

**TEXT ON THE SCREEN: A STUDY OF CULTURAL TRANSFER IN THE  
SUBTITLES OF SELECTED MALAYALAM AND ENGLISH FILMS**

**Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English**

by

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**2019**

## **DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Text on the Screen: A Study of Cultural Transfer in the Subtitles of Selected Malayalam and English Films** is original research carried out by me. No part of this thesis was published, or submitted to any other University/Institution for the award of any Degree/Diploma.

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Place: MANUU, Hyderabad

Date:

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Text on the Screen: A Study of Cultural Transfer in the Subtitles of Selected Malayalam and English Films** submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, School of Languages, linguistics and Indology, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, is the result of the original research work carried out by Mr. Muhamed Ali. E.K. under my supervision and to the best of my knowledge and belief, the work embodied in this thesis does not form part of any thesis/dissertation already submitted to any University/Institution for the award of any Degree/Diploma.

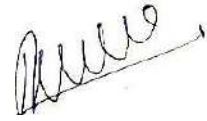
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AVT - Audiovisual Translation

CSR – Culture Specific References

SC - Source Culture

SL- Source Language

ST - Source Text

TC - Target Culture

TL- Target Language

TS - Translation Studies

TT - Target Text

## ABSTRACT

Subtitling is a popular mode of translation and an important extent of research in Audiovisual Translation (AVT), a recently emerged branch of Translation Studies. Relegated as ‘translation not proper’ for a few decades, AVT has been acquiring its due academic status with the cultural turn of Translation Studies that started to see translation more as a bicultural practice than a bilingual one. Aspects like cultural specificities of language, political and ideological implications of translation and socio-economic factors governing translation practices were freshly taken up by Translation Studies and helped the emergence of new branches like the AVT.

Subtitle is a unique kind of text as subtitling involves both inter-lingual and inter-semiotic translation. It differs from other modes of translation in the technical constrains like the space and time limitations imposed by the audiovisual medium, number of characters and lines, speed of dialogue, shot changes and typographical features. This implies a considerable degree of text reduction and an average reading speed of the audience. Subtitles function only with the original sound track and this feature makes it a ‘vulnerable’ translation as the original is always present with the translation.

This study focuses on the issues and challenges involved in the translation of Culture Specific References (CSR) in the selected films. The CSR is any word or expression having references to items that are tied up with elements in a given culture and hence poses a challenge in its translation. It includes names of people, places or things which have historical or social references; religious, political or governmental terms used in a given culture; humor and jokes which are language specific; proverbs

and idiomatic expressions, etc. Though they are classified into different categories, CSRs cannot be fixed to definite categories; rather they undergo changes over time and may become less culture specific due to increased interlingual contact or globalization of minor languages. The CSRs are usually rendered in subtitles using the strategies like Retention, Specification, Direct Translation, Generalization, Substitution, Omission, Creative Addition and Neologism all of which play a significant role in translation in the respective context.

Translation of the CSRs is central to the study because of the potential influence exerted on the depiction of the people and culture represented in the source language and also on the way in which the target culture audience receives it. The research enquires the nature of the CSRs; the linguistic and cultural challenges involved in their translation; their treatment in different contexts in the subtitles of selected films; the different strategies adopted for the translation; the way the strategies affect the production of meaning in the film; their role in conveying the cultural, political and ideological meaning of the film and the ways in which the target audience receive and interpret a subtitled film as a cultural artifact.

The films under study are *Adaminte Makan Abu* (Abu, son of Adam) (2011), *1921* (1988), two Malayalam films with English subtitles and *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994), an English film with Malayalam subtitles. *Adaminte Makan Abu*, directed by Salim Ahmad revolves around the themes of sanctity of religious faith and critique of the socio-religious systems of the community in the background of the rustic and humble life of an elderly Muslim couple living in the interior village of Malabar, the north-west part of Kerala. The theme of the film is entrenched more in the verbal expressions, remarkably in 19 CSRs analyzed, of the leading characters than the actions

performed by them. The study finds that the CSRs used in religious circle, colloquial expressions, puns and idiomatic expressions fail to produce the implication of the central theme and render the film devoid of its socio-religious connotations.

The second film *1921* (1988) , directed by I.V. Shashi, also has the same region as its locale, but in a different social context which is historically significant. It films the anticolonial revolt lead by the Muslims and Hindus who live harmoniously in the British ruled Malabar of 1920s. As many as 29 CSRs are identified in this film, having references to names of people and geographical places having historical, political and religious connotations and, more significantly, ones associated with social customs and practices like the caste system and untouchability prevailed in Hindu community. The analysis reveals that many of the CSRs are omitted in the subtitle or retained without sufficient explication. There are also instances of improper translation and ambiguity which are caused either by the ignorance or laxity of the subtitler. Consequently, the subtitles fail to represent the socio cultural features and historicity which are hall marks of the film.

The third film *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) , an American film directed by Frank Darabont, is the portrayal of the imprisonment of a life-sentenced convict who is deceptively accused of murdering his wife. It is centered on the conflict between guilt and innocence and extends its implications to the notions of sin and redemption in Christianity. The study identifies and analyzes 63 CSRs of different categories like legal and judiciary terms, official and governmental categories, terms related to crime, punishment and court procedures, names of real and fictional heroes mentioned by different characters and a good number of humorous articulations, puns and idiomatic expressions that make the film more entertaining and rich in theme. Malayalam subtitles

for the respective CSRs are found to lack the multiple meanings and connotations which are specific to English language. It is also found that substantial CSRs that are central in communicating the theme of the films through humor and pun could not be rendered adequately in the subtitles. This lack of correspondence between the original and subtitles largely tells upon the characterization and thereby the entire message of the film.

The arguments made in the study are supported by the theoretical postulations of Andre Lefevere (1985) who proposes that translation is ‘rewriting’ and the translated text is a refraction of the original. According to him, translation distorts and manipulates the original and he calls translators ‘the artisans of compromise’ which is aptly applicable in the context of subtitling. Placing subtitling in the context of Cultural Studies, the study also applies the notions of Stuart Hall (1973) who analyzes the process of ‘encoding; and ‘decoding’ in communication. Subtitling, in this sense, is a re-encoding of the film and entails a ‘determinate’ moment of production making choices and taking decisions in terms of the lexical and semantic elements of subtitles.

The study proves the hypothesis and concludes that subtitling is a partial translation, with several CSRs left untranslated, strategically omitted, technically condensed and weakly retained in translation. While it is commonly believed that subtitles support the target audience in understanding the film, they can, in fact, present only a distorted version of the entire film due to the loss of cultural specificities of verbal elements that are substantial in understanding characterization, vernacular features, intercultural exchanges and, above all, film as an artifact. Thus, subtitling is a rewriting of the film, produced on the strength of the ‘imagined knowledge’ of the target audience and therefore sufficient attention must be paid in producing quality subtitles.

Subtitling practice in Malayalam film industry urgently needs meticulous professional hands who devote adequate time and make scrutiny of language experts and audience reception well in advance in order to produce authentic and reliable subtitles. Linguistic expertise and bicultural knowledge of subtitlers in addition to the remuneration policies in the profession inhibit subtitling in Malayalam film industry, though the situations are improving. Subtitling films in various foreign languages into Malayalam is trending among the amateur translators and has succeeded in introducing a number of international classic films into Malayalam. The study of subtitles also has to incorporate the analysis based on their reception of the target audience whose feedback and comments on reading and understanding subtitles are vital in drawing conclusions.

## INTRODUCTION

Translation is practiced in diverse forms and technology has ever supported communication to overcome the barriers of language, remarkably with the onset of different audiovisual media. The digital turns of communication technology and translational possibilities like subtitling, dubbing, voice over, live subtitling, and audio description have been instrumental in different phases of audiovisual translation. Subtitles, one of the most popular modes of audiovisual translation, appear on various screens nowadays: in films, documentaries, advertisements, promotional videos, etc. Far from providing a technical solution to overcome the linguistic barriers in audiovisual products, they have become an integral part of enjoying and promoting programs in the language preferred by the viewers. In the age of New Media where language is read more on screen than articulated orally, subtitles also enhance the visual appeal of language. Subtitles democratize audiovisual programs in that they enable the viewers to choose a language of their choice rather than watch in the language set default. While they democratically contribute to the multilingual versions of a program and linguistic priorities of viewers, they challenge the autonomy of a single language in which audiovisual programs are produced. Subtitles are more popularly used in films that address multilinguistic and heterogeneous audience and this increasing use of text on the screen has been well accommodated in our visual culture. In a world where translation is at the heart of global communication it will not be an exaggeration to say that subtitles are to audiovisual technology what translation is to language.

Research in subtitling is the study of translation and films and more fundamentally it is the study of an audio/visual text in the wider range of translation.

In audiovisual translation, subtitles appear in a technically constrained space as they flash on the screen in seconds and in a highly condensed distribution of the text. Subtitles being primarily a kind of interlingual translation they entail linguistic, cultural, political, ideological and aesthetic implications and they are to be studied not only in the technical realm of films, but also as a translational practice that has an irrefutable role in the verbal communication of a film's sociocultural ethos. Film subtitling has always been about identifying and representing the other/foreign which are visually and acoustically present in a film and a translator's perspectives about the other/foreign always influence determinations of their cultural, social and ethnolinguistic denominations. Therefore, in a wider circle, the linguistic and translational negotiations between the source language and target language in film subtitling amount to the understanding of other cultures and identity-forming experience of the viewers.

Subtitles occupy a tentative translational space between the visual and verbal elements in a film to communicate the given message by translating dialogues and other narrations to a heterogeneous audience irrespective of their linguistic and cultural background. The task of the subtitler is to prepare the subtitle text that transcends the foreignness of the visual and verbal elements of a film. But the translated version raises questions of strategies taken for translation, structural and verbal features of source/target language, issues of faithfulness in representing a culture and many others. The linguistic, aesthetic, political and ideological strategies adopted in the translation shape the way subtitled films are received in a different culture and contribute significantly to the understanding of other cultures in diverse ways. It is in this context that the study of subtitles assumes academic relevance in Translation Studies in general and particularly in Audiovisual Translation that



maintains an interdisciplinary approach drawing from Film Studies, Translation Studies, Linguistics, Aesthetics and political and cultural theories.

### **i. The Research Problem**

Subtitles generally facilitate viewing foreign films, but a critical reading of the subtitles impede the free-flowing reading experience and lands one amidst a number of questions of linguistic, pragmatic and cultural dimensions. Subtitles are supposed to translate the entire verbal expressions in the source language, but in most cases subtitles appear to be the abridged version of the original, producing semantic gaps which the viewer has to fill with his/her prior knowledge. As a cultural product, a film reflects human experiences in a given culture and includes words and expressions related to different walks of life like family, food habits, politics and governance, education, entertainments, literature, religion, etc. These terminologies are used in film in different forms such as, slang, idiosyncratic expression of a particular character, standard form, humor and so on. Translating such items according to the merit of each expression and filmic context makes the task challenging and a subtitler has to resort to different strategies to translate them. This problem becomes much more complex when phrases with culture-specific meaning are translated because the linguistic choices and cultural priorities of the two languages come into conflict simultaneously. As films embody a socio cultural representation of life and circulate images of given cultures and people in a comprehensive manner, translation of such references has greater significance because the way they are rendered in subtitles and received by the audience has larger implications of framing images of characters in another culture, understanding their sociocultural life, enjoying linguistic varieties and humor, identifying political and ideological factors and the like. Thus, the study of subtitles requires not only a paradigm of linguistic translation,

but also one that addresses the cultural and social impact they can create on the viewers as well as on the film.

The problematic area discussed above is evident in the English subtitles of Malayalam films and Malayalam subtitles of English films irrespective of their genres and types. Several films in both languages are subtitled and reach global audience and their subtitles play a major role in intercultural exchanges. Though specific translational issues may vary in films of different genres and categories, fundamental problems remain the same between English and Malayalam which are linguistically distinct and culturally poles apart. It is, therefore, significant to study subtitling in English and Malayalam and investigate the translational issues pertaining to both languages. The present study takes three films which have a rich repository of culture-specific references and analyses the translational issues in their subtitles with theoretical support.

## **ii. Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The films and their subtitles selected for the study pose several questions which are generally considered in any work of translation. The research is tapered to the theoretical and practical issues of audiovisual translation in general and film subtitling in particular. It is further narrowed down to the investigation of the issues pertaining to subtitling culture-specific references that are crucial in disseminating the central message of the film, identity formation and characterization of actors and cultural exchange taking place through watching films. Major questions that are attempted to be answered in the research are the following:

- Why does subtitling occupy an exclusive space in Audiovisual Translation Studies?

- What are the technical, linguistic and cultural factors that determine translation in subtitling and how do they affect the meaning making of the film?
- What is the nature of culture-specific references in films and how are they subtitled in different genres of films?
- What are the different strategies employed in subtitling culture-specific References?
- How do these strategies influence the communication of cultural, political and ideological meaning of films and determine the way audience watch and interpret them?
- How are the CSRs rendered in English subtitles of Malayalam films and how do the strategies adopted define the cultural, political and historical aspects of the films?
- How are the CSRs rendered in Malayalam subtitles of English films and how do the strategies adopted define the cultural, political and linguistic aspects of the films?

The research is carried out on the hypothetical premise that subtitling in film can fulfill only a partial translation of the verbal elements in the source language and hence cannot be qualified as a true representation of the dialogues in the source language. Subtitling the CSRs pose a much more serious challenge in subtitling as they are affected by several other parameters and they are mostly translated compromising the essential elements of their meaning. However, there are successful instances of subtitling in which many CSRs including idiomatic expressions, humor and other items are creatively reproduced in the target language without damaging the entertaining elements of films. In view of these factors, it can be hypothetically argued that translation in

subtitling can play a vital role in introducing a people and culture through films and determine their reception by audience in the target culture because subtitles are capable of rewriting a film through linguistic appropriation.

### **iii. Research Corpus and Rationale**

The research trend in Translation Studies appears to move from literary translation to fresh texts and is diverging into new fields like Audiovisual Translation, Interpreting Studies and Translation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Audiovisual Translation, though a burgeoning branch of research, presently contributes extensively to research in Translation Studies. Subtitles are being widely studied and researched in their various dimensions in genres like films, documentary, advertisements, etc. The present study has taken subtitles of films as primary materials for analysis because films are the most popular mode of entertainments and they appeal alike to the educated and common people in addition to the fact that foreign films help the audience construct views of other cultures and redefine their own world views. It is these qualifications of films that promoted the researcher to choose films rather than any other audiovisual material.

The selection of films is guided primarily by the abundance of the CSRs of diverse categories and linguistic variety of multiple denominations which are at the core of analyzing subtitles from linguistic and cultural perspectives. Thematic considerations and chronology of their release also have motivated the selection. As a bilingual study, the research corpus includes two Malayalam films with English subtitles and one English film with Malayalam subtitles. The films selected in the first category are *Adaminte makan Abu* and *1921* (detailed description of the films are given in the respective chapters). Both films are rich in their socio-cultural environment in which the

stories develop and a number of CSRs that have allusions to geographical locations, ethnographic peculiarities, references to religion and theology, names of historical and political relevance, social customs, communal inequalities and so on. These films have ample resource of subtitles that can be analyzed with sufficient theoretical explanations. Moreover, the cultural ambience and geographical locale of the two films is very much familiar to the researcher and therefore found quite comfortable to understand the esoteric expressions in the dialect with its regional specifications. This again helps the researcher to identify the nuances of meaning of particular words used in different dialogues and analyse them in respective subtitles. The second category has *The Shawshank Redemption*, an American film with Malayalam subtitles accessed from the blog Msone ([www.malayalamsubtitles.org](http://www.malayalamsubtitles.org)). The verbal expressions in the film include a lot of personal names, geographical names, official and technical terms along with adequate number of humorous expressions which are exclusive to the source language and virtually lost in translation. While the first category emphasizes subtitling from a minority language to a global language the second one focuses on subtitling from a global language to a minority one. *Adaminte makan Abu* and *1921* screens the life a community whose historical, religious and social upbringing are very much reflected in each conversation and this is a decisive factor in presenting them to a foreign audience. *The Shawshank Redemption*, on the other hand, concentrates on the life of the hero whose personal and psychological urges form the main theme of the film. The film also portrays other individuals who represent institutions like government, bank, prison and religion and marks a sarcastic contradiction in every episode. Keeping up the paradigm of Descriptive Translation Studies that always entertains large and varied corpora, these two categories of films help to cover different genres and include a good number of scenes of varied circumstances so that a representative conclusion can be drawn.

#### **iv. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical frame work of this study is envisaged in conformity with the dual dimension of the research topic: the modality of translation involved in subtitling and the larger cultural implication of such constrained translation in the reception of subtitled films by the target audience. The former aspect is validated drawing from the fundamentals of translation theories and the second aspect is substantiated with the help of postulations that have wide currency in Cultural Studies. As a whole, this research is carried out on the theoretical premise of Descriptive Translation Studies which is marked by its shift of focus from source-orientedness to target-orientedness. Itamar Even Zohar in 1970s and Gideon Toury in 1980s and later José Lambert, Van Gorp and André Lefevere contributed elaborately to such a shift of focus in the discipline. In the present study, film is taken not simply as a visual product, rather as a text in a given language whose multi-semiotic nature produces its meaning along with verbal dialogues. Subtitling renders the verbal utterances to the written text which in turn is read by the target audience whose linguistic and cultural experiences are unpredictable. The transformation from speech to writing and translation from one language to another language pose a major challenge in interlingual translation. Subtitling being a practice of constrained translation is more commonly received as manipulated/distorted version or rewriting of the original film to the target audience. In this sense it is inevitable to investigate the distortion or rewriting of the original and its implication in the larger discourse of intercultural communication.

Studies of translation scholars like André Lefevere share the conviction that the entire practice of translation is of manipulation and that both translators and readers are manipulated. The anthology *The Manipulation of literature: Studies in Literary*

*Translation* (1985) edited by Theo Hermans popularized Manipulation School pioneered chiefly by Andre Lefevere. In the preface of the anthology, the editor argues that from the point of view of the target literature, all translations imply a certain degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose (Hermans & Lefevere, 1985). Lefevere defines translation in terms of manipulation, as one of the processes of literary manipulation whereby texts are rewritten across linguistic boundaries and rewriting takes place in a very clearly inscribed cultural and historical context (as cited in Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990). In the light of Lefevere's theorization, subtitling can be viewed as manipulation and rewriting because subtitles are the translation of the original film and prepared for audience in the target language.

Lefevere is mainly interested in the diverse practices of translation and he explains the processes of manipulation throughout history citing case studies from various cultures that illustrate how different kinds of ideological constraints have operated on translators, along with several extra-textual factors that come into play in translation. According to him, the subject of ideological manipulation through translation becomes a central area of investigation in Translation Studies (Lefevere, 1985 & 1992a). The central point of Lefevere's theory is to dispel the idea that the translator's main goal when performing a translation is to produce an equivalent text in the target culture, "in a neutral, objective way". Instead, he claims, translators are "artisans of compromise", being constrained by "the times in which they live" (i.e. historical and ideological factors), "the literary traditions they try to reconcile" (i.e. literary factors), and the features of the languages they work with (i.e. linguistic factors) (Lefevere, 1992a). It can be added to this that translation is also constrained by the medium in which it is performed and that translation is determined by the modalities involved in it. On these premises it can

be argued that subtitling is constrained by technical limitations of the audiovisual medium and it produces a manipulated translation influenced by the linguistic choices and nature of the two given languages.

In his 1981 essay, “Translated Literature: Towards an Integrated Theory”, Lefevere coins the term ‘Refraction’, which occurs in “texts that have been processed for a certain audience (children, for example), or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology” (Lefevere, 1981b, p. 72). From an ideological perspective, translations are thus no longer transparent reflections of their originals, but (inevitably) distorted products for which equivalence no longer seems to work. The concept of ‘refraction’ which Lefevere used to explain the degree of manipulation is fundamental in understanding Audiovisual Translation, especially subtitling. He argues that language, culture, ideology, technical and professional factors act as a “spectrum” through which writers and their products are “refracted” before they reach their audience (Lefevere, 1982). Such refractions are evident in texts which are translated for certain audience or adapted to a certain poetics or ideology. Subtitles in audiovisual productions reach the target audience after various phases involved in subtitling like spotting, selecting, translating and editing, in addition to factors concerning professional and financial negotiations required for the production. Subtitles of films are translated for a certain target audience and adapted to the reading habit and visual culture of that audience. Thus, subtitles do not necessarily ‘reflect’ the entire original, rather they ‘refract’ for a special purpose. The cultural disparity between languages and the constraints of time and space imposed by the medium act as a “spectrum” through which films are “refracted” when they reach the target audience.

In his later essays, Lefevere replaces “refraction” by “rewriting” which refers to a more complex and powerful category. Rewriting refers to a range of intra or inter-



lingual processes, including translation, which can be said to re-interpret, alter or manipulate an original text in some way (as cited in Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997). Thus, besides translations, anthologies, literary histories, reference works, biographies and book reviews are also rewritings, together with more sophisticated forms such as films, which may be “visual rewritings” of novels or comic strips, etc. Lefevre considers translators as rewriters: “those in the middle, the men and women who do not write literature, but rewrite it” (Lefevre, 1992a, p. 1). While subtitles are considered as an integral part of film and often replaced by the source language, they rewrite the original dialogues in terms of omission, text reduction, explication and other translational strategies. According to Lefevre, of all rewritings translation is a privileged object of study because “it shows the workings of all these constraints more clearly than most other forms of rewriting. But it needs to be studied in conjunction with them, for they all partake in the packaging, remodeling, manipulation, construction and transmission of cultural goods” (Lefevre, 1992a, p. 143).

Lefevre’s (1991) concept of ‘cultural capital’ refers to factors like patronage and poetics working inside the system of both target culture and source culture and to the power and prestige enjoyed by a given language. These privileges account for the selection of texts to be translated and translation strategies to be adopted. This is particularly relevant when translation is made between the languages which are more ‘prestigious’ and ‘authoritative’ and those which are less ‘prestigious’ and ‘authoritative’. This leads to signify the issues of cultural asymmetries, especially when films are subtitled from a dominant language to a minority language. Thus, translating texts of the colonized into cultures of authority, Lefevre shows, has generated ethnocentric attitudes resulting in translations “that are tailored to the target culture exclusively and that screen out whatever does not fit in with [them]” (Lefevre, 1992b,

p. 120). Subtitling foreign films to Malayalam is to be studied against this background as it is translation from a global language to a minority language. As a postcolonial discourse that focuses on power operating in languages and cultures, the study of power operating in language and translation assumes much significance in Cultural Studies and contemporary Translation Studies.

Larger implications of these ‘distortions’ and ‘manipulations’ of translating films through subtitles can be formulated when film is placed within the framework of Cultural Studies. Cultural Studies does not engage in stylistic or formal analysis of film texts, instead focuses on them as cultural products and studies the popular taste. The notions of communication in Cultural Studies consider culture as the ‘texture of lived experience’ rather than as a separate entity and underline that all mass communication messages are ‘systematically distorted’ (Stuart Hall, 1973). More importantly, it sees ideology not as a system of ‘dominant ideas’, but as a field of ‘common sense’ with which people transact meanings and values. The ideological meaning of film, according to the postulations of Cultural Studies, stems from the way films ‘encode’ their messages and from the way audiences ‘decode’ and receive those messages. Subtitling, considered as an encoding process in translation, is a negotiator of meaning of film texts and therefore plays a crucial role in producing their explicit or covert meaning. Cultural Studies and Translation Studies are shifting consider ideology and discourse as a shaping force of manifestation and this makes subtitling an important discourse. From a Cultural Studies point of view, a text is studied in the context of a given translation tradition observing whether the translator has domesticated or foreignized its translation process. Moreover, it surveys the hierarchical differences between the source language and target language and examines whether the dominant voice is preferably heard and the marginalized one is conveniently silenced.

Theoretical explanation of the analysis made in the study is not given along with every example cited from the source text; rather, it is done in the final part of the chapter in order to keep up the uninterrupted discussion of the subtitles in each film. The CSRs identified in the three films belong to different categories, but they are grouped under particular categories considering their basic qualification as CSR. However, the CSRs cannot be fit into rigorous categories because the boundaries of classification often blurs as most CSRs belong to more than one category simultaneously. The categories and classifications are thus made on a general principle.

#### **v. Methodology**

The present study of subtitles bears its affiliation to three dimensions of the AVT: subtitling in audiovisual translation, translation of culture specific references and the linguistic and filmic aspects of the selected films. Philosophical notions of translation in general and technical and practical aspects of subtitling in particular are prerequisites to substantiate the fundamental issues involved in subtitling CSRs in addition to the preliminary understanding of cultural embeddedness of language and theoretical perspectives of translation. The production and reception of film subtitles are to be considered in the contexts of professional, economic and conventions in film industry as translation is a discursive activity. Therefore, a comprehensive study is attempted in this regard to facilitate a close reading of the subtitle text and a comparison between the original and translation in order to substantiate the manifold issues in subtitling. This is also to demonstrate that the ideological underpinnings and cultural negotiations involved in any kind of translation practice redefine our understanding of translation and different strategies are functioning in the production of meaning with regard to the particular texts and contexts of film. The research is

designed in such a way that a close reading of the subtitle text and comparative analyses of the source language and subtitle expose the cultural, political, aesthetic and ideological nuances of meaning that have larger implications in experiencing film as a form of cultural exchange.

The first step taken in the research, after completing a preliminary study of subtitling in Audiovisual Translation, is to watch the selected films repeatedly in order to identify and examine the scenes where the qualified CSRs appear. The researcher compared and contrasted the original sound track and the corresponding text of subtitle in relevant parts of each film and studied the given translation analyzing the structure of the sentence, word meaning, background story, etc. It was followed by the next phase of identifying the key word in each context, analyzing the translation method on the basis of the given translation strategies and examining other possibilities of translation, if any, in the given context. The ultimate focus of the study is on the treatment of CSRs with its denotative and connotative meanings in the particular context of the source language used in the film. All the CSRs identified are mentioned with a description of the science and literal translation of the dialogue.

As CSRs belong to different categories and the classifying parameters are flexible, the classification is based on the dominant traits of a given CSR and on the focus of its meaning in the context. Moreover, the order the CSRs appear in the film and the order of their classification always clashed and therefore the CSRs are presented in the thesis are not in their sequence in the film, but according to practical convenience for classification and explanation. However, the context and background story of each subtitle are given wherever required for better understanding. The relevant part containing a CSR is presented in the thesis with the transcription of the original dialogue (transcription and

translation in the case of Malayalam sound track) and its corresponding subtitle to help any reader who wants to refer to them back in the film.

Each CSR analyzed in the study is given in a table of three columns: the first to indicate the serial number of the item, the second for the transcription of the source language sound track and the third for the corresponding subtitle. In some special cases the translation of the given sentence, done by the researcher, is also given in an extra column in order to facilitate the analysis which requires a comparison between the subtitle and SL dialogue. Each set of example is given with a short description of the context of the given subtitle and analyzed in terms of the relevance of the CSR contained in it. For a clear and better understanding of the study, the reader is expected to watch the film with subtitles, rather than reading the text of the subtitle and the given description. It will be quite evident from the chapters of analysis that one cannot make sense of a subtitle isolated from the film because subtitles always work effectively only with the co-texts of the visuals and original sound track in the film.

#### **vi. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The research is carried out primarily on the assumption that film subtitles do play a significant role in providing an intercultural space to understand a foreign culture and people through films. In this respect the study can throw light on the fundamental difference between literary translation and audiovisual translation as the latter is medium-specific and less independent. The study focuses on the constrained nature of translation in film in general and the strategic translation of culture specific references in particular. It aims to understand the personal, political and linguistic negotiations made by the subtitler in translating such items and its effect in the subtitled film. It is also intended to bring out the possibility/impossibility of translating certain elements in

film by analyzing the degree of cultural transferability through translation and to understand the level of comprehension when a foreign film is watched. This helps one understand how film subtitles contribute to the formation of identities and images of the other and how irregularities and discrepancies in the translation strategies bring about differences in representing them.

The study is not a comprehensive one encompassing all aspects of subtitling like linguistic and grammatical issues, professional environments of subtitling agencies and issues related to patronage and censorship. It focuses only on the translation of CSRs and its impact on the film as a whole. Subtitles produced under censorship can determine theme of a film and indeed contributes to the political and representational issues of societies and people, but they have not been brought within the purview of this study. Studies are also coming up pertaining to issues of subtitling films in minority languages and dominant languages, but these wider aspects of translation are set aside in the central discussion. The empirical study related to reading behavior and reading speed of the viewers would substantiate the arguments more precisely, but it has not been taken up in the study owing to the probable elongation of the thesis and diversion from the main argument. The present study does not include subtitles in documentaries, advertisements, promotional videos, etc. which also are major areas of research in Audiovisual Translation.

### **vii. Structure of the Study**

The thesis is organized in five chapters based on the important aspects of the topic considered to be relevant in the study. They are arranged according to their relevance in the study and in the order of narrowing down on the topic. The first two chapters try to locate the topic within the studies of Audiovisual Translation and in the

wider discipline of Translation Studies; the third one contributes to the central thesis of the research and the last two chapters present an analytical study of representative instances collected from the selected films.

The first chapter ‘Translation Studies: The Discipline and Practice’ is set to introduce the discipline of Translation Studies tracing its history and emergence as a discipline in Humanities. It tries to explore the historical practice of translation and its recent theorization following its interface with other branches in literary studies and Humanities. It also emphasizes the shift from a source text oriented translation based on the fidelity of the text to the cultural turn of the discipline that sees translation as a flexible practice. The chapter marks Translation Studies along with the parallel emergence of postcolonial studies and gender studies of the recent decades. The political and philosophical content of translation, including perspectives of translation, also are discussed in this introductory chapter.

The second chapter ‘Subtitling in Audiovisual Translation’ introduces the field of Audiovisual Translation in different modes and explains the practice of subtitling from a translational and professional perspective. The textuality and modality of subtitles and different translation strategies adopted in subtitling are discussed in this chapter. The technical and professional factors determining subtitling also form an important section of this chapter.

The third chapter ‘Cultural Transfer in Film: Subtitling Culture-Specific References’ is one of the core sections of the thesis as it focuses on the specific area of the research. The chapter explains the term CSR and its features and different categories of the CSRs. It also covers the taxonomy of translation strategies used in their translation and provides a background to the following chapters.

The fourth chapter ‘Cultural Transfer in Subtitles: Subtitling Malayalam Films to English’ covers the analysis of the subtitles extracted from the two selected Malayalam films. The chapter begins with a short description of the subtitling conventions in Malayalam film industry and in the following part the subtitles of *Adamnite Makan Abu* and *1921* are analyzed citing examples and discussing translations strategies.

The fifth chapter ‘Cultural Transfer in Subtitles: Subtitling English Films to Malayalam’ analyses the Malayalam subtitles of the American film *The Shawshank Redemption*. The chapter introduces the new trend of subtitling world films in Malayalam and the initiative of M-sone, the blog for Malayalam subtitles.

In the conclusions, findings drawn from the comparative study of the original and subtitles and theoretical analysis of the translation strategies are presented on the basis of analysis carried out in the selected films. Implications of the findings and suggestions for further research also are added therein. Bibliography and necessary appendices are given at the end.



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 1950 – 1960

Erstwhile discussions in the field of Audiovisual Translation sprouted in 1956 in the first volume of the journal *Le linguiste/Detaalkundige*, dealing with the subject very superficially under the title *Traduction et Cinéma* (Translation and Cinema).

An unpublished manuscript on subtitling titled *Le sous-titrage des films. Satechnique. Son esthétique* (Subtitling Films and its Aesthetics), produced by Laks in 1957 and widely circulated once, appeared in many other succeeding publications.

The first known publication in AVT from an academic point of translation appeared in 1960 in a special edition of the magazine *Babel*, under the title *Cinéma et traduction* (Cinema and translation).

### 1960 – 1970

This rather sluggish period in the history of research in Audiovisual Translation yielded no remarkable contribution on subtitling, but a few articles appeared on dubbing.

### 1970 – 1980

It was in 1974 that a significant article was published on subtitling. Dollerup in his article focused on the errors that creep in subtitling television programs from English to Danish. His study remarkably contributed to the pedagogical significance of subtitles in learning a foreign language and became a launching pad for research in the area of teaching and learning foreign language. Though Danan (1992) and Caimi (2002) have pioneered research in this area, it still demands systematic and serious attention.

Helene Reid wrote extensively on subtitling in the later years of 1970s and throughout 1980s. '*Subtitling: The Intelligent Solution*', her 1978 article discussed the professional perspectives of the subtitler and the relationship between the subtitles and the public.

### **1980 – 1990**

A comprehensive study in Audiovisual Translation, categorizing the prevailing issues into technological, psychological, artistic-aesthetic and linguistic realms, came out in 1982. Marleau in his work titled "*Le sous-titres... un mal nécessaire*" detailed on the origin of cinema and the use of intertitles and offered a diachronic vision of language in film. He recommended some orthotypographical modifications in presenting subtitles and discussed economic factors involved in subtitling, explaining the complex nature of film industry and various professionals involvement in film production.

A brief but powerful article was published in the same year. Christopher Titford's finding that the problems in Audiovisual Translation, particularly in subtitling "derive essentially from the constraints imposed on the translator by the medium itself" gave birth to the term 'constrained translation' and his book was titled '*Subtitling: Constrained Translation*'.

