.
- (5) Adaptation, where the translation is adjusted to the target language and culture in an attempt to evoke similar connotations to the original. Strictly speaking, this can be considered as a form of equivalence.
- (6) Replacement of the cultural term with a deictic word or expression, particularly when supported by an on-screen gesture or a visual clue. This strategy was not observed in the selected audio-visual texts; therefore, it will not be discussed here.

(7) Generalisation, which might also be referred to as neutralisation of the original.

(8) Explication, which usually involves a paraphrase to explain the cultural term.

However, for this study, redefined audio-visual translation strategies which are suitable for dubbing and subtitling have been applied. These strategies are as follows:

1- Exact translation: Translating a word, a phrase, or a sentence from the original movie into target language without any extension, reduction or distortion. It can be defined as "closer than close". In this strategy, singular/plural differences, wording differences, small sentence structures differences between the ST and the TT and null subject have been ignored and they have been considered as exact translation.

2- Close translation: Translating in a very similar and corresponding way but there can be some extensions or/and reductions.

3- Adaptation: Using a completely different expression or different words to transmit the same real meaning or translating the original meaning by using a completely different expression, but it gives the same meaning with the original one.

4- Replacement: Translating the original meaning into target language with unrelated words. In other words, replacement strategy comes into existence with entirely new meanings.

5- Addition: Adding some sentences- which does not exist in original text- into target language.

6- Deletion: Throwing out the sentences which are in original text instead of translating them into target language. Sometimes, some sentences aren't necessary to mention, or the translator does not need to translate them. Moreover, especially for dubbing, it is necessary to delete a sentence because of the movie's speed.

These strategies have been created and used because by the help of this study, there will be common strategies shedding light on both subtitling and dubbing. At the end of the study, it will be understood that if these strategies are suitable for Turkish Animated Movies translation version.

In translation, the most indispensable thing is equivalence and for equivalence, accuracy and fidelity are the essential things. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) deal with the methods of creating equivalent texts (2000: 90). Jakobson (2000) also identifies equivalence as "the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguists" (2000: 114). As Hartman and Stork (1972) summarize the concept, "texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially), in respect of different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and at different ranks (word-for word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for-sentence)" (1972: 713 cited in Bell 1991: 6). Hence, most of the theorists define translation from the point of equivalence relation which can be described as the relationship between the source text and the target text. For instance, Bell (1991) views translation as the replacement of a text in one language by an equivalent text in another language. He defines translation as;

*"The transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as is possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text" (Bell 1991: xv)*

Bell (1991: 6) also states that “texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (full or partly equivalent), in respects of different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and different ranks (word-for-word, phrase, sentence-for-sentence)”. The analysis of this research is also conducted by referring to the theory proposed by Bell (1991), in which he proposed two degrees of meaning equivalent, in respect of context: equivalent (fully or partly equivalent) and non-equivalent (Different meaning or no meaning). So, at the end of the study, to what extend meaning equivalent is possible will be understood. While the strategy of exact translation is thought as fully equivalent and the strategy of close translation and adaptation is considered partly equivalent in this study, the strategy of replacement is considered as different meaning and the strategies of addition & deletion are thought as no meaning.

The aim of this study is to redefine certain translation strategies applied in one of the well-known and most recently released animated movies from Walt Disney, “Frozen”- that is the 53<sup>rd</sup> Disney animated feature movie- and also to understand to what extend it is possible to apply fully or partly equivalent translation described by Bell (1991) in the selected movie. “Frozen” was released on November 27, 2013 in the USA and January 17, 2014 in Turkey. It was directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee and produced by Peter Del Vecho. (Del Vecho, Lee & Buck, 2013). Gülseren Bayındır translated the movie’s dialogues and Selim Atakan translated the songs in the movie into Turkish. Briefly, the research tries to find an answer to the following questions:

- Which dubbing and subtitling strategies are the most common in the translation of “Frozen”?
- To what extend meaning equivalent is possible in the translation?

Besides, this research seeks if there are differences in the applied strategies between dubbing and subtitling.

## 2- Methodology

The study is a comparative and descriptive qualitative and quantitative research as it concerns with the audio scripts for dubbing and the Turkish translations for subtitling. A formula is used and the results have been shown with numbers in order to find the most and the least common translation strategies.

The data for this study has been derived from “Frozen”, Walt Disney animated musical movie which was released in 2013. This movie has been selected because it is one of the well-known movies among not only children but also teenagers and adults in Turkey. Moreover, it has been watched by many people. It also has very good positive reviews.

The corpus consists of English audio script, Turkish audio script and their Turkish translation in the form of subtitles. The audio scripts and subtitles have been taken from its DVD.

While deciding which translation strategy is applied, proper nouns and echo names have been ignored in all translation strategies. They have been omitted while analysing.

For collecting data, three tables have been created. Besides, intercoder reliability check has been used for getting valid qualitative results from a quantitative research.

