

Strategies Used for Persian Dubbing of Russian Utterances as L3 in English Movies

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Abstract

In contemporary cinema, multilingualism serves as a powerful tool for enhancing narrative realism, yet it poses considerable challenges for dubbing practices, particularly when a third language (L3) appears in a predominantly English-language film. This study examines how Iranian dubbing studios render Russian-language utterances—functioning as an L3—within English films intended for a Persian-speaking audience. Drawing on a corpus of 15 multilingual movies, the analysis applies the framework proposed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011) to identify recurring translation strategies. The findings reveal a strong preference for direct translation of Russian segments into Persian, resulting in the systematic neutralization of multilingual elements in dubbed versions. This homogenization risks undermining narrative coherence and reducing the representation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Additionally, the study identifies instances of explicitation strategy which enhance the transparency of multilingual scenes for target viewers. By evaluating the narrative impact of each identified strategy, this research underscores the importance of preserving multilingual markers in dubbing and contributes to the growing field of audiovisual translation studies.

Keywords: AVT, cinema, multilingualism, Russian language, target audience

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1. Introduction

In today's multicultural societies, communication often involves engaging with a variety of languages and cultural perspectives. A notable example is the large Hispanic population in the United States, which illustrates multilingual realities in the American society. Similarly, European citizens have long been encouraged to learn at least two additional European languages (Angouri & Delmas, 2025). This growth of multilingualism within various communities may explain why Aparicio and Bairstow (2016) argue that the increasing use of multilingualism in movies is rooted in cinema's reflective nature, portraying today's culturally diverse world. Szarkowska and Boczkowska (2022) likewise confirm that contemporary directors have become more inclined to include multiple languages in their movies, contributing to a growing body of multilingual audiovisual content. O'Sullivan (2011) finds this tendency among the filmmakers based on the recent increased migration, mobility, and intercultural communication between various groups of people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which in turn encourages the directors and screenwriters to adopt diverse ethnicities and languages in their plots. Hence, employing multilingualism is also beneficial for movie production companies, given that it increases the authenticity of their products (O'Sullivan, 2011; Szarkowska et al., 2013). Furthermore, even in monolingual films, there is a desire to incorporate various ethnicities, such as Asian and African-American characters. This tendency may also be seen as a reflection of globalization and a challenge to the traditional dominance of the English language and Anglo-American culture. In other words, the propensity for manifesting the non-American world is another reason for adopting multilingualism, especially in Hollywood (Mingnat, 2010).

The rise of multilingualism in cinema has posed new challenges, especially for dubbing, the more prevalent mode of AVT (Chiaro, 2009). In other words, challenges arise when incorporated secondary languages carry narrative significance. When a language distinct from the film's primary language plays a pivotal role in advancing the plot, translators must carefully select strategies that preserve the function and meaning of these multilingual segments (Badstübner-Kizik, 2017).

This growing trend has also led to the recognition of multilingualism as a new research area within AVT (Chaume, 2013), underscoring the need for further scholarly inquiry to address existing theoretical and professional gaps. While some studies have explored multilingualism and dubbing in general, it seems that no research has focused on how specific secondary languages (L3) are treated in Persian dubbing, particularly Russian in English-language films. The present article seeks to fill this gap.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the relevant literature on dubbing as a mode of audiovisual translation (AVT), the concept of third language in multilingual media, and recent empirical studies addressing the representation of multilingualism in film dubbing. Special attention is given to research in the Iranian context, where dubbing remains the dominant AVT mode.

2.1. Dubbing: The Preferred Mode

Chaume (2013) posits that dubbing is the rendering and lip-syncing of a text in an audiovisual context, being subsequently carried out by voice actors, and supervised by a director. This process may also involve guidance from a linguistic consultant. This mode of AVT is particularly prevalent in European and Asian countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Japan (Chaume, 2013). Despite its popularity, dubbing presents a number of challenges, with procedural complexity being one of the most significant. Dubbing is quite time-consuming, expensive, and literally more

complicated than subtitling (Chiaro, 2009). Undoubtedly, in the process of dubbing, multiple voice actors need to be paid, and synchronizing takes time, energy, and meticulousness. Another possible challenge of dubbing is viewer dissatisfaction, as it masks the actors' original voices.