In 1987 European Broadcasting Union (EBU) organized a 'Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling', the first of its kind in this field and it triggered a wave of conferences and publications on AVT. It succeeded in proposing guidelines to facilitate translation of TV programmes.

Titford's 'constrained translation' was popularized by Roberto Mayoral Asensio, Dorothy Kelly and Natividad Gallardo through "*Concept of Constrained Translation:*

*Non-linguistic Perspectives of Translation*” (1988) and they established a taxonomy of various degrees of subordination involved in different translation practices.

It was Delabastia (1989) who made a thorough study of the polysemiotic nature of audiovisual programmes and the interplay of various signs and channels which are to be considered in dubbing and subtitling. His study, from a Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) perspective, is centered on the cultural dimension of translation and the norms that underlie translation behavior.

The power of mass media over contemporary societies and the role that language and translation play in it was discussed by the French writer Jose Lambert in his 1989 article “*La traduction, les langues et la communication de masse*” (Translation, Languages and Mass Communication). His 1990 article “*Le sous-titrage et la question des traductions. Rapport sur une enquête*” (Subtitling and the question of translations: Report on an investigation) gives a more detailed account of various characteristics of subtitling discourse.

### **1991 – 2000**

The turn of the decade was so revolutionary that studies on AVT in French gave way to English and it continues to dominate. Georg-Michael Luyken published *Overcoming Language Barriers in Television: Dubbing and Subtitling for the European Audience* in 1991 in collaboration with professionals from different European countries. It is profession-oriented and gives an account of the translation modes applied in linguistic transfer of audiovisual programs.

The maiden book exclusively on subtitling named *Subtitling for the Media: A Handbook of an Art* came from an experienced subtitler of Swedish public television in

1992, translated from Swedish to English. The author Jan Ivarsson coupled with his professional experience and in-depth knowledge in the field offers a detailed account of the history of the technical aspects of subtitling. The work is distinguished by an overview of subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. In 1998 the work was revised with latest developments in technology and Mary Carroll co-authored it.

Yves Gambier is a name that has become synonymous with AVT. He produced several seminal edited and co-edited volumes focusing on different modes of language transfer. Some of them are *Communication audiovisuelle et transferts linguistiques* (Audiovisual Communication and Language Transfer) (1995), *Les transferts linguistiques dans les médias audiovisuels* (Language transfers in the audiovisual media) (1996), *Translating for the Media: Papers from the International Conference Languages and the Media* (1998) and *(Multi) Media Translation: Concepts, Practices and Research* (2001).

Teresa Tomasziewicz produced her doctoral thesis in French in 1993. She worked on the general issues in film translation focusing on the linguistic operations underlying the practice of subtitling and carried out a detailed analysis of the two strategies that characterize subtitling: elimination and condensation. Another article, applying Relevance Theory in subtitling, “*Relevance as a factor in subtitling reductions*” was written and published by Irena Kovacic in 1994.

Josephine Dries, a researcher in European Institute for the Media (EIM) addresses the linguistic diversity of Europe and the problems faced in the free circulation of audiovisual materials in Europe and advocates a linguistic awareness of all professionals working in the industry and was addressed in *Dubbing and Subtitling: Guidelines for Production and Distribution* (1995).

The name that the bibliographies of all AVT studies include is Jorge Diaz Cintas, an internationally known scholar who is teaching, researching and practicing AVT. The doctoral thesis of this Spanish prolific writer *El subtitulado en tanto que modalidad de traducción fílmica dentro del marco teórico de los Estudios sobre Traducción* (Subtitling as a translation mode in film within the theoretical framework of Translation Studies) (1997) is an exclusive work on subtitling. Analysis of the subtitles of various films, proposal of models for such analysis, contributions to teaching subtitling are a few topics that range his huge number of publications.

One of the scholars who formally theorized the AVT, Henrik Gottlieb began his career with research in subtitles in 1990s. The linguistic dimension of subtitles, translation of idioms and training and teaching of subtitles, among other topics, found a scholarly expression in his large number of publications. *Subtitles, Translation & Idioms* (1997), *Screen Translation, Six Studies in Subtitling, Dubbing and Voice-over* (2001) and *Titles on subtitling* (2002) are prominent among them.

*The Semiotics of Subtitling* (1999) is a reference work for the study and practice of subtitling. Zoe de Linde and Neil Kay in this work give a detailed account of the linguistic aspect of subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. It also discusses the interaction between text and image and the reception of subtitles focusing on the difference between adult and younger audiences.

Towards the turn of the century, Karamitroglou published his doctoral thesis as a move to locate AVT in the target culture with the help of Poly system and Norms. His thesis *Towards a Methodology for Investigation of Norms in Audiovisual Translation* (2000) throws light on the norms determining dubbing or subtitling children's programmes in Greek.

## 2000 – 2010

This decade witnessed a surge of publications on different aspects of audiovisual translation including the translation between minor languages and global languages.

“*Translating via English as a relay language: the case of subtitling*” (2000) by Irena Kovačić and *Translation into Non-Mother Tongues in Professional Practice and Training* edited by Meta, Mira Kadric, Irena Kovacic & Mary Snell-Hornby are noted works.

Major studies in this period include “*The value of the semiotic dimension in the subtitling of humour*” (2001) by Jorge Díaz, *(Multi) Media Translation: Concepts, Practices, and Research* (2001) by Yves Gambier, and Henrik Gottlieb, “*An empirical approach to the reception of AV translated humour*” (2003) by Adrián Fuentes Luque and *Subtitles: on the Foreignness of Film* (2004) edited by Atom Egoyan & Ian Balfour. Frederic Chaume-Varela’s 2004 article “*Film Studies and Translation Studies: two disciplines at stake in audiovisual translation*” discussed the critical points of the two interrelated disciplines.

Jorge. Díaz-Cintas’ article “*Subtitling: the long journey to academic acknowledgement*” (2004) is a serious contribution that fights for the due acknowledgement of the audiovisual translation in the discipline of Translation Studies. Articles like *A Relevance Framework for Constraints on Cinema Subtitling* (2004) by Wydawnic two Uniwersytetu Lodzkiego, “*To be or not to be natural: clichés of emotion in screen translation*” (2004) by Vera Araújo, “*The perception of subtitled humor in Italy*” (2005) and “*DVD technology and the possibilities for audiovisual translation studies*” (2005) by Matthew Kayahara are also important in studies in their respective areas.

*Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (2007) by Jorge Díaz-Cintas and Aline Remael, *Media for All: Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description, and Sign Language, The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* (2008) by Jorge Díaz-Cintas, “Orality and film subtitling”, *The Sign Language Translator and Interpreter* (2008) by Marie-Noëlle Guillot, *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation* (2009) and *Audiovisual Translation: Language Transfer on Screen* (2009) by Jorge Díaz-Cintas influenced major studies in audiovisual translation and became reference books to the practitioners and researchers in the field.

### **2010 – 2017**

*Dealing with Difference in Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling Linguistic Variation in Films* (2015) by Claire Ellender, “Technological strides in subtitling” and *Audiovisual Translation: Tacking Stock* (2015) by Jorge Díaz-Cintas, “The pros and cons of using templates in subtitling” (2015) by Kristijan Nikolić, *Audiovisual Translation in a Global Context. Mapping and Ever-changing Landscape* (2015) by Rocío Baños-Piñero, and Jorge Díaz-Cintas, *Audiovisual Translation in the Digital Age: The Italian Fansubbing Phenomenon* (2015), *Subtitles and Language Learning* (2015) by Yves Gambier, Annamaria Caimi and Christina Marioti and “A reception study on non-professional subtitling: do audiences notice any difference?” (2016) by David Orrego-Carmona are important studies in the field.

The Ph. D. thesis of Colm Caffrey titled ‘*Relevant Abuse? Investigating the Effects of an Abusive Subtitling Procedure on the Perception of TV Anime Using Eye Tracker and Questionnaire*’ is a study carried out in 2010 at Dublin City University on the use and abuse of subtitles in different instances of TV animation. The thesis cites

cities examples from relevant parts of the TV show and is supported by feedback from the audience.

The book *New Insights into Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility* edited by Jorge, Díaz-Cintas, Anna Matamala and Josélia Neves (2010) gives an account of the new trends in the field of audiovisual translation. The articles “*The highs and lows of digital subtitles*” (2010) and “*Dealing with multilingual films in audiovisual translation*” (2011) of Jorge, Díaz-Cintas deal with multiple possibilities of digital subtitling.

Jan Pedersen’s, *Subtitling Norms for Television: An Exploration Focussing on Extralinguistic Cultural References* (2011) is an authentic reference for study of subtitling, especially the subtitling of culture specific references. This work has been one of the significant secondary sources for the present study and the analysis of the selected films is based on the contributions of Pedersen.

Issues of professional subtitling and its various aspects are discussed by Kristiina Abdallah, in her 2011 article “*Quality problems in AVT production networks: Reconstructing an actor-network in the subtitling industry*”. Elisa Ghia’s article *Subtitling Matters: New Perspectives on Subtitling and Foreign Language Learning* (2012) analyses subtitles as an effective tool for foreign language learning. The article “*Subtitling: Theory, practice and research*” (2013) published by Jorge Díaz-Cintas in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies* is true guide to the researchers who focus on subtitling in audiovisual translation.

*Subtitling and Intercultural Communication: European Languages and beyond* (2014) , edited by Beatrice Garzelli and Michela Baldo Pisa and “*Subtitling swearwords*



*in reality TV series from English into Chinese: a corpus-based study of The Family”*

(2014) are significant contributions in interlingual subtitling.

Researches have been carried out on various topics of translation in film and a few number of Ph. D theses are available on the web. *Screening the text adaptation and appropriation in the films of Akira Kurosowa and Francis Ford Coppola* (2011) by Sjid Latheef at University of Kerala is a study of the problems involved in the adaptation of the selected films. A thesis that focuses on *Translation strategies of subtitling in English for Tamil feature films a linguistic study* (2016) is produced by G. Janakiraman at Bharathiar University. The study focuses on the linguistic issues in subtitling Tamil feature films. It does not cover the cultural and semantic aspects of translation involved in the subtitling process. *Cinematic Adaptations of Literary Texts* (2015) is another study in the adaptations of fiction to films. The study is conducted by Dhvani Joshi, Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University in 2015, but does not discuss the translational issued that come up there in. PM Ahamed Musfar’s *Fiction Film and the Child Viewer* (2017) is a Ph. D thesis Central University of Rajasthanthat studies the adaptation of fiction films and the viewing experience of children.

Studies on different aspects of audiovisual translation in general and subtitling in particular are abundant in western academia mainly because audiovisual technology developed there and began to be applied in audiovisual translation much earlier.

Hollywood films and other films produced in developed countries have been subject to critical enquiries in terms of subtitling and dubbing as different form of translation.

Indian films, at the same time, developed to use the audiovisual technology for translation at a later stage and therefore translation Studies in Indian academia has just started to explore the Audiovisual Translation. As a multilingual country where English

is used as link language, the study of film subtitling has better prospects as translation between any two languages often takes place via English. Most Bollywood films are subtitled in English for global circulation, but the translation of the films are rarely studied and the research in this area is at minimal level and there are ruptures which are to be filled in by the interdisciplinary engagement of Translation Studies and Film Studies.

Malayalam films are immensely popular nationally and globally and they are subtitled to different foreign languages including English, but translation of Malayalam films are hardly studied and there is in fact dearth of serious research that looks into the translational issues of subtitling. In the case of Malayalam, most researches in Translation Studies have been limited to literary translation and most researches on films have centred on the themes like gender issues, cultural and political representation of different communities and so on. Therefore it is necessary to establish an interdisciplinary link between these two divergent branches so that research in translation of films can be promoted and popularized. Malayalam films in translation have not been addressed appropriately in academic research and subtitles of Malayalam films are yet to be recognized as a powerful mode of translation. Despite the growing trend of subtitling all audiovisual programs in Malayalam, the research in this area proves to be disproportional. It is in this context that the present study is expected to make significant contributions to Translation Studies and its allied areas in Humanities.

## CHAPTER I

### TRANSLATION STUDIES: THE DISCIPLINE AND PRACTICE

#### 1.1. Introduction

In the popular sense of the term translation is a simple bilingual attempt, but it is a multidimensional concept in academic studies. It is a term that stands for both process and product and maintains strong bond between language and culture. Translation has been a pivotal enterprise in promoting global communication facilitating cultural exchanges and enhancing production of knowledge in diverse disciplines. Cultural proximity and linguistic plurality of peoples in different parts of the world have very often necessitated translation of various discourses to understand themselves and the world outside. Though the word ‘translation’ invariably denotes two languages and a process of textual correspondence between the two, etymologically, it means ‘to carry across’ or ‘bring across’ in Latin. What is expressed in one language can be reproduced, though in varying degree, in another language and this ‘transfer’ is the core of translation. Translations are carried out in every day communication and in different variants of language in almost all branches of knowledge like History, Politics, Medicine, Law, Literature, Natural Science, Social Science and Information Technology. Any attempt to spot the earliest instance of translation made in the history of language can only speculate its origin. Many practitioners and philosophers of translation since the classical age have also expounded profusely on the practice, principles and methodology of translation.

The genesis of translation can be traced long back in the recorded history of human communication. Cicero and Horace (1 c. B.C.) and St. Jerome (4 c. BC) have

carried out significant translations and elaborated on the translation of several texts including the scriptures. Cicero's *De Optimo Genere Oratum* (on the Best Kind of Orator) (46 B.C.) and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (The Institute of Oratory) (A.D.1) are the earliest known chronicles on the principles of translation. Translation of the Bible in Western Europe and Buddhist sutras in China initiated translation in the first century CE. Quintilian suggests that translation of Greek texts served as a means of improving the oratory skills of the trainee orators who imitated the superior Greek. For Quintilian, imitation and translation are mutually enriching means of oratory skills. According to Cicero and Quintilian, translation from the Greek to the Roman vernacular maintained a broader dimension than the textual correspondence and was a significant mode of asserting Roman cultural and political independence from the Greek models (as cited in Hendrickson, 1926). St. Jerome who produced the Vulgate translation of the Bible declared that sense-for-sense translation also is harmful as it invites the possibilities of inaccuracy, particularly in the translation of scriptures. All these classical discourses on translation reflect the universal practice of translation and the ever continuing debate on its complex nature and function and the effect it might cause to different elements in the text and outside the text.

Traditionally, translation was considered as an isolated textual practice, a private affair of a bilingual scholar. Texts were translated on the prescriptive linguistic rules and canonical stereotypes set by the classical translators. Translation was seen as a textual practice and the role of the translator and cultural context of translation were hardly considered. What mattered in translation were the accuracy or 'faithfulness' of translation and the equivalent binaries of the texts in the source and target languages. The embryonic relation between language and culture and the mode of production of

meaning of a text were not approached systematically in translation for many centuries and the probable uncertainties involved in the translation process were left untouched. Translation as a skill was taught and learnt in the educational institutions as a means of learning a new language and it thus formed a significant part of language learning in school curriculum. Though translation was commonly practiced Translated works enjoyed only a secondary status and readers of the translated texts were frowned upon. Reading a translated text even after the learner acquired the skill to read the original was considered derogatory in the academic circles.

The nature of approach to language and communication changed over the centuries as the discipline of Humanities broadened its allied areas and translation took a cultural turn and emerged as a mediating practice between two cultures rather than two languages. With the advent of Saussurean linguistics and later with the Poststructuralist theorists, the very nature of language was redefined leaving revolutionary insights into the production of meaning of words and the relative position of a text in wider cultural context. Thus a shift in approach took place from a text oriented linguistic approach to a culture oriented approach beyond the text. This concluded the long standing debate over the linguistic/cultural approach to translation which, in the earlier stage, was shuttled between the branches of Applied Linguistics and Comparative Literature. The practitioners and scholars of translation criticised both the linguists who failed to see the broader contextual dimensions and cultural specificities of a text and literary scholars who produced unfounded value judgements obsessively. Moreover, translation was too narrowly focused by the linguists on one hand, and treated as a subsidiary or inferior activity by the literary scholars, on the other. The disciplinary/academic division between linguistics and literary studies failed to consider translation a practice which is,

in fact, both linguistic and literary. In the light of the notions which emerged in the academia pertaining to the studies of language and culture, it was strongly advocated by the scholars and practitioners of translation that translation must be compartmented as a separate branch and treated as an autonomous discipline. The growth of diverse disciplines in Humanities and the faded margins among them, with the interdisciplinary approach that shared perspectives and analytical methods, theoretically fuelled the newly emerging discipline.

Though the practice of translation and the theorization of its linguistic and cultural dimensions are centuries old, Translation Studies as a separate branch in Humanities and Arts assumed its title and significance only recently. Leaving behind the parasitical existence in Applied Linguistics/philology and Comparative Literature, Translation Studies emerged as an independent academic discipline in 1990s. The earliest discussions in the western academic circle for the formation of the new discipline were pioneered by Leuven Group, a band of academics trained in diverse disciplines such as literary theory, linguistics and comparative literature. They hailed from different nationalities and were experienced in translating between different languages. They were unanimous in their strong grievance that translation lacked formal acknowledgement in the academic and professional zone. Responding to the collective plea of scholars like Snell Hornby (1988) regarding the demand that translation studies should be considered as an independent discipline, a proposal for the new discipline was actively initiated by scholars and writers in linguistics, literary studies, linguistic philosophy and comparative literature. After much academic deliberations made on the nomenclature of the new discipline there surfaced a variety of titles such as The Art/ Craft/Principles of Translation, Translatology, The theory of Translation and The Science of Translating and it was resolved to stick to 'Translation Studies'. The plural suffix in the name, like Women Studies and Communication Studies,

for example, actively covers a broad area in Humanities and engages in answering critical questions as to the nature, function, process and product of translation and its social, political and cultural dimensions. The term ‘Translation Studies’ was coined and suggested by the Dutch based US scholar James Holmes, a poet teaching poetry at the University of Amsterdam in his seminal paper *‘The Name and Nature of Translation Studies’* presented at the third International Conference on Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen in 1972. The paper, however, became popular in 1988. According to Holmes, Translation Studies

As a field of pure research— that is to say, research pursued for its own sake, quite apart from any direct practical application outside its own terrain—Translation Studies thus has two main objectives: (1) to describe the phenomena of translating and translation (s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience, and (2) to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted. (Holmes, 1988, p. 69)

This was followed by a series of publications that explained the nature of the discipline, its scope and theoretical framework. In 1978 Andre Lefevere published a manifesto treatise entitled *‘Translation Studies: The Goal of the Discipline’* in which he stated the goal of the discipline: “to produce a comprehensive theory that can also be used as a guideline for translations” (Lefevere, 1978, p. 233). The 1980s saw introduction of new methods of approach and theoretical perspectives in Translation Studies. Ernst-August Gutt’s Relevance Theory, the Skopos theory proposed by Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer and Gideon Toury’s enquiry into pseudo-translation offered new perspectives to Translation Studies.

In 1990s a significant move was made by the collaborative enterprise of Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere through their edited work entitled *Translation, History and Culture* (1990). It is considered to have initiated what is generally termed 'the cultural turn' in Translation Studies as it argued that translation as an activity is always doubly contextualized as the text is located in two languages and hence in two cultures. It also proposed that knowledge of both the source and target cultural contexts are crucial in translation and sometimes more important than linguistic competence. Considering translation as a creative activity, they advocated that translation is to be seen as a kind of rewriting during which process some form of power is exercised by the translator over the source text:

What the development of Translation Studies shows is that translation, like all (re) writings, is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text transposed". (Bassnet & Lefevere, 1990, p. 33)

Translation is, therefore, to be perceived in wider perspective that takes into account the dominant norms operating in the contexts of two languages and expectations of the receivers in the target culture. Bassnet and Lefevere (1990) state that the role of Translation Studies has changed as it diverted from the formalist approach and linguistic equivalence to larger issues of context and history. With the renewed literary conventions and the challenged notions of 'equivalence as sameness', the discussions on 'faithfulness' faded away and gave way to the relative function of a text in terms of its contexts. The attention paid to redefining the concept of faithfulness and equivalence, the relevance of foregrounding the visibility of translator and the claim of translation as a creative



activity are primary concerns in Translation Studies. The translator is perceived as a liberator, one who frees the text from its original source. A translator also bridges the gap between the two and ensures its readership in the target language without making the target text subordinate to the source text. This attempt made the discipline free from the conventional accusations of ‘appropriation’, ‘penetration’ or ‘possession’ of the text, posed against translation.

Translation and Linguistics are intensely connected to each other and translation was, for several decades, considered to be part of linguistics. This area emphasizes studies on the comparative arrangement of linguistic elements between the SL and TL text in terms of phonemic, morphic, lexical, syntagmatic and syntactic levels. It also explores the problems of linguistic equivalence, language bound meaning, linguistic untranslatability, machine translation and also studies the problems of non-literary texts. Once seen as a branch of linguistics, Translation Studies by 1990s began to gain scholarly attention for its cultural engagement and interdisciplinary nature and established itself as an autonomous discipline in Humanities and Arts. In the west, the foundation theories to Translation Studies were pioneered by J.C. Catford, Michael Halliday, Peter Newmark and Eugene Nida, to name a few. Scholars like Mona Baker, Roger Bell, Basil Hatim, Ian Mason, Katharina Reiss, Hans Vermeer and Wolfram Wilss contributed substantially to the breakdown of boundaries between disciplines and to promoted borrowing and lending across disciplines. The renewed position of translation made substantial reflections in literary studies as well when it tried to deconstruct the elitist view of translation:

Theorists and scholars have a far more complex agenda than deciding between the good and the bad; they are concerned, for instance, to tease

out the different possibilities open to the translator, and the way these change according to the historical, social and cultural contexts. (France, 2000, p. 84)

In addition to the task of redefining translation as a whole, Translation Studies has been successful in critically questioning the role of translation in determining literary canons, the strategies employed by translators and the norms operating at a given point of time. It places at the centre the discourse of translators and tries to analyse the issues of measuring the impact of translation and different elements that contribute to the formation of an ethics of translation. The discipline, very recently, has been expanding beyond its European universities and, quite interestingly, in Canada, India, Hong Kong, China, Africa, Brazil and Latin America it has diverged significantly from the western priorities. Theorists like Gyatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993), Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) and Eric Cheyfitz (1991) suggest that translation was effectively used as an instrument of colonial domination, a means of depriving the colonized people of their voice. Translation could reassert the hierarchy of power in the colonial practice and discourses, one culture as the dominant and the other as subservient, as Anuradha Dingwaney puts it: “The process of translation involved in making another culture comprehensible entail varying degrees of violence, especially when the culture being translated is constituted as that of the ‘other’” (Dingwaney, 1995, p. 34).

Translation Studies unveils the image of two types of translators who dominated the translation discourses in 1990s. On the one hand, translator was viewed as a creative writer who ensures the survival of the text across time and space and as an intercultural mediator and interpreter and, on the other, translator as a suspect, one who unequally employs power relations in the production of the text. Previously, the translated text

was compared with the original to see what was ‘lost’ or ‘betrayed’, whereas the new approach does not seek to evaluate it, but attempts to understand the shifts of emphasis and the methodology of priority operating in the process of translation. This also reflected the inequalities of power relations in the study of economics, politics, gender, and geography of the two cultures. It is clear that translation becomes submissive to the hegemonic power of images and stereotypes created and propagated by the target culture. Mahasweta Sengupta writes:

A cursory review of what sells in the west as representative of India and its culture provides ample proof of binding power of representation; we remain trapped in the cultural stereotypes created and nurtured through translated texts. (Sengupta, 1995, p. 59)

Translation Studies is reflective of the fundamental process of translation and its methods and does not consider translation just as a transfer of texts from one language to another, rather as large scale negotiation between two languages and two cultures mediated by the translator. This approach dislocates a text from its native/original context and always sees between the source and target contexts. Homi K. Bhabha (1994) analyses this phenomena elaborating the etymological meaning of the word ‘translation’ as ‘carrying across from place to another’. He uses the term ‘translation’ metaphorically to describe the state of the contemporary world where millions of people migrate, change their location and are placed amongst fresh cultural experience. In this kind of a changing world and life, translation becomes a part of everyday life as people and cultures become more global than regional. According to Bhabha, “We should remember that it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden the meaning of culture” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 56). Translation Studies

underlines the postcolonial approach to translation that linguistic exchange is essentially dialogic and it takes place in a space that belongs neither to the source nor to the target. The textual disparity between ‘original’ and ‘copy’ in the translation process of earlier centuries are now corresponding to the ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ in terms of culture and hegemony in Postcolonial Studies.

In the USA, translation gained promotion in universities in 1960s through the concept of Translation workshop, based on I.A. Richards’s reading workshops and practical criticism workshops that bloomed in 1920s. Iowa and Princeton were first to establish the workshops as a platform to introduce new translations and discuss their different aspects in theory and practice. Parallel to this, Comparative Literature studied and compared translated literary works transnationally and transculturally producing a great deal of understanding of language and culture. Translation was also subject to study in Contrastive Analysis in which languages underwent a contrastive study to identify specific differences between them. It was Eugene Nida who came up with the word ‘science’ in the title of her 1964 book *Towards a Science of Translating*.

Translation is of different types in its practice. Roman Jakobson in his *On Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1959) has broadly classified translation into three:

1. Intralingual Translation (rewording): an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language. Rewriting, paraphrasing and editing of literary and non-literary texts are examples of this type. This limited the given language and concentrated more on the alternative linguistic choices in the same language.

2. Interlingual Translation (translation proper) : an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. Translation of literary and non-literary works

between any two languages is commonly known as interlingual translation. It requires competence in the two languages and an understanding of their cultural and social contexts. This is the most widely practiced form of translation.

3. Intersemiotic Translation (Transmutation): an interpretation of one system of signs by another system of signs. In this type of translation, for example, non-verbal works like painting, music, film are translated into oral or written form and vice versa. The translator has to be aware of the semiotic structures of each medium and of different strata of signs interplaying to produce meaning. Audiovisual translation, which constitutes a core chapter of this thesis, is intersemiotic and translation of subtitles is a speech-text-visual translation.

James Holmes (1972) put forward a broader framework of Translation Studies in a binary of 'pure' and 'applied', the 'pure' being divided into 'theoretical' and 'descriptive'. The Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) has three dimensions:

1. Product-oriented DTS: It involves the description or analysis of a single ST-TL pair or a comparative analysis of several TTs of the same ST into one or more TLs. This large scale study, either diachronic or synchronic, can form larger body of translation analysis considering a specific period, language or text/discourse type. According to Holmes, "one of the eventual goals of product-oriented DTS might possibly be a general history of translation" (Holmes, 1988, p.72).
2. Function-oriented DTS: This category of translation focuses on the "function of translation in the recipient socio cultural situation: it is a study of contexts rather than texts" (Holmes, 1988, p.72). It takes into account factors like which works are translated, when, where and what influence they have exerted on the receiving culture.

3. Process-oriented DTS: It is the psychology of translation as it tries to find out what are the intellectual and emotional priorities in the mind of the translator.

Translation Studies as an academic discipline is premised, in a broad sense, on the collaborative initiative of translators who expressed strong interest in the theories of language and communication and the linguists who recognized translation not only as a product, but also a process. Currently, various disciplines in humanities and a number of social/cultural theories have been establishing a strong bond with Translation Studies. Postcolonial Studies, Gender Studies, Culture Studies, Deconstructive Studies are sharing disciplinary outlook with Translation Studies. More and more linguists came to the scene to test their theories of language and thereby to embrace the study of translation. The polarization between theory and practice facilitated the interdisciplinary growth of the field.

Though the tension between translators and linguists still prevails, linguistics has broadened the scope of Translation Studies. The linguists who are interested in translation process and theory and translation practitioners have engaged in constant dialogue with theories and models of translation. They are particularly sensitive to issues raised not only in the science of language but also literary theory, the study of culture and society. Linguists and theorists in humanities are increasingly becoming preoccupied with the nature of the translated texts. With the blooming publishing companies, books and journals, Translation Studies began to interact with other disciplines in a complementary mode.

What is loosely called Translation Poetics covers the allied area of literary translation both in theory and practice. It investigates the particular problems of translating poetry, theatre texts or libretti and the issues of translation for cinema, like

dubbing and subtitling. Poetics of the individual translators and comparison between them, research into the problems of formulating a poetics and studies of the interrelationship between SL and TL texts are the seriously researched topics in this field. More importantly it analyses the inter relation in the triangle of author-translator-reader.

Two other disciplines too were emerging in the same age and with the same spirit: Gender Studies and Postcolonial studies. Both of them attacked the traditional assumptions of centrality in gender and power and continued to expose what was ‘hidden from history’, as the left wing feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham (1971) put it. While gender studies questioned the unequal power relations dominant in producing/sustaining women writers/texts in the history, Postcolonial Studies wrote back to the centre to unearth the universalized monocentrism in history, language and culture. It is not coincidental that Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and Andre Lefevere’s *Translation Studies: The Goal of the Discipline* were published in the same year: 1978. One year later, in 1979 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar published *The Mad Woman in the Attic*. Women studies, Postcolonial Studies and Translation Studies all emerged out of a shared sense of frustration with the established notions of various discourses and they move along the parallel pathways of rethinking and rewriting.

## **1.2. The Cultural Turn of Translation Studies**

Lawrence Venuti writes:

Every step of the translation process – from the selection of foreign texts to the implementation of translation strategies to the editing, reviewing and reading of translations – is mediated by the diverse cultural values

that circulate in the target language, always in some hierarchical order.  
(1992, Venuti, p. 62)

The ever increasing debates on the interrelationship between language and culture and the investigation of the phenomenon of translation as rooted in the cultural contexts gradually marked the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies. Mary Snell-Hornby coined the term considering the fact that it is the culture, not the text, which is the main unit of translation and was later popularized by Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett (1990) who used the term to emphasize the cultural dimensions of the theories they proposed. The 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies is a departure from the linguistic approach and it examines the ways in which translation is nourished by and contributes to the dynamics of cultural representation in any work of translation. This paradigm shift is a platform to study translation trends that prevail in a specific period and understand the larger cultural forces that influence translation and more importantly, the use of translation to the imposition and maintenance of colonialism. Translation scholars of this label detect and describe translation norms and the way they function at different times in different cultures in order to account for the relationship between source texts and translations. They take into account the function and impact of translation in different cultures and demonstrate how translations are manipulations undertaken for various purposes. Moreover, they highlight the role of translations in constructing cultural identities specifically in postcolonial and feminist discourses and highlight the power of translations in projecting strong images of the cultures involved. In a powerful strategic mode, the cultural turn tries to develop strategies of resistance to manipulation and to change the translators' status along with other 'repressed' categories like the colonized and women.



Cultural Studies maintains a strong bond with Translation Studies and it has become more manifest in the recent years of emergence of both disciplines. Cultural Studies whose development parallels in many respects that of Translation Studies made a reverse movement in what is known as the 'translation turn'. The interdisciplinary status of the two disciplines gives clear signs to a turn to sociology, ethnography and history in order to account for the increasing globalizing systems in which intercultural communication takes place. According to Lefevere, the common ground that Translation and Cultural Studies share is that they are both 'instances of cultural interaction' (1998). Issues like how the image of a culture is constructed for another through translations and other forms of rewriting, why certain texts are translated /rewritten and not others, what is the agenda behind the production of translations/rewriting and so on are pertinent in both the disciplines. Translation Studies always emphasizes that the transfer of texts across cultures by no means depend only on the intrinsic value of the text itself and hence Translation Studies and Cultural Studies are seriously concerned with issues of power relations and both of them reveal that texts cannot exist outside a network of power relations that control their production. What Cultural Studies investigates is the acculturation process that takes place between cultures and the way in which different cultures construct their image of writers and texts. It advocates comparative studies of how texts become cultural capital across cultural boundaries and serious research into the politics of translating. The complementary nature and the theoretical boundaries of both the disciplines are, however, criticised by scholars. To Jeremy Munday, such 'turn' is "an attempt by Cultural Studies to colonize the less established field of Translation Studies" (Munday, 2001, p. 139) while Edwin Gentzler claims that "the moment has come for the two disciplines to jump off their parallel track and join together" (Gentzler, 1998, p. xx).

The scholars and writers in Translation Studies and Cultural Studies are engaged with each other in the meeting grounds of the critical enquiry of socio-cultural factors, poetics, ideology, politics and ethnic/gender identity that shaped translations at different times and at different geographical areas. They aim at generalizing translation laws by extensively observing the translator's regularity of behaviour from a more realistic stance. They also detect and describe translation norms in order to better account for the relationships between source texts and their translations. This is achieved by unravelling the socio-cultural contexts, ideologies, institutions and network of relations in order to account for the impact of translation in different cultures and to demonstrate that translations are manipulations undertaken for various purposes. Translation theories of Lawrence Venuti (1992) and D. Robinson (1997) highlight the power of translations in constructing cultural identities and projecting strong images of the cultures involved. In a more militant vein, feminist and postcolonial translation scholars have tried to develop strategies of resistance to manipulation and to change the translators' status and that of other repressed categories such as members of colonized nations, women, etc. They focused on translators as active mediators rather than mere socio-cultural aspects of source and target texts.

### **1.3. Philosophical Affiliations**

Translation is at the core of philosophy. When philosophy is approached as an epistemological method to reach the essence of all forms of knowledge and derive the ultimate truth which is beyond language, translation is the process "to transfer the truth" (Derrida, 1985) from one signifying system to another. In a sense it is a metaphor for the very act of human communication and deciphering because translation takes place not only between languages and cultures, but in any instance of communication. Despite its

positive intentions and consecrated connotations which evolved with Bible translation, translation always had a bad impression in the mainstream Western philosophy. It is seen as inauthentic, a trope for something secondary and almost derogatory. Robert Frost's noted quote "poetry is what is lost in translation" underlines this attitude.