Three steps have been followed to get the required information. The first step is viewing the films. Then the next step is writing out the English and Turkish audio scripts and the Turkish subtitles of the film

and the last step is determining the strategies applied in subtitling and dubbing in accordance with the translation strategies that have been redefined for this study.

After collecting the data, the tables below are applied for presenting results. Table 1 shows the first twenty- two audio script texts as a sample and it represents which translation strategy has been applied. In summarizing the results, the number of applied strategies is counted and then the frequency and the percentage of the different strategies applied in subtitling and dubbing are measured and shown in Table 2 and Table 3. Finally, tables are analyzed and their results are discussed.

### 3- Findings

The following table is a sample to show which translation strategy is applied.

Table 1. Translation strategies applied in dubbing and subtitling in “Frozen”

No	Source text	Expected Translation with Literal Meaning	Dubbing	Translation Strategy	Subtitling	Translation Strategy
1	Wake up, Wake up, Wake up	<i>Uyan, Uyan, Uyan.</i>	Uyan, Uyan, Hadi uyan	2	Uyan, Uyan hadi uyan	2
2	(Elsa:) Anna, go back to sleep	<i>(Elsa:) Anna, uykuya geri dön.</i>	Anna, gidip uyu artık	3	Anna, gidip uyu artık	3
3	(Anna:) I just can't...	<i>(Anna:) Ben sadece yapamam.</i>	Uyku tutmadı.	4	Uyuyamıyorum	2
4	The sky is awake, so I'm awake.	<i>Gökyüzü uyanık, e ben de uyanığım.</i>	Gökyüzü uyanık, e ben de uyanığım.	1	Gökyüzü uyandı, ben de uyandım.	2
5	So, we have to play	<i>Yani, oynamak gerek</i>	Niye oyun oynamıyoruz ki?	3	Yani, oynamamız gerek.	1
6	(Elsa:) Go play by yourself	<i>(Elsa:) Git kendin oyna</i>	Git kendi başına oyna.	1	Git kendin oyna	1
7	(Anna:) Do you want to build a snowman?	<i>(Anna:) Kardan adam yapmak ister misin?</i>	Kardan adam yapalım mı?	2	Kardan adam yapmak ister misin?	1
8	Come on, Come on, Come on	<i>Hadi, Hadi, Hadi</i>	Hadi, Hadi, Hadi koş hadi	2	Hadi, Hadi, Hadi	1
9	Do the magic, do the magic	<i>Sihir yap, sihir yap</i>	Sihir yapsana, sihir yapsana	1	Sihir yap, sihir yap	1
10	(Anna:) This is amazing!	<i>(Anna:) Bu harika</i>	(Anna:) Bu harika bir şey	2	(Anna:) Harika bir şey	2
11	(Elsa:) Watch this!	<i>(Elsa:) Şunu izle</i>	(Elsa:) Şunu izle	1	(Elsa:) Şunu izle	1

12	Hi, I'm Olaf!	<i>Merhaba, ben Olaf!</i>	Merhaba, ben Olaf!	1	Merhaba, ben Olaf!	1
13	And I like warm hugs	<i>Ve sarılmaları severim</i>	Sarılmaya bayılırım.	2	Ve sarılmayı çok severim.	2
14	(Anna:) I love you, Olaf.	<i>(Anna:) Seni seviyorum, Olaf.</i>	Seni seviyorum, Olaf.	1	Seni seviyorum, Olaf.	1
15	(Elsa:) Tickle bumps!	<i>Gıdıklayan tümsek!</i>	Kakhaka uçuşu!	4	Gıdıklayan kaydırak!	3
16	(Elsa:) Hang on!	<i>(Elsa:) Sıkı dur!</i>	(Elsa:) Sıkı dur!	1	(Elsa:) Sıkı dur!	1
17	(Anna:) Catch me!	<i>(Anna:) Yakala beni!</i>	(Anna:) Yakala beni!	1	(Anna:) Yakala beni!	1
18	(Elsa:) Gotcha	<i>(Elsa:)Yakaldım !</i>	(Elsa:) Yakaladım!	1	(Elsa:) Yakaladım	1
19	(Anna:) Again	<i>(Anna:) Bir daha!</i>	(Anna:) Bir daha!	1	(Anna:) Bir daha!	1
20	(Elsa:) Wait	<i>(Elsa:) Bekle/Dur</i>	(Elsa:) Bekle.	1	(Elsa:) Dur!	1
21	Slow-down	<i>Yavaş ol.</i>	Yavaş ol.	1	Yavaş ol!	1
22	Anna, Mama, Papa	<i>Anna, Anne, Baba.</i>	Anna, Anne, Baba.	1	Anna, Anne, Baba	1

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of Translation Strategy applied in “Frozen”.