Spiteri Miggiani (2021) highlights another factor influencing viewer reception: habituation. Habituation refers to the time spent consuming dubbed productions by a society. While Anglophone countries are unaccustomed to dubbed movies (Spiteri Miggiani, 2021), Iranians have been watching dubbed movies for many years, both in cinemas and on television (Ghomi, 2009).

The principal goal of dubbing, however, is to make such an impact on viewers that leads them to accept that the audiovisual characters speak their languages; achieving this goal requires considering three types of synchronization: lip synchrony, isochrony, and kinetic synchrony (Chaume, 2013). Among these types, lip-sync is especially effective on the viewer reception (Spiteri Miggiani, 2021), sometimes compelling translators to prioritize naturalness over accuracy.

Despite being more challenging in the process, dubbing enjoys greater popularity among the viewers in many countries, as it creates an immersive and culturally familiar experience for the target audience (Palumbo, 2009). Furthermore, many governments prioritize dubbing movies over subtitling, particularly for national television broadcasting. This approach not only preserves and promotes the national language but also serves as an effective means of censoring culturally inappropriate content for any target society (Chiaro, 2009). This feature also played a crucial role following the Islamic Revolution (1979) in Iran, where inappropriate parts of movies, especially those of a sexual nature, have been censored in accordance with Islamic law, on both national television broadcasting and private streaming programs.

Dubbing has a long-established history in Iran, where this mode of AVT gained significant popularity many years ago. As Ghomi (2009) observes, dubbing first gained popularity in the 1940s, when crowded cinemas served as a major form of public entertainment, and it reached its peak during the 1960s. Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) remains the primary institution responsible for dubbing foreign films and animated productions into Persian, supplemented by a limited number of independent dubbing studios. Consequently, in this country, dubbing movies has been considered a crucial activity to both fill the large-scale demand and save the target culture from foreign cultural hegemony.

2.2. The Third Language

Jakobson (1959) introduced the term translation proper, which traditionally describes translation as a bilingual act: from a source language into a target language. Similarly, Bassnet (1992) supported such a binary view regarding translation. However, according to Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), translation is no longer a purely bilingual practice, particularly in the field of audiovisual translation. In fact, the use of multiple languages for communication in Hollywood movies has increased since the 1980s (Heiss, 2004), and employing multilingualism has never been exclusive to the audiovisual context, as it has always existed in various languages and other formats of texts (Bleichenbacher, 2008). Ultimately, the significance of multilingualism extends beyond translation studies, having played a central role in the educational and policy frameworks of the European Union (Angouri & Delmas, 2025).

The term L3 was first introduced by Corrius (2008) to refer to any language in a film that is not the primary one. A film may therefore contain several third languages or even multiple primary languages. As Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011) explain, L3 is a feature of multilingualism that may represent either a natural language (spoken by an existing community), as in the present study, or an invented language created specifically for a film or other media, sometimes drawing on elements

from various natural languages. In this framework, the original language of the film is L1, the target language into which it is translated is L2, and any additional languages present are classified as L3 (Corrius, 2008; Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011).

L3 may be either within the source text (L3ST) or the target text (L3^{TT}); mostly, the first situation is common (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011). Additionally, the presence of multiple L3s within a film may be more challenging for a translator to render those parts of the movie, since each language or character may need to be distinguished to save the desired role in the plot of the movie. *Inglorious Bastards* (Tarantino, 2009) could be classified as this type, which also could be claimed that, instead of L3, this film even includes more than one L1 (L1a, L1b, L1c, ...), since French, German, and English are spoken evenly during the movie (Voellmer, 2012).

In recent years, there has been an increasing academic interest in multilingualism within AVT, particularly in the Iranian context. Several studies have shown a general tendency to neutralize linguistic variation when dubbing multilingual films into Persian.