In *The task of the Translator* Benjamin (1923) foregrounds the idea of 'pure language' which comprises of all languages of humanity and he believes in the holy language in which all languages unite at some messianic moment. According to him, all languages are incomplete in themselves and are striving towards the point of reconciliation and fulfillment. An original work is confined within the specificities of the particular language, but its translation ventures towards the monolithic language of man which is also the language of truth. Translation, thus, is a trope to cross the limitations of the incomplete and isolated languages. What makes translation possible between languages is their universally underlying common structure despite the apparent differences in the sign systems. According to Steiner, "Translation is realizable precisely because of these deep-seated universals, genetic, historical and social from which all grammars derive can be located and recognized as operative in every human idiom, however singular or bizarre its superficial forms" (Steiner, 1975, p. 76-77).

According to Jaques Derrida:

What does philosophy say? What does the philosopher say when he is a philosopher? He says: what matters is truth or meaning, and since meaning is before or beyond language, it follows that it is translatable. Meaning has the commanding role, and consequently one must be able to fix its univocality or, in any case master its plurivocality. If this plurivocality can be mastered, then translation, understood as the

transport of a semantic content into another signifying form, is possible. There is no philosophy unless translation in this latter sense is possible. Therefore the thesis of philosophy is translatability in this common sense, that is, as the transfer of a meaning or a truth from one language to another without any essential harm being done... The origin of philosophy is translation or the thesis of translatability, so that whenever translation in this sense has failed, it is nothing less than philosophy that finds itself defeated. (Derrida, 1985a, p. 120)

The philosophical foundations of translation are derived from Hermeneutics promulgated by 19<sup>th</sup> century German theologians. Among many others, George Steiner's *After Babel* (1975) is a monumental thesis that investigates the nature and function of interlingual translation. It foregrounds the difficulty of providing a systematic theory though it reflects on the workings of language and of the human mind, on the status of meaning and nature of translation. For Steiner translation is a "critical ground" as the philosophies of language, communication and meaning making are intertwined. According to Steiner, there are two periods of hermeneutic enquiry in the evolution of the discipline: the first one ranges from 19<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century and includes philosophers, linguists, writers and theologians like Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Humboldt, Schopenhauer, Goethe, Mathew Arnold, Paul Valery, Ezra Pound, I.A. Richards, Benedetto Croce, Ortega Y Gasset and Valery Larbaud, to name a few. The second period ranges from 1960s together with wide admiration Walter Benjamin's seminal essay *The Task of the Translator* and the contributions of Heidegger and Gadamer. Steiner considers the overlapping relation between the theory of translation and the theory of language and argues that "all procedures of expressive articulation and interpretative reception are translational, whether intra- or interlingually" (Steiner, 1975,

p. 279 ). Analysing from a hermeneutic stand he states that “every understanding is interpretative. Even the most literal statement [...] has a hermeneutic dimension. It needs decoding. It means more or less something other than it says” (Steiner, 1975, p. 280). Steiner argues that languages change and no semantic form is timeless. Therefore, the interpreter must strive to restore, to the extreme extent, the intent and value of the “original” speech acts. He considers the variant forms of language, as it is associated with a “centrifugal impulse”, in terms of place, speaker, age, sex and psychological and neurophysiological identities when he states: “No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same thing, to send identical signs of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings” (Steiner, 1975, p. 273). *After Babel* remains a rich resource of philosophical foundations of language and translation as it is replete with carefully contextualized interpretations of literary texts, specific discussions on how to deal with old texts and archaisms they comprise, histories of philosophy, of linguistics, of language, of literature and of translation theory and histories of the reception of literary texts.

Steiner is also among the first to recuperate the Biblical myth of Babel linking the story with *The Task of the Translator*, Walter Benjamin’s 1923 essay. Benjamin (1923) claims for a strong orientation towards the source text language, because to translate ultimately means to have access to ‘the pure language’ (Logos, that which makes speech meaningful), a ‘universal language’ and a ‘hidden spring’ and to produce a great translation and to stand closer to the ‘pure language’ the translator has to retain a ‘vital strangeness and otherness’ with regard to the translator’s language. While the Babel myth stands for the dismantling of a single language, Benjamin professes the end of history when all languages will have returned to their initial source, re-establishing their pre-Babel condition. He draws a comparison between the Fall of man which was followed by a

Redeemer and the scattered tongues at Babel that would necessitate a return to linguistic unity. *After Babel* is a backdrop against which Steiner reveals the cultural dimension of translation. Source language and its culture are enriched by translation and they become more prestigious. Steiner makes use of the metaphor of a mirror which not only reflects but also generates light as the original text gains a lot linguistically and culturally through its relation with the translated ones. He underlines Benjamin's use of 'after-life' when says that translation ensures the survival of the original.

The hermeneutic theory of Steiner primarily rests on his analysis of the psychological and intellectual process that takes place in the translator's mind while translating for which he uses the denominations of Initiative Trust, Aggression, Incorporation and Compensation (Steiner, 1975). Initiative Trust is the presupposed condition of the translator in which s/he assumes that the source text contains something meaningful and translatable. This instantaneous and unconscious act underlies every act of translation. Resounding Heidegger's notion of violence and St. Jerome's simile of 'a captive slave', Steiner explains the second phase Aggression through which the translator 'invades, extracts and brings home' the meaning of the source text. The third movement Incorporation refers to the assimilation of the source text to either of the two extreme extents: 'complete domestication' or 'permanent strangeness and marginality'. The incorporation takes place by dislocating and relocating the elements in the target culture with the addition of new ones. The fourth, Compensation is the stage where the loss and breakage occurred in the source and target texts in the previous phases are restituted in both directions. Obviously, Steiner's *After Babel* has offered a methodology for the cultural aspect of translation along with the historical and geographical contextualization. Steiner's vast examination of the linguistic, cultural, social and psychological nature of translation has also triggered subsequent research in cognitive

translation, Descriptive Translation as well as in translation oriented Cultural Studies dealing with gender translation, postcolonial discourse and the translator's status.

The philosophical trend of Deconstruction approaches translation refuting the fundamentalist premise that translation always presupposes the presence of an original with an ultimate stable meaning. Deconstructionist theorists like Jacques Derrida displace and defer the meaning of a text and repudiate the structuralist view of the existence of a source text which can be re-presented and retrieved in the target culture, thus deconstructing the very foundation of western philosophical thought. Derrida's attempt, both as a continuation and critique of structuralism, is actually an exploration of Saussure's claim that "in language there are only differences without positive terms" (as cited in Derrida, 1985). As the concept of *Logocentrism* privileges ideas or content and keeps the form or medium in secondary position, translation also involves the binary of the original and the translated one. According to Derrida, nothing escapes *differance* and everything is part of the 'play of things'. The Saussurian concept of structure as the dichotomy between signifier and signified is cut across by *differance* by an unending 'chain of signification', including both temporal and spatial dimensions. Thus placed in the light of *differance*, translation can be seen "always in the process modifying the original text, of deferring and displacing any possibility of grasping that which the original text desire to name" (Gentzler, 1993, p. 163). No language is entirely original and carries within it the traces of previous ones inviting everything outside it for the production of meaning. Translation, according to Gentzler (1993), is "a lively operator of *differance*, as a necessary process that distorts the original meaning while simultaneously revealing a network of texts both enabling and prohibiting interlingual communication" (p. 163).

Every text carries within it the void that needs to be filled by the interplay of the context. In translation the original always tends to engage with the source text for the never ending supplementation and complementation. Translation modifies the original as it modifies the translating language; it extends, enlarges and makes language grow. The process of translation is an act of compensating the original's longing for the outside as "at the origin it was not there without fault, full, complete, total, identical to itself" (Derrida, 1985, p. 188). As Benjamin (1923) puts it, "it is no longer the translation that depends on the original for its existence; it is the original that depends on the translation for its survival" (p. 21). Derrida's location of meaning in *differance* as a result of no clear distinction between signifier and signified is philosophical demonstration of the impossibility of total equivalence in which translation emerges as a 'regulated transformation rather than as a 'reflection' of the original. Derrida's postulations on the deconstruction of systems and of binary oppositions inside them and the decentralization and dehierarchization of a series of categories considered as 'privileged' have made long-lasting implications for the subsequent development of Cultural Studies and for the culture oriented Translation Studies.

#### **1.4. Indian Perspectives**

Notions of translation in Indian tradition are closely associated with *Brahminical* metaphysics which is grounded on unchanging, original and absolute nature of reality and sees all changes as illusory and superficial *Maya*. The worldly beings, both human and animal, are the manifestations of an ultimate essence for which all are striving. The concept of rebirth is taken as a metaphor for translation in that everything in the world has an inner, eternal and transcendental essence and rebirth makes a change only in outward appearance. This Eastern view of transcendental essence has its western



counterpart in Derridean philosophy: ‘the transcendental signified’ that survives despite its all material signifiers. Translation in Indian view is an illusion and deception of the senses. Contrary to the *Brahminical* version of Indian philosophy is Buddhist perspective that treats reality not as fixed and ultimate, but always in state of constant flux. The concept of *anaatma* or non-self is truth, but the selfhood is not organic, it is always divisible and heterogeneous. Transformation of one material ensemble into another is what takes place in Buddhist thought about rebirth. It can, therefore, be understood that no text is permanent and is always being transformed into multiple translated forms.

Compared to the western views of translation which is based on the experience of the faithful translation of the Bible into non-European languages, Indian translations were not much affected by the anxiety of being faithful to the original till 19<sup>th</sup> century; rather they promoted and celebrated the multiple versions of translation. Throughout the Middle Ages, classics and *puranas* in Sankrit were retold, adapted and subverted in their course of translation to several Indian languages. Valmiki’s Ramayana was translated as a Tamil classic by Kamban keeping it close to the structure and narrative style of Dravidian epic by elaborating, interpreting and modifying the original. Malayalam texts *Ramacharitham*, *SitaDukham*, feminist versions of the patriarchal text and Tulasidas’s *Ramacharithamansa* are examples of the marked shift from the original and creative freedom maintained in translation. Many Aryan or Sankrit texts were appropriated to regional languages through linguistic manipulation in South India under the influence of Bhakti movement which promoted desanskritisation of the classical texts. According to K. Ayyappa Paniker (1994), “The politics of medieval Indian translations could perhaps be understood and interpreted in terms of the visible absence of the anxiety of authenticity on the part of these “translators” (p. 130).

### 1.5. The Interface with Postcolonial Studies

Translation played an integral role in the course of colonization and continues to extend its influential part in the on-going process of decolonization too. As translation and postcolonialism are marked by cultural asymmetries, hegemonic relations existing between cultures and issues of identity with linguistic uncertainty, both disciplines have been mutually intersecting. Postcolonial Translation has led to the construction of new cultural identities for authors and translators alike, providing fresh insights into processes of creation, translation and interpretation of different kinds of texts. Both the feminist and the postcolonial cultural positioning emerge from asymmetrical power relations operating inside and between cultures. It is not surprising then to find out similarities between these “ideologies of the oppressed”, which are, further, associated with the translators' status. As Rosemary Arrojo writes,

If asymmetrical relations of power have established that authorship, patriarchy and colonialism do have a lot in common, by the same token, the devoted interpreter's or translator's plight may be comparable not only to the woman's but also to that of the subject of colonization. (Arrojo, 1999, p. 142)

Sherry Simon points out that the concept of culture has become increasingly problematic both in Translation and Postcolonial Studies in our era of displacement, immigration and transnational identities:

[...] the idea of culture as a set of unchanging and coherent values, behaviours or attitudes has given way to the idea of culture as negotiation, symbolic competition or 'performance'. Every culture speaks

a language traversed by two kinds of codes, the complicit idioms of the vernacular and the vehicular codes of international communication”.

(Simon, 1996, p. 152-153)

It is obviously understood that the postcolonial theories and practices are frequently produced from such spaces of plurality, from hybrid cultures and “third spaces” in which postcolonial identity acquires further dimensions. It is this space extended from the center that is shared by translation and postcolonial concerns. The textual space in translation and the cultural/geographical space in postcolonial condition are the meeting points of cultures and languages where transfer takes place challenging the original.

Homi K. Bhabha explains how the space between two cultures or languages defines the two and functions as a field of meaning production:

We should remember that it is the “inter” – the cutting edge of translation and renegotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national anti-nationalist histories of the “people”. And by exploring the Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 224)

Translation is closely linked to the postcolonial discourse irrespective of the latter's acknowledgement of its role in analyzing colonial discourses. This immediate relevance comes from the realization that translation has always been an indispensable channel of communication between the colonizers and the colonized, as well as a way of converting the latter into docile, cooperative subjects. It has also disseminated ideologically motivated images of colonized people. In his book *Translation and Empire* Douglas Robinson organizes his line of argument according to three sequential

but overlapping roles fulfilled by translations, which are present in the theorists' discourses. Among them, the foremost is the colonial status of translation as a channel of direct colonization, parallel to and connected with education and the overt or covert control of markets and institutions. This role is mainly related to the colonial past in which the communication in the local administration was dependent on translation into the vernacular. Secondly, translation was practiced as a lightning-rod for cultural inequalities continuing after the collapse of colonialism. This issue is also formulated as “translation across power differentials” and forms the main body of contemporary postcolonial material. Thirdly, translation is used as a channel of decolonization, producing new and beneficial avenues for the discipline (Robinson, 1997a, p. 6, 31). These aspects reveal the physical, cultural and hegemonic hold that translation has on the colonial and postcolonial existence of a people.

The consequences of cultural hegemony prevalent in postcolonial discourse and practice are equally evident in its translation and translation strategies. A dominated culture does translate far more of a hegemonic culture than the latter does of the former. In such translations “the translator appears as the servile mediator through whom foreign-made linguistic-cultural objects integrated without question into his own dominated language-culture” (Robinson, 1997a, p. 31-32). When a hegemonic culture translates works produced by the dominated culture, those works will be perceived and presented as difficult, mysterious, inscrutable, esoteric and in need of a group of intellectuals to interpret them, while a dominated culture translates a hegemonic culture’s works accessibly for the masses, the translator becomes “the authoritative mediator through whom the dominated language-culture is maintained outside the limits of the self and at the same time adapted to this self in order for it to be able to consume the dominated linguistic-cultural object” (Robinson, 1997a, p. 32). A hegemonic culture

will only translate those works by authors in a dominated culture that fit the former's preconceived notions of the latter. Authors in a dominated culture who dream of reaching a large audience will tend to write for translation into a hegemonic language, and this will require some degree of compliance with stereotypes. They are constantly interpellated and subjectified as authorities, being expected to consider themselves "rational adults", in opposition to their colonized subjects, who are "irrational children" (Robinson, 1997a.). The knowledge of the colonized too is conquered by the colonizer in such a way that the former never doubts the legitimacy of the colonizer's status as the owner and guardian of the indigenous body of knowledge. This state of things has made colonial hegemony in terms of language and culture survive even after the downfall of the colonial empire and hence a main concern of postcolonial project is 'provincializing Europe'. One way of provincializing is to write history of modernity exposing its ambivalences, contradictions, use of force, tragedies and ironies involved in it. Another way would be to replace the artificial hierarchy between 'center' and 'province' by cultural diversity and heterogeneity. In Bhabha's opinion cultures are untranslatable because they are never in a "pure state, but are always hybrid, mixed with other cultures" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 223-224). This hybrid condition of cultures ultimately leads to productive translation strategies.

In a context in which the former colonies continue to be dependent on the ex-rulers or the 'west' in economic and political terms decolonization is taking place at a slow pace. The impact of colonial discourse can be subverted by considering translation and by rewriting the East. Scholars like Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) have registered their strong dissatisfaction with Western Translation Studies because they are 'mediations' undertaken from the colonizers' perspective in order to make the 'primitive' world safe, understandable and thus apt for domination. Their main concern is to see the ways in

which translations have participated in the rewriting of the East, in the creation, by the hegemonic culture, of an image of the colonized that is still regarded as “true”. The British interpellation of Indians in terms of language is evident in the multiple translations of texts undertaken by scholars, administrators, historians, missionaries in order to ‘transform’ the natives’ personality in the image of hegemony and to ensure the permanence of colonial empire.

The essential criterion that had governed these translations was the need for translations by the Europeans since the natives were considered unreliable interpreters of their own laws and cultures, the desire to be a law giver and the desire to ‘purify’ Indian culture and speak on its behalf. Seen from a postcolonial perspective, the role performed by translations is quite complex: not only have they contributed to the creation of (Orientalist) images of the colonized that explain and give legitimacy to colonial domination, but they have also helped in the internalization of these images by the colonized thus ensuring the survival of hegemonic systems even after the collapse of colonial empires.

Western theories of translation are also critiqued for its incapacity to accommodate translation into its literary tradition and the inability of western linguistics to respond to all translation problems. Ganesh Devy (1999) draws a parallel between Indian and Western considerations of translation. According to him, translations are not given the status of original works as Western discourse and metaphysics considers translation as a fall from the origin, keeping with the Babel myth. As translations always appear after the originals, the ‘metaphysics of guilt’ permits it to see translation as defective, fallen and in a diminishing mode of literary authenticity. There is also a rooted sense of individualism that allows the West to see translation as an ‘intrusion of the other’ which

is paradoxically reflected in its own literary tradition of Bible translation, Chaucer's Boccaccio, works of Dryden and Pope, to cite a few. According to Devy:

Within the context of Western metaphysics, translation is an exile, a fall from the origin; and the mythical exile is a post-Babel crisis consequent upon the moment of the fragmentation of a pure, original, divinely authorized language into a series of different languages that were then diffused throughout the world. Given this metaphysical precondition of western aesthetics, it is not surprising that literary translations are not accorded the same status as original works. Western literary criticism implies that translation carries with it a burden of guilt because it comes into being after the original, and this temporal consequentiality is held as proof of diminution of its literary authenticity. (Devy, 1999, p. 152)

Translation practices and literary history are associated with the relationship between origins and subsequentity of texts. This implies the superiority of the original against the inferiority of translation and from a postcolonial perspective it is the manifestation and assertion of a hegemonic monolingual colonialist approach. The status of translations as inferior to the colonizer's language is the consequence of a larger oppression of the colonized in terms of language. Language carries the value of people and if a language is suppressed it is the most potent symbol of wider oppression. Postcolonial discourse always foregrounds the strategy of manipulation of language in translating hegemonic cultures. The colonies 'write back' challenging the dominance of the colonizer's language and even while reclaiming the colonial language, they reshape their own versions of those languages and acknowledge the presence of the indigenous

language. This implies that the colonizing power is the source, an original from which the colony has derived as a copy, as a translation. The question how translation is deemed to be inferior to its original is to be equated with how the colony is deemed to be inferior to the colonizing power. In any translation process, meaning would have to be negotiated and it is in that process of negotiation that the inequalities of power relationships come to the forefront. Assertion of a single world view insisting on the dominant culture leads to violent disposition of language and, in Venuti's words, brutal exercise of power:

The violence of translation resides in its very purpose and activity: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist it in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation and reception of texts. Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader. (Venuti, 1992, p. 209)

Writers from postcolonial countries have long challenged the European literary hegemony and tried to rewrite or subvert canonical European models in their respective ways. Their strategy has neither been to reject the colonial language altogether nor to reflect the dominance of the colonizer's language, but to reach an integrated literary production to rewrite European literature in a genuinely non-European way. There always appear a 'translation zone' which is a space that does not belong to any one nation, but is a zone of critical engagement that connects 'l' and 'n' of transLation and transNation' (Apter, 2006).



Films, like literary texts, are translated to multiple languages targeting audiences from different cultures across the world. This thesis tries to explore translation of subtitles in films produced both in colonizing and colonized countries in order to see how far the translations carry the ethos of the source culture through the original or English subtitles and how far these translated versions are the rewritings of the original. Films and their translation in postcolonial discourse are powerful tools to decolonize the cultural and political images crafted in the colonial language to perpetuate the hegemonic notions to the third world countries. The plurality of translated versions of films in the indigenous language questions the centrality of the 'original' and the dominant. Hence, this thesis is intended to lead to understand the ways in which translation and its viewership of such films play a significant role in providing freedom from the imperial monoculture, as Else Viera tellingly states it:

Translation that unsettles the logocentric tyranny of the original, translation that has the devilish dimension of usurpation; translation that disturbs linear flows and power hierarchies—daemonic dimensions that coexist with the *a priori* gesture of tribute to the other inherent in translating and the giving of one's own vitality to the other. Transcreation – the poetics that disrupts the primacy of the other model – a rupture and recourse to the one and to the other. Translation can be servitude, translation can also be freedom. (Viera, 1999, p. 109)

Postcolonial theorizations of translation are more relevant in the translation of films, especially those which represent a colonized culture and indigenous language and subtitled in a global language. While translations usually connect two languages, the technology of subtitling provides a virtual space for two languages to meet and

communicate. The divide between the dominating and dominated languages is getting blurred in subtitling.

The preliminary notions of different aspects of translation discussed above are indispensable to understand the philosophy of translation, politics of translation and history of Translation Studies. These notions are equally important in analysing different modes of translation and Audiovisual Translation is not an exception. Translation of films through subtitling is guided by the translator's perspectives of film as a text and its translation, nature of films selected for translation and the source and target languages in addition to the features of audiovisual medium. Translation of Culture Specific References in film which forms the core part of the study is to be analyzed using the insights given in the introductory part in order to establish a foundation for the study. Audiovisual translation is a distinguished field and is characterized by a number of configurations which are not considered in other modes of translation. Therefore a detailed study is attempted in the forthcoming chapter which will throw light on various aspects of Audiovisual Translation focusing on subtitling, its history and technical and translational issues.

## CHAPTER II

### SUBTITLING IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

#### 2.1. Introduction

It is not an exaggeration to say that the nature and function of today's communication are heavily dependent on the far reaching upshot of audiovisual technology. The 'talkies' in film industry heralded the revolutionary developments in the way ideas are produced, transmitted, shared and consumed audiovisually. The flood of audio visual media and their practice have produced a more dynamic and interactive audience transforming them from being traditional passive viewers to active producers and consumers of their own written or edited materials. The ever expanding territory of audiovisual communication has brought about radical changes in the way we share ideas with each other with result that the combination of visual and auditory channels have become part of everyday communication for millions across the globe. The age old written communication has eventually been surpassed by the creative potential of the multisemiotic materials of audiovisual communication.

Audiovisual translation is an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of practices involving translation of dialogues/narration/commentary in the original sound track and visual and textual images on the screen. Normally the terms refers to subtitling and lip-synch dubbing of audiovisual material for television programs and cinema and videos, CD-ROMs, DVDs, operas and plays. Audiovisual translation is otherwise known as 'media translation' and 'language versioning' in which case the first refers to the print and visual media and the second to video materials.

'Revoicing' is the superordinate term to suggest various methods of rendering translated lip-synch dubbing, voice over, narration and free commentary, while

subtitling and surtitling are used to refer to the main methods used to translate the original from speech to writing.

The term Audiovisual Translation has been subject to change over the decades as the practice and method of translation changed in accordance with the revolutionary contribution of technology and growing specialization of AVT practice and research. In 1950s and 1960s, it was known as film translation for subtitles were popularly used in films. Though it covered all kinds of translation in films, feature films and documentaries, it failed to include translation practices in television and other audiovisual programs. In 1980s and 1990s it assumed the label language transfer, but it focused only on language and blurred the complex nature of audio, visual and verbal signs in the translation process. It is only in the closing years of the twentieth century that the widely used term Audiovisual Translation came to vogue encompassing the multisemiotic dimension of all screen and broadcast programs like radio, TV, cinema and DVD. In professional circles the term 'versioning' is commonly used to mean dubbing and subtitling and 'screen translation' in academic circles to include all elements of screen productions. Translation for the media and multimedia translation reveal the multitude of media and channels used in global and local communication for variety of purposes (information, entertainment, education, advertising, etc.). The changing terminology and the dynamic nature of the field make the AVT difficult to mark its boundaries.

Audiovisual Translation is gaining wide popularity though, for several decades, it had been suffering from disciplinary immaturity to develop as a branch within the circle of Translation Studies. The growth of technology and modes of human communication can be mapped out as the history of audiovisual communication. Audiovisual Translation

was adopted by Translation Studies and recognized as one of its branches only in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Unlike the textual or written translation, AVT is multi modal in nature and transfers multimedia speech (dialogue, monologue, comments, etc.) into another language or culture. It thus involves a complex process of interlingual and intersemiotic translation apart from the technical concerns of the visual and auditory images. But, AVT remained for several years a less explored area and failed to come out of the technical confines to reach out to our everyday life. In academic research, it was considered even as an unprivileged practice despite its ever growing popularity across languages and cultures. According to Yves Gambier,

While two to four years are needed to produce a film (from script writing and the search for financial support through to release and broadcasting) , very often, only a few days are given to provide the translation. Thus, it is hardly surprising that most people consider AVT as a ‘problem’, or as a ‘loss’ rather than as a creative solution to the problems of internal distribution. (Gambier, 2009, p. 18)

It is observed that audiovisual translation enjoyed a secondary status though it facilitated the interlingual communication in a great deal. Film industries commonly tend to work on subtitling in the last phase of the production and sometimes subtitles are produced by a different agency. T

## **2.2. Historical Perspectives**

The history of audio visual translation runs parallel to the history of film industry which experimented various means to communicate the verbal dialogues of the characters. From 1890 till early 1930s silent films reigned the industry. The silent

films were not really ‘silent’, rather they made use of varied techniques to supplement the visual images on the screen. They made use of piano music, sound effects and, mostly, a narrator behind the curtain. The dialogues and development of the plot were communicated using intertitles projected intermittently on the screen and these texts spoke to the viewers. The linguistic elements in the film were communicated through the visible, but not audible, verbal images projected on the screen. Intertitles, which can be viewed as the direct forerunners of subtitles, met the linguistic needs of the heterogeneous audience of film as they could be “removed, translated, drawn or printed on paper, filmed and inserted again in the film” (Ivarsson, 1992. p. 15). Intertitles continued to be an integral part of silent films until the synchronized sound became technically and commercially feasible.

The ‘silence’ in film industry was broken in 1927 with the release of the first sound film *The Jazz Singer* and it led to the wide popularity of the ‘talkies’ across the world. When talkies became instantly popular, the audience from heterogeneous linguistic background suffered from the language barrier in the film. Europe responded to this issue of language barrier initially by reshooting the films using multi lingual and foreign actors. The USA initially shot versions in different languages in the same setting. Local actors were imported from France and Germany, but the attempt was dropped due to huge economic liabilities. Consequently, the practice of dubbing and subtitling grew to meet the linguistic problems of the heterogeneous viewers. With the arrival of dubbing in 1930s, the production companies evaded the linguistic challenge and film distributing firms and film-importing countries took it up. Despite the myth of universal sense-making of the visuals and sound in films, the issue of language was a challenge that took a few more years to overcome.

Attempts were also made in 1930s to remake the films. It was a kind of appropriation by changing the language and modifying the plot. During 1930-50 the US films were recontextualized in and for Europe, but in 1980s the flow reversed, remaking the successful European films in the USA. The French film industry pioneered across the world from 1906 to 1913 and in 1912, Italy became the most advanced national cinema in the world with 717 films in production. When European film industry waned after the World War I, American films thrived and the latter were widely screened across Europe.

Earlier through cinema and television and currently through digital, mobile and internet devices, the rapid exchange of text and images has proved the potential of audiovisual media to reach unimaginable range of audience. This production, distribution and consumption of information have always confronted barriers of language as heterogeneous audiences in the same or different parts of the world speak different languages. Translation and interpreting are imperative to overcome this linguistic barrier and they have been practiced for centuries to facilitate communication and dialogue across varied linguistic communities. As long as speaking and writing prevailed as major modes of communication, translations were concerned exclusively with written texts. But with advent of audiovisual media, the multiple elements in the audiovisual material such as the text, image and sound converged in a single device and this necessitated an intersemiotic translation. The advancement in audiovisual technology and its widespread use across cultures and linguistic communities were forced to give birth to new types of translation which is grouped under the umbrella term Audio Visual Translation (AVT) of which subtitling and dubbing are the most practiced ones.

According to Jorge Diaz Cintas,

This relatively new concept refers to translation practices in which the verbal dimension is just one of the many components interacting in the original text and compounding the communication process. It is precisely this concurrence of different semiotic layers – visual (images, written text, gestures) and auditory (music, noise, dialogue) – that makes the translator’s task particularly challenging, and rewarding, in this field. (Diaz Cintas, 2005, p. 4)

Subtitling and dubbing are the two commonly used methods in Audiovisual Translation. Right from the infancy years of AVT, subtitling and dubbing became opposed primarily due to the relative financial expense and time consumption. It is also not always clear why one mode was selected in one case and the other was rejected in another. Subtitling is very often ten times cheaper and more popular than dubbing. The selection between the two is determined by various economic, political, ideological and pragmatic factors. The history and current practice of dubbing and subtitling on these grounds reveal an international classification of countries as ‘dubbing countries’ and ‘subtitling countries’. Of course, every country follows its traditional priorities in screen translation, but the decision either to dub or subtitle is born out of the consideration of a number of other factors. What is remarkable in this AVT landscape is that dubbing countries like France, Germany and Spain are larger and developed countries while the subtitling countries like Belgium, Denmark and Sweden are less developed ones. Most of the dubbing countries have an ‘international language’ whereas most of the subtitling countries have a so-called less used or minor language.

In addition to the relative variation of financial and time considerations in subtitling and dubbing, the interlingual translation has deeper implications concerning



language and culture in SL and TL. Subtitling usually leaves the original sound track intact and introduces an interest in foreign language and culture. It also presumes the literacy of the audience and expects an average reading speed. Dubbing on the other hand, can reach a large audience with low literacy rates. It provides a more relaxed viewing experience and the viewers can engage in multitasking. Linguistically considered, subtitles keep the audience on guard because the simultaneous presence of the source language in the sound track and target language on the screen facilitates an evaluation of the translation provided. Those who know the two languages can cross check every segment of the subtitle and original for themselves and challenge the ‘faithfulness’ of translation. Contrary to this, dubbed versions are received on the pretext of source language which is always suspended. This disguised mode of translation breeds greater chance for censorship, modification and manipulation in dubbing. According to Danan,

Choosing to dub rather than subtitle can be viewed as an attempt to hide the foreign nature of a film by creating the illusion the actors are speaking the viewer’s language, an assertion of the supremacy of the national language and its unchallenged political, economic and cultural power within the nation boundaries. (Danan, 1991, p. 612)

The practice of Audiovisual Translation differs from the conventional textual translation both in the medium and manner. The AVT assumes greater relevance in academic research owing to the complex nature of the sign system in audiovisual productions. Earlier studies in this area were based on the assumption that various signs run along parallel lines, almost independently and they could not reveal the interrelationships between different sign systems. But, it was later understood that a

great number of various signifying codes like the visual, auditory and textual are simultaneously at play in the production of meaning of any audiovisual product or performance. The overall meaning effected by the interplay of all the semiotic codes is much more than the meaning of individual items. All the verbal and nonverbal means of communication work together to achieve coherence, intentionality, informativity, intertextuality, relevance and the maxims of conversation. Multiple theories drawn from text linguistics, pragmatics, semiotics and discourse analysis can be applied to the translation and interpretation of audiovisual materials. It is, therefore, a complex process undertaken both by the producer and viewer to decipher the multilayered codes of the audiovisual productions. To translate them is much more complex and challenging.

AVT has become a problematic area in Translation Studies due to the numerous challenges posed by technological, linguistic and verbal segments. The primary one among them is the process of identifying the types of relationships between the verbal and nonverbal signs. A film, it is argued, is a multisemiotic entity and hence linguistic data must be treated separately, very often ignoring the complex nature and dynamics of producing the meaning. This marginalization of linguistic components reflects why subtitling and dubbing were earlier not considered as 'proper' translation. What supported this attitude was the dictum that translation should deal with literary works only. In the age of multimedia communication, methodologies are coming up to incorporate any language and to tackle any barrier that stands in the way of multi-coded communication.

Describing audiovisual communication and analyzing the function of language in the translation is again of complex nature as both of them largely depend on what is translated and the translation strategies opted for it. In subtitling, the selection and

condensation of lexical items are determined by the given time and space in a specific scene in relation to other semiotic signs. For instance, the question of omission and addition of words used to address a person, swear words or other culturally packed words or phrases cannot be translated as easily as other items. Audiovisual communication is actually multi layered: the characters speak to each other, with other participants listening and able to interfere at any moment. In fact, the characters and the bystanders 'speak' indirectly to viewers who cannot interact but are both the first and final addressees (Bell, 1984). All audiovisual materials are produced with an assumed target audience and all the hands working behind the scene, like the producer, the director, the actors and the editor try to address an imagined audience throughout the process. Generally it is the average, literate/educated, socially aware and psychologically sound audience who are expected to understand the multiple signs on the screen. Nevertheless, there are groups of audience who are often not addressed at this stage: the foreign audience who will need a translation in dubbing or subtitling. Not only the dialogue of the characters, but background information, narration, commentary or even the posters and placards shown in the visuals also need translation for a successful communication. Thus the imagined audience and the real one are at conflict when a film is viewed by the target audience. It is here that practice and research in AVT gain practical scope as translation is shifted from page to visual and auditory devices.