Table 2. The frequency and percentage of Translation Strategy applied in “Frozen”

No	Translation Strategy	Dubbing Frequency	Dubbing Percentage (%)	Subtitling Frequency	Subtitling Percentage (%)
1	<i>Exact Translation</i>	761	57 %	975	73 %
2	<i>Close Translation</i>	203	15,2 %	134	10 %
3	<i>Adaptation</i>	282	21,1 %	159	12 %
4	<i>Replacement</i>	64	4,8 %	18	1,3 %
5	<i>Addition</i>	(24)	(1,8%)	-	-
6	<i>Deletion</i>	26	1,9 %	50	3,7 %
Total		1336	100 %	1336	100 %

As it can be understood from the table, the most common strategy is exact translation both in dubbing (with 57 %) and subtitling (with 73 %). Like dubbing (with 21,1 %), the second common translation strategy for subtitling is Adaptation with 12 %.

There are some omissions in the following cases:

- 1- If the words can be understood the from the mimics,
- 2- If there is no space or time to be translated,

3- Some expressions such as “you know”, “well”, “hmm” etc. can be left out as they usually do not make any contribution to the semantic meaning of the audio script,

4- If the target language audience knows the word pronounced separately do not need to be subtitled.

Moreover, in the process of translating, the translator tries to use simple vocabulary and simple syntax to make the subtitling and dubbing easier to understand and follow. For example, instead of using passive voice, active voice is preferred.

Table 3. The Frequencies of Degree of meaning equivalence

No	Degree of Meaning Equivalence	Dubbing Frequency	Dubbing Percentage (%)	Subtitling Frequency	Subtitling Percentage (%)
1	Equivalent				
	<i>Fully Equivalent</i>	761	57 %	975	73 %
	<i>Partly Equivalent</i>	485	36,3 %	293	22 %
2	Non – Equivalent				
	<i>Different meaning</i>	64	4,8 %	18	1,3 %
	<i>No meaning</i>	26 (+24)	1,9 % (+1,8 %)	50	3,7 %
Total			100 %		100 %

As it can be understood from the table, in the translation process of the movie, meaning equivalent is possible. As fully equivalent is more than the others both in subtitling and dubbing. Then partly equivalent, which is the strategy of close translation and adaptation, is the second. On the other hand, non - equivalent (different meaning and no meaning) is used only 6,7 % in dubbing and 5 % in subtitling. Also, there are some addition audio scripts in dubbing version (1,8 %) that means there is no meaning.

### Conclusion and discussion

The findings show that all strategies redefined for this study are suitable for English-Turkish subtitling of English animated movies and its dubbing version with some degree of variation. Moreover, meaning equivalent is possible while translating animated movies since their language is quite simple.

Audio-visual translation has some features. For example, in subtitling, the lack of space and time are one of the most significant features. Hence, translation of subtitling is affected by limited space for the subtitled text, the given time for and between subtitle exposures, the timing of subtitle interpolation & elimination and the showing and format of the subtitles. Moreover, the translator must consider the average reading speed of the watchers. Synchronising the speech with the subtitles is the basic rule of subtitle translation. The subtitle must appear exactly at the same time when the speech starts and go away the time it finishes.

Dubbing translation must be natural and authentic. It must be as close as the lip movement of the actor or actress who is on the screen, especially when s/he is seen closely.

When dubbing and subtitling are considered, there are some differences as mentioned above. However, the main difference between them is that in subtitling, only one person attends the translation process while a lot of people take part in the process of dubbing. For example, one of them translates the audio scripts and another one rewrites them in accordance with the lip movements of the person who is seen on the screen.

Briefly, there are two things that must be considered. The first thing is the length of the target language version and the second one is fidelity to the meaning. In subtitling, there should be reduction of the length of the original because of the space and time; however, the meaning must correspond with the original one as the audience can realise any small difference. On the other hand, dubbing translation has the same length with the original audio scripts; however, it is not essential to have the exact meaning. Plot-carrying meaning and fidelity to the plot are significant in dubbing. Put it differently, if the translator needs to adapt the utterances to match the lip movements, he can do it. Yet, he cannot go out of the plot.

The last but not the least, it should be mentioned that film genre plays an essential role in the chosen strategy. For example, since Walt Disney animated movies address to children and teenagers, their audio scripts are very simple and clear, therefore there is no need to change the audio scripts.

Moreover, best sellers such as Walt Disney movies are translation friendly, which means that they are made for every culture. Thus, the strategies of “Exact Translation” and meaning equivalent are convenient for them as their language is simple, and cultural elements are kept to a minimum.

This study can give ideas for further studies. The most significant one is that the translation strategies which have been redefined for this study can be used for studying other movies. Moreover, they can be applied on other types of movies. Furthermore, different scholars’ translation strategies or techniques can be applied while analysing subtitles and dubbings. Finally, the songs in movies translated from Turkish into other languages are also worth investigating.

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