In 2021, Ebrahimzadeh Poustchi and Amirian investigated the translational techniques utilized for dubbing multilingual movies to discover the frequent patterns. They selected three distinct films released between 2009 and 2019 and applied the very same model proposed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011). They found a desire among Iranian dubbing studios to standardize the L3s, leading to the creation of a homogenous target text. Their findings were later corroborated by Tavousi and Eriss (2024) and Khoshsaligheh et al. (2024). Both studies employed the framework proposed by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) and Ortega's (2011) model to examine verbal and non-verbal multilingual instances in Persian dubbed versions. Their results consistently showed that neutralization is the dominant strategy at the verbal level across both national television and Video-on-Demand (VOD) platforms, effectively erasing linguistic variation and, consequently, the multilingual fabric of the original films. Non-verbal multilingual instances were likewise frequently altered to align with sociocultural and regulatory expectations of the target context. However, Tavousi and Eriss (2024) observed that VOD services demonstrate greater effort than the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) to preserve the original timing and duration of polyglot movies.

A related study by Rezvani Sichani et al. (2023), focusing on Persian subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) within the Iranian polyglot genre, similarly reported the widespread invisibility of multilingualism. The authors noted a general lack of attention among subtitlers to the importance of conveying multilingual segments for audiences who rely heavily on subtitles.

Interestingly, however, Hassanvandi and Golchinnezhad (2024) identified a marked shift in the opposite direction in the dubbing of animated films. Analyzing the dubbing policies of dubbing multilingualism over the span of a decade, they found that while multilingualism had previously been routinely suppressed in animated productions, recent years show a clear tendency to retain L3 elements, signaling a more preservation-oriented approach to linguistic diversity in this genre.

Since multilingualism in AVT of the Iranian context has not been extensively explored, this study intends to observe this subject from a new angle to fill that gap to some extent. As we believe, there is an absence of focus on a single language presented as L3 within the literature. In other words, specifically dedicated to one language, this paper intends to analyze the strategies employed for dubbing the Russian language segments as L3. Therefore, the research question is: Which strategies are used to deal with the Russian language as L3 in dubbing English movies into Persian?

3. Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive, corpus-based approach to investigate the strategies employed in rendering third-language (L3) elements, specifically Russian, in Persian-dubbed versions of English-

language movies. The analysis focuses exclusively on clear, contextually significant spoken dialogues produced by Russian-speaking characters. Non-verbal content, indistinct utterances, songs, hymns, and censored segments (in accordance with Iranian Islamic regulations) are excluded from the analysis.

This study employs the framework proposed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011) to analyze multilingualism in audiovisual translation. This model was selected over the later version (Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer, 2014) for two reasons. First, it provides a comprehensive and well-established categorization of L3 translation strategies. Second, the 2014 model's emphasis on accent-based variation falls outside the scope of this research, which does not examine prosodic or dialectal features.

The framework identifies five possible strategies for handling an L3 in the source text ($L3^{ST}$), as summarized in Figure 1. Generally, an L3 segment may be adapted, neutralized, or transferred unchanged. In the case of adaptation, the $L3^{ST}$ is replaced with a functionally equivalent element in the target language. This may involve substitution with L1 (the dominant language of the target audience) or with another language that carries different connotations or stereotypes for that audience. In neutralization, the $L3^{ST}$ is rendered invisible by being deleted entirely or translated into L2 (the main language of the source movie, i.e., English). In either case, otherness may be compensated through accent modification or explicit verbal reference to another language. In unchanged transfer, the $L3^{ST}$ is carried over into the target text without modification ($L3^{ST} = L3^{TT}$). When this occurs, additional techniques such as subtitling may be employed to ensure viewer comprehension. A variant case occurs when L3 coincides with L2 ($L3^{ST} = L2$), which introduces distinct challenges. However, this scenario does not arise in the present study, as Russian is consistently the L3 in all selected movies.