What makes Audiovisual Translation more puzzling is the multi-layeredness of its constitutive elements like the visual, acoustic and verbal and complexity of relationship among them. The relationship is often determined by factors like redundancy (when one sign repeats or emphasizes another one) and complementarity (when, for example, the background music or light arouses certain tension). The autonomy of some scenes, the

contradiction in their presentation and elements of criticism that forces the viewer to take a stand also produce certain effects that add to the overall meaning of the program. There are explicative elements which offer an additional piece of information but normally not understood from the visuals, like performative elements that help to do something and allocative that provides idiosyncratic linguistic features in order to identify a character. Demarcative codes play an important role in organizing the film narration, facilitating the progression of the plot, differentiating between dream and real, past, present or future and selective signs in directing the interpretation of a shot, a sequence. Yves Gambier (2013) has classified AVT on the basis of the translation between different codes in the same language and inter-language translation between codes. The first category in the translation within same language is Intralingual translation practiced for facilitating access to deaf and hard of hearing and for the young and migrants to learn the given language. The second type is Live Subtitling or respeaking for live broadcast done with a voice-recognition software. This involves stressful work and the product end is always questionable. The third category Audio Description (sight interpretation double dubbing) is used for the blind and visually impaired. Audio Subtitle, used for the dyslexic and elderly, is a different category that reads the subtitle out with the help of a text-to-speech software.

Interlanguage audiovisual translation is divided into seven types: (i) The script/ scenario translation: it is usually done for financial support and subsidies as a preparatory step for the production of any audiovisual material. (ii) Interlingual subtitling: this adds a semiotic channel to the primary material whereas other modes, dubbing for example, replaces the existing channel. The process of subtitling is usually carried out by a single person by translating, spotting, and editing. (iii) Dubbing: it cannot be

reduced to lip synchronization. (iv) Free Commentary: one of the oldest forms revoicing in which the narration is synchronized with the screen images rather than with the sound track. (v) Interpreting: it is done simultaneously, consecutively and using several forms of sign language. (vi) Voice-over (half dubbing): here, the target voice is superimposed on the source voice which is almost inaudible or incomprehensible. (vii) Surtitling: it is a kind of subtitling that appears above a theatre or opera stage. In all these types of audiovisual translation the nature of translation varies according to their modes and codes. There are issues of oral dimension, switching from oral to written, written to oral and from written to written. This variety leaves the question as to whether some are more domesticating practices than others. It is true that dubbing, free commentary, even interpreting and audio description, allow the manipulation of the linguistic material in order to please the dominant expectations and preferences, sometimes censoring dialogues or changing parts of the plot to conform to ideological drives and aesthetic norms of the target culture.

Professional and technological issues involved in audiovisual translation are to be considered seriously. In most cases the translation is outsourced to an AVT company which commissions it to a freelance translator who has to work against tight deadlines. The quality of the end product is determined by the relationship with the commissioner which is based on traditions and preferences, quality expectations, modes of payment, technical tools, and the status and responsibility of the translator. Differences are obvious when translators working directly from screen, with only a script, or working from a script without the visual. Working exclusively from a script, i.e. in the absence of visual reference, implies the necessity of solving different types of ambiguity. Proofreading and revision are seldom regularly practiced. Translators are nowadays

aware of their rights and privileges when a particular work prepared for cinema is reused in another supporting format like TV, DVD, website or rebroadcast. Economic and legal deregulation still dominates the business despite the comforts of digital technology.

Technological issues are of wide range consequences in Audiovisual Translation and have changed the production, distribution and projection resulting in renewed fashion of the architecture of cinema theatres, quality of takes, piracy, film archiving and restoration, the style and aesthetic of AV products as well as of their investment and marketing. New technology (video-streaming, video and TV on demand, podcasting and portable players such as the mobile phone and portable video and ‘mobisodes’) is modifying the meaning of broadcasting and the common concept of audience. Remarkably, two shifts have taken place in audiovisual technology: on the one hand, it offers a better and more versatile range of services and programmes (TV channels through cable and satellites and via relay and networking, pay TV, transfrontier and local TV, and thematic TV channels on history, sports, finance, geography, cartoons, etc.) indicating the end of a centralized model of the media (mass media) and a convenient move from broadcasting to narrowcasting. More viewers with more varied educational and language backgrounds switch from non-specialized to specialized channels to satisfy their different kinds of expectations and needs. On the other hand, in a globally connected world the audience is becoming more global: a video or a film on the internet is available for all irrespective of the language of the audience. Automation is changing the working process in every field of audiovisual translation and it is moving towards increased digitization. Today, certain software programs can clone original voice, so the dubbed voice is assimilated to that of original actor, irrespective of

the source language. This raises important questions of voice rights pertaining to the authority and ownership of voice.

An important aspect of research in Audiovisual Translation is the text which has evolved into the concept of 'screen text' that is short-lived and multimodal. Its coherence is based on the interplay of the images and the sound and hence, according to Gambier, 'a complex object of investigation' (Gambier, 2013). It differs from the conventional notions of the text as a linear arrangement of sentences, or as a sequence of verbal units and redefines it as the hypertext on the internet where the concept becomes more ambiguous. Any text presumes an author and the concept of authorship invites more attention here. In literary translation studies the author is often perceived as a single individual, but in AVT it is a group working on subtitles or employees in a firm that commissions subtitle projects. The concept of meaning and the process of making meaning are more complex in Audiovisual Translation as communication is made neither in a linear sequence nor with a single system of signs. Moreover, the meaning is produced by the interaction taking place not only between various agents involved in creating the AV product, but also between them and the viewers and even between different audiovisual productions. Together with these features, the concept of audiovisual translation lack a consensus in definition as it overlaps adaptation, manipulation, transfer and remake. The links between translation norms and technical constraints and the relationships between written and oral versions and its accessibility have become the problematic in Audiovisual Translation as they question the binary and hierarchy between the original and translation, between production and reproduction, and between initial broadcasting and a rerun. Audio Visual Translation thus redefines translation and disrupts the boundaries of Translation Studies.

The research in AVT is inspired by Poly system theory, Functional approaches and Descriptive studies. Even though interdisciplinarity increasingly characterizes research in AVT today, with methods and concepts borrowed from literary studies, sociology, experimental psychology, film studies, reception studies, history and didactics, the AVT analyses conducted depends mainly on linguistics, including pragmatics, discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics, as if the verbal component of AVT were sufficient to describe and understand AVT as a process and a product, with its social and ideological impact. Academic research in the field turns to be isolated mainly with fragmented studies on inter/intralingual subtitling and isolated studies on other AVT modes. According to Gambier, (2013) “There is a long way to go towards achieving a coherent field of research, combining all the different semiotic codes, including the influence of those codes on the linguistic one” (p. 24). More experimental studies on the viewer’s processing habits, reading strategies and reception patterns, differentiating between three types of reception (the three Rs) : response, reaction, and repercussion, are required in the AVT research to produce comprehensive understanding of the translation process (Gambier, 2013).

### **2.3. Subtitles: Textuality and Modality**

Translation in subtitles differs from that of other kinds of texts both in the textuality of subtitles and modality of translation. Interlingual subtitling is a kind of language transfer in which the translation does not replace the source text; rather both are present in synchrony in the subtitled version. Though they appear on the screen along with other elements of a given audiovisual material, they are largely determined and limited by technical factors like time, space, screen size, typographical features, scene, editing, shot change, pace of dialogue, etc. In other forms of translation, the translator is free to render the message at his/her will in the most appropriate phrase



irrespective of the number of words and space used. But, according to the international codes, “subtitles are confined to appear maximum in two lines of maximum 35 – 37 characters and remain for 5 – 6 seconds. Since readability of the text is of paramount importance, it has been suggested that an ideal subtitle is a sentence long, with the clauses of which it consists placed on separate lines” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, p. 172). The number of words and length of a subtitle are directly related to its on-air time. The balance with the appropriate reading time setting is maintained by accurate in and out timing or Word per Minute (WPM, i.e. 150-180 words) and this varies between adults and children viewers. Subtitles normally occupy up to 20% of screen space. Subtitles are to be legible to the viewers in terms of the size of the characters, their position on screen, as well as the technology used for the projection of subtitles in the cinema (DTS or Dolby), TV broadcast, DVD emulation, etc., as it affects their definition. The digital revolution in digital technology has made it a more flexible task and subtitles are now created and kept as separate files. The task of the subtitler is to distill the message down to its most essential parts and to communicate ideas with the condensed form of the translated text. The subtitler has to foresee the viewers who cannot re-read or go back to the previous subtitles unlike in other forms of translation. The viewer of a subtitled program has to simultaneously concentrate at least two different types of information: the visuals on the screen, and the translation of the dialogue, that is the subtitles. Moreover, the temporal succession of subtitles is quite different from the linear succession of sentences in a printed page and hence it does not allow the eye to move backwards or forwards to clarify any misreading or re-read any overlooked word, recapitulate the basic facts or see what comes next. Consequently, in order for the subtitles to be successful, it needs to preserve the “sequence of speech acts [...] in such a way as to relay the dynamics of communication” (Mason, 1989, p. 15).

Due to the technical limitations and nature of the text mentioned above, subtitles mostly cannot render complete translation of the original sentences. Subtitles are finalized after multiple stages of editing a heteronomous text and therefore deviate from the established linguistic patterns, sentence structure and lexical composition. They largely depend upon the translator's subjective view of what is most relevant in the SL, represent subtitle's interpretations and choices and are condensed and presented in compliance with the technical restrictions and conventions governing the subtitling process. In addition to the condensed nature of subtitles, their readability and reception are crucial in deciding how much a viewer can read at a particular moment and which lexical item or concepts to be emphasized or left out. In this process subtitles simultaneously become an independent representation of the source text and a subordinate product closely tied with other audiovisual items. This complex relationship between subtitle and original is labeled 'formal foreignness' by Dionysis Kapsaskis (2008). According to him, "subtitles belong properly neither to the text nor to the image; they occupy a hybrid and intermittent site that is never fully their own" (2008, pp. 47). They are, hence, a unique type of text dependent on its context and not fully understood when isolated from the audiovisual co-texts.

The composite nature of subtitle's text is further revealed when its multimodality is considered. Translation of subtitles is not only interlingual, but it is intersemiotic too because the text is translated not only from one language, but also from one sign system to another. What is spoken in the source language is translated to target language and appears on the screen in written form which is not entirely 'written'; rather it preserves some kind of orality. Thus it differs from ordinary interlingual translation which is always horizontal from one language to another. Emphasizing this feature, Gottlieb (1994) calls it "diagonal

translation”: transfer from one language to another and from speech to writing. The expertise of subtitler is remarkably demanded in appropriating the verbal text to readable written form as the subtitles are read along with the sound track in the source language. Prosodic features of speech like hesitation, repetition, attributes of slang, dialect are difficult to re-create in writing. Again, characteristics of spontaneous speech, such as slips of the tongue, pauses, false starts, unfinished sentences, ungrammatical constructions, etc., are all quite difficult to be reproduced in writing. The same goes for dialectal, idiolectal and pronunciation features that contribute significantly to the characterization and plot. However, there are instances where these are reflected in the subtitle experimenting on typography by changing the cases of letters and size or color of font.

Subtitles remain on the screen only for seconds as the fragments constitute complete sentences and they function amidst several illusory features. First, subtitles create the illusion of being an integral part of the entire audiovisual programme, but in fact they are prepared separately and added to the video in a post production stage. Perfect synchrony of subtitles with the visuals and audio is another illusion by which the viewers get the feeling of a constantly flowing and uninterrupted flow of text. Reading the subtitles, viewers are under the illusion of having read the entire source text while subtitles are a highly condensed form of the written text. All these illusions keep subtitles hidden in plain sight, attempting to blend with the original, but never being able to fully replace the original. Even though these illusions are more or less common in literary translation, in AVT the subtitler has to construct them more autonomously. What is remarkable about subtitles in this respect is their challenge to be invisible while being extremely visible. The subtitler is always challenged by the conflict between technical reality of subtitles’ visibility on the screen and the aim of fluent transparency.

Translations rarely carry their original with them. But, subtitles stand unique among translations as both the source text and target text are simultaneously present in the medium. Subtitles appear on screen corresponding to the original sound track so that it is open to comparison and viewers' comments or criticism. While Gottlieb (1994) calls subtitles 'overt translation' Diaz Cintaz and Rameal (2007) call it 'vulnerable translation' as anyone who knows the basics of the source language can criticize them. This openness increases challenge of subtitling because the subtitler has to take into account what the viewers might consider acceptable/possible translation. It is understood that the practice of translation in subtitles is exclusive as it is not confined to the linguistic competence of translator, rather governed by a number of other issues outside the text. According to Luyken *et.al*, subtitling is "a meeting point of science, art, technology, linguistics, drama and aesthetics. The quality of the end product results directly from the harmonious fusion of these parts" (Luyken *et. al*, 1991, p. 36).

All factors that redefine and restrict the process of translation in subtitles also influence the conditions in which they are received and interpreted. It is equally challenging both to translate subtitles and to read them in an audiovisual program. Reading subtitles and making sense of them is more demanding and require increased skill than dealing with other forms of translations. It is always a question whether one can read them on the first sight and whether one can follow the program when the subtitles intrude. Subtitles are usually produced taking into account the skills and expectations of the target audience. They are meant to be disseminated to a heterogeneous audience with diverse skills and linguistic background. The viewer is expected to be able to follow the original audiovisual form and the subtitles simultaneously. What is more challenging is that they have to mentally transform

fragmented parts of subtitles into a coherent message as the ongoing program cannot be paused and played backwards. Subtitles become most successful when they are read unnoticed. To achieve this status, they need to comply with certain levels of readability and be as concise as necessary in order not to distract the viewer's attention from the programme. Hajmohammadi (2004) states that "subtitled films thus require a greater effort to harmonize a variety of cognitive activities and grasp the underlying idea" (p. 16).

Subtitles are produced on the strength of the heightened interpretation of the translator. As is the case of any translation, subtitling too highlights and preserves certain elements in the text in order to prioritize and privilege them in communication. In addition to the translator's linguistic competence, the skill of interpreting, making choices and decision making are central in subtitling. Subtitles are highly condensed, context-bound, and they only function fully when they are considered in relation to the larger cultural entities which they metonymically represent. This exclusive nature of subtitles and metonymic nature of representation necessitate a metonymic language by which parts or aspects of the source text come to stand for the whole. As the notion of substitution and equivalence are obsolete in Translation Studies and impossible in subtitling, metonymic language is more suitable for subtitling. As Maria Tymoczko (1999) makes it clear "translation is seen as less a metaphoric process of substitution than as a metonymic process of connection, a process of creating contiguities and contextures" (p. 28). The purpose of subtitling is to create a contextualized text which is connected to auditive and visual elements. Taking subtitling as a special case in translation, traditional notions of text, authorship and translation strategy are revised, extended and rethought when they are applied to Audiovisual Translation. According to

Yves Gambier (2009), Audiovisual Translation can ‘disturb’ Translation Studies to encourage the discipline to better accommodate various forms of translation and to make critical examination and constructive enquiry of translation.

#### **2.4. Subtitles and the Reader**

Every text has a target reader and the target reader of a translated text invites more attention because the latter is created by the translator and therefore is different from the one assumed by the author of the source text. It is important to address the status of the reader of a translated work and it is much more pertinent in the study of film subtitles as they are read in the multimedial context of film by viewers with heterogeneous linguistic and reading experiences. Alexandra Assis Rosa (2006) identifies three types of readers: the Actual Reader, the Ideal Reader and the Implied Reader. According to her, the concept of Ideal Reader and Implied Reader are more relevant in translation studies than the concept of ideal reader which is distant from the real translation context and interaction. The Implied Reader reflects the translator’s expectations of the target audience and determines the translator’s choice and norms of translation. The classification of Rosa makes it clear that the Implied Reader is an intratextual phenomenon, a textual feature imagined by the translator or the researcher.

The concept of reader in the context of this study is elaborated by Christiane Nord who uses the term ‘addressee’ to describe an abstract intratextual reader construction. According to Nord,

The *addressee* (or target audience) of any text or translation is not a real person but a concept, an abstraction gained from the sum total of our communicative experience, that is, from the vast number of

characteristics of receivers we have observed in previous communicative occurrences that bear some analogy with the one we are confronted with in a particular situation. (Nord, 2000, p. 196)

It underlines the fact that the concept of reader is constructed through previous experiences and observations. It also facilitates the assessment of reader expectations and reveals the intratextuality of the Implied Reader or the addressee in reading experiences. This informs the translator on cultural and communicational conventions, which would allow translators to communicate with target culture readers in a way the readers are used to. The same concept is also investigated by Christina Sousa (2002) when she discusses the cultural knowledge between source text and target text: “it is crucial [...] to evaluate the relevance of the reader’s cultural knowledge in the reading of the text, as this can help to anticipate reader-responses to the text and, consequently, to its translation” (p. 21). This evaluation can be used as a justification for making modifications in the text on the basis that the cultural knowledge of the target-text reader is more or less distant from the source culture thus the ‘perceived level of receptivity’ of the reader differs from that of the source-culture reader (p. 22).

The translation and source text have different Implied Readers and so this can affect the translation strategies employed. Brian Mossop distinguishes the two reader positions stating that

Reader reaction to translation can be considered from two points of view: from the point of view of reception, there is the actual reaction of the reader; from the point of view of production, there is the reaction imagined in the mind of the translator. (Mossop, 2007, p. 203)

The most important difference between the actual and abstract reader is the context boundedness and the effect of individual circumstances, as explained by Cristina Sousa:

When performing the act of reading, the real reader does not abstract himself totally from his own set of preconceptions, ideas and knowledge. In fact, the activity will involve his whole experience as a living being that is part of a given historical, cultural, social and language group, interacting, where necessary, with other language groups via some kind of mediation. (Sousa, 2002, p. 18)

This is why abstract reader constructions are always considered tentative and cannot explain the multitude of dimensions related to the real act of reading and reception of subtitles. In the case of films, there is already an implied reader of the film in the mind of the director according to whom the film is scripted, dialogued, edited and screened. Subtitling is another phase of film production in which the subtitler has to follow the image of the reader created by the director in subtitling the dialogues. What is puzzling in subtitling is to construct an abstract target reader who cannot be limited to any specific cultural background, but only to the target language.

## **2.5. Other Issues**

The multimodality of communication in audiovisual programme plays a significant role in translating subtitles as well as viewing it. The viewers have to alternate their attention between the visuals and subtitles in order to make a holistic sense of the program. A few rough rules are usually followed internationally by subtitlers to make the text more readable and to help minimize extra processing



demands made by the viewer. When the visual elements are vital for the comprehension of a particular scene, subtitles are limited to the most basic linguistic information, leaving the eyes of the viewers free to follow the images and action. On the contrary, when important information is not in the visuals but in the soundtrack, subtitles are displayed in the least condensed way and sometimes the complete version of subtitles, to ensure that the viewers are not left behind in terms of individual dialogues and development of the plot. Subtitles are presented on the screen in the most legible and readable format, with necessary modification in typographic features suitable for suprasegmental requirements of each word and line. The flow of subtitles is successfully grasped by the viewer with the recurrent images and repeated lexical expressions. Redundancy also, to a great extent, enhances the comprehension of the entire audiovisual program, specifically in the case of slow readers and those with lower level of comprehension. Redundancy is very common in everyday spoken communication but always edited out in written translation, most essentially in subtitles. Actually, redundant elements help participants in a conversation grasp the intended meaning effortlessly, but subtitles do not entertain it owing to the constraints of space and time. At the same time, its elimination from film dialogue will badly affect the cohesion in the subtitled text. The systematic deletion or retention of redundancy is, therefore, a matter of choice among the indispensable elements, (which must be translated), the partly dispensable elements (that can be condensed) and the dispensable elements (that can be omitted) (Diaz Cintaz, 2009). Even when the spatio-temporal constraints do not apply, some professional subtitlers tend to delete many other semantic and structural elements such as repetitions, names in appellative constructions, false starts and ungrammatical constructions, internationally known words, such as 'yes', 'no', 'OK', expressions followed by gestures to denote salutation, politeness, affirmation, negation, surprise,

telephone responses, exclamations, such as ‘oh’, ‘ah’, ‘wow’ and the like. Instances of phatic communion and ‘padding’, often empty of semantic load, but their presence being mostly functional speech embellishment aimed at maintaining the desired speech-flow are also not retained. Elements such as repetitions, padding expressions or even ungrammatical constructions may at times be optionally condensed rather than omitted, as they may contribute to the textuality of the program and the character development of the actors. Apart from linguistic redundancy in audiovisual programs, there is also visual and situational redundancy that usually works in favour of the translator. The visual information often helps viewers process the subtitles, and to a certain extent this compensates for the limited verbal information they contain. It is this multimodal nature of the subtitle text and its intersemiotic communication that make the translation process a critical one.

Thus the study of subtitles as a translation mode in AVT is to be located within the multiple concerns discussed in this chapter. The technological peculiarities equally facilitate and determine the audiovisual communication while the textuality and linguistics of subtitling define the translational activity. Though subtitles are usually meant to translate the dialogues of a film, they also involve translation of voice over, live commentary, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing and so on. Even within each of these categories subtitling is carried out through various strategies to meet the requirements of particular verbal items in question and the holistic meaning of the film created by the co-texts of visuals and sound track. It is much more relevant to discuss the subtitling of special items such as culture specific expressions, special references and genre specific item. This study is fundamentally aimed at exploring the issues involved in subtitling culture specific references in subtitling and various aspects of

intercultural exchanges through films which help one critically understand not only a film but also the culture which is represented therein. The following chapter exclusively discusses the practice of subtitling Culture Specific References and different issues and strategies employed for that.

## CHAPTER III

**CULTURAL TRANSFER IN FILM:  
SUBTITLING CULTURE SPECIFIC REFERENCES****3.1. Introduction**

Ever since the cultural turn of translation studies, the cultural underpinnings of translation practices have been subject to major enquiries in Translation Studies. The cross cultural realm of translation is explored and brought into the limelight of investigations in Translation Studies substantiating the fact that translation is not only a bilingual practice but also a bicultural one. The bicultural aspect of translation encompasses cultural negotiations between any two dissimilar cultures as well as the subcultures that make up a society. The cultural turn of translation studies and theoretical contributions of Manipulation School underline that texts produced in a culture cannot make sense without considering its cultural factors. Hermans (1999) makes it clear that “since translation operates in and on existing discourses while fashioning new texts after models belonging to other discourses, individual cultures or groups may develop different attitudes with regard to these potentially disruptive new arrivals” (p. 89). It obviously implied that cultural orientation of language is of crucial concern in the practice and theory of translation. A translator, in this sense, is a mediator and according to Hatim and Mason (1990), tries to “to overcome those incompatibilities which stand in the way of transfer of meaning” (p. 223-224). The bicultural vision of translator coupled with the role of a mediator amounts to the fact that a translator plays not only a communicative role, but also a social role. This becomes more evident when the translator is expected to provide some references with symbolic value when their corresponding references do not exist in target culture. Castro-Paniagua (2000) proposes

that “a translator should be an ethnographer” because he considers translator’s role as the interpretation of not only the semantic information, but also the inherent cultural codes. According to him, “she or he needs to have a deep knowledge of cultural frames [he or she] will be handling” (p. 24).

Translation process in audiovisual products invites much more attention because communication is made orally and visually and the translator often comes across untranslatable or culture specific contents in a film. According to Whitman (1992), the translator will have to follow suggestions and orders “from ‘above’ to alter other ‘foreign’ elements and culturally unfamiliar items to make them more attractive (that is, marketable) to the target audience” (p. 95). She explains the cultural features in terms of “internalized moral values, shared political and historical identity, collective aesthetic tastes” (Whitman, 1992, p. 96) and asks how all these can be transferred to the target audience of a different cultural background in intelligible ways. A cultural referent would be anything and everything that makes a society have its own idiosyncrasy and helps being different from another culture. Globalization in different walks of life has made many foreign cultures familiar to each other and apparent cultural differences are being blurred and assimilated in various ways. But the underlying differences and unique identities are to be brought out, as stated by Cateora and Graham (2008) : “the approach to life, values and concepts of acceptable and unacceptable behavior may all have a common heritage and may appear superficially the same, yet in reality profound differences do exist” (p. 89).

### **3.2. Culture Specific Reference (CSR) : Defining the Term**

What inhibits any attempt to define Culture Specific Reference is the fact that language itself is embedded in culture and all references and expressions in a language are, in a sense, culture specific. Scholars in Translation Studies and Audiovisual

Translation have neither given cut and dry definition of CSRs nor made any hard and fast norms to define and classify them. Rather, a CSR is loosely referred to in different terms like culture specific references, culture bound references / elements / terms / items/expressions, *realia*, allusions, rich points and, more generally, cultural references. Most literature in Translation Studies has used ‘Culture Specific References’ in diverse contexts as an all-encompassing term and the same is maintained in this study.

One of the earlier conceptualizations of these elements was made by A.M. Finkel (1962). According to him, such elements “stand out from the common lexical context, they distinguish themselves for their heterogeneity, and consequently they require a reinforcement of attention in order to be decoded” (p. 112). A clear picture and a precise classification may be drawn from this classical definition of such references:

words (and composed locutions) of popular language which constitute denominations of objects, concepts, which are typical of a geographical environment, of a culture, of the material life or of historical-social peculiarities of a people, a nation, a country, a tribe, and which thus carry a national, local or historical coloring; these words have not precise equivalents in other languages. (Vlahov and Florin, 1939, p. 438)

CSR is a defining quality of certain references in language and they cannot be grouped into unrelated compartments. Rather, they all depend on a matter of degree of exclusiveness to a given culture and the dividing line between them is very fluid. They function in the experience and knowledge of a speech community that produce and circulate them. The meaning of such terms may differ even within the community and they are understood by the target culture audience in varying degrees. Not all people in a given cultural group may be familiar with these terms in the same way. This is the result

of a subjective perception of references from different perspectives. Helle Leemetes puts it in this way:

Every language has words denoting concepts and things that another language has not considered worth mentioning, or that are absent from the life or consciousness of the other nation. The reasons are differences in the ways of life, traditions, beliefs, historical development – in one word, the cultures of the nations. Also, differences can be observed on conceptual level. Different languages often nominate concepts from different viewpoints, and they also tend to classify them slightly differently. (Leemetes, 1992, p. 475)

The interpretation of cultural references is characterized by varying degree of subjectivity. It is also seen in relation to the proximity or distance from the SC to TC. This is interestingly explained by Mailhac (1996) in his definition: “by cultural reference we mean any reference to a cultural entity which, due to its distance from the target culture, is characterized by a sufficient degree of opacity for the target reader to constitute a problem” (p. 133-34).

The treatment and reception of different CSRs in their translation are subject to the strategies employed for rendering them into the target language. Strategies used for the translation of some CSRs may not be applicable to some others. Similarly, CSRs undergo variation in their references over time and this will be reflected in the way they are translated and in the way target audience make sense of them. The textual and temporal context of CSRs thus determines their dynamic function.

Jan Pederson comes up with a striking term which is self-explaining and more binding. He calls it Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECR). His definition

Extra linguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) is defined as reference that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extra linguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience.

(Pederson, 2005, p. 2)

distinguishes itself from other definitions with the prefix 'extralinguistic'. The term extralinguistic refers to matters outside language, but relates to a linguistic sign that is within language and thus establishes sense relations with other linguistic signs. According to Pederson, 'Extralinguistic' is not a synonym for non-verbal and though they are extralinguistic they are expressed verbally. The signifier here is always linguistic and within language. They are, of course, linguistic expressions regardless of word class, syntactic function, or size. ECRs make sense only in the encyclopaedic knowledge of the culture of any particular language.

The term 'cultural' in the definition is used in a wide sense as defined by Tyler: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (as cited in Katan, 2004, pp. 25). It is the Source Culture (SC) rather than Source Language (SL) that prevails in the discussions of ECRs because language is only a part of several elements that constitute a culture. The referent of an ECR is at hand only through the encyclopaedic knowledge of a certain culture and a 'cultural literacy' is indispensable to understand the meaning. This research focuses on how far the linguistic expression in itself is transparent enough to enable one to access its referent without cultural knowledge.



The 'Reference' in ECR does not rigorously mean the property of any of a noun phrase or other lexical items. It is a generous term to denote the relation between a linguistic sign and extralinguistic cultural reality. It is not a referent of any linguistic expression and a purely linguistic definition of 'Reference' would be insufficient here to cover all the cases. Rather, it stands for the Referring expression or the relation between a linguistic expression and its referent (Pederson, 2011). ECRs become relevant where language meets culture and a reference is always 'context-dependent' (Lyons, 1995). It is particularly applicable in AVT where every translation solution sought to render an ECR in a TT depends on the context of utterance and polysemiotic texts that have more context than mono semiotic ones.

The referent of ECRs is not found within language, but in the extralinguistic reality, i.e. in the world. As translation is basically about communication the translation problem here is to find a match between the two worlds in the case of a film translation: the world of the film maker and that of the viewer. The 'universe of reference' (Leech, 1980) varies according to the experience of people. This gap between worlds of reference and experience of people stand in the way of perfect or absolute translation. What is taking place here is only felicitous communication. The challenging task in subtitling is that the concepts from outer world should be made accessible within the text of film itself. As ECRs could be said to be the link between the text and the world, the distribution of ECRs and the perspective of the text are always interrelated. Horror films, adventure films, character-driven dramas, etc. are introvert because they tend to create their own world whereas genres like action, crime, comedy and romance are extrovert, maintaining more links to the world outside the text (Pederson, 2011).

Delia Chiaro's explanation of CSR is central to Audiovisual Translation:

CSRs are entities that are typical of one particular culture, and that culture alone, and they can be either exclusively or predominantly visual (an image of a local or national figure, a local dance, pet funerals, baby showers), exclusively verbal or else both visual and verbal in nature.

(Chiaro, 2009, p. 156)

She has explicitly addressed the 'visual' and not exclusively verbal nature of the CSRs. This is very pertinent in AVT as many of the CSRs are presented visually on the screen either alone or with the verbal sound track. The visual dimension of CSRs attributes more to their embeddedness to a specific time and place, as presented on the screen. This is emphasized by Anthony Pym (2010) and according to him films are the products of a specific context and this is evident not only in the verbal language used, but also in the components that make part of the image: geographical place, historical period, dress code, nonverbal signs of communication, cinematographic conventions, editing, formal qualities, etc. The concept of belonging to a context refers to the complex networks of relations which links the original film to its context of production. He adds that the more a text presupposes its place of production, the more it is difficult to transfer it to another culture. The task of the translator, according to him, is to loosen the "bonds of belonging" (Pym: 2010). It is in this context that translating CSRs becomes a culture Vs language problem in Audiovisual Translation.

All the above definitions and different perspectives of CSRs share certain assumptions in common: CSRs are embedded in their respective cultural slot, they are fixed to the time and space of a specific culture, CSRs may belong to more than one culture and that the referent of such terms may vary according to the time and the

dynamic growth of a speech community and all these features of CSR become decisive in the strategies used to translate them. Having given these definitions, it would be difficult to adhere to any particular definition and follow a permanent term to refer to CSRs as their nature and function are unpredictable in practice. However, the term CSR is used in a free and flexible sense throughout this thesis though some specific contexts may force the use of slightly modified terms.

CSRs are generally references to places, people, institutions, customs, food, festivals etc. that one may not decipher even if he/she knows the language in question. They demarcate between what is 'within' the language and what is outside and what is cultural and what is not. The term 'reference' in CSR does not take one outside the language, but relates to a linguistic sign that is within language and thus establishes sense relations with other linguistic signs. CSRs make sense only in the encyclopaedic knowledge of the culture of a particular language and they need special explanation for the target audience of a different culture to understand them. For example, one's primary knowledge of English language will not help to understand the phrase 'finishing school'. The meaning of the individual words 'finishing' and 'school' and even their connotations appear to be odd in the context when Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture has this entry to mean 'a private school where rich girls learn social skills'. Thus, 'finishing school' is a CSR in English which always needs an explanation to those who are alien to that cultural and social context. In Malayalam, എഴുത്തിനിരുത്തുക (*ezhuthiniruthuka*, 'to make one sit for writing') has the same CSR feature and it has nothing to do with the literal meaning of the individual words 'writing' and 'sitting'. Different from its apparent meaning, it means 'the ritual of making a child enter the world of letters' or 'the beginning of formal education'.

Another example can be cited from the subtitle of the Malayalam film: 22 *Female Kottayam* in which the heroine introduces herself to one of the characters that she is ‘Tessa K. Abraam’ in which ‘K’ stands for ‘കുരിശുപറമ്പിൽ’ *kurishuparambil* (the surrounding area of a cross/church/cemetery). It is a surname in Malayalam which has a Christian implication because *kurish* means ‘the Cross’. But the character comments making fun of her surname: ‘നീയൊരു കുരിശാണോ?’ (Are you a cross?) playing on the connotation of the word as ‘cross’ in Malayalam also means ‘an irritating/disturbing person, burden/nuisance’. This funny dialogue is well conveyed to the source culture because the usage is very common in Malayalam. But the same cannot be translated into English because the English word ‘the cross’ is not used in the corresponding sense and the humor of the entire expression is lost when rendered in English. Thus CSRs always function within the shared space of language and culture and live in the exclusive cultural vocabulary of that language. Translation of cultural references is challenged by two basic issues: priorities and restrictions. Translator has to prioritize a specific linguistic expression out of a few possible ones and has to strategically surpass the restriction imposed by the medium, language and other factors. These priorities and restrictions, according to Zabalbeascoa (1997), “will have to be fixed anew for each task” (p. 331). References popularized through translations will last only for a limited period of time as their meaning changes according to the development of the world view and cognitive capacity of the target audience. They need modification and replacement in the course of time. Audiovisual materials like film can be redubbed or resubtitled as books are retranslated and rewritten as a result of cultural dynamism that makes cultures constantly evolve and refresh their repository of cultural elements.

