

ABSTRACT OF THE MINOR PROJECT

CONTESTED TERRAINS: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES IN SUBTITLING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOCUMENTARIES

Studies on subtitling can be considered as an extension of both translation studies and film studies in a broader sense of the term. Film making and subtitling the films of all types from Commercial films, Documentaries, Cartoons, Short films etc have achieved great claim in the new cyber age. This rampant growth in the digital media has really paved way for many other disciplines related to film making. Audio visual translation, Audio dubbing, voice over etc are some of the consequences of this new mode of digitalization.

Feature films are also given subtitles which are dealt differently from documentary subtitles. There is a glaring and distinct difference between feature film and documentary film. A documentary cannot be called a film as it is not a fiction. Together with all its artifacts, it is in every strict means real. It is said that on analyzing deeply the origin of cinema, it is found that cinema was born as a documentary.

Every country is enriched with its own cultural and traditional background. The unique elements- culture and tradition, most often are transferred to many generations. Nowadays it has become a difficult task for

the new cyber generation to understand and follow the culture and tradition of one's own country. Yet, the new technologies have found various ways to impart the cultural and traditional ethos to the newer world. Before the dawn of the e-media, the print media has already set its deep roots on translating various literary works to different languages. This has really bridged a gap between various cultures and traditions of different countries within and outside nations. Especially, in a country like India, where there is diversified cultures and traditions, based on its geographical positioning, translations, audiovisual translations and subtitling have really opened an eye to catch the glimpses of different cultural and traditional concepts and backgrounds. The scientific technology of Audio-visual media has paved way to subtitling which is an offshoot of translation.

Subtitling, like translation, is a process in which two languages are involved. The process helps to a large extent to understand the cultural, linguistic, economic, geographic and other social aspects of different countries. It involves cultural, linguistic and traditional aspects of two different languages with a difference in its expression through an audio-visual media.

The research work is proposed to address the challenges and scope of subtitling a film into English referring to two documentary films in

Malayalam - “Mannu Pilarnnupoya Maram”(A Tree Ravined by Earth and “Muziris, Oru Punarvaayana” (Muziriz-A Rediscovery) It is a venture by the self hence the challenges, difficulties and the scope are ascertained in a meticulous way.

Need and Scope of the study

Together with linguistic and semiotic differences, there is the most important fact of disparity between culture, tradition, geography etc., which leads forward for the need of subtitling. Irrespective of nation, language, cast or creed, erudite as well as common folks in this world consciously or unconsciously depend on the process of translation which leads to subtitling in films. Though a common phenomenon, it is a vast interdisciplinary branch of literature and creative art, where science and art, theories and pragmatics, combine to form a new area of research. The recent developments in translation studies prove the significance of the process of subtitling where not only the literary world is involved but the exceedingly innovative cyber world too.

The need of this research is thus to expand the world of State level and National level films (Commercial as well as Documentary) of a comparatively less used language of a small state or nation to the much known universal language called English. India is a country in possession of

many cultures, traditions and thus enriched with films of many languages with many dialects and usages of their different respective languages. To subtitle a film from a language like Malayalam, which is used by a minority group of people in a small state, to that of Tamil or Oriya, which is again used by yet another minority group, is of less scope. Our need is to reach the culture and concepts of a place to larger viewers than to a smaller one. Hence there lies a need to establish the possibilities and scope of subtitling into English not only within a country but outside the country too.

Objectives

Subtitling now paves way to many folded objectives. There are many possibilities now in the field of subtitling. Together with possibilities there arise challenges like un-translatability, linguistic disparities, beauty, precision, readability within the time span, faithfulness etc., that come across during the process of subtitling. The difficulties confronted while subtitling a film can be overcome by creating empathy and understanding between the two cultures by accepting the differences and values one another. Through subtitling, the differences and disparities can be minimized and thus enrich and strengthen the societies and communities all over the world.

The main objectives are-

To explore into the challenges of subtitling like

1. Untranslatability
2. To relate audio with the written form
3. To adjust the time span of visual script to that of the scene on the screen
4. To communicate clearly what is actually implied
5. Editing the subtitled matter intelligibly
6. Fidelity in subtitling, etc.,

Hypothesis

During a venture on subtitling a documentary, underwent many problems and challenges in connection to linguistic, cultural, social and other technical issues. This led to an enquiry into the scientific aspects, if any, subtitling from Malayalam into English, but found that it is still an unexplored area of much research. Hence there lies a need and hence wider scopes of research on subtitling from a language like Malayalam into English.

Methodology

The methodology proposed to be adopted in this research is that of a study of different aspects in subtitling focusing on the challenges and scope of different films (commercial, short films and documentary) and also undergoing a practical subtitling of two documentary films of socio-cultural background.

References

The main source of reference is from the experience of subtitling documentary films named “Mannu Pilarnnupoya Maram” written and directed by M.Sabarish which was telecasted in the Kairali Channel in the year 2007-2008 and another documentary film “Muziris-Oru Punarvaayana” by Deepak M.M.