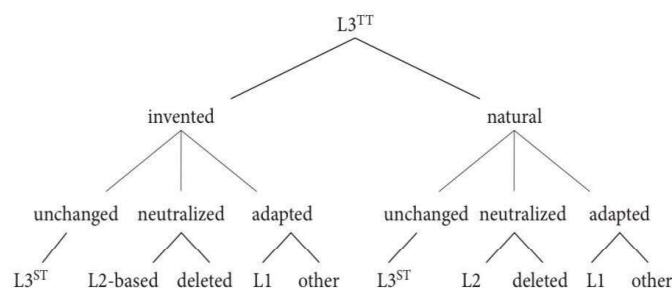


Figure 1. Strategies for Dubbing L3 (Corrius and Zabalbeascoa, 2011)

A total of 15 English-language movies featuring Russian dialogue were selected for analysis. The primary selection criterion was the presence of spoken Russian in the original version, coupled with the availability of a Persian-dubbed version. The movies span from 1985 to 2023 and include a range of genres such as action, thriller, drama, and science fiction.

The dubbed versions were obtained from two sources. Filimo, a major Iranian private streaming platform offering licensed Persian-dubbed content, provided ten of the selected movies. Doostiha, a non-official Iranian website distributing dubbed versions, provided the remaining five movies.

The final corpus comprises the following movies (original title, year, and Persian title):

1. *Anna* (2019) – آنّا
2. *Black Widow* (2021) – بیوه سیاه

3. *Creed II* (2018) – کرید ۲
4. *Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw* (2019) – هابز و شاو
5. *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) – ایندیانا جونز و قلمروی جمجه بلورین
6. *Max Payne* (2008) – مکس پین
7. *Mission Impossible – Ghost Protocol* (2011) – ماموریت غیرممکن ۴
8. *Napoleon* (2023) – ناپلئون
9. *Red Heat* (1988) – داغ سرخ
10. *Rocky IV* (1985) – راکی ۴
11. *Salt* (2010) – سالت
12. *Siberia* (2018) – سبیری
13. *The Courier* (2020) – پیک
14. *The Shape of Water* (2017) – شکل آب
15. *Without Remorse* (2021) – بدون پشیمانی

The original versions of all 15 movies were viewed in their entirety to identify scenes containing Russian-language dialogue. Each identified Russian segment was extracted and compared with its corresponding segment in the Persian-dubbed version. The dubbing strategy applied to each L3 instance was then classified according to the Corrius and Zabalbeascoa's (2011) model. Segments subject to censorship, which were removed or altered in compliance with Iranian Islamic regulations, were documented but excluded from the final analysis to ensure focus on translational rather than regulatory interventions.

4. Results and Discussion

Overall, the findings revealed that the majority of the Russian utterances as L3ST of English-speaking movies were directly translated into L2. The second most common strategy involved the repetition of Russian utterances in the dubbed version, thus preserving the multilingual function of the original. Deleting the Russian utterances from the dubbed version filled the third place. Interestingly, out of five possible solutions, only three of them were found in the data; thus, other strategies proposed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), namely substitution of L3ST with L1 and substitution L3ST with any other languages, were not used at all. In addition, a novel way for dealing with L3, as we call it, 'explication', was identified, albeit infrequently, and is discussed in detail below.

The frequency of each strategy is summarized in Table 1. As it is visible in this table, the number of multilingual segments found in the polyglot movies within the present research is plentiful. However, in contrast to some studies (for example Voellmer, 2012), the presence of Russian utterances in the movies was insufficient to create significant challenges in distinguishing the movie's primary language from others. Hence, it cannot be claimed that there is more than one L1 in a movie.