Translation of cultural references also entails questions of viewers’ knowledge level of the source culture and their ability to decode allusions and references to other

contexts and people. In this sense intertextuality is an important aspect to be considered in audiovisual translation, particularly in film subtitling. The presence and implication of external references, either current or previous, are to be detected and communicated effectively with the help of their adequate background knowledge. According to Lorenzo *et al.* (2003), “Intertextual references usually give rise to many translation problems. The translator must spot the reference in the first place and then evaluate [on an intuitive basis, depending on the ‘general knowledge’ of the translator and the target audience] the likelihood of being recognized by the audience” (p. 283). This underlines translator’s necessary presumed knowledge to identify them in the source language and render them in the target language. Professional aspects, competence and expectations of target audience, interaction among dimensions of pragmatic, semiotic and communicative contexts and synchrony are important factors to be considered in audiovisual translation and audiovisual intertextuality.

### **3.3. Domains and Classification of Culture Specific References**

Cultural references in a language are the wide range of vocabulary that involves all the words pertaining to diverse aspects of that culture, like food items, greetings, humour, religion, politics, etc. Their meaning is specific to the given culture and hence translating them always poses challenges, especially in subtitling films. These items are classified into different categories and scholars in Translation Studies share a variety of classification.

Peter Newmark’s (1988) classification is an adaptation of Nida’s ideas and he distinguishes five major categories: (i) Ecology (flora, fauna and natural phenomena) , (ii) Material Culture (artifacts including food, clothing, housing, transport, etc.) , (iii) Social Culture (work and leisure) , (iv) Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures

and Concepts (political and administrative references, religious, historical and artistic terms) and (v) Gestures and Habits.

Oltra Ripoll (2005) classifies it as: (i) Nature (all references to ecology, fauna and flora, types of winds and other natural phenomena, climate and weather, etc.) , (ii) Leisure, feasts and traditions, sports, games, leisure places, etc., (iii) Religion and mythology (all types of references related to religion and mythology) , (iv) Geography (all references regarding place-names and names of the inhabitants of a country, of a region, etc.) , (v) Politics and Economy (all references associated with political or economic institutions and organizations, theories and tendencies, ideologies, laws, norms of banks, public posts, administration, political parties and trade unions) and (vi) History, including all historical references (historical characters, events, battles, etc.)

G. Klingberg (1986) classifies: (i) Literary references (title of books, short stories, magazines or newspapers, events or characters in literary works) , (ii) Foreign language in the source text, (iii) References to mythology and popular belief, (iv) Historical, religious and political background, (v) Buildings, home furnishings and food, (vi) Customs and practices; play and games, (vii) Flora and fauna, (viii) Personal names, titles, names of domestic animals and names of objects, (ix) Geographical names, (x) Weights and measures.

According to Barbara Schwarz (2002) : (i) Locations and geographical names, (ii) Money and dated terms, (iii) Non-verbal signs, (iv) Taboos, (v) Proverbs and fixed expressions, (vi) Puns and word play, (vii) Specific problems: acronyms and foot notes and (viii) Songs.

A relatively restricted and more overlapping classification is made by the following scholars. E.E. Davies (2003) classifies into (i) Food references, (ii) Toponyms, (iii) Word

play (iv) Names. B. Nedergaard Larsen (2003) identifies: References to (i) Geography, (ii) History, (iii) Society (iv) Culture. Vandeweghe (2005) analyses (i) Geogrpahic, (ii) Ethnographic and (iii) Soci-political references. Ramiere (2004) : (i) Extra linguistic references, (ii) Geographical references, (iii) Historical references and (iv) Socio-cultural references.

The above mentioned classifications of CSR suggested by different authors reveal that the boundaries of classification are very tentative and several categories overlap each other in many respects. While some authors tried to classify in encompassing minor sub-categories strictly others have suggested a loose classification which has an ambiguous boundary. The common criterion that all the authors have used here is dividing the entire cultural entity into geographical, political, institutional, social and cultural domains that represent all references in the subcategories. Though each author's classifications vary in number and scope, they include those items which need some kind of explanation in any mode of translation, unless they are internationally known references.

### **3.4. The Model Proposed for the Present Study**

The classifications given above tend to arrange CSRs into lexical fields and do not reflect the scholars' view that culture-specificity depends on the relationship between SC and TC. The model presented for the present study is based on conceptual rather than lexical groupings and the classification endorsed by Jorge Diaz Cintas and Jan Pederson is selected for this purpose. This selection is also in view of the exhaustive listing and representative nature of all major CSRs mentioned by other scholars. This approach helps the research to enable the analysis cover all the CSRs appear in the film as they have included all minor items under the titles of a broader classification. Moreover, Cintas's classification have included some relevant classifications for the

present study, like references to Endemic Animal and Plant Species, references to Descent, references to Administrative or Territorial Units and the like. Pederson's list deserves attention for its simplicity of labels and all-inclusive nature. Above all the two authors have based their classification not only on the theoretical assumptions of AVT, but also on the professional expertise in the field of subtitling.

According to Jorge Diaz Cintas and Aline Ramael (2007):

- (i) Geographical references: (a) Objects from physical geography, (b) Geographical objects and (c) Endemic animal and plant species.
- (ii) Ethnographic references: (a) Objects from daily life, (b) References to work, (c) References to art and culture, (d) References to descent, (e) Measures: inch, ounce, euro, pound.
- (iii) Socio-political references: (a) References to administrative or territorial units, (b) References to institutions and functions, (c) References to socio-cultural life, (d) References to military institutions and objects.

According to Jan Pederson (2011) : (i) Weights and measures, (ii) Proper names subdivided into: Personal names, Geographical names, Institutional names and Brand names, (iii) Professional Titles, (iv) Food and Beverages, (v) Literature, (vi) Government, (vii) Entertainment, (viii) Education, (ix) Sports, (x) Currency, (xi) Technical materials, (xii) Others.

The present classification accommodates both realistic and intertextual references. The realistic here means references to non-fictional persons, objects and events which defines reality. Intertextual references are explicit or indirect allusions to other texts which maintain a bond between the translated text and other literary,



audiovisual or artistic texts. The feature of the taxonomy helps the researcher identify and translate taking the distinct nature of the target language into consideration. These CSRs are translated using various strategies according to the purpose of translation and knowledge level of the audience.

### **3.5. Translation Strategies**

Every translation produces a new text that is different from the original and hence the process involved in producing that text is bound to involve certain strategies. The rendering of cultural references into the target text in subtitles entails strategies that are specific in audiovisual translation. Though ‘translation strategy’ is interchangeably used for translation methods, techniques, norms and tactics in translation this research foregrounds the description of Pederson who, drawing on Chesterman’s propositions, explains ‘method’ as the label for global level decision-making and ‘strategy’ for local problem-solving process (Pederson, 2011). According to Chesterman (1997), “it seems reasonable to assume that it is mainly at the problem points that translators have recourse to strategies, as a way of overcoming temporary hitches in the translation process” (p. 89). In fact the strategy is a tool in the hands of the translator and “... thus forms of explicit textual manipulation. They are directly observable from the translation product itself, in comparison with the source text” (Chesterman, 1997, p. 89). Any strategy is a means to uncover the translation norms “that operate at the intermediate level between competence and performance, where competence stands for the set of options translators have at their disposal and performance refers to the set of options actually selected” (Hermans, 1999, p. 75). Strategies are the translation solutions arrived at through the same or similar process of moving from ST to TT and they are categorized according to their different groups. These categories which are hierarchically structured are presented as taxonomy of translation strategies.

### **3.6. Taxonomy of Translation Strategies**

The taxonomy of translation strategies modeled upon in this research is contributed by Pederson (2011) by arranging the ‘source oriented’ and ‘target oriented’ strategies along an axis of source-to-target orientation. The strategies are Retention, Specification, Direct Translation, Generalization, Substitution, Omission and Official Equivalent.

#### **3.6.1. Retention**

Retention is the most used source-oriented strategy in which the SC element is allowed to enter the TT and is kept as it is. In a sense, retention is the strategy that shows the most fidelity towards the ST in that the translator is not only true to the sense, but to every letter of the ST. According to Schleiermacher, it is a strategy that “leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him” (1813/2004, p. 49). In some cases the CSR is retained in the TT by marking it off from the rest of the text, usually by quotes or italics and the process is known as Marked/Unmarked Retention. Retention is also carried out by adjusting the CSR to meet the TL conventions by adjusting the spelling or dropping the articles, for example. These varieties of retention, however, ensure the entry of CSR from SC to TL without any significant alteration.

#### **3.6.2. Specification**

This is a strategy of retaining the CSR in its untranslated form, but explaining it by adding information that is not present in the ST, making the meaning of CSR more specific in the TC than the SC. This is done either through Completion or Addition and hence is commonly known as Explication which is a broader term used by translation scholars to apply to all categories that are used to intervene and explain an SC item.

‘Completion’ describes the cases where the added material is latent in the expression part (i.e. the linguistic sign) of the ST CSR. Spelling out acronyms or abbreviations and adding someone’s first name or completing an official name are examples of this kind. The primary function of specification is to disambiguate the CSRs for the TC audience which may not be as familiar with the CSR as the SC audience is. This strategy is most often consumes space and is practiced at the cost of some additional words, though it gains some other information. The linguistic process involved in Addition is based on meronymy, polysemy or hyponymy. Specification is a much more complicated process than retention as it involves not only the ‘text level’ and ‘world level’ but also something that can be called language level or cognitive level. Translating the CSR, however, is not an indispensable part in the strategy of Specification because the sense is transferred to the TL either through the co-text or any non-verbal audio/video channels and thus intersemiotic redundancy may come to help in such cases. Specification is also used to make a reference more specific by adding semantic features, rather than surface-structure linguistic materials.

### **3.6.3. Direct Translation**

When the CSR elements are literally translated without changing the semantic load of the SC CSR it involves the strategy of Direct Translation. Nothing is added, nor subtracted and no effort is made to transfer the connotations or to guide the TC audience in any way. This process is simpler than Specification as translation takes place at the literal level only. This is used in rendering the names which are made of common nouns and thus have a compositional sense that can be translated. Names of companies, official/commercial institutions, technical gadgetry, etc are translated in this manner. Based on the outcome of the strategy, Direct Translation is divided into two subcategories: Calque and Shifted.

### 3.6.4. Generalization

This strategy entails replacing a CSR referring to something specific by something more general. This is done by exploiting sense relations in the form of hyponymy or homonymy, thus replacing the CSR with a superordinate term in TC. It is commonly seen that hyponymy is involved in this strategy than meronymy and the resulting TC item will no longer be a CSR. Translation usually takes place in this strategy, but it need not be part of it. There are similarities between the strategies of Generalization and Addition in the strategy of Specification in that the added information in Addition can be a hypernym. So, it can be observed that Addition often appears to be the result of Generalization and Retention. According to Pederson,

Generalization by Superordinate Term – or chunking up – is a much more common strategy than its down-chunking counterpart, Specification. One reason has already been mentioned, i.e. that Specification normally uses up more valuable subtitle space than Generalization. There is another reason as well, that is that Generalization is more in line with the expectancy norms of the TT audiences. This is partly a result of its greater frequency, which in itself generates acceptability (i.e. making the use of it a stronger norm), but also because it does not involve any breach of reference, which may be the case when Specification is used. (Pederson, 2011, p. 88)

Generalization is also done with Paraphrasing which involves reduction to sense. Here the SC CSR is removed, but its sense or relevant connotations are kept by using a paraphrase. This is resorted to only for solving CSR crisis points that are too complex for Specification or Generalization using a Superordinate Term.

### 3.6.5. Substitution

As the term indicates, here the CSR is replaced with something else: either with a different CSR from the TC or with something completely different item that fits the context. In the former case it is Cultural Substitution and in the latter it is Situational Substitution. This strategy is followed to domesticate the text by using a TC CSR either from SC or from a third culture. Such substitution is suggested by Gottlieb when he subcategorizes the use of a Transcultural CSR: “replacement by a foreign element known to the target audience” or “replacement by a foreign element shared with the target culture” (Gottlieb, 2009, p. ). Cultural Substitution can be of Transcultural CSR or Target Culture CSR. Substitution by Transcultural

CSR is successful when the SC CSR is widely known or Transcultural CSR is from a third culture. The effect of these renderings is ‘dynamic’ equivalence rather than ‘formal’ equivalence (Nida, 1964). According to Gottlieb (1997) , the overall effect is “centripetal” in that the substitution removes the more exotic and peripheral CSRs and replaces them with CSRs that are more common and central. The viewers are not actually exposed to new CSRs, but to familiar ones and this makes TT more accessible. Substitution by Target Culture CSR completely removes a foreign element and replaces it with a domestic one and hence this is the most domesticating of all strategies, according to Venuti (1995). One of the advantages of Cultural Substitution is that the connotations are conveyed to the readers in a space-efficient and in a striking manner. In Situational Substitution, every sense of the ST CSR is removed and replaced by anyother item that fits the situation irrespective of the sense conveyed by the SC CSR. This is considered as a quasi-omission strategy in translation and is similar to Gottlieb’s (1975) “resignation”.

### **3.6.6. Omission**

Omission as a strategy simply means replacing the ST CSR with nothing. This is very crucial in rendering CSR as “a translator may choose omission responsibly, after rejecting all alternative strategies, or irresponsibly, to save him/herself the trouble of looking up something s/he does not know” (Leppihalme, 1994, p. 93). Omission can be the most target-oriented strategy available as it prevents a problematic foreign item from entering the TL in any form at all. In the interface of cultural and linguistic reciprocity omission is a vital strategy as it determines the existence of a particular item in the target language and hence influences intercultural relations. A CSR is omitted due to technical constraints like pace of a dialogue or semiotic redundancy and though it does not create a gap in the semantic level, it affects the fidelity of translation in general.

### **3.6.7. Using an Official Equivalent**

This is an easygoing strategy where there is a ready-made solution for rendering the CSR. Using an Official Equivalent is a different strategy in that the process involved is administrative rather than linguistic. Here, the CSR is rendered on the basis of its use in official circles and decisions taken by people in government authorities. Conversion of measurements, monetary transactions, metric systems, etc. would fall into this category. Apart from the equivalence by decree, an Official Equivalent may come to existence through entrenchment in which case “an SL item X is invariably translated into a given TL as Y” (Chesterman, 1997, p. 9). These two ways of creating an Official Equivalence tend to merge. Once an Official Equivalent is created by decree, it is likely to be entrenched and vice versa. Therefore, Official Equivalent is also known in a more felicitous name ‘established equivalent’.

Jorge Diaz Cintas (2007) identifies nine strategies commonly used globally in all types of audiovisual programs:

**1. Loan:**

Loan is the strategy of incorporating the source text word/phrase to the target language because the translation is impossible. Here, both the languages use the same word like the references to drinks or culinary specialties in a culture.

**2. Calque:**

Calque is a literal translation, especially phrases denoting the name of institutions, organizations, official positions, etc. Depending on the familiarity/unfamiliarity of the terms, some words require an explanation which is challenging in subtitling unless the context or visuals come to the rescue.

**3. Explicitation:**

This is an attempt to make the source text more accessible to the target audience by explaining it. This is usually attained through specification i.e., using a hyponym or through generalization i.e., using a hypernym/superordinate. Popularly used in subtitling, hypernyms perform an explanatory function, whereas hyponyms narrow down the meaning of a word. According to Cintas, “the use of hypernyms, often dictated by the need for transparency, contributes to the loss of specificity that is typical of subtitling and shows that subtitlers cannot always opt for the shortest word available, since clarity may have to come first” (Cintas, 2007, p. 203).

**4. Substitution:**

It is the substitution of word/phrase in the source language by another one in the target language. This is often resorted to when the technical constraints do not permit to retain a longer word, even if the term exists in the target culture.

**5. Transposition:**

This strategy refers to the replacement of one cultural concept by another one in a different culture when the reference is not understood without a calque or a loan, but there is no room for explication. Transposition also implies some degree of explanation because it is described using a word or phrase.

**6. Lexical Recreation / Neologism:**

When the source language speaker makes up words, a corresponding word/phrase is invented by the subtitler and is placed between quotation marks in the subtitle. This is a product of the creativity, linguistic competence and bicultural knowledge of the translator.

**7. Compensation:**

It is the strategy of compensating the translational loss by overtranslating or adding something in another text. This is widely practiced in subtitling though the oral-visual cohabitation impedes it often.

**8. Omission:**

Though often not counted as a strategy, omission is an inevitable practice in subtitling. References are omitted either due to the time-space limitation or the lack of a corresponding term in the target culture.

**9. Addition:**

A form of explication, addition is adding information for better understanding, especially in the part containing cultural references which are difficult to comprehend.



### **3.7. Influencing Parameters**

The translation strategies are always governed by certain norms which are fundamental in rendering the subtitles. These parameters, though enumerated separately, are interconnected and overlap in many respects. The following is an overview of the parameters suggested by Jan Pederson (2011) :

#### **3.7.1. Transculturality:**

Transculturality refers to the degree of closeness of one culture to another and the mutual familiarity of the specific items to people in both cultures. The culture bound terms that were once familiar to only one culture may be used interculturally and globally and hence they cease to be culture specific expressions. This reduced distance between cultures decides how easily a CSR can be rendered in to the target language through their encyclopaedic or intertextual knowledge. The subtitler has to work on the probability of TT audience about the CSR and the need to intervene to help the TT audience to access the CSR. According to Christopher Taylor (2007), “Where texts are governed by cultural mores, predictability can be largely discounted, firstly in the pattern of the source language and particularly in translation. Here the translator is on his/her own gauging to what extent the audience is attuned to the mindset of the source text culture” (p. 10).

Pederson identifies three types of Transcultural CSRs based on the accessibility of each to the SC or TC: Transcultural CSR, Monocultural CSR and Infracultural CSR. A Transcultural CSR is one which is assumed to be known both in the encyclopaedic knowledge of the SC and TC and the referent of the CSR comes from the SC, TC or a third culture. This does not ensure that the CSR is accessible equally to ST and TT

audience. The shorter the cultural distance, the more Transcultural CSRs would be found in a text. A Monocultural CSR is one whose referent is less identifiable to the majority of the TT audience than it is to the ST audience. So this CSR is somewhat limited to the encyclopaedic knowledge of the ST audience and they have a greater chance to access it. The greater the cultural distance, the more Monocultural CSRs would be found in a text. An Infracultural CSR is one which is typically bound to the SC and it is too specialized or too local to be known even by the majority of the ST audience. Most members of the ST make sense of it through the context or co-text and only a negligible part of the ST audience have access to it. Infracultural CSRs are thus marginal CSRs. The level of transculturality is influenced by other parameters like the assumed knowledge of the target audience and time period in which they are used. A Transcultural CSR in one text at a particular time may become a Monocultural CSR in another text at another time, depending on the intercultural relations.

### **3.7.2. Extratextuality:**

This refers to the existence of a CSR independent/dependent of the text in a given culture. If it exists independently outside the text it is Text External and if it is always dependent of the text and constructed for the text it is Text Internal. As it is in the case of Transculturality, an originally Text Internal CSR may become Text External through the process of intertextuality when it becomes well known outside its source.

### **3.7.3. Centrality:**

One of the most influencing parameters, Centrality is the result of judging how important a CSR is in the given text. It works on a gradual scale at two levels: the macro-level and the micro-level. It takes diverse positions like central on the macro-level and peripheral on the macro-level; central on the micro-level and peripheral on the micro-

level. If a CSR is central on macro-level it is very relevant in the context and almost impossible to use any other strategy than Retention or Official Equivalent to render it. It is peripheral on the macro-level if a CSR is just mentioned or omitted after repetition. The CSR becomes central on the micro-level if it pertains to affect the internal elements of the discourse, for instance, to move the plot forward or trigger a joke.

#### **3.7.4. Polysemiotics:**

As subtitling is an intersemiotic translation and it functions in a polysemiotic context, this parameter is crucial in deciding translation strategies. Subtitles functions between four semiotic channels: the nonverbal visual channel (the image) , the nonverbal audio channel (the music) , verbal visual channel (displays and captions) and verbal audio channel (dialogue). The interplay and overlap between these channels contribute, often, to the intersemiotic redundancy. So the subtitling strategy should take into account the interplay between these different channels and the redundancy or complementary additions in rendering the subtitles.

#### **3.7.5. Co-text:**

The subtitles are rendered taking into consideration what precedes the segment of a particular dialogue and what follows it. It also considers the visuals that appear along with subtitles. The preceding and following parts of the verbal expressions helps the subtitler choose translation strategies in each point. It also saves time and space which are the media specific constraints.

#### **3.7.6. Media-specific Constraints:**

The semiotic switch from the spoken to the written and the time-space constraints in subtitling influence the subtitler in the reduction and formalization of the

text. As discussed in the previous chapter, subtitles keep hybrid status of speech and writing and this controls a subtitler in producing a spoken text in the written form.

### **3.7.7. The Effects of the Subtitling Situation**

While the parameters enumerated so far centers on the text, this last one is centered on subtitling situations like subtitlers, guidelines, subtitling companies, broadcasters, the internet TV guides. All the above parameters influence local decision-making, but the Subtitling Situation influences global strategies because “the choice of the local strategy depends on the translator’s global strategy for the text” (Leppihalme, as quoted in Pederson, 2011, p. 116). Fundamentally, the Subtitling Situation is concerned with Source Text, TT Audience, Broadcasting and Pragmatic Considerations. The questions regarding Source Text are the skopos of the text, the production norms, the genre and the style and genre used in it. The TT Audience takes into account the age group, general level of education and special knowledge of the TT audience. The Broadcasting part asks the questions like who broadcasts the program and when it is broadcasted. Pragmatic Considerations are the deadlines of subtitling work, the financial remuneration and the experience and competence of a subtitler.

### **3.8. Subtitling the Special: Songs**

Songs play an important part in many films aesthetically or thematically. Normally films use two kinds of songs: those with lyrics which are not particular about the theme and others having a bearing on the thematic interpretation of the film. If the songs are very pertinent in following the film story they are to be subtitled, provided the lyrics and rhythm keep a correspondence with the target language. However, in some cases, the lyrics of songs happen to be central in understanding the plot, but composed in a particular linguistic combination of words and rhythm exclusive to the source

language. This poses a challenge to the subtitler. The decision to subtitle or not subtitle a song depends on various criteria prevailing in the industry and individual choice of the subtitler. Primarily, a song is translated on the instruction of the company or outsourcing agency. If the dialogue list does not include the lyrics, the subtitler takes it for granted that songs are not important in translation and consequently the songs are not subtitled. The language of song is also of prime importance because if the song is not in the same target language as the rest of the film (for example, a Hindi song in a Malayalam film or an Arabic song in an English film), it is translated only if they are translated in the original version. The linguistic and cultural gaps are also factors that determine the choice of translation. A Tamil song in Malayalam film needs less translation than an English song in an English film.

If the dialogue and song are in the same language, several other dimensions also are to be considered. Technically, a song may overlap with the credits at the beginning or end of a film and the question of preferring either the credits or subtitle is very important in subtitling. Occasionally, a song may overlap with the dialogue in the middle of the film and in such instances subtitlers always prioritize speech over lyrics. Familiarity of the target audience with the song also plays an important role in subtitling the lyrics. Internationally known songs and songs that are repeatedly heard through different media are not subtitled if the lyrics do not contribute much to the story. Special attention is usually given to cases like those which are not written for the film, those extraneous to the story or part of a fictional scene (a character listening to a song on radio or the dial tone on a mobile phone). A song becomes relevant on various grounds: suggesting a mood, creating an atmosphere, narrative function and so on. According to Cintas and Ramael, in case of doubts with reference to the relevance of the song in the

film or the target audience's familiarity with it, it is always better to subtitle: "it is to say that if directors decide to include a song, this is usually done for a purpose and viewers who do not understand the words cannot estimate their relevance. So, when in doubt: subtitle." (Cintas and Ramael, 2007, p. 208)

Once the subtitler decides to translate a song three major aspects are to be considered: content, rhythm and rhyme. Feelings like love, tenderness and disappointment can be conveyed through a 'free' translation because in most cases rendering the atmospheric quality of the lyrics will be enough in the context and an accurate translation may not be necessary. This is on the assumption that subtitles are only a supporting translation and should not detract the audience beyond a limit from the image and soundtrack.

### **3.9. Subtitling the Special: Humor**

Humor has been one of the 'difficult' terrains in translation, irrespective of the language and nature of humor. Rather than defining humor and elaborating on diverse qualities and different objectives of humor, what is relevant here is to look at it from a translational point of view. The ultimate end of humor is to produce fun causing laughter in human communication. Jeroen Vandaele (1999) explained the phenomenon of humor having dual dimensions: incongruity and superiority. Incongruity is the art of deviating from a generally accepted norm, usually regulating the utterance and expectations in a given context. Superiority amounts to a form of increased happiness related to a heightened self-esteem born out of being able to understand an incongruity or feeling better than others. John Searle proposes tridimensional aspect of humor in terms of speech act theory:

In Austin's view, when a speaker utters a sentence, without necessarily being ironic, this constitutes a locutionary act, as well as an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act. The locutionary act consists of saying something with a propositional content. At the same time the speaker performs an illocutionary act, i.e. in saying something he or she makes an assertion, a promise, a request and so on. By the same token, the speaker performs a perlocutionary act in that he or she causes a certain effect in the hearer. (Searle, 1976, p. 6)

Laughter is one of the perlocutionary effects of humor and this is caused by the 'fun' element which is unstable. Some utterances trigger laughter unintentionally whereas some others fail to do it even if laughter is intended. This leads us to place humor in a wider socio-cultural, linguistic and individual context. In a film, humor never functions in isolation, but always in the dialogue or scene sequence in which it occurs. Humors rarely travel across linguistic, geographic, socio-cultural boundaries and the universality of humor is relative because different cultures or even different directors conceptualize humor in different ways.

In any discourse, subtitling humor also is qualified by insight, creativity and, above all, a matter of establishing priorities. The process involved in the translation of humor is to identify the source of the humor in the source text, recognizing the clues, identifying the paraphernalia linked to particular humor genres and rephrasing the humor in the target language. According to Vandaele:

It is clear [...] that: we may not always be able to grasp the sender's intentions; we may have our own (conscious or unconscious) agenda while grasping intentions; many other contextual elements play a role in

the interpretation process; original contexts may be absent; new contexts may emerge continuously; the humorous function of a text may be combined with other textual functions. This means that a translator of humour has to make decisions. (Vandaele, 2002, pp. 165)

Humor originates from different sources: the interaction between word and image, play on words, structure of the plot, experimental features of the genre or intertextuality. It is therefore very important to identify to what extent humor is part of the film texture. The critical point lies in prioritizing either the direct meaning of a context or its humorous side, striking a balance between the two. Zabalbeascoa (1996) suggested three dimensions to be considered for prioritizing humor in any context: first the vertical scale of importance to measure a particular instance on low, high, medium levels, second a horizontal scale to decide whether it is local global and a third scale of equivalence-non-equivalence to render a faithful translation or to replace it by another instance of humor. Asimakoulas (2001) puts it rather clearly, “when translating comedy, rendering the ST as a humorous text is of high priority in terms of importance (vertically) , a global priority (relevant for the entire text) and an equivalence priority” (p. 54).

Subtitling humor always calls for synchrony with the sound track and visuals on the screen as they should not mismatch with the subtitles. If the subtitle cannot produce humor at the right time as the characters laugh on the screen, for example, the audience may feel that something is missing in the subtitle affecting the entire sense of the programme. Lack of synchrony may also be caused by inaccurate spotting or inaccurate sentence/line break in the subtitle. Despite the vulnerable situation of all these unfavorable elements in the audiovisual material, humor works better in AVT than in literary translation as the visual and auditory parts function as a supporting channel for



humor translation. Though the universality of image and sound is always disputed, the intersemiotic play of various signs helps the subtitler to translate humor in a flexible manner.

Zabalbeascoa (1996) has classified jokes into six types and though his classification is made in view of the dubbed sitcoms on television, they are equally applicable here in subtitling. It covers various translation challenges, varying degree of complexity and the translation strategies required in each case.

### **3.9.1. International or Bi-national Jokes:**

These are humorous concepts or discourses which are known either internationally or between any couple of nations. The humorous part of the referent in the source culture can be retained in the target culture when it is transferred to target culture by way of calque or paraphrase. The central element of humor “does not depend on either language-specific word play or familiarity with unknown specific aspects of the source culture” (Zabalbeascoa 1996, p. 251). Jokes containing internationally known events, personalities, geographical features, historical facts, etc. belong to this category and can be translated literally as they can be rendered verbatim subject to the time-space constraints.

### **3.9.2. Jokes Referring to a National Culture or Institution:**

Jokes focusing on any national culture, dominant institution or other culture-bound reference can be translated by adapting in order to retain the effect. This is usually done by generalizing things using hypernym in cases where a specific item is limited to the realm of source culture. However, the demarcating line between ‘national’, ‘binational’ or ‘international’ is quite subjective and the subtitler has to consider various levels of reception among the target audience.

### **3.9.3. Jokes Referring to a Community's Sense of Humor:**

This type of jokes is typical of a community and different sub-communities within it. The referent of such jokes may have religious overtones, political satire, historical events, etc. all of which work on strength of intertextuality prevailing among various discourses and groups within the community. The humor becomes successful only when the target audience is properly identified and suitable strategies are applied accordingly.

### **3.9.4. Language-Dependent Jokes:**

Word play, pun, homophones, homographs, homonyms, paronyms, etc. fall under this category and Chiaro (2005) termed it 'verbally expressed humor'. The features of natural language in terms of sound and structure are exploited here to effect various meanings in different contexts. Though Substitution and Compensation are strategically used to translate language dependent jokes, it is rarely successful.

According to Delabastita,

The semantic and pragmatic effects of the source text wordplay and their origin in particular structural characteristics of the source language for which more often than not the translator fails to produce a counterpart, such as the existence of certain homophones, near-homophones, polysemic clusters, idioms or grammatical rules. (Delabastita, 1994, p. 223)

### **3.9.5. Visual Jokes:**

Visual jokes primarily rest more on the subtleties of the visuals on the screen than on the linguistic elements used in the context. The humorous end is achieved both in terms of gestures, facial expressions, costumes, background visuals on the one hand, and editing, suspense set-up, other technical feature, on the other.

### **3.9.6. Aural Jokes:**

This includes noises and paralinguistic features of speech like accent and intonation. They speak for themselves and hence needs no translation but rendering them in subtitles is almost impossible.

### **3.9.7. Complex Jokes:**

When two or more types of jokes mentioned above are combined in a particular context to produce humor, it is a complex one. Culture-bound references, images, linguistic elements, etc may happen together to create a complex joke.

Jokes and humorous expressions are abundant in the CSRs which are analyzed in films selected for this study. In most cases, these jokes and humorous expression do paly a significant role in communicating the message of the films. They belong to different categories listed above and a clear understanding of their nature is necessary to discuss them in the forthcoming chapters.

The CSRs belong to different categories based on the references implied in them but the strategies used for subtitling them are limited because of the nature of each language and their linguistic limitations. They cannot be classified into strict categories, rather the demarcating line between each category fluctuates according to the criteria used for the treatment of a culture. The plurality of strategies to render the CSRs denotes multiple possibilities to subtitle a given item. However, the theoretical assumptions made in identifying and categorizing CSRs are to be validated in the actual events of subtitling which has to confront more practical issues. Therefore, the following chapter analyses subtitles of the films selected for the study, identifying each CSR and the theoretical and practical issues involved in subtitling them. The analysis also includes translation strategies used in the given contexts and the issues of prioritizing one strategy upon the other.

## CHAPTER IV

**TRANSLATING CULTURE SPECIFIC REFERENCES:  
SUBTITLING MALAYALAM FILMS IN ENGLISH****4.1. Subtitling in Malayalam Film Industry**

English subtitle for Malayalam films became popular only in the recent decades in the ninety year old history of Malayalam film industry. Of course, there were sporadic instances of subtitling in Arabic and English ever since subtitling technology was applied in film production. For a long time since its origin, Malayalam films were confined to Kerala audience and the idea of subtitling was not entertained much as viewership in a foreign language was rarely expected. At the same time, Malayalam films were immensely dubbed or remade in Tamil, Kannada and Hindi and enjoyed a national circulation. The earliest practice of subtitling in English began when movies were sent for national or international awards and screened in film festivals outside Kerala. Further, the Gulf emigration of the 1970s and 80s popularized Malayalam film in Arabian countries and this necessitated the production of subtitles in English and Arabic to meet the requirements of censorship in Gulf countries. Despite the international export of Malayalam films, their viewership was limited to Keralites migrated across the globe. Subtitles for all these purposes were produced privately by individuals who are either related to the film industry or by some other translators and most of such works suffered from linguistic precision and technical perfection.