Table 1. Frequency of Strategies for Translating L3 instances

No.	Movie Title	Substituting L3 ST to L2	Repeating L3 ST	Deleting L3 ST	Explication of L3 ST
1	<i>Anna</i>	95 (95%)	2 (2%)	-	3 (3%)
2	<i>Black widow</i>	24 (92.30%)	-	2 (7.69%)	-
3	<i>Creed II</i>	38 (92.68%)	1 (2.43%)	2 (4.87%)	-
4	<i>Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw</i>	2 (33.33%)	4 (66.66%)	-	-
5	<i>Indiana Jones and the</i>	6 (15.38%)	31 (79.48%)	2 (5.12%)	-

	<i>Kingdom of the Crystal Skull</i>				
6	<i>Max Payne</i>	6 (85.71%)	-	1 (14.28%)	-
7	<i>Mission Impossible – Ghost Protocol</i>	25 (38.46%)	35 (53.84%)	5 (7.69%)	-
8	<i>Napoleon</i>	-	-	2 (100%)	-
9	<i>Red Heat</i>	53 (91.37%)	2 (3.44%)		3 (5.17%)
10	<i>Rocky IV</i>	15 (46.87%)	15 (46.87%)	2 (6.25%)	-
11	<i>Salt</i>	-	21 (91.30%)	2 (8.69%)	-
12	<i>Siberia</i>	137 (97.16%)	-	-	4 (2.83%)
13	<i>The Courier</i>	59 (74.68%)	16 (20.25%)	4 (5.06%)	-
14	<i>The Shape of Water</i>	-	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-
15	<i>Without Remorse</i>	6 (100%)	-	-	-
16	Total	466 (74.32%)	128 (20.41%)	23 (3.66%)	10 (1.59%)

4.1. Substitution of L3ST into L2

Based on the findings, the strategy of substituting L3ST into L2 was the most frequently employed technique. Although it tends to mask instances of multilingualism, it was used significantly more often than the second most common strategy, indicating a strong preference among Persian dubbing companies for directly rendering Russian segments presented as L3.

Table 2. An Instance of Translated L3 – *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008)

Character	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Irina	До свидания, Доктор Джонс.	Goodbye, Dr. Jones.	خداحافظ، دکتر جونز. [Goodbye, Dr. Jones.]

Nonetheless, sometimes employing this technique by Iranian translators spoiled the intended humor. For example, in *Black Widow* (2021), the humor of a scene relies on Yelena responding to Natasha regarding the function of an antidote in Russian after she ironically requests clarification in English. The switch from English to Russian, which Natasha still does not understand, is integral to the joke. Nonetheless, all these parts were translated into Persian, which disguises the fact that the multilingualism itself functions as the point of humor (Table 3).

Table 3. A Translated Dialogue from *Black Widow*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Yelena	It's a synthetic gas. The counteragent to chemical subjugation. The gas immunizes the brain's neuropathways from external manipulation.	-	یه جور گاز مصنوعیه. خنثی ساز مطیع کننده شیمیایی. این گاز عصبای مغزو در برابر دستکاری خارجی ایمن میکنه. [It is somehow a synthetic gas. The counteragent to chemical subjugation. The gas immunizes the brain's neuropathways from external manipulation.]
Natasha	Maybe in English next time?	-	به یه زبونی بگو بفهمم. [Say it in a language that I know.]
Yelena	Это антидот контроля сознания	This is an antidote to mind control.	پادزهریه که مانع کنترل ذهن میشه. [This is an antidote that prevents controlling the mind.]

Similarly, in *Mission Impossible 4* (2011), Ethan Hunt and his colleague Benji infiltrate the Kremlin as part of a high-risk mission. After successfully passing through the building's entrance by briefly conversing with the gate guard in Russian, a segment that remained untranslated in the dubbed

version, the two proceed inside. Benji, overly enthusiastic, begins whispering excessively to Ethan in English. Sensing the ongoing danger, Ethan abruptly tells him to be quiet, but does so in Russian. Unlike the preceding Russian utterances, this line was translated into Persian in the dubbed version, thereby diminishing the intended humorous effect (Table 4).

Table 4. A Translated Dialogue from *Mission Impossible 4*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Ethan Hunt	Заткнись	Shut up	[Shut your mouth] دهنتو ببند
Benji	Простите	Sorry	[Sorry] ببخشید

In *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008), the antagonist Irina typically speaks to her subordinates in Russian and to Jones in accented English. Her English utterances were usually translated into Persian with an exotic accent to preserve her identity, while her Russian utterances to her subordinates were left unchanged in the dubbed version. However, in one case, this pattern was manipulated by translators. Irina wants to persuade Jones to guide her to the Crystal Skull, but he refuses. She then decides to manage it in another way, as she orders her soldiers to deliver the woman whom Jones knew. In the dubbed version, this utterance to her soldiers was rendered into Persian, perhaps to make the plot more transparent. However, the scene spoke for itself. According to Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), it is not always necessary to render all L3s, as in many cases the actors themselves make the narrative clear through their performances. In this regard, we could suggest that this strategy was not appropriate in this case (Table 5).

Table 5. An Instance of Translated L3 – *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*

Character	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Irina	Perhaps, I can find a more sensitive one. Приведите женщину.	- Get her here.	شاید بتوانم به نقطه حساس‌تر پیدا کنم. بیارینش بیرون. [Maybe I could find a more sensitive point. Get her here.]

4.2. Repetition of L3ST in the Dubbed Version

The next most frequent strategy was the repetition of L3ST in the dubbed version. This strategy, which conveys original Russian segments unchanged into the dubbing, preserves the multilingual nature of the movie and contributes to the differentiation of characters through linguistic variation. Although used in only 20.41% of cases, it effectively maintained narrative consistency in certain scenes. Consequently, the findings highlight the fact that the role of Russian L3s is rarely preserved in dubbed movies by dubbing studios. Moreover, no compensation was made to make the scene transparent. The dubbing studio, for example, could have included on-screen Persian subtitles; however, no instances of Persian subtitling were observed in the dubbed movies.

In multiple cases, employing this strategy helped save the rationale of the storyline. For instance, in one scene of *The Courier* (2020), while Wayne wants to fly away from Russia, Russian soldiers come after him on the plane. In Russian, they ask him to follow them, but he does not understand them at all. Subsequently, a secret Soviet agent, sitting behind Wayne, translates their sentence along with showing his own identity card. The Russian segment was repeated in the dubbing, making it rational why Wayne gets confused at first (Table 6).

Table 6. Repeating L3 Segment in *The Courier*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
A Russian	Мистер Уйн, прои́дём	Mr. Wayne, come	[Repeated]

soldier	с нами.	with us.	
Wayne	I'm sorry, I don't understand.	-	می‌بخشید. من نمیفهمم چی میگن. [I'm sorry, I don't understand.]
The secret agent	He said, come with us, Mr. Wayne.	-	ایشون گفتن که، لطفا باهامون بیا، آقای وین. [He said, come with us, Mr. Wayne, please.]

In *Anna* (2019), in one scene, the utterance produced by Anna is moved into dubbing without any change. The main reason might be based on the condition of the scene, which is aimed to show that Anna knows English, too (Table 7).

Table 7. Repeating Utterance in *Anna* (2019)

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Anna	Ой. Простите пожалуйста. Вас что интересует?	Oh, I'm really sorry. Which one is interesting to you?	[Repeated]
Samy	Uh, sorry. I don't speak Russian. English?	-	آه، ببخشید من روسی بلد نیستم. انگلیسی؟ [Uh, sorry. I don't speak Russian. English?]

In this scene, the Frenchman, who is looking for a beauty queen in the bazaar, finds Anna reading a newspaper. He is going to invite her to the profession of modeling in Paris. However, before that, Anna, as a seller, tries to ask him in Russian what he wanted to buy. This part was intentionally left unchanged to show that a code-switching situation was happening. This strategy justified the confused face of the Frenchman. Following his request, Anna spoke in English.

In some scenes, the translators utilized two different strategies for the same utterances of a character. For instance, at the end of *Red Heat* (1988), while the Russian officer, General Danko, wants to bid farewell to Ridzik, he uses two Russian phrases. Whereas the first phrase was rendered, the second one was transferred in dubbing without any alteration. In fact, the voice actor himself articulated this phrase to both highlight the identity of the General and preserve the pattern of voices. Nonetheless, there is no clear reason why only the second phrase was repeated (Table 8).