It is only in the recent decade that serious attempts were made to produce subtitles in English when digital technology made it possible to create subtitle files in any language independently and insert them in the video. Subtitles in English have become an indispensable part of a film as most films have a global viewership these

days because technology brought them out of movie theatres to private screens. Despite the fact that subtitles for Malayalam films are getting more popular, subtitling in Malayalam film industry faces various issues in terms of producing subtitles and circulating them globally. Unlike other well known film industries, it does not invest adequate time and money for producing quality subtitles. While western films spend adequate time for translation, subtitling and editing well before the release of the film, Malayalam films try to furnish subtitles in a slapdash attempt that too just a few days before the release, sometimes long after the release. The industry does not follow any uniform norms or style guide pertaining to the vocabulary, usages, lyrics of song and specific references to culture, religion, etc. Neither any technical prescription is provided about the number of lines or number of words/characters per line to conform to international standards. The individual subtitler is free to stick to his/her personal style of translation based on linguistic skill, filmic knowledge, world-views and cross cultural understanding. Usually the subtitler is not acknowledged in the credits of the film and this invisibility of translator makes subtitles less authentic and the subtitler less responsible. This unacknowledged practice risks the quality of the subtitles in terms of faithfulness to the original dialogue, grammatical correctness, sentence construction, punctuation because cross checking or review is rarely done by the directors and script writers. There are also instances of poor proof reading and sentence fragmentation as they are produced in a hasty manner and often without due consideration. The subtitles thus produced are directly sent to the director or the editing professionals and added to the video file of the film (Vivek Ranjit, personal communication, March 28, 2018).

But the conditions have been improved recently due to the initiatives taken by professional subtitlers like Mr. Vivek Ranjit, a thriving young professional subtitler based in Kochi who has been in the field for the last six years and has accomplished an

impressive number of subtitles for Malayalam films and Rekhs, a Chennai based subtitler who subtitles Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam films. Mr. Vivek Ranjit subtitled almost all mainstream Malayalam films and made a commendable contribution to the acknowledgement by including his name in the credits of films in 2012 for the first time in the history (Vivek Ranjit, personal communication, March 28, 2018). There are several freelance translators and LSPs (Language Service Provider) working in South India and they provide their services in subtitling Malayalam films.

The two films under study here are *1921* and *Adaminte Makan Abu* whose subtitlers are not acknowledged in the film or in any related publications. The former film was subtitled in Arabic and English and carries the double subtitle in the version published in 1992. The English subtitles were prepared by Saina Video Vision, Chennai, Tamilnadu. The latter one was released with English subtitles in 2011 and it was subtitled by Allen's Media, Kochin, Kerala.

## **4.2. CASE STUDY I: *Adaminte Makan Abu* (2011)**

### **4.2.1. Introduction to the Film**

*Adaminte makan Abu* (Abu, son of Adam) is a 2011 Malayalam feature film written, directed and co-produced by Salim Ahmad. The theme of the film revolves around sanctity of faith and critique of socio-religious systems in the background of the rustic and humble life of a family that lives on brotherhood, communal harmony and a spiritual relationship with the ecosystem. Abu and his wife, an elderly traditional Muslim couple in Malabar region of Kerala lead an impoverished life, totally neglected by their only son who migrated to Gulf. Passing through the late stage of their life with a nominal livelihood, they cherish their life-long ambition of performing Hajj

pilgrimage. To equip themselves financially, they have to sell the jackfruit tree in the courtyard and their cow, a means of their livelihood apart from the scanty savings from his *attar* (perfume) sales for several years. Arrangements are enthusiastically made in terms of acquiring a passport, guidance classes for Hajj and purchasing materials for the travel kit. Meanwhile, Johnson, the timber business man to whom he sold the jackfruit tree informs that the wood was hollow and not worth its price, making Abu utterly upset. He plans to withdraw the deal, but Johnson, being a benevolent Christian insists that Abu should take the money for his noble cause of Hajj. Finally Abu refuses it and runs short of money, but Govindan master, a Hindu well-wisher of Abu offers the balance amount, but being an ardent believer and a faithful devotee, Abu kindly rejects this offer too on the ground that the one cannot go on Hajj with borrowed money. The couple's life-long dream gets shattered and they try to reconcile with it. Reflecting on the reasons of the misfortune he concludes that he cut the jack fruit tree against the will of God Almighty. He plants a fresh sapling of jackfruit at the dawn of Bakrid and determines to fulfill his dream in the following year. The film was received with wide acclaim and serious post-screening debates. It has secured four National Film Awards for best film, best actor, best cinematography and best background score apart from several Kerala State Film Awards.

The film is set in one of the interior villages of Malabar, North-East region of Kerala where people belonging to different religions, caste and political orientation lead a harmonious life. What unites them is the feeling of humanity and precious values like love, kindness, mercy and a sense of belonging to each other. The film is rich in portraying diverse aspects of social life, faith, and complex human relations which are communicated not only through the setting, costume, music and dialogue, but also

through the originality of the source culture ambience pivotal to the film. Subtitles of such a culturally loaded film with its regional variety of language and colloquial expressions require an in-depth analysis. The following is the analysis of the subtitles extracted from the film and classified according to the categories of CSR mentioned in the previous chapter. The categories followed here are not watertight ones; rather they are classifying titles under which references of similar items can be incorporated.

#### 4.2.2. Names of Peoples / Institutions / Designation / Medicine / Religious Practices:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	Subtitle
1	00:06:37 – 00:06:45 യതീംഖാനേലെ കുട്ടികളെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞാ... അവർക്കതിന്റെ അടക്കവും ഒതുക്കവും ഒക്കെ വേണം.	Children of yatheemkana... They must behave in a modest way expected from them.	Children of the ‘yatheemkana’ (orphanage) should know their status.
2	നിസ്കാരം നടക്കുന്ന നേരത്ത് പള്ളി കെടുന്നു. ചെറിയുണ്ടാക്കാതെ പറഞ്ഞാൽ...	How can we tolerate their disturbing when namaz is going on?	They cannot disturb the prayers.

These words of Maliyekkal Hassanar Haji, the rich and popular noble man of the locality, are part of an ongoing discussion on their way back from the mosque after Subhi namaz. It reflects the tussles and gossiping that usually take place between the members of the committee that run the local mosque and students of *Dars*<sup>1</sup> (a seminary for religious studies) or any other religious institutions like an orphanage. Students, very often in their teenage, turn naughty and disturb the mosque’s otherwise calm atmosphere which is strictly maintained by the so called senior citizens of the locality. Being a member of the

<sup>1</sup> *Dars* is a Kerala system of mosque-centred religious education in which the students hailing from different places are taught by a scholar who also serves as the supreme religious authority of the parish. They reside in the central mosque of the locality and are offered food and other perks by the natives.



committee, Hassanar Haji has a say in the discussion on this issue and he even becomes arrogant. His tone and style are suggestive of the asserting nature of his dominating personality. He emphasizes that the inmates of the orphanage should be disciplined enough to keep silence when namaz is going on. The subtitle anticipates the presumed knowledge of Kerala Muslim culture and the monologue of Hassanar Haji is accepted in this cultural backdrop. But, the target audience probably cannot understand the cultural specificity and the social criticism in his comments which is a co-text to the subtitle. The English subtitle ‘should know their status’ fails to communicate the discipline and modesty expected from the children by the local people who provide financial and material support to these children. Being the head of such an institution, his words politically implies the ‘expected’ behavior of a ‘certain’ kind (അവർക്കതിന്റെ അടക്കവും ഒരുക്കവും ഒക്കെ വേണം) and their lower status dictated and determined by the local leaders of the community.

‘Yatheemkana’ translated as ‘orphanage’ in the subtitle is the institution that provides free residential education to Muslim orphans. The word ‘yatheemkana’, though of Arabic origin, is commonly used as a Malayalam word among Muslims and non-Muslims of Kerala. Despite its translation as ‘*anaathaalayam*’, such institutions have acquired a cultural label and hence translating it into ‘orphanage’ would lose its connotative meaning. The strategy of specification in translation is carried out here by juxtaposing both the words in order to retain the cultural and religious flavor of the word. This may be in view of that translation as ‘orphanage’ means only a secular institution and bracketing the word to explain the meaning in the subtitle compensates the intended sense to a great extent, though it affects the readability as the sentence becomes lengthy.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	Subtitle
3	00:07:16 – 00:07:21 ഹസൻമൊയ്ല്യാർക്കു ഈടെ ഖത്തീബായിരുന്നെ കാലത്ത് സൂബ്ഹിക്ക് പത്തുസ്വപ്ഫുണ്ടായിരുന്നു പള്ളിയിൽ.	When Hasan Musliyar was the chief mullah here, <u>there were ten rows in the mosque for Subhi namaz.</u>	When Aslamoideen was <u>head of mullah</u> here... ... <u>the prayer hall was always full.</u>

In subtitle 3, the flow of dialogue and the pace of talk compel the subtitle to be as short as possible and reduce its time of appearance on the screen. This could be the reason the translator resorts to the more condensed form of translation, omitting the dispensable elements that explain the main point of the sentence. The subtitle is reduced to ‘the prayer hall was always full’ eliminating ‘ten rows in the mosque for Subhi namaz’. Though the subtitle communicates the idea that the mosque was crowded for prayer, the attendance of local people for the specific prayer of Subhi is a criterion in religious discourse to assess the piety of people in the entire locality. Again, the attendance for prayer in the mosque is usually counted in terms of *swaffs* (rows) by religious authority and the least number of *swaffs* indicates the deteriorated religious spirit of the people while more *swaffs* indicate a higher level of enthusiasm and piety. This comment underlines the fact that Hasan Musliyar was a popular mullah of the mosque whose words and deeds inspired the common people and hence they were attracted to spirituality and to the five-time prayers because of him. It also implies that people become more faithful and offer prayers not solely out of their piety or submission to God, rather it is the mullah whose inspiring life that works more as an impetus for a faithful life than anything else.

‘Head of mullah’ is the translation of *katheeb* (the chief Musliyar who deliver the Friday sermon). The Arabic loan word *katheeb* is popularly used in Malayalam to refer to the chief Musliyar who is, in most cases, a senior religious scholar and teacher

of *Dars* and one who solemnizes the religious ceremonies and rituals in the locality. Besides, *Katheeb* is also responsible for inculcating religious spirit among the natives and taking scriptural decisions in matters of dispute. This culture-loaded meaning is ultimately lost in the phrase ‘head of mullah’ due to the condensed nature of subtitle and the impossibility of adding a foot note unlike other modes of translation. In the film, Hyder mentions *katheeb*, *usthad* and *mukri*, as discussed in the forthcoming examples, all of which are words used in the religious discourse and in a hierarchical order. *Usthad* is the Arabic word meaning ‘teacher’ but in the film it is used to mean a seer, the supreme spiritual authority of the village, a *sufi* leading a secluded and mysterious life. Next is *Katheeb* and the lowest in the order is *mukri* whose main duty is to call out *adan* in the mosque and assist the *katheeb* in Friday prayer and other ceremonies. The recurrent use of these words by Hyder connotes a spiritual sense, but their specification in the subtitle cannot impart the same sense.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
4	00:07:24 – 00:07:32 പള്ളിയിലെ ഖത്തീബ് അങ്ങാടീലൊരങ്ങി ചെറുപ്പക്കാരുടെ തോളിൽ കയ്യിട്ട് നടക്കാൻ പറഞ്ഞാ...	How come he befriends the youngsters roaming around the street!	It is not right for him to walk around town with his arm over shoulders of youngsters.
5	പിന്നല്ലാ... കോയെർചിം ബിരിയാണിയും പൊറോട്ടീം തിന്നു പള്ളിയിൽ അടയിരിക്കലല്ലേ ഖത്തീബിന്റേ പണി!	Do you mean that he should lead a royal life confining to his room in the mosque?	<u>Neither does he have to be confined to the mosque eating chicken, biryani squatting like a brooding hen.</u>

Hyder makes this humorous remark to criticize the prevailing concept of *akatheeb* who is expected to be confined to his room in the mosque enjoying the rich food provided by the natives. According to Hyder, he should mingle with people as

closely as possible to give them spiritual guidance. Hyder’s tit-for-tat reply to Hasainar Haji’s allegations against the former *katheeb* is humorous, and it is captured in the subtitle providing a direct translation of the items mentioned in the sentence uttered. But the complete sense of the sentence and the critique involved therein cannot be conveyed without understanding its cultural and religious context. This debate between Hyder and Hasainar Haji is again rooted in the cultural domain of Muslims of South Malabar and is indicative of the power relations between the committee members of the mosque and the *katheeb*. Therefore, the visuals and dialogues along with subtitles are not sufficient to explain the exact meaning and the audience is expected to have some sort of background knowledge of the source culture.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Subtitle
6	00:07:36 – 00:07:39 അബ്ബാ...ധാനേന്ത്രം ഗുളികണ്ടോ നിന്റെ കയ്യില്?	Do you have some <u>of those</u> <u>digestive tablets?</u>

In subtitle 6, the tablet wanted by Hasainar Haji is *dhanvantharam gulika*, an Ayurvedic tablet used for gastrointestinal problems. The pronunciation of the word *dhaanenthram* is more of a sociolect than an idiolect and indicates the speaking style of earlier generations of the elderly who mostly take Ayurvedic medicine along with other indigenous ways of medical treatment. An alternative way to convey the sense would be to transliterate it in the subtitle as *dhanvantharam*, but in that case the viewers will have to negotiate to understand a long and totally unfamiliar word. Generalizing this name as ‘Digestive tablets’ is a strategy of explicitation using a hypernym and the name does not specify whether it is an Ayurvedic medicine or other kind. In the scene, what Hasainar Haji needs is not any other tablets for gastrointestinal problems, but *dhanvantharam* itself. When it is replaced with ‘those digestive tablets’ in the subtitle what is lost is not

only the essence of the community's life style but also the representation of their colloquial expression. Retaining the same word would not be effective as the target audience will find the transliteration of the Malayalam word difficult to read in the subtitle.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
7	00:18:14 – 00:18:22 ഞാൻ ഇത് വരെ ഹജ്ജ് കമ്മിറ്റി വഴി ഹജ്ജിനു പോയിട്ടില്ല.	I haven't made it on the government package so far.	I have not gone on Hajj through <u>the committee</u> .
8	നാല് തവണ പോയതും കോഴിക്കോട് അക്ബർ ട്രാവൽസ് മുഖേനയാ.	I made it four times through the agency of Akbar Travels, Kozhikode.	All 4 times I have gone only through <u>Akbar Travels of Kozhikode</u> .

Abu plans to go for Hajj through the Hajj Committee, an exclusive Government body for Hajj service which is economic and hence resorted to by majority of the pilgrims in contrast to the private travel agencies that provide a more comfortable service though at a higher rate. Haji plans to go by Akbar Travels, one of the leading private travel agencies in Calicut, Kerala, with its branches spread across India. Abu's pilgrimage, for which he was preparing for the last 12 years, is to be contrasted with that of Hasainar Haji who plans to set out just a few days before Hajj starts. Therefore, the 'Hajj committee' referred to in the film is synonymous with budget pilgrimage of the common people like Abu and 'Akbar Travels' appears as a metaphor for luxurious pilgrimage which is preferred by wealthy people like Hasainar Haji. The given subtitle (No. 7) does not carry this connotation and presents 'hajj committee' as an ambiguous term to the audience who may not quite be aware of such a government package. The two modes of travel service are presented and contrasted in the film to emphasize the socio-economic disparity among Hajj pilgrims and it is an indispensable part of the subtitle. 'Akbar

Travels', a hyponym for private travel agencies, is retained in the subtitle as a mode of specification, but the concept may not be clear to the audience until the camera is turned, after a few scenes, to the name board of the office written in English. It is difficult for the common viewers to understand the concept from the dialogue only and the visual functions here as a co-text that supplement the subtitle. The name board of the travel agency office appears in English on the screen, but it is not translated into Malayalam because the SL audience is expected to have the primary knowledge of English.

#### 4.2.3. Pun/Word Play/Humor

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	Subtitle
9	00:09:14 – 00:09:25 ഉസ്താദ് മുകളിൽ ഇല്ലാണ്ടായാൽ ഹൈദറിന്റെ കച്ചോടം പൂട്ടേണ്ടി വരോ?	Will you have to close down the business, if <i>usthad</i> does not stay upstairs?	If <i>usthad</i> did not live up there, <u>Will your tea shop close down?</u>
10	എന്റെ കച്ചോടം മാത്രം? ഉസ്താദ് മുകളിൽ ഇല്ലാണ്ടായാൽ ഈ നാടിന്റെ തന്നെ കച്ചോടം പൂട്ടുമേ?	Not only my tea shop, but the whole village will be closed down.	Not only the tea shop, <u>this entire village will wind up business.</u>

Apart from the local people, those who come from faraway places to meet *usthad* are also customers of the tea shop of Hyder. He is an ardent and pious follower of *usthad* whose presence and blessings, according to Hyder, constitute the spiritual backbone of the entire village. When Moideen amusingly asks whether he will have to close down his shop if *usthad* disappears, Hyder plays with words and gives an equivocal reply that it is not only his shop, rather the entire village that will have to wind up business. It simultaneously means that if *usthad* is gone, the tea business of Hyder and the spiritual ambience of the entire village will come to an end. The

Malayalam phrase ‘കളോടൊപ്പം പട്ടുക’ is a pun of antanaclassis, and the phrase means ‘to end an engagement or pursuit’ and ‘to be dead / pauper / inactive / deteriorate’. This duality of meaning cannot be reproduced in English subtitle and it affects the characterization of Hyder whose keen observation, critical comments packed with humor and satire are significant for the development of the plot.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
11	00:47:31 - 00:47:35 <u>ഇങ്ങനെയൊന്നു സഹുറാക്ക്.</u> <u>സഹുറാക്കല്ലെ, ഖദീജാക്ക്.</u>	You please be patient. Not to Safoora, but to Kadeeja.	<u>Calm yourself.</u> (No subtitle)

Abu who was eagerly waiting for his passport reaches the post office well before the office time and turns impatient when he learns that he has to wait for the postman for a long time. The peeved Abu exchanges harsh words with Ayshu and she tries to appease him saying *safooraaakku*, translated as ‘calm yourself’. Again, the word has its roots in Arabic and is a blend of Arabic word *swabr* meaning ‘patience’ and Malayalam word *aakku* meaning ‘be’, together meaning ‘be patient’. This phrase which is commonly used among Malayalam speaking Muslims presents the audience a pun in which the Arabic word *Safoora* denotes a feminine proper noun and its Malayalam suffix *kku* meaning ‘to’ resulting in the verbal humor of the word play *safooraaakku* simultaneously meaning ‘calm yourself’ and ‘to Safoora’. The irritated Abu takes the latter meaning of the phrase, though out of context, and retorts to Ayshu: ‘it is not to Safoora, but to Kadeeja’ (Kadeeja is another feminine proper noun), trying to tease his wife just by mentioning the name of another woman. But Abu’s complex word play on this homonym which is both language specific and culture bound cannot be subtitled as a corresponding lexical – semantic – acoustic combination does not exist in English.

#### 4.2.4. Idiolect/ Stylistic/ Dialectic Variants:

	Malayalam Sound track	English Translation	Subtitle
12	00:43:07 – 00:43:17 മയ്യിൽ സ്വർഗത്തിൽ പോയാലേന്തു നരകത്തിൽ പോയാലേത്... മുക്രിക്കാക്കു പൈസ കിട്ടണം എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞ പോലെയോ...	It is like the clergy who doesn't mind whether the soul goes to heaven or hell... He is only after money.	<u>It doesn't matter whether you go to hell or heaven after you die...</u> <u>...undertaker should get money.</u>
13	പാസ്പോർട്ടിന്റെ എൻക്വയറി വന്നാ പോലീസുകാരന് പൈസ കൊടുക്കാൻ പറയുന്നത് ഹർജ്ജ്.	It has become a must to bribe the police for a passport enquiry.	<u>It is quite normal to bribe the police for a passport enquiry.</u>

Hyder is a keen observer of all social and religious practices and makes his own critical comments at his tea shop against any injustice that prevails in the community. This part of his dialogue with Abu takes place at his tea shop which is a center for all kind of social, political and religious discussions. The given subtitle (No. 12 and 13) at the tea shop scene is insufficient for the audience to comprehend as the context of the comment is not mentioned in the scene. He has his tongue in cheek when he compares the practices of *mukri* and the police officer who is in charge of the local enquiry for issuing a passport. The undertaker mentioned here is the *mukri* who leads the funeral ceremony and is paid an amount of charity by the family of the deceased person after the funeral is over. This practice is common among Muslims, especially among Sunni sect in Kerala and it is a popular joke that *mukri* receives the tip irrespective of the financial condition of the family and the destiny of the soul of the deceased person: hell or heaven. Moreover, *mukri* is also made fun of being economically motivated for performing funeral rituals and other religious practices. It is in the same vein that Hyder makes fun of the police officer who has to be tipped to speed up the verification process for passport. During 1970s and 80s,



when Malayali emigration to Gulf countries for employment was at its peak, acquiring a passport was in high demand as was the official procedure to issue a passport. It is in such a context that tipping or bribing the police officer and even the postman who delivers the passport became a common trend. These religious and official ‘malpractices’ pointed at in the comment are familiar to SC audience whereas the ‘discourse of tips to *mukri* and police’ may seem totally strange for target culture audience. This regional and ethnic connotation that forms the substance of Hyder’s comment is missing in the subtitle and ultimately the element of humor is lost in translation.

*Farlu* translated in the subtitle as ‘normal’ is a popularly used word among Kerala Muslims in their day-to-day life. It is an Arabic loan word meaning ‘obligatory / must’ and connotes the obligatory religious practices like namaz performed five times a day. Hyder’s typical usage of the word satirically assimilates the practice of tipping the *mukri* and the police officer as an ‘obligatory’ custom in the local social circle. Translation of this sociolect as ‘normal’ or even ‘obligatory’ could only suggest the sense of the statement without extending its intention to a wider socio-economic range.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	Subtitle
14	00:08:13 – 00:08:18 എട്യായ്‌ടെന്താ കാര്യം? അബൂക്കൊക്കും ഐസുതാക്കും അയിനെക്കൊണ്ട് ഒരു പൂച്ചേന്റേ ഉപകാരം കൂടില്ല.	It doesn’t matter wherever he is. Abu and Ayshu don’t get the benefit of a cat even.	Wherever after all? <u>There was no benefit</u> for Abu and Isu from their son in their life time.

In the above subtitle Hyder responds to the speaker’s comment about Sathar, the only son of Abu. Hyder always coats his words with humor in his own style and this reply is not an exception. Abu’s friend says that Sathar is married and is now in Dubai. Hyder’s reply is that it doesn’t matter whether he is in Gulf or elsewhere, but he is

supposed to take care of his parents at least. The Malayalam usage ‘they don’t get any benefit from him, even that of a cat’ is typical of Hyder’s humor tinged criticism. This idiomatic expression is untranslatable into English and therefore is totally omitted in the translation. The metaphor of cat used here refers to Sathar who abandoned his parents in their old age and forms the main thread on which story revolves. It reveals the intensity of the deprived life of Abu and Ayshu and underlines the fact that Sathar had never taken care of them. The usage comes from the homely experience of the common people where a cat is considered to be a very docile domestic animal, helping human beings at least eating up whatever is left over. This metaphorical expression is, however, difficult to be reproduced in the subtitle cross culturally and is therefore perhaps not translated.

	<b>Malayalam Sound Track</b>	<b>Subtitle</b>
	00:06:49 –00:07:00	
15	- എടിയായിരുന്നു അബൂ കൊറച്ചോസം? - നാദാപുരം കുറ്റിയാടിലാഗത്തായിരുന്നു.	-Where were you all these days Abu?
16	വരുന്ന വഴിക്കു കല്ലാച്ചിലൊന്നു ഇറങ്ങി. -ഹസൻ മൊയ്ല്യാർക്കാനെ കണ്ടുണ്ടല്ലോ?	-Been to Nadapuram and Kutyadi. On the way stopped at Kallachi. Did you meet Aslamoideen?

The Malayalam spoken in the film is the dialectical variation of Kozhikode – Nadapuram – kutyadi region, the northern side of Kerala. It is slightly different from the standard spoken Malayalam. Located in the interior village of the region, the dialect is again community specific and culturally loaded. This variant of language is one of the linguistic attractions of the film, but it is ultimately lost in the English subtitle. In subtitle 1 and 4, the incapacity of subtitles to carry over the peculiar feature of the spoken variety of the language prevents the viewer from enjoying the dialogues as a whole. Moreover, this dialectic variation is communicated only in the oral expression and cannot be reproduced in subtitles.

In subtitle 15, Abu means that he had been to the nearby areas of Kutyadi and Nadapuram, but the subtitle precisely mentions only the two towns. As a pedlar of *athar* (perfume), he is referred to as *Athar Abu* and his business is centered around small religious gatherings like *nercha* (annual rituals at the holy shrines) and other congregations. One cannot expect Abu to stick to the two towns only as mentioned in the subtitle. It could have been subtitled ‘been to Nadapuram and Kutyadi area’ to make it a more appropriate translation.

#### 4.2.5. Songs / Prayers / Unsubtitled Parts:

The title song of the film creates the cultural ambience for the film and develops the appropriate mood for the plot, but it is not subtitled. The song carries dominant metaphors like ‘*the dove settled on minaret*’ and imparts a sense of sanctity both to the character of the protagonists and the pristine village life. It is a prologue to the film and has a bearing on the interpretation of the meaning of the film. It may be that the subtitling of the song is omitted either because the credits overlap the song or the translator is not given the lyrics for translation and so considered them less important. Though this song is not one of the most essential parts of the film, the lyrics and rhythm compose a beautiful world that touches the emotional string of the spectators’ heart. Many lines of the lyrics become literally meaningful in the later parts of the film and thus contribute to the enjoyment of the film at a deeper level. The unsubtitled song definitely creates a cultural gap between the SC and TC audience.

	Malayalam lyrics	English Translation	Subtitle
17	00:32:47 – 00:37:53 മക്കാ മദീനത്തിൽ എത്തുവാനല്ലാതെ തുള്ളുമി ജന്മത്തിൻ അർത്ഥമെന്തോ?	If one cannot land in Makka and Madeena, What is the meaning of this trivial life?	(No subtitle)

This song is an integral part of the film, but it is left subtitled. The song, in terms of its lyrics, music and visuals, sums up the film story and plays a major role in heightening the mood of an emotional waiting for the long cherished wish for Hajj, in the mind of the heroine and spectators alike. The couple holds the strong principle that apart from being financially qualified, one has to be bestowed with divine blessing from Almighty to reach the holy land and perform Hajj. When Abu is running from pillar to post to meet the financial expenses, Ayshu contributes to the spiritual support through her persistent prayers. She is overwhelmed to see the singers and notice the coincidence of her own prayer and that of the singers in their song: *otthidatte... vidhiyaayidatte* (Good luck... May you be blessed for it). These lines of the song are presented as a supernatural endorsement of their Hajj dream and the close-up of Ayshu's face shows that the dream has come half true. The scene assumes greater significance in the development of the story exclusively through the well composed lyrics relevant in the context and the absence of its translation in the subtitle not only renders it a piece of meaningless visual, but also deprives the audience of the basic effect of the film in terms of emotional appeal.

At the same time, the humming of the police officer who was tipped by Abu for the passport verification enquiry is subtitled (00:44:41 – 00:44:48). In fact, the two lines before Abu tips him and the other two after that portray this minor character's joyful mood reflecting his money-motivated approach. Ironically speaking, these relatively less important couplets are subtitled while other songs which are very relevant in the film are completely omitted in the subtitle. This reflects the subtitler's choice in terms of selection and rejection of the parts that are to be translated and the absence of directions which are to be strictly made by the director or the script writer.

Another unsubtitled part in the film is Ayshu's recitation (00:18:50 – 00:19:21) of *Muhyidheen Maala* (ode to Sheik Muhyidheen Abdul Kadir Al- Jeelani) which is one of her routine religious practices. *Muhyidheen Mala* is a sacred text for the orthodox Sunni sect in Kerala and is recited regularly at home as a religious practice and as a ritual in spiritual congregations. It is a highly venerated text among Sunnis and is believed to cure serious diseases, make women's delivery easy and to fulfill one's strong wishes, if recited with devotion. It is evident in the film that Ayshu and Abu belong to the traditional Sunni sect and reciting *mala* is a vital means of spiritual support in erasing the miseries of their life and in fulfilling their dream of Hajj. The scene in which she recites shows the interior room of her small house, in the dim light, contributing to the sacred ambience and slowly shifts to Abu looking at the photograph of Sathar, their only one but lost son. These emotionally packed scenes underline the couple's strong devotion to *maala* and are therefore an indispensable part in the translation. The recitation becomes insignificant without subtitles and an essential element in the film is ultimately lost. As *mala* is an Arabi-malayalam text, a faithful subtitling of all the lines in the limited time may be a technical challenge. Still, it could have been compensated with a short description, for example 'reciting *Muhyidheen Maala*' just like reading of Ramayana at Govindan Master's house which is subtitled 'Hindu chant' (01:05:26 – 01:05:43). Complete omission of subtitles in such crucial parts of the film creates major gaps in terms of its cultural transfer. If the English subtitles, usually taken as the template for translation into other languages, are missing, they will not be translated to any other language further and, in the course of several interlingual translations, will eventually disappear from the film. The consequence will be a translation of the film devoid of all culture specific references.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English subtitle
18	00: 05:54 – 00:06:00 കാത്തോളുണേ റുബു... പാപങ്ങളെല്ലാം പൊരുത്തപ്പെടണേ...	Oh Lord, save me... Forgive me all my sins...	(No subtitle)
19	00: 39:49 – 00: 39: 52 പടച്ച റബുൽ ആലമീനായ തമ്പുരാണേ... കാത്തോളുണേ റുബു...	Oh Lord Almighty of this universe... Save him...	(No subtitle)

The visual of Ayshu's prayer in her typical Kerala Muslim prayer dress clearly communicates namaz and the subtitle 'prayer' appears on the screen. Though namaz is one among many other practices of prayers it is to be distinguished from other types of prayers. What Ayshu does immediately after namaz is 'seeking to God' which is a secondary prayer said after namaz and it is more personal and intimate plea to God. Abu and Ayshu being pious Muslim couple leading a simple and stainless life, as we understand from the film, this prayer embodies the essence of their personal life and the spiritual energy to go ahead in their lonely life. The words used in the prayer of the aged woman contribute to her characterization of the heroine and clearly locates her in the family life. Though the English translation described as 'prayer' appears in just one subtitle and is retained for namaz and the prayer afterwards, the target audience cannot grasp the actual words said in the prayer that reflects her intimacy with God and deep religious conviction. The film presents this prayer as the mantra of the couple's life and hence the nuances of prayer should have been subtitled. As it is understood from the forthcoming scenes, this humble prayer of Ayshu and innocent life of Abu are what make them heroes and heroines in their life and film. The complete omission of this translation and subtitling, however, is not due to any technical constraints of time and space. The last one in the above table also is a prayer of Ayshu for Abu when he goes to

the police station for passport verification. Upset with the description of Ayshu about police enquiry, Abu adventurously sets out to seek the help of his friend Shridharan Master to follow it up. The prayer shows the mutual care and the spiritual support the couple maintains throughout their life. The subtitle has skipped these prayers in the subtitle, but they are significant in communicating the character of the heroine and such omission denies the target culture audience an opportunity to empathize with the couple and identify themselves with Abu and Ayshu in the local ambience of the rustic language.

### **4.3. CASE STUDY II: *1921***

#### **4.3.1. Introduction to the Film:**

The film *1921*, based on a historical revolt of pre-independent India, is a drama film released in 1988. Directed by I.V. Sasi and produced by Muhammad Mannil, the film is scripted by T. Damodaran and is considered one of the classic films in Malayalam. The film recounts the saga of the popular Malabar Rebellion, the anticolonial struggle that took place in south central part of Malabar in Kerala as part of the nation-wide protest against the British rule in India. The film historically presents the anti-colonial struggle led by the massive participation of the dominant communities of Mappilas (Muslims in Maabar) and Hindus in the backdrop of social inequalities and communal harmony. Set in the rural areas of interior Malabar, the film screens the ethos of a community in terms of its familial, social, religious, political and cultural particularities and articulations that carry a number of references specific to the given region and culture, forming the thread of the film story. The variety of Malayalam spoken by the individual characters differs in various respects and one who is alien to that specific cultural, social and historical background will find it difficult to make sense of the film. Moreover, the film is rich in

terms of references to personal and geographical names, family systems, social customs, native festivals, religious practices, caste divisions, warfare, linguistic variety of dialectic and idiolect, humor and fun. When it comes to the English subtitles, it is again a question of translating these Culture Specific References to the target language audience which holds a very different cultural and social experience. The following is the analysis of the instances selected from the film.

#### 4.3.2. Names of People / Places / Events / Social or Family Systems / Others:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
1	Part 1 00:11:56 – 00:12:06 ഇങ്ങനെ ചാണകത്തിലെ പുഴുനെ പോലെ കഴിയുന്നതിലും ഭേദം... ഉണ്ണിമൂസ മുപ്പനും അത്തൻ ഗുരുക്കളും ഹൈദ്രോസും ചെമ്പൻ പോക്കരും കാണിച്ചു തന്ന വഴിയില്ലേ...	Why should we lead a humiliated life?  We have to follow our great leaders like Unnimoosa, Athan Gurukkal, Hydros and Chemban Pokkar.	Why die like worms?  Rather we follow the principles of <u>warriors</u> .