Table 8. Two Strategies in One Scene in *Red Heat*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
General Danko	Удачи тебя. До свидания.	Good luck, see you soon.	خب خدانگهدار. دا سووی دانیآ. [Well, goodbye. Da svidania]
Art Ridzik	Sorry, my Russian is a little rusty.	-	چه کنم که روسییم زنگ زده؟ [Sorry, my Russian is a little rusty.]

4.3. Deletion of L3

Turning to deletion, this was the third most used strategy by Iranian translators for dealing with Russian utterances, accounting for 3.66% of cases. As with translating L3, this strategy makes linguistic variety invisible. In some cases, deleting and repeating L3 segments in the same scene was observed. For instance, at the end of *Salt* (2010), after discovering the real personality of her friend, Salt wants to talk with him. Ted happily, in Russian, congratulates her on her accomplishments. His utterance was omitted without any justification. No unsuitable content was noted during their contact. The decision to repeat one segment while omitting another within the same scene lacks a clear translational and narrative rationale (Table 9).

Table 9. Deletion Strategy from *Salt*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Ted	Поздравляю товарищ Ченко. Ты исправилась.	Congratulations, comrade Chenkov. You made it.	[Deleted]
Salt	Why you didn't tell me?	-	چرا به من نگفتی؟ [Why you didn't tell me?]
Ted	Я пытался много раз. Одиночество было моим товарищем.	I tried many times but, my loneliness was my only friend.	[Repeated]

A combination of deletion and translation was found in *Black Widow* (2021), where a conversation between two sisters begins in Russian following a short fight. Two different strategies were employed to deal with two different segments of L3 dubbing. The first segment was simply translated, but the second one was omitted totally. The reason might be that, in the scene regarding the second segment, Yelena swiftly stands up. Since her outfit was not suitable according to Islamic norms, a second after her utterance, the scene is censored. As it was difficult to synchronize the aural and visual aspects, the this part was deleted. It is worth noting that this was not considered censorship, as only a second was removed, and the utterance is articulated shortly thereafter in the original movie (Table 10).

Table 10. Rendering and Deleting Russian Instances – *Black Widow*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Natasha	Ты выросла.	You've grown up.	عادل و بالغی. [you're wise and grown up]
Yelena	Да, ладно.	Come on.	[Deleted]

Regarding interlingual interpreting, however, not a single strategy was utilized consistently. As an example, at the end of *Creed 2* (2018), when the two fighters are getting prepared to fight each other, the referee tells them the rules of the match in both English and Russian. The translator only dealt with the English sentences, and the Russian translation was completely omitted in dubbing. Upon closer inspection, it was noted that the dubbed version filled the gaps made by the deleted Russian segments with other sentences that do not exist in the original version. In other words, some Persian phrases that were semantically unrelated to the original utterances were used to fill the absence of those source utterances. This shows the attempt to make the dubbing feel natural to Iranian audiences (Table 11).

Table 11. Deleting Russian Instances – *Creed 2*

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
Referee	Бойцы.	Fighters	مبارزا. دقت کنید. [Fighters, listen up.]
Referee	Fighters.	-	من به مبارزه خوب و تمیز میخام. [I want a good and clean fight.]
Referee	I want good and clean fight.	-	هرچی که من میگم گوش میدید، باشه؟ [You will obey, whatever I tell you, ok?]
Referee	Я хочу прочный и чистый бой.	I want good and clean fight.	وقتی گفتم جدا میشیید، وقتی که بهتون گفتم برید به گوشه‌ها، میرید به گوشه‌ها. [Break, when I tell you to break. You go to your corner, when I tell you to go to your corner.]
Referee	Break, when I tell you to	-	سریچی کنید اخطار می‌گیرید.

	break. You go to your corner when I tell you to go to your corner.		[If you disobey, you'll be warned.]
Referee	Когда я говорю брейк вы рассоритесь, когда я говорю по углам, вы пойдёте к своим углам.	Break, when I tell you to break. You go to your corner when I tell you to go to your corner.	دوست ندارم که حرفمو دوباره تکرار کنم. [I wouldn't like to repeat my words.]