The names mentioned in the SL are Haji's role models who fought against the British colonial rule. These warriors are historical figures who participated in the uprising of 1921 and died martyrs and the names Unni Moosa, Athan Gurukkal, Haidrose and Chemban Pokker are heroic names, but they are found omitted in the subtitles. The omission could be on two grounds: assuming that they are strange names to the TL and may not be easily readable and digestible to the TL audience or the sentence will become longer when they are included in the subtitle. Retention of these names gives rise to questions of their historical role in the film story and the need to highlight them in the film. These names, however, are important in the SL as they are freedom fighters recorded in the local history, but appear to be irrelevant in the TL as they do not add anything substantially to understand the film story at primary level. But, here they are



abridged to the common name ‘warriors’ which does not reveal any identity of the martyrs. While the omitted names represent their community, gender and familial or trade lineage, the replaced common name does not suggest the same.

	Malayalam Sound track	English Translation	English Subtitle
	Part 1 00:13:03 – 00:13:08		
2	നിലമ്പൂർ കോവിലകത്തെ കാര്യസ്ഥന്മാരിൽ മാപ്പിളമാരെ മുഴുവൻ മാറ്റാണത്രെ.	They are going to substitute all Muslim servants at Nilambur house.	At Nilambur <u>family</u> Muslim servants are removed.

‘Family’ in the subtitle is a scanty translation of *kovilakam* which is an important cultural reference in the film. *Kovilakam* refers to a beautiful palacious manor that belongs to princely lineages and traditionally is the ancestral house of the Nayers, the elite feudal families in Kerala. It stands for the traditional family system of the Brahmins, the dominant caste among Hindus and suggests the hierarchical order of power structure prevailed both in the family and society. The unique architectural build of the house with its rich wood work and extensive mural paintings, with highly privileged family customs and traditional life style, is the institutional symbol of savarna Hindus. In the film it is repeatedly shown as the center of power and headquarters of discussions and orders pertaining to the anticolonial protest and above all a house where the servants mingle freely without being concerned about their caste and creed. When the *kovilakam* appears on the screen, it visually communicates its meaning in a sense, but the same cannot be communicated to the target audience through the word ‘family’. Describing the term in the subtitle is challenging because even the minimal description may make the subtitle longer and messy. It can neither be retained in the subtitle as the Malayalam word would appear strange and difficult to read in the context. However, the visual of a

*kovilakamis* expected to create the sense of a huge house of ancestral family, though in some cases it is only a remote possibility for the target audience to combine the meaning of ‘family’ in the subtitle and the visual of *kovilakam*. The untranslatability of the term urges the translator to skip the reference which in effect disappears from the film.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
3	Part 1 00:26:27 – 00:26:29 മോനെ കോലോത്തെ പണിക്ക് അയക്കാനാണോ ബീരാൻറെ പൂതി?	And do you want to send your son to serve at <i>Kovilakam</i> ?	And you want to send him to <u>serve the lords</u> ?

*Koloth* is the shortened version of *kovilakathe* as seen in the previous subtitle. *kovilakam* in the previous subtitle is translated as ‘family’, but in the subtitle it is translated as ‘lords’. This is an instance of Situational Substitution in which *kovilakam*, the house, is substituted by the people who inhabit there. The substitution successfully fits the context semantically as the phrase ‘serve the lords’ conveys the sense of working under the elite class. Compared with the previous one, this subtitle makes the meaning much more clear and easily accessible to the target audience because the referent in *kovilakam* is fairly translated into ‘serve the lords’ which is the point emphasized in the dialogue. Unlike the preceding subtitle, the Situational Substitution is successful here.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
4	Part 1 00:13:10 – 00:13:12 കുട്ടിരാമൻ ഉള്ള സ്ഥിതിക്ക് നമ്മുടെ ബീരാനെ...	Why can’t we substitute Beeran with Kuttiraman?	We have <u>Kuttiraman</u> to replace <u>Beeran</u> .

Kuttiraman and Beeran are two personal names and they represent two religious communities of Hindu and Muslim respectively. Kuttiraman is a Hindu name and Beeran

is the colloquial version of the Muslim name Ibrahim. The social connotations of these names are obvious to SC audience, but for the target audience they may appear strange as they are just two names. The meaning of this subtitle is completed only when combined with the preceding one, but anticipating the target audience's memory of the previous subtitle would risk the communication of its meaning. The challenge here is to distinguish between the two names in terms of their religion because the central point of the dialogue is the suggestion to replace Muslim servants with Hindu ones. This comment is very crucial in the film as it helps the audience to understand the leading characters and to give glimpses about the spark of Hindu-Muslim conflict, a sub plot of the film. Therefore it is necessary to communicate the identity of each name with sufficient explanation. Retaining the two names does not make any sense of their identity and also the explication of any kind would make the sentence longer. One of the possible ways to resolve this issue is to replace the names with their respective community hypernyms: 'Muslim' for Beeran and 'Hindus' for Kuttiraman, but it can be done only at the cost of introducing the two personal names which appear several times in the forthcoming part of the film.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
5	Part 1 00:14:21 – 00:14:25 അറിയില്ലേ? തൊട്ടു നെറുകയിൽ വെച്ചിട്ടു വേണം എണീക്കാൻ. ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ സരസ്വതി നിന്ദയാകും.	Don't you know how to end the session formally? The Muse may get insulted.	Don't you know how to <u>give reverence?</u> Or else <u>Saraswathi</u> will be humiliated.

When Radha comes home, Ammu stops playing *veena* (musical instrument) abruptly and her grandmother notices this irreverent act. She warns that this kind of

negligence in concluding the musical session may invite the wrath of *Sarswathi* (the Hindu Goddess of music, arts and wisdom). The grandmother also describes the ritualistic gestures of concluding the musical session: to pay homage by touching the instrument and her forehead. This part is generalized in the translation and is transferred to 'reverence' to make the sentence fit into the space and time. This generalization strategy is supported by the visual in which she corrects herself and follows the instruction of the grandmother. But in the visual, she appears in the background as the main characters enter and hence may escape the sight of the TL viewer. The reference here, however, focuses Indian tradition of music and its rituals and it is partially communicated through the visuals. In the second part of the subtitle, *saraswathi* is retained as a proper name, but it fails to indicate the sense of reference to a goddess to the target audience, despite sufficient audio and visual support. *Saraswathi* is commonly used both as the name of goddess and feminine personal name and so it is difficult for the target audience to identify its intended meaning in the context as they will be confused between the two. Though this part does not contribute much to the main story of the film, it is relevant for the target audience to understand it in order to enhance the cultural knowledge of the source language. The name could be explained through the strategy of explicating it using a hyponym like 'Goddess of music' or simply 'Goddess'. This problem can also be solved either by a Cultural Substitution of the word i.e., Muse which is the western counterpart of *saraswathi* or by the use of a common name which will be an easier way to render it in the subtitle and provide clarity to the target audience. The usage of 'humiliated' in the subtitle seems to be inappropriate in the context and 'disrespect' or 'irreverence' would have been more appropriate.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
6	Part 1 00:28:16 – 00:28:18 അമ്മക്ക് സംസാരിക്കാൻ പുതിയ സംബന്ധക്കാരൻ ഇല്ലേ?	Mother has got a new affair, right?	For mother, she has <u>new relation</u> .

The ‘new relation’ mentioned in the subtitle is the translation of *sammandham* which refers to a marital system prevailed among the Nairs and Ambalavasis of Hindu community in Kerala. This marriage system was more contractual between the bride and groom and could be dissolved at will by either party. A woman can get into *sambandam* with a man of her same caste or of superior caste. Under this matrilineal system, woman had property rights and children inherited from their mother, not their father. This cultural reference, rooted in the social system of Kerala, is translated into a superordinate term ‘relationship’ which means any kind of man-woman relation. The Generalization strategy effected through the superordinate term used here deprives the CSR of all its social, religious and caste implications. Explaining the term in the subtitle would make it longer and difficult to read and the subtitler has to resort to Generalization as no direct translation, explicitation or substitution is possible in the context. Consequently, this source culture CSR disappears from the subtitle and that particular concept remains totally unfamiliar to the target audience.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
7	Part 1 00:38:48 – 00:39:00 - എന്താടി നിന്റെ പേര്? - ലക്ഷ്മി. - അടിയാത്തി പെണ്ണ് ലക്ഷ്മിയോ? മുട്ടി, മാക്രി, ചീകണ്ണി എന്തെങ്കിലും പേര് മതി.	-What is your name? - Lakshmi. - A slave girl is named Lakshmi? Let her be called any filthy name.	-What is your name? - Lakshmi. -Slave woman & Lakshmi. <u>Name her like low caste.</u>

This dialogue is part of a seminal conversation between the lord of upper class Hindus and slaves and reveals the inhuman attitude of the former towards the servants. The girl servant who belongs to the lower caste is named Lakshmi, but it is strongly objected by the wife of Appunni Nayar and his family. According to them, the lower caste girl should not be named Lakshmi which is reserved for the upper class Hindus, rather she is destined to be called any feeble name dictated by the landlords, like *mutti*, *makri* & *cheenkanni* all of which are filthy names associated with animals and other non-human beings. These names carry the weight of the humility they suffer and the insistence to take such name reveals the outright denial of their dignity. The nomenclature also suggests the upper class's unwillingness to treat them even as human beings. The intensity of this feeling is in the names arrogantly suggested for her and it is vital in terms of the verbal expressions used to dehumanize the lower class servants. Therefore, it is essential to include these names in the subtitle in order to retain the same effect produced in the source language. They cannot be literally translated, but corresponding expressions in English to denote inferior status could have been used. The translation into the generalized term 'low caste names' does not make the intended sense especially when the target audience is not aware of caste specific names and their implication.

	<b>Malayalam Sound Track</b>	<b>English Translation</b>	<b>English Subtitle</b>
8	Part 2 00:02:58 – 00:03:04 - എന്താ ആനയുടെ പേര്? - <u>ബലരാമൻ.</u> - മാറ്റി കോയക്കുട്ടി എന്നാക്കണം. - എന്തിനാ? <u>മാർഗ്ഗം കൂട്ടണോ?</u>	- What is the elephant's name? - Balaraman. - Change it to Koyakkutty - Why? <u>You want to convert it into Muslim?</u>	-What is his name? - <u>Balaraman.</u> -Change it to <u>Koyakkutti.</u> (No subtitle)

In this amusing scene, the speaker suggests that an elephant too can be converted to Islam by changing its name from Balaraman to Koyakkutty. This funny dialogue makes sense only against the background knowledge of the audience's awareness about reports of forcible religious conversion taking place during the rebellion. The humorous element is lost in the translation of the dialogue and does not produce the humorous effect to the TL audience for two reasons. Firstly, the use of personal pronoun 'his' in the subtitle 'what is his name?' does not necessarily refer to the elephant despite its presence in the background of the visual, because the speaker does not gesture at the elephant. Secondly, the two proper nouns Balaraman and Koyakkutty are obviously the names used by two different communities in SL: Balaraman by the Hindus and Koyakkutty by the Muslims which forms the core of the verbal humor here. There is no room in the subtitle to specify the details of these names and hence they are absorbed in the TL devoid of their religious or community connotation. The last part of the dialogue 'Why? You want to convert it into Muslim?' is completely omitted from the subtitle. Though the omission does not directly impinge upon the humor, its retention would have helped the audience to understand the dialogue completely because *marggaam koottal* is a colloquial expression meaning conversion to Islam. In short, without referring to the communal identity of the names the scene cannot be rendered humorous in the target culture and the humor will be complete only when one understands that the elephant too is converted forcibly.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
9	Part 2 00:11:34 – 00:11:48 - കണ്ടൻ കുട്ടി! - അല്ല. എന്റെ പേര് ഇപ്പോ മുഹമ്മദ് എന്നാ. മുടി കളഞ്ഞപ്പോ ഇനി തല നീർത്തി നടക്കാം. കോലോത്തെ തൊഴുത്തിലെ കന്നുകാലിന്റെ ചേലക്കല്ല, മനുഷ്യനായിട്ട്.	- Kandan Kuttee! - No, now I am Muhammad. <u>After conversion</u> , I can walk like a man, not like cattle in your house.	- Kandan kuttee! - No, now I am Muhammad. <u>After shaving off</u> <u>my head</u> , I can now walk like a man.

In this instance also ‘shaving head’ plays a significant role in communicating the sense of ‘religious conversion’. As discussed above, Kandan Kutty’s dialogue means that he is free now as he has converted to Islam. But as long as the TL audience do not identify the practice of shaving head with religious conversion, the subtitle will appear meaningless though the visual shows Kandan Kutty with his shaven head. The idea here can be properly communicated with the phrase ‘after conversion’ which produces direct meaning irrespective of the visual. The subtitle omits an important part in which he declares his freedom to ‘walk like a man, not like cattle in your house’. These dialogues are remarkable in the film and need proper translation as his words stand testimony to the social privilege that he enjoys after conversion and the inhuman treatment he suffered so far. It is a good pointer to the suppressed life of the tenants under the landlords and upper class community and it is against this background that the film develops. While subtitling a film that historically portrays the social and cultural aspects of a community, the subtitler has to be vigilant in representing the social and cultural customs more legibly. But the following subtitle overcomes a similar problem successfully:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
10	Part 2 00:12:02 – 00:12:06 പേടിക്കണ്ട. ഞാൻ നിന്റെ കാതു കുത്തി ചിറ്റ് ഇടിക്കും. തലയിൽ തട്ടം ഇടിക്കും.	Don't worry, I will <u>pierce your ears and scarf your head.</u>	Don't worry, I <u>will make you a Muslim.</u>

The concept of conversion is explained in a more effective manner here. According to the social practice in Kerala, while men got their head shaven, women were made to wear a scarf to mark their conversion to Islam. Kandankutty invites his wife Lakshmi to convert, but does not directly use the word ‘conversion’. Instead, he



says ‘I will pierce your ears and scarf your head’ implying the rituals to mark the conversion. The subtitle has creatively skipped the ritual of piercing ear or scarfing head, and simply and more fruitfully translated ‘I will make you a Muslim’. The strategy of creative addition used here makes the translation more transparent and easier for the target audience to understand the concept. This is highly effective translation in that it does not anticipate the TC to be familiar with the customs of SC, like ear-piercing and scarfing as ritual of conversion to Islam.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
11	Part 2 00:53:42 – 00:53:48 എനിക്ക് ഒരു കാച്ചിയും തട്ടവും തരുമോ?	<u>Give me a scarf and dhoti.</u>	<u>Give me a life.</u>

Here the translation is carried out excellently through Transposition of the nouns mentioned. Ammu wants to convert to Islam to save her own life after being accused of adultery and banished from her family. She asks for a scarf and *kaachi* (dhoti worn by Muslim women) which signifies her religious conversion just like shaving one’s head and circumcision signify a man’s conversion, as mentioned in the previous examples. Her request for ‘scarf’ and ‘*kaachi*’ is replaced by the request for ‘life’ which itself is the ultimate intention of her conversion. Probably, even substitution like ‘Make me a Muslim’ or ‘Can I join your community?’ does not express the intensity of her emotion and the turbulent social condition as poetically as in ‘Give me a life’. The phrase ‘give me a life’ also connotes the conjugal life she aspires for since she is both deprived of her own family and social dignity. Here the subtitle transcends all the linguistic limitations inherent in the cultural reference and renders the dialogue universal. This translation is one of the most notable instances of creative addition and very successful one in communicating the essence of the dialogue.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
12	Part 2 00:49:58 – 00:50:02 കന്യാ ദാനമല്ലാതെ മാസക്കുളി തെറ്റിയ ഒരു പെണ്ണിനെ ഞാൻ സ്വീകരിക്കുമെന്ന് നി കരുതിയോ?	Do you think that I accept a <u>girl with her delayed</u> <u>period</u> ?	Do you think that I can accept <u>you</u> ?

Thulasi returns home after she spent a few days after escaping from the *khilafath* military, but her husband refuses to accept her on the ground that Muslims who are considered inferior gave her refuge. Unni bursts out asking her how he can accept a woman whose menstrual period is delayed. Her family members undoubtedly believe that she has been sexually assaulted by the Muslim men when she stayed with them and even suspect that she might be pregnant. When the source language dialogue explains the reason for out casting the girl, the subtitle appears very vague and does not hint at her pregnancy or period, rather makes it ambiguous as it does not refer to that reason. The context needs an explanation for the outcast because it reveals not only the declaration of the prejudiced approach of the family towards an innocent girl but also the menace of untouchability operating between Hindus and Muslims, as it is learned from the previous dialogues. The given subtitle does not refer to any of these issues and hence falls short of the cultural implications of the conversation. It is kept very short to comply with the time – space norms. The omitted phrase ‘delayed period’ certainly calls for retention as it is the punching point of the accusation because Unni strongly believes that she has been sexually assaulted by those men who gave her refuge.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
13	Part 2 00:50:51 – 00:51:00 ആസാം - ബർമ അതിർത്തിയിലെ കാട്ടു ജാതിക്കാരുണ്ട് ചിൻ ക ചിൻ. ഓലെ ചേർത്തൊരു ബറ്റാലിയൻ ഉണ്ട്. ആനയെ ചുട്ടു തിന്നുന്ന ജാതിയാണ്. തോക്കും പീരങ്കിയും ഒന്നുമല്ല. വളഞ്ഞ ഒരു തരം കത്തിയുണ്ട് 'കുക്രി'. അതാണ് അയിറ്റങ്ങളെ ആയുധം.	They have formed a battalion of the tribal called <i>chin ka chin</i> on Assam- Burma border. They eat even elephant's meat. Their weapons are not guns or missile, but the special knife kukri.	(No subtitle)       They have got <u>knives</u> .

The untranslated part of the dialogue is a comment about the strength of the British military force and it speaks about the participation of the aboriginal people in the rebellion, favoring the colonial power. The name *chinkachin* refers to the tribal community living on the Indian borderline of Assam and Burma, and mentioning its name here reflects the tactics employed by the British to fight the colonized. Though the target audience is not familiar with this, the complete omission of the dialogue is done at the cost of reflecting the rich cultural variety of India and the process of forceful colonization at large in the film.

The description of a weapon in Malayalam specifically brings the image of a particular knife with its local name '*kukri*'. It refers to a particular kind of Nepalese knife with an inwardly curved blade. But the subtitle has generalized it simply as 'knives'. The shape and size of the knife reflects the indigenous design of the weapon and their particular use. The name '*kukri*' could have been retained in the subtitle because this word of Nepali origin is now popularly used as an English word. Names of such arms are worth mentioning in a film which represents the struggle between the colonial power who use imported weapons and the natives who use only their

indigenously designed weapons. The name ‘*kukri*’ stands for the local and improvised methods of resistance and so it could be better retained in the context as an explication of the knives: ‘They have special knives ‘*kukri*’.

### 4.3.3. Idiomatic / Proverbial Expressions:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
14	Part 1 00:10:03 – 00:10:06 അള മുട്ടിയാൽ ചേരയും കടിക്കും.	One may retaliate if he is at the end of the tether.	<u>If the hole is lost</u> <u>the snake also bites.</u>

This is a comment of Aali Musliyar in reply to the police officer who urges the crowd to maintain law when they are agitated by the military occupation. His words are a strong declaration to highlight the anticolonial struggle looming large in Malabar. It is expressed in the idiom popularly used in Malayalam to refer to a person’s tendency to retaliate when one is extremely impatient. The subtitle is the literal translation of the idiom which does not convey the meaning when Aali Musliyar sarcastically replies to the police officer with a strong conviction. An idiom cannot be translated literally, especially in a film, because it is connected to the cultural ethos of a society and it contributes to the portrayal of a character. The scene of this local expression could not be reproduced completely in the literal translation and the punch of the expression is ultimately lost. The idiomatic expression could have been better translated so as to render the essence of this emotionally charged comment in the best possible manner.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
15	Part 1 00:33:18 –00:33:23 അൻറെ ബാപ്പ പറഞ്ഞതാ, മോളെ ലവക്കുട്ടിക്കെ കൊടുക്കുള്ളൂ എന്ന്.  <u>അതിൻറെപ്പേ നമ്മളൊരു അബൂ</u> <u>സയ്യാദ് ആവാൻ പാടില്ല.</u>	Your father has promised to marry you to Lvakkutty.  Let me not be a spoil sport in the game.	Your father has got another man for you.  (No subtitle)

The love that sprouts between Khader and Rasiya is one of the subplots of the film. Khader out rightly turns down the proposal of Rasiya as her father has already found a suitable groom for her. He says that her father had promised Lavakkutty to give her in marriage and he does not want to be an *Abu Sayyad* (an intruder / spoilsport) in the affair. The usage comes from the Arabic name of Abu Sayyad who is a historical figure who played a spoil sport in Arabian stories. This idiomatic expression is typical of Malabar Muslims who are familiar with Islamic history and are rich in Arabic vocabulary using it in their day-to-day communication. Translation of this expression would have added much to the characterization of the hero in addition to the literary taste and a demonstration of the everyday vocabulary used the community.

#### 4.3.4. Partially Translated / Untranslated / Omitted Items:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
16	Part 1 00:11:49 – 00:11:51 <u>പത്ത കൊല്ലായിട്ടു നമ്മൾ</u> <u>എരിഞ്ഞുടങ്ങി.</u>	I have been <u>burning</u> for the last 10 years.	(No subtitle)

Kunjahammad Haji confesses to Aali Musliyar that he had been living with a burning mind for the last ten years because his father was exiled to Andaman under the colonial rule. He is waiting to avenge the British who troubled him and his father and he

could not do it as Aali Musliyar prevented him. The figure 10 years is historically relevant in the film as it shows the time lapsed after the exile of his father. This needs to be subtitled because it throws some light on the character of Haji at the very beginning part of the film and prepares the audience for the outbreak of the long sustained retaliation. The expression *erinjadanguka* (burning) also requires a corresponding translation because it strongly expresses his emotion and therefore is the punch of the dialogue. The omission of this minor part of the dialogue does not affect the main story, but it contributes much in characterizing Haji as valiant fighter and obedient disciple of Aali Musliyar.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
17	Part 1 00:12:28 – 00:12:36 നമ്മളെ ഓർത്തു ചൊല്ലിച്ചതും സർഹും നഹ്വും പഠിപ്പിച്ചതും ഇങ്ങനെയാണ്. ഇനിയും ഓരീ തന്നാ നമ്മൾ കേൾക്കും. കളക്ടർ സാഹിബ് തോമസിന്റെ കൽപനയല്ല.	You taught me Quran and Arabic Grammar and I am ready to follow your words to any extent. But not that of Collector Thomas.	<u>I am ready to</u> <u>listen to your</u> <u>teaching.</u> Not of that collector Thomas.

The conversation between Variyamkunnath Kunjahammad Haji and Ali Musliyar is a powerful dialogue which reveals the strong protest against the principles of non- violence propagated by Gandhi and other national leaders who stood at the forefront in the freedom fight. Being an obedient disciple of Ali Musliyar, Kunjahammad Haji mentions how he is humbly ready to follow the words of Aali Musliyar who taught him reading Qur'an and Arabic grammar (*sarf* and *nahvu*) which was believed to be the sacred and the most beneficial kind of education for a Muslim. He declares that he is ever ready to obey the commands of Aali Muslaiyar and adds that

he will never obey the British Collector Thomas. His words emphasize the need for religious education provided by Aali Musliyar and diminish the relevance of secular education that helps one understand the political condition of the country and the principles propagated by other national leaders for a secular movement against the colonial power. This is underlined by the Arabic words he used, like *swarf* and *nahvu* (Arabic syntax and morphology) which are fundamental to understand Qur'an and other religious scriptures in Arabic. The dialogue informs the audience about the traditional Islamic education prevailed at the historical time which was limited to learning Arabic language and fundamentals of Islamic theology. Therefore, it is significant to translate such references in order to bring the historicity of the film to the foreground. The subtitle does not mention what Aali musliyar taught him, rather it only emphasizes Hajis refusal to obey the collector. The omission of these phrases, either due to the length of the sentence or the impossibility of their retention as Arabic terms, is significant in that it tells upon the characterization of Haji and deletes the linguistic expressions that are pertinent to represent the community's world view.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
18	Part 1 00:15:23 – 00:15:30 <u>നാനാ ജാതിക്കാരെ തീണ്ടിയും</u> <u>തൊട്ടും മീറ്റിങ്ങും</u> പ്രസംഗവുമായിട്ടു നടക്കുന്ന അവളെ തറവാട്ടിൽ കേറ്റാൻ പറ്റില്ലെന്ന് ഞാൻ വാദിക്കും.	She is after meetings and speeches, <u>mingling</u> <u>with all castes and</u> <u>classes of people.</u> I will argue that she should not be permitted to enter this house.	<u>She is after meetings</u> <u>and speeches.</u> I will argue in the court not to let her in the house.

This is Appunni Nayar's comment on Radha who is ousted from the ancestral family and accused of supporting the freedom fighters and mingling with people of all castes and classes, especially the lower class Hindus and Muslims, ignoring the concept

of untouchability that prevailed among the upper class Hindu. The social evil of untouchability of that period is significant in social system of Kerala and played a remarkable role in decentering the massive drive for the freedom fight. The subtitle includes her expulsion from the family house but does not mention the case of ‘untouchability’ which is its root cause. The subtitle could have been more descriptive in bringing out the social background and giving a true picture of the public spaces of the society at that era. This omission of a term referring to historically relevant social evil affects the characterization of Radha, one of the leading characters of the film and this cannot be justified by time-space constraints.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
19	Part 1 00:25:53 – 00:26:12 പടച്ചോനോട് പരി ഇനി ഈ ഭൂമിയാവിൽ മാപ്പിളായിട്ടു ഒരുത്തനേം ജനിപ്പിക്കരുതെന്ന്. ഉള്ള ഭൂമിമുയുവൻ നമ്പൂരിശ്ശമാരെ കൈയിൽ ബ്രഹ്മസം, അല്ലെങ്കിൽ അമ്പലത്തിന്റെ പേരിൽ ദേവസ്വം, ബാക്കി തംബ്രാക്കമാരെ ചെരിക്കിലും. അവിടെ നായ്ക്കളെ ചെലിൽ പണിയെടുക്കാനാ മാപ്പിളന്റെ വിധി. എന്നാലും പാട്ടം കൊടുക്കാൻ തികയൂല. കടം ബാക്കി, പട്ടിണി.	Tell God that no one be born here as a Muslim All the land belongs to the upper class, the temple or the landlords. A Muslim is destined to work for them like a dog. Still, we can't pay off the lease. What is left is only debt and poverty.	<u>Tell God.</u>  <u>The land belongs to the            temple we have only            the debts and poverty            left.</u>

The first of the subtitles given above is the abridged form of the original dialogue and a major part of the dialogue is edited out. This piece of dialogue is very substantial in the film as the hero speaks quite pessimistically and emotionally about the social and economic condition of his community. Khadar is moved by the pathetic condition of slavery suffered by the lower caste servants, including Muslims, working



under their landlords and though he is an ardent believer, he is desperate about the social and economic condition. He is pulled by the faithful nationalistic spirit on the one side and the unpleasant social reality of their life on the other. His words carry the intensity of his emotions and are essential to be reproduced in the translation. But it is cut short and is limited just to three words. This may be justified by the reason of the paucity of the dialogue. The second subtitle also expresses the pathetic condition of Mappila (Muslim) tenants who are destined to work like slaves in the mansions of the landlords. The CSRs like *devaswam* (the land that belongs to temple), *Brahmaswam* (the land that belongs to Hindu upper caste), *paattam* (agricultural lease) deserve special mention in the subtitle, but they cannot be explained either by Retention or using any other strategy. The CSR *Devaswam* only is translated in the subtitle. Such references contribute to the understanding of the socio-economic condition of Malabar people that functions as an elementary segment of the historical background of the revolt in 1921.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
20	Part 2 00:06:10 – 00:06:24 ഖിലാഫത്തിൽ വാങ്ങേണ്ടത നീ, <u>അബൂ സുഫ്യാൻ മാപ്പാ കൊടുത്ത</u> <u>മുത്ത നബിയെ റസൂലായി</u> <u>വിശ്വസിക്കുന്ന</u> <u>മുസൽമാനാണെങ്കിൽ</u> <u>അല്ലാഹുവിന്റെ നാമത്തിൽ ഞാൻ</u> <u>ആണയിട്ടു പറയുന്നു: തമ്പ്രാൻ</u> <u>കുറ്റക്കാരനല്ല.</u>	You are fighting in <i>khilafath</i> . But listen to me if you are a true follower of Muhammad who forgave Abusufyan: The lord is innocent.	<u>For the khilafath you</u> <u>have taken the</u> <u>sword.</u> <u>As a Muslim, leave</u> <u>these innocents.</u>

The dialogue between father and son reveals their strong religious conviction and endorses the fact that the uprising was not motivated by any communal prejudices. Beeran tries to convince his son who has misunderstood the uncle. He asks him to forgive the *thambran* (lord) if he is a true Muslim who believes in the prophet Muhamad because even the prophet had forgiven Abusufyaan, the historical rival of the prophet.

But this part is omitted in translation and it is limited to ‘as a Muslim, leave these innocents’. Owing to the pace of the speech and the emotional intensity of the scene those details are skipped in the subtitle which is already long enough. The Muslim characters in the film represent their untainted religious spirit in the uprising and knowledge of historical events from the life of Prophet which are recurrent in the words of fighters like Khader and Haji. In a film like *1921* which address the social, religious and political ethos of a community allusions to historical events and people need more exploration and omissions or condensation at the cost of its historicity cannot be justified. The subtitle, therefore, has to acknowledge the sense of a lay man who alludes to such historical references in his day-to-day conversations. The omission of such items in the TL tells upon the characterization of the protagonists in terms of depicting them as sincere and virtuous.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
21	Part 2 00:02:02 – 00:02:09 തമ്പുരാൻറെ അപ്പി തിന് നടക്കുന്ന നീ സ്വന്തം മകനെ ചിലാഹത്താണെന്നും പറഞ്ഞു പൊരേന്ന് ഇറക്കി വീട്ടോനല്ലേ. മിണ്ടരുത്.	You lick the boot of the lord and ousted your son accusing him of <i>Khilafath</i> . Shut up!	<u>You sent out your son from the house.</u>

The omitted part in the subtitle signifies the raging response of Haji who fights against the landlords who assist the colonial rulers. The swear word used here shows the extreme fury he keeps towards those who betray the freedom fighters. These expressions reveal his stern stand in the violent atmosphere of the uprising and their omission badly affects the characterization of Haji. The reason for Khadar’s expulsion from the house by his father is obviously mentioned in the SL dialogue, i.e.

khilafath, but it is missing in the subtitle leaving incomplete information to the target audience.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
22	Part 2 00:02:18 – 00:02:47 - തംബാക്കൽ കൽപ്പിക്കാതെ കാവൽക്കാർ വെടി വെക്കുമോ? - തറവാട്ടു കാരണവന്മാരെ ഭരണത്തിൽ അനന്തരവർ മിണ്ടാ പ്രാണികളാണേ. - ആങ്ങളയോട് അത്ര പ്രിയപ്പെട്ടവരിൽ പെങ്ങൾ പോരൂ.	Can the guard shoot without the Lord's order? We, the nephews cannot question when elders rule the family. If the sister loves him too much, she can come.	No subtitle <u>Under the rule of            elders the nephew            was silent.</u> No subtitle

The anticolonial struggle had divided Hindus and Muslims in the region and some Muslims and Landlords often betrayed the *khilafath* fighters. In this trial scene of Unnikrishnan, he confesses that *khilafath* members were killed by the guards of the Lord, his own uncle in which case Khader confirms the Lord's indirect hand in the incident. In this scene Khadar demands to know whether the guard could shoot without the permission of the Lord. Finally, Unnikrishnan reveals the truth that it is his uncle who ordered to kill them and his mother slapped him out of fury for accusing her brother. This significant question is unsubtitled, but, at the same time, Unni's reply to the question is subtitled subsequently. The dialogue deserves much attention as it reveals not only the communal polarization, but also the hierarchy and power relations dominated in the savarna Hindu families where the senior most men dominates the family and younger members have to obey them strictly. The translations of the dialogue is "We, the nephews cannot question when elders rule the family", but it is translated as "Under the rule of elders the nephew was silent" which does not reflect the

degree of the elder's dictatorship and the helplessness of the nephew which are punching points in the dialogue. Again in the next instance, Haji's comment on Unnikrishna's mother is left unsubtitled. She tries to defend her brother and stands in the way when he is being arrested. Haji then tells her "if the sister loves him too much, she can come" and makes her helpless. This trial scene is quite emotional and critical in the film and therefore omission of any part of the dialogue seriously affects the target audience. The partial translation and irregular appearance of subtitles affect the reading flow of the viewers and as a result they fail to make sense of the scene as whole. Complete omission of parts of the dialogue in subtitles in this context cannot be justified by any technical element of time-space constraint.

	<b>Original Sound Track</b>	<b>Subtitle</b>
23	Part 2 00:07:53 – 00:08:38 Mr. Thomas, don't you know that Ali Musliyaar, the holy priest of the Muslim community of Malabar? Then why (you sent) the military force to arrest him? What you have done is a great mistake, Mr. Thomas and you are responsible for the consequences. But sir there is not a single police constable to maintain law and order. In that place people are wild, looting, killing, raping and even forcible conversions are reported, sir. Is it? Then you create a communal riot between Hindus and Muslims which we want and it is a government policy to divide and rule.	(No Malayalam subtitle)
24	ഹിന്ദുക്കളും മുസ്ലിംകളും തമ്മിൽ തല്ലി മരിക്കട്ടെ എന്നാണു സർക്കാരിന്റെ തീരുമാനം.	Let them fight each other.