Nevertheless, at the end of *Rocky IV* (1985), after winning the match, Rocky Balboa talks to the Russian audience in English, whereas the referee translates these sentences into Russian. In dubbing, those Russian parts were left unchanged, while the English ones were dubbed into Persian, thus employing repetition for L3 in this scene.

4.4. Explication: A Unique Variation of Neutralization

A unique strategy was observed throughout this study and was used a few times, accounting for 1.59% of cases. In this strategy, which we term explication, new Persian utterances were inserted into L3 scenes by the dubbing studio despite their absence in the original script. In other words, this is the Persian rendition of absent Russian utterances in the dubbed version. The function of this approach might be regarded as making the scene more comprehensible and transparent. These additions typically occurred in some unique scenes when a character had previously spoken Russian, aligning with the logic of maintaining linguistic consistency. This treatment could be classified as a variation of the neutralizing solution, where the L3s would turn into L2. It is also worth noting that this method has been employed in various movies, even for rendering L1 into L2. Thus, while this method is not entirely new, it is considered a potentially innovative approach to handling L3 and multilingualism. Nevertheless, this strategy was used very few times. For example, four instances of explicating L3 scenes have been detected in *Siberia* (2018). In the middle of the movie, when Katia is asked if she likes Yefrem or the American, she responds with “Shut up” in the dubbed version. This addition helps clarify her emotional reaction (Table 12).

Table 12. An Explication Approach Adopted from *Siberia* (2018)

Characters	Source Text	Literal Translation	Target Text
The Russian Guy	Катя, кто тебе больше нравится? Американец или Ефрем?	Katia, whom do you like more? The American guy or Yefrem?	کاتیا، از کدامش بیشتر خوشش میاد؟ آمریکاییه یا یفرم؟ [Katia, whom do you like more? The American guy or Yefrem?]
Katia	-	-	خفه! [Shut up!]

Conclusion

Across the 15 movies analyzed, it was found that Iranian dubbing studios most often translate Russian utterances, presented as the third language in movies, directly into Persian in the dubbed versions. This tendency indicates that Russian utterances in English-language movies are largely masked for Iranian audiences, a practice that can alter humor, reduce narrative depth, and occasionally lead to viewer confusion. The newly identified Explication strategy in this study also reinforces this conclusion, as the translators attempted to verbally clarify multilingual scenes. At the

same time, the findings show that although retaining L3 may at times impede immediate comprehension, it ultimately contributes to a more authentic and natural storyline. These results underscore the need for dubbing studios to adopt more consistent, informed, and creative strategies for handling L3s in future productions, thereby improving the quality and authenticity of Persian-dubbed multilingual movies.

When compared with studies on other languages functioning as L3, the present findings indicate that Iranian dubbing studios do not employ a different pattern of strategies when dealing with a particular secondary language, in this case, Russian. Instead, the treatment of Russian aligns with previously reported tendencies in Iranian research on natural L3s. Using a similar analytical framework, Ebrahimzadeh Poustchi and Amirian (2021) likewise found that L3 elements across three movies were frequently standardized in Persian dubbing. Although grounded in different methodological approaches, the results are also consistent with those reported by Tavousi and Eriss (2024) and Khoshsaligheh et al. (2024) regarding verbal instances of multilingualism. However, in contrast to studies on animated movies, the findings diverge from those of Hassanvandi and Golchinnezhad (2024), who observed a shift toward greater preservation of L3 features in recent animated productions.

Although this study does not introduce radically new findings, it contributes to the growing body of research on multilingualism in audiovisual translation by corroborating the prevailing policy of Iranian dubbing studios to standardize L3 elements. However, there remains a need to investigate the underlying reasons why Iranian translators adopt such strategies (see Ortega, 2015). While this aspect was beyond the scope of this study, future research could address this gap. Additionally, although the analysis focused on Russian as L3 within the context of dubbing, subsequent studies may examine other third languages across various audiovisual translation modalities. Finally, further research could investigate whether the explication strategy identified in the present study is also utilized in the dubbing practices of other linguistic and cultural contexts.

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