The strategic military movements and the policies adopted by the colonial rulers are discussed in the meeting held between the district Collector Thomas and Mr. Knap in the given scene. The conversation in English is not translated to Malayalam and the vital information pertaining to the communal riots between Hindus and Muslims, the policy of 'divide and rule' and preventing the army from noted location are denied to the

SL audience. This conversation in English is very important to understand the communal bifurcations in the story. A corresponding Malayalam subtitle could have easily communicated the idea, but the English dialogue is not subtitled in Malayalam anywhere in the film. However, the SL audience can make the conclusion from the entire conversation only from the subsequent scenes of the film.

Audiovisual translation should also address the bilingual issues present in the original sound track. When two languages are used alternatively in a film, the subtitler has to ensure the translation of dialogues in the second language of the source culture audience. Very often, the choice of translation depends upon the translator's assumed knowledge of the target audience, but the question is pertinent as a film is viewed by heterogeneous audience whose linguistic knowledge and background are unpredictable. In a democratic mode of translation, every utterance should be translated. In the given example, the English dialogue is equally important as the Malayalam one, but it is left unsubtitled here either because the translator has ignored it or the audience is expected to have considerable knowledge of English.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
24	Part 2 00:10:34 – 00:10:41 - ഇല്ലത്തു നിന്ന് ബലമായി പിടിച്ചോണ്ട് വന്നതാ മതം മാറ്റാൻ. - കാദർക്കാ, കൊല്ലരുത്. ചെമ്പ്രശ്ശേരി തങ്ങൾ പറഞ്ഞിട്ടാ.	-We are forced to convert.  -Dear Khadar, don't kill me. This is ordered by Chembrasheri Thangal.	- By force <u>they</u> <u>changed my caste.</u> - Don't kill me. We obey orders.

In yet another scene of forced religious conversion, the members of upper class Hindu family are brought to shave their head to mark the conversion. The subtitle 'they changed my caste' cannot directly communicate religious conversion. The act of shaving head clearly indicates conversion of Hindus to Islam for the SL audience (as

explained in No. 9) and this was a popular ritual required for conversion in the historical age of the film. The visual here shows shaving the head provides supporting information to the SL audience whereas the same may not work out as a sign of religious conversion in the target culture. The subtitle too has become ambiguous with the word ‘caste’ instead of ‘conversion’. So neither the subtitle nor the visuals help the TL audience to make a better sense of the scene. In the second instance, the name of Chembrasheri Thangal is omitted in the subtitle and is substituted by ‘obey orders’ as the name of the person is not considered relevant here. Chembrasheri Thangal’s name is to be retained because it would help the audience understand those characters who cash in on the communal conflict during the revolt. In this scene it is necessary to mention the name of Chembraseri thangal in order to help the audience understand the character and reveal his real identity.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
25	Part 2 00:46:02 – 00:46:10 എങ്ങനെ ഒരുമിക്കും? <u>തീയനും ചറമനും പുലയനും</u> <u>അയിത്തം കൽപിച്ചു മാറ്റി</u> <u>നിർത്തിയ തമ്പുരാക്കന്മാർ</u> <u>പട്ടിയെ പോലെ ചാവുന്നതു്</u> <u>കാണാനായിരിക്കും</u> <u>അടിയൊളന്മാർക്ക് ഇഷ്ടം.</u>	How can they unite? The tenants are divided into untouchable groups of <i>theeya</i> , <i>cherama</i> and <i>pulaya</i> . They like their masters die like dogs.	How can they be one having caste divisions? <u>The suppressed would like the suppressors destroyed.</u>

This is one of the important dialogues of Radha who addresses Unni and other members of her family and reflects on the unfortunate communal violence that took place in the name of *kilafath*. The evil of caste system prevailing among Hindus divided them into different sub-groups and prevented them from taking a unified stand against the colonial rule. Radha’s comment here is a rejoinder to Unni’s words who understands that the social condition would have been better if all Hindus including the untouchable

castes like *theyyan*, *charaman* and *pulayan* could stand united. But the subtitle has summarized it as ‘oppressed’ and the ‘oppressor’ without explicating them and the two terms do not make the intended sense in the context. The names of the untouchable caste are relevant in the context and they could have been translated at least as ‘the untouchable castes’. Radha’s words register her strong protest against the landlords who were neither ready to fight against the British nor assist *khilaafath* to safeguard the society. The summarized /paraphrased subtitle has omitted the most important part of Radha’s argument which is pertinent to describe the wretched master-slave relationship and significant to the social background of the film.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
26	Part 2 00:50:04 – 00:50:15 -മാപ്പിളാർ തൊട്ടു നീ ഈ തറയിൽ ചവിട്ടി നിന്നാൽ പഞ്ച പുണ്യാഹം തളിച്ചാലും അയിത്തം മാറില്ല. -മാപ്പിള തൊട്ടു അയിത്തം എനിക്കല്ല. അത് കൂടുതൽ കാണുക നിങ്ങളുടെ ദേഹത്താകും.	You are polluted by Mappilas. No holy water can purify the place you stepped. It is yourself who is polluted more by Mappilas.	You should not make this unholy. It will be more in you than in me.

Thulasi returns to Lord Appunni after she was rescued by Kader. Raged with humiliation and anger, Maheswari and Gopi stamp Thulasi adulterous and impure as she was ‘polluted’ by living in refuge amongst Mappilas. Maheswari strongly denies Thulasi’s entry to the house and she shouts that no holy water can purify the house and even *panja punyaaham* (the holy water used to purify the places or persons believed to be polluted) can purify the place she enters. The subtitle given here does not follow the previous dialogues and hence may create confusion to the TL audience. The original dialogue she explains that ‘you are polluted by Mappilas’ and states that ‘No holy water can purify the place you step’ which clearly explains the

reason of ‘pollution’ and its consequence. But, the subtitle ‘You should not make this unholy’ does not guarantee to communicate that she is adulterated and she cannot regain her purity.

The pronoun ‘it’ in the second subtitle is ambiguous in the subtitle as its antecedent is not mentioned in the previous subtitle. It actually refers to the contamination caused by mingling with the untouchable caste. When Maheswari accuse her of such impurity, Thulasi retaliates in the same token and says ‘it will be more in you than in me’. The referent of ‘it’ could either be given in this subtitle, like ‘Mappilas have polluted you more than me’ or in the previous subtitles, as it is given above.

#### 4.3.5. Technical / Legal / Administrative Terms:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Subtitle
27	Part 1 00:17:25 – 00:17:33 മഞ്ചേരി, തിരുരങ്ങാടി, താനൂർ, പൊന്നാനി പ്രദേശത്തും ഇന്ന് മുതൽ 144 നടപ്പാക്കുന്നു.	From today onwards 144 is declared here.

‘144’ mentioned in the subtitle simply means ‘curfew’. It is Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in Indian Penal Code which empowers an executive magistrate to prohibit an assembly of more than four people in an area. The section was an important tool used by British Raj during the independence movement and was widely used to quell riots and protests. The scene in the film shows the declaration ceremony of ‘144’ which is used as a synonym for ‘curfew’. This is a familiar term in Malayalam and the figure obviously makes sense to the source language audience. But for an international audience the retention of this figure does not make any sense in the subtitle, especially without the visuals of police or military personnel in the scene.



Assuming its meaning from the word ‘declared’ would be a remote possibility because the figure ‘144’ as such has no implication of any law and order and it means differently according to the encyclopedic knowledge of the target audience. It thus highly needs disambiguation and therefore the strategy of Generalization, rather than Retention, would simply solve the problem in the context. But the Generalization of ‘144’ as ‘curfew’ impedes the translation of the following subtitle (No. 28) in which the figure is central in making it humorous. It is now a critical point for the subtitler to see whether retaining ‘144’ or generalizing into ‘curfew’ would be effective in the context.

#### 4.3.6. Pun / Humor / Word Play:

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Translation	English Subtitle
28	Part 1 00:19:20 – 00:19:24 144 അല്ല 288 ആയാലും ശരി, ചന്ത കഴിയാതെ ഇവിടെന്നു പിരിഞ്ഞു പോകുന്ന പ്രശ്നമില്ല ഒരൂത്തനും.	Be it 144 or 288, we will not leave until our business is finished’	<u>Unless we sell off these we will not go.</u>

Khader gets angry over the unexpected clamping of curfew of 144, that too when his cattle business was progressing at the market place. The police orders to disperse immediately but Khader and his people insist on remaining there to finish off their business in the market. He replies in harsh words but with a tinge of humor by playing on the numbers: ‘be it 144 or 288 we will not leave until our business is finished’. The subtitler is caught between the numerical retention of ‘144’ and its conversion to ‘curfew’ in the above subtitle. Khader’s words express vehement protest against the colonial rule and the woes of a common man who struggles for his livelihood. It seems to be necessary to reproduce the numerical humor in the subtitle. Here the humorous part is completely ignored by omitting the figures, but only at the cost of the character’s humor sense. The humor works only when ‘144’ is retained in the first subtitle. This can be probably done

by prefixing ‘Section’ and abbreviating it as ‘Sec.144’ because it is necessary to explicate the word to retain the number in the subtitle. Thus ‘curfew Sec. 144 is declared here’ in the first case and ‘be it 144 or 288 we will not leave until our business is finished’ in the second case may help to serve the purpose in both contexts to some extent.

	Malayalam Sound Track	English Subtitle
29	Part 1 00:25:29 – 00:25:36 ഹാജിയാർ ഖിലാഫത്ത് ആണെങ്കിലും ഈ ചെയ്തത് ബർകത്തുള്ള പണിയാ. ഖിലാഫത്ത് അല്ലെടോ, അഖില അപത്ത്. ഈ അബ്ദുക്കുട്ടിയെക്കാളും അപത്ത് ആ ഹാജിയാരാണ്.	What he has done now is good. (No subtitle) He is more dangerous.

‘*Khilafath*’ is an Arabic loan word that means ‘rule’. It refers to the pan-Islamic campaign of political protest against the British in India to safeguard the Ottoman Caliphate. In the film it stands for the revolt led by Muslim leaders and immensely supported by the local Hindus against the colonial rule in Malabar and it is historically known as ‘*Khilafath*’. It is also extensively used to denote the people who participated in it, the strategic geographical locations and anything else that may have been associated with it. Here Hajiyar is called a ‘*khilafath*’ and his action of capturing Abdullakutty is appreciated by the police officer through the words *barkathulla pani*, meaning ‘a good deal’. The two words *khilafath* and *barkath* are popularly used words and their translation invites linguistic and semantic issues. Their retention in the subtitle would complicate the reading and will not offer any semantic function. The second subtitle is the humorous remark of the police officer and it is purely linguistic humor. He splits the word into two corresponding Malayalam words ‘*akhila*’ and ‘*aapath*’ meaning ‘entirely dangerous’. This word

play is exclusive in Malayalam due to the phonetic similarity between the Malayalam and Arabic words and they remain untranslatable into English. It seems that it is almost impossible to reproduce the sense of the Malayalam words in the context, though omission of these CSRs is at the cost of the representation of linguistic skill of the local people and their word play in satirical comments.

The extracts from the dialogues of the films and the discussion of translation strategies employed in each case constitute only a limited exposure of how different CSRs are rendered in subtitles and why a particular strategy is employed in a given context. Subtitles of films like *1921* and *Adaminte Makan Abu* deserve a detailed analysis as they reflect the cultural specificity of a community, linguistic diversity of those people and historical representation of a region. In most instances of the films discussed above, it is not clear why certain parts are left subtitled or partially subtitled and why certain strategies are prioritized over the other. Omissions and partial translations resorted to in these films tell upon their reception because many of the names, social practices, religious connotations and implications of power relations are sacrificed in the translation. While *Adaminte Makan Abu* remains a social and religious satire, its subtitles occasionally fail to communicate the humor and irony with which the plot is developed. Categories of CSRs like names which have connotative meaning, idiomatic and idiolectal expressions and songs could not find corresponding subtitles in English. *1921* cannot be subtitled without proper translation of the historicity of the film in addition to its ethnocultural peculiarities. The historicity of the film is constituted by the names of historical figures who took part in the struggle and social inequalities that prevailed in the community in that particular era and the anticolonial movement which became stronger at that time. But the subtitles could not capture the essence of many of

these components either because of the untranslatability or because of the lackadaisical attitude of the subtitler.

The anonymity of the subtitler in the two films also is a matter of concern in deciding the quality of subtitles. The absence of acknowledgement of the subtitler in the credits of the film or any literature related to the film makes the subtitler perform the task in an indifferent manner. The translation seems to be influenced by personal preferences and judgments in terms of deciding what is to be translated and how it is to be translated. Neglect to include the subtitler's identity and acknowledge him or her risks the authenticity of translation and reliability of the subtitles. Translational issues under study here are more or less homogenous in English and Malayalam, but they deserve special study because Malayalam subtitling is a recent trend. The following chapter tries to cover the same issues, focusing on Malayalam subtitles of English films.

## CHAPTER V

**TRANSLATING CULTURE SPECIFIC REFERENCES:  
SUBTITLING ENGLISH FILMS IN MALAYALAM****5.1. Malayalam Subtitles for World Films: M-Sone ([www.malayalamsubtitles.org](http://www.malayalamsubtitles.org))**

The cinematic tradition of Kerala has been entertaining not only Malayalam and other Indian films, but also world films in different foreign languages with and without subtitles and they continue to attract a huge audience from the educated and common people alike. Usually these films are screened in theatres with English subtitles and therefore they were confined to English knowing audience. Though subtitles in the vernacular remained a dream for majority of the audience, there was hardly any initiative towards this end primarily because of the linguistic inferiority imposed on Malayalam and secondly of the technological limitations to process the language. The onset of digital Malayalam was a revolutionary shift that held a key role in preparing subtitle files just like any other language and is fundamentally facilitated by the output of the research carried out by different individuals and institutions in the field of digital technology. With the advent of digital age, Malayalam began to appear on the keyboard and screen of computers, smart phones, i-pads, etc. thanks to the Unicode system and independent operating systems.

The discussion and practice of subtitling world films in Malayalam were developed by individuals with a mounting passion for experiencing a film in mother tongue and devotion for translation. Subtitles in Malayalam began to appear on the screen only after 2010 when films and their viewership turned to a personalized experience in the new age of digital revolution. Films from any part of the world

became globally accessible to any person along with the subtitles in the language preferred. Sporadic attempts had been started by many volunteer translators who subtitled world classic films both for educational purpose and public screening. The earliest instance of Malayalam subtitle was carried out by Mr. P. N. Venugopal of Kochin Film Society who prepared Malayalam subtitles for *Patherpanjali*. The Society also subtitled the classic *Bicycle Thieves* and screened it for the public. In the same period, Mr. Sanal Kumar, a teacher at Higher Secondary School at Irumpanam, Ernakulam subtitled another classic film *Dreams* when he realized that his students could not properly follow English subtitles. The subtitle file was uploaded in the website school for public access. These two individual cases proved the success of Malayalam subtitles and many translators were motivated to this field. It was out of such an inspiration and supporting public opinion that Msone-Malayalam subtitles for everyone ([www.malayalamsubtitles.org](http://www.malayalamsubtitles.org)) was formed as an independent blog for volunteer translators who prepare and share Malayalam subtitles for world films. Started as a Facebook group in 2012, this band of volunteer subtitlers has accomplished Malayalam subtitles for more than 500 films in different foreign languages by 2018. The subtitle files can be easily downloaded from the blog in SRT format by the public to watch the films. Many Film Societies functioning in Kerala like Open Frame based in Payyannur, Kodungallur Film Society and Thaliparamb Film Society are preparing Malayalam subtitles independently in order to use them in their festivals.

Launching of Malayalam subtitling gained much impetus and wide circulation through various periodical literatures published in Malayalam, social media apart from the print and audiovisual media. The discussions on linguistic priorities of subtitles influenced Malayalam subtitlers and viewers of foreign films alike. It also triggered the

active initiative of amateur subtitlers in Malayalam in various parts of Kerala.

*Sinimayude Upasheershaasanam* (The subtitling in film) (2010), *Upasheershakangalude Koottukaar* (The Comrades of Subtitles) (2014), by Aravind Gopinath, *Sabtililukal malayalalathilalle vendath?* (Shouldn't we have the subtitles in Malayalam?) (2014), *Malayalam upasheershakangal:Maarunna kaazcha sheelangalum uyarunna chalachithra bodhavum* (Malayalam subtitles: changing visual habits and growing film awareness) (2015) , *Quit English* by P.K. Surendran, K.P. Jayesh and T.K. Pramod Kumar (2017) and *sinimalayalam sabtililukalil ninnu upasheershakangalilekku* (Malayalam films: from sub-titles to subtitles) by C.S. Venkiteswaran (2018) are some of the prominent print pieces that articulated the need for Malayalam subtitling and the issues of translation and viewership therein.

These articles widely discuss the relevance, scope and political aspects of Malayalam subtitles and emphasize the need to elevate Malayalam language to the forefront of audiovisual communication in this digital age. Malayalam subtitles are to be seen not only as a mode of translation, but also an endeavor to expose the language to its higher level of creativity and to introduce it to new avenues of technological experience to help its survival in the techno growing world. P. Premachandran writes,

Apart from providing a simpler and enjoyable experience of films, the world classics screened in Kerala with Malayalam subtitles imply the possibility and complexity of practicing mother tongue in a new vista. Historically, the limitations of technology were heavily and unfortunately imposed on Malayalam and consequently the language was severely retarded. The vocabulary and typographic beauty of Malayalam letters on the screen is to be critically discussed in the light of the destiny of

original Malayalam scripts which were split into bits and pieces first by the typewriter and then computer keyboard.

Subtitling in Malayalam assumes greater significance when the language rarely finds a wider practical scope other than its primary function of day-to-day communication. The lovers of Malayalam are disappointed to see the language suffering from the impairments in terms of its pronunciation and usage in an age in which audiovisual media and radio are expected to find new ways to refine them. The film subtitlers have to be very conscious of this fact. Today when language is minimized into a mere communicative practice and is deprived of its rich usages , vocabulary, styles and sayings that constitute its essence and vigor, this opportunity must lead the younger generation to higher levels of linguistic creativity and its aesthetics. The dignity of Malayalam lies exclusively in its power and unique aesthetics. Malayalam subtitles are expected to be a creative space to restore the language on the screen of mobile phones, laptops and i-pads, more elegantly and attractively than it is done on the printed page. Good films, irrespective of their ‘commercial’ and ‘art’ labels, are always sought after not only by the intellectuals of older generation, but also by the young generation who could be satisfied only with something new in films. They will, indeed, be proud to see Malayalam on the screen if it helps them understand films profoundly in their own language. (Premachandran, 2014, p. 52)

Malayalam subtitles brought about a sea change in the viewership of world films by popularizing them to ordinary people which was earlier limited to English knowing



audience. This can be called democratization of language and translation and is undoubtedly the result of digital revolution rampant in all walks of life. Malayalam has conquered the keyboards and screen in all operating systems like Android, Mac, Windows and is used extensively for multiple purposes. It has become a smart friend to the new generation in writing and reading on mobile phones and i-pads and Malayalam subtitle is a new comer to their digital world. Unlike other technological platforms in which they are mostly consumers, the young generation has to function as producers and distributors of subtitles of world films of their choice. Several film societies functioning in Kerala make use of the advantage of Malayalam subtitles in their screening of world classic films to the public audience. But, unfortunately no governmental organization or institution has given due consideration to this novel venture of enhancing a language neither any serious discussion was initiated in connection with International Film Festival held in Kerala. It has become a social and political need of the hour that the IFFK has to proceed to screen all foreign films with Malayalam subtitles. The following highlights from the discussion of P.K. Surendran, K.P. Jayesh and T.K. Pramod Kumar explain the massive reception of Malayalam subtitles on MSone and the need to popularize subtitles in mother tongue. According to T.K. Pramod Kumar,

Subtitles are integral parts of films in that they communicate the story through dialogues or narration, more significantly in those films in which visuals exclusively cannot convey the entire idea. World films became more popular with the introduction of Malayalam subtitles when it demolished the myth of 'English subtitles'. A subtitler is to be competent enough to translate the social and cultural nuances of the language along with the basics of the technicalities of subtitling. For example, 'Thank you' is a very common expression in English whereas

Malayalam does not express the same concept in day-to-day life except in formal occasions. Repeated appearance of the translation of the phrase may disturb the enjoyment of the film.

Subtitling in Malayalam is to be addressed also in terms of Malayalis' visual culture that needs to be fostered by liberating them from the hangover of English subtitles. The apprehensions about Malayalam subtitles is a reflection of the inferior status allotted to that language under the labels of 'non-global', no-commercial and 'non-official' language in contrast with English which is maintained as 'official', 'commercial' and 'universal' language. Malayalis have to do away with this inferiority complex of their own mother tongue and have to gain experience of visual literacy by constantly reading Malayalam subtitles on the screen. This is, of course, an easy go in this digital age. (Surendran *et. al*, 2017, p .43)

According to K.P. Jayesh,

Books are mostly translated in the written or standardized version of language, but translation of films into Malayalam requires a distinct linguistic and translational competence as the language is rich in its variety and regional variations. So, the selection of that variety of Malayalam keeping justice with the linguistic variety in the film poses a great challenge to the subtitler. Our translators here are quite responsible for keeping the regional and cultural variety of language and are ardently thinking out of the box as to translating morality codes commonly practiced in Kerala.

In literary translation the story is visualized in the imagination of the reader and the probable incongruities between the imagined visuals and the text do not harm the story much as every reader may have unique pictures. But, in film the visuals projected on the screen and any minor instance of translational deviation from the visuals spoils the beauty because film is a picture painted on the same canvas simultaneously by the director and the subtitler. Subtitles cannot be limited to a technical translation of dialogues; rather they should range to a stylistic and rhythmic vocabulary conforming to the overall filmic experience. (Surendran *et. al*, 2017, p. 43-44)

*The Shawshank Redemption*, the film under study here is a film subtitled in Malayalam by Msone. Subtitling in Malayalam is to be considered as a novel initiative of the volunteer group of this kind and the attempt is experimental because there are no set models to follow. It is also to be noted that the subtitles, once completed by translators are directly uploaded on the blog by the admin and made accessible to the public. The subtitles discussed below are taken verbatim without any modification or editing and the discrepancies or mistakes in the language, if any, are not focused in the analysis. The categorization and analysis that follows are made on the strength of the discussions pertaining to the translation of cultural references explained in the third chapter.

## **5.2. Case Study III: *The Shawshank Redemption***

### **5.2.1. Introduction to the Film**

The American film *Shawshank Redemption* (1994) is the adaptation of the novella *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* by Stephen Edwin King. The film, directed by Frank Darabont, centers on the imprisonment of a banker who is life sentenced in Shawshank for allegedly murdering his wife and her lover. His engagement

with fellow prisoners, his passion for geology that breeds his favorite pastime in the prison, smuggling and money laundering and finally his astonishing prison break and disguised reappearance make the film rich with suspense and irony. The movie is an impressive drama and an enlightening movie inspiring us to reflect life and real self. In 2015, the United States Library of Congress selected the film for preservation in the National Film Registry, finding it “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant” (Morgan, 2015, p. 12). As its name indicates, the film illustrates the liberating and redemptive power of hope and the religious themes of freedom and resurrection: “Fear can hold you prisoner, hope can set you free”. It is a movie exploring the mundaneness of everyday life which is expressed in the colloquial expressions, slang and taboos in an effort to present audience a real and vivid picture of prisoners’ lives.

The film is replete with names of various artists and actors, verbal and situational ironies, idiolects of different prison mates, humor and fun effected through a series of wordplay and swear words, all of which uniquely succeed in making their sense in the source language of the film, i.e., English, but most often do not guarantee the same when they are subtitled in Malayalam. English and Malayalam are two dissimilar languages which structurally and culturally stand poles apart and hence subtitling in Malayalam has to consider the typographical and phonological aspects. The Culture Specific References in the film include, but are not limited to, the ones discussed below.

### 5.2.2. Names of people/ places / events / brands:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
1	00:02:04 - 00:02:07 And she said that she wanted a divorce in <u>Reno</u> .	റിനോയിൽ വച്ച് വിവാഹ മോചനം വേണമെന്നും.

The film starts with the trial scene of Mr. Dufresne, the hero of the film, being accused of murdering his wife alleging her of extramarital relationship. When he is asked to describe the confrontation he had with his wife on the night she was murdered, he explains that she was glad that he knew about all her sneaking around and most importantly “she said that she wanted a divorce in Reno”. Reno is a city in the state of Nevada state of America and quite commonly referred to in matters of marriage and divorce. The state is globally known for its flexible legal procedure in terms of divorce and a ‘Reno divorce’ is used as the most convenient step to end one’s marital relationship. Reno came to be known as the ‘divorce capital’ since 1909 because of its generous number of legal procedure for divorce-seekers and a short period of legal residency to qualify for divorce— six weeks. The state has always promoted the divorce industry by legalizing wide-open gambling and providing ample opportunities for entertainments for the couples who stay there. Several eminent personalities, including the famous American actress and dancer Rita Heyworth whose name and image are influential and recurrent in the film, got divorced in Reno.

With all these implications of legal flexibility and simplified process of divorce, the expression ‘divorce in Reno’ functions as a specific reference in the source culture. As it is retained in the subtitle, Reno is taken for granted by the target audience as a mere name of a place without any aforesaid implications. The merit of this CSR lies more in the nature of divorce of the couple than in the geographical reference to the place where the divorce takes place. This idea is, therefore, to be conveyed to the target audience in order to reveal the character of Dufresne’s wife in terms of her attitude towards marital life and divorce. The retention of the city name in the Malayalam subtitle in no way communicates such a meaning. It is again difficult to explicate or replace with a corresponding expression because of the cultural disparity between the

Western culture and Indian culture. Again, in Kerala culture which is of a plural society of different religions and customs, the concept of divorce differs across communities and no consensus can be seen in matters related to divorce, especially when it is attributed to a place. As any cultural substitution is not possible to explain the CSR, it is retained in the subtitle simply as a geographical name, without any possibility for explanation. Retention of this CSR at the cost of its cultural and legal dimensions is what makes the subtitle problematic because the target audience cannot even think about its important aspect unless they are aware about a ‘Reno divorce’. Such strategy in translation of a geographical name can communicate only its primary sense and any other strategy to explain the term may practically fail.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
2	00:08:56 - 00:08:59 So when Andy Dufresne came to me in 1949... ...and asked me to smuggle <u>Rita Hayworth</u> into the prison for him... ...I told him, "No problem".	1949-ൽ ആൻഡിദുഫ്രെസ്നെ എൻറടുത്തു വന്നിട്ട് റിത ഹേവർത്തിനെ (ഒരുനടി) അവനു വേണ്ടി കടത്തികൊടുക്കാൻ പറഞ്ഞപ്പോ ഞാൻപറഞ്ഞു "നോ പ്രോബ്ലം"...
3	01:24:13 - 01:24:18 By 1966, right about the time Tommy was getting ready to take his exams... ...it was lovely <u>Raquel</u> .	1966-ൽ ടോമ്മിയുടെ പരീക്ഷ ആവുമ്പോൾ... ചുമരിൽ <u>റാക്വെൽ</u> * എന്ന മനോഹരിയായിരുന്നു. (* മറ്റൊരുനടി)

Rita Heyworth and Raquel Welch mentioned in the subtitles are very popular American film actresses, dancers and glamorous screen stars idolized particularly by the youngsters. Heyworth, known as ‘The Love Goddess’ and Raquel, the celebrated singer

are among the top pin-up girls popularly used by the young generation. The cheesecake photos of the two actors decorated the private rooms of their young American fans like Dufresne. Without any visuals on the screen, the sense of erotic figures of these characters is well communicated to the source culture audience. But they are not familiar to most of the target audience of Malayalam and the names fail to create the photographic image of these actors in the spectators' mind.

These cultural references are retained in the subtitle as calque as both of them are proper nouns and hence cannot be translated. But, the subtitler has explicated them using the bracket in the first case and an asterisk and bracket in the second case. Using these non-alphabetic symbols too much in subtitle impedes the reading flow of the viewers in many respects. There is no unanimously agreed subtitling tradition among the subtitlers all over the world and different subtitlers follow different practices in terms of putting the punctuation marks and parenthetical constructions in subtitle. But, most studies reflect that punctuations must be used only in very limited places as they interfere with the verbal elements in the sentence in rapid reading. As Cerón (2001) mentions, “whenever movie and TV viewers are watching a subtitled film, they are deciphering a whole set of codes. They may be unaware of it, but they will react immediately to a departure from the norm” (p. 173). The parenthetical items are usually compensated in the easiest way, often rephrasing the words or reconstructing the sentence. According to Diaz Cintas,

Although parenthesized and bracketed material is rather more distanced from the sentence proper than material within commas, the natural tendency in subtitling is to eliminate the parenthesis and brackets and reconstruct the sentence using commas and, if necessary, adding a connector. (Diaz Cintas, 2007, p. 108)

If the brackets are omitted completely the names would not mean anything beyond two personal names. The easiest possible strategy here is to explicate the names with a more common noun to avoid brackets and asterisk is to add just an adjective to the names:

*nadi Rita Heyworth/Raquel* (actress Rita/Raquel). This technique at least brings the sense that they are actresses, if not the same image is created in the source culture.

However, it is almost impossible to reproduce the cheesecake image of these celebrities without adequate explanation.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
4	01:07:56 - 01:07:58 - Hey, look who's here. - <u>Maestro!</u> You couldn't play something good, huh? Like Hank Williams?	- ആരാ വന്നത് എന്ന് നോക്ക് - മൈസ്ട്രോ..! (മഹാനായ സംഗീതജ്ഞൻ) നിനക്ക് വല്ല നല്ലതും വെക്കായിരുന്നില്ലേ.. ഹാക്ക് വില്യംസോ മറ്റോ...
5	01:08:11 - 01:08:15 ...complete with a fine selection of <u>Hank Williams</u> .	ഹാക്ക് വില്യംസിന്റെ കുറച്ച് പാട്ടുകൂടി ആയപ്പോ പൂർണ്ണമായി...

Hank Williams who is referred to in the given subtitles (No. 4 and 5) is a renowned American singer and a very popular name in western culture. But the name may not be familiar to majority of the target culture audience. As explained in the case of No. 1 and 2 when the name Hank Williams is retained in the subtitle it remains only as a name and does not communicate the figure of a great singer. Of course, the name cannot be explained in the subtitle because it will make the sentence longer and will not fit into the time-space slot. Substituting the name with any other personality known to the target audience also will risk the cognition of the audience. The challenge here is to introduce Hank Williams to the target culture without using any additional phrases and this is done on the strength of the assumed knowledge of the target audience about the



person. If the name alone does not describe the person, the context in which the name is mentioned tries to inform the audience that the person is a famous singer.

In the first part of No 4, the word ‘Maestro’ is retained in the subtitle with a bracketed translation. It seems that the translator is ignorant of the word and has taken it for a personal name. Actually the word means ‘a great singer’ and it needs only a literal translation as seen in the visual when the character is addressed so.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
6	01:21:19 - 01:21:21 You done some stretch in <u>Cashman</u> , right?	നീ ' <u>ക്യാഷ്മനിൽ</u> ' കിടന്നുണ്ടായില്ലേ? (ഒരുജയിൽ)
7	01:26:14 - 01:26:17 ...I was in <u>Thomaston</u> on a two-to-three stretch.	ഒരു രണ്ടു മൂന്നു വർഷത്തേക്ക് ഞാൻ ' <u>തോംസണിൽ</u> ' ആയിരുന്നു.

Cashman (No. 6) and Thomston (No. 7) are names of notorious prisons in the USA. The discussion between Dufrense and Tommy reveals that Tommy had been sentenced in different jails on various occasions for different reasons. The retention of both names in two different scenes with inadequate explanation renders them very strange to the target audience. In example 5, the description is given in the bracket and in example 6 it is left unexplained. The inconsistency in keeping a regular mode of explanation makes the comprehension difficult for the target audience and as it is bracketed in the first one and unbracketed in the second. In addition to all the issues of punctuation discussed in the case of example 1 and 2, it is to be noted that an easier translation is possible here too if a generalized term is added to it. Instead of retaining the names of the prison as such, an additional word suffixed to it can make the subtitle more readable. Thus, translating them as *cashman jailil* (in Cashman jail) and *Thomson*

*jailil* (in Thomson jail) can easily solve the problem without adding any parenthetical punctuation. These being short phrases, do not affect the space and number of characters which the subtitle line can accommodate.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
8	00:08:10 - 00:08:14 Yes, sir! I am a regular <u>Sears and Roebuck</u> .	അതെ, സാർ. ഞാനാ ജയിലിലെ സ്ഥിരം <u>ചില്ലറക്കച്ചവടക്കാരൻ</u> .

The term ‘Sears and Roebuck’ technically stands for the chain of departmental stores in the USA. The company’s name has become synonym for buying anything at any place, just like the internationally known online shop Amazon today. Retaining the company’s name in the subtitle does not make sense as it may appear strange in the context to majority of the target culture audience. Here, it is translated in Malayalam subtitle as *chillara kachavadakkaran* (retail seller) which does not catch the crux of the brand name, though the message is conveyed to an extent. The emphasis of the term is not on the goods sold, but on the large network of stores, availability of all willy-nilly products and delivery of any item to any interior and unreachable location, especially the prison. In order to bring this idea in translation it has to be replaced with a cultural substitute. In this technologically globalized world ‘Sears and Roebuck’ could be substituted by ‘Amazon’, for example, which may communicate the sense in a better way as most of the audience is aware of the online business. ‘Amazon’ used in the example here stands for selling all types of goods and their delivery to any location in any part of the world.

Another possible way to convey the sense is to emphasize the illegal practice of supplying things to the prison from outside. In this context, the nature of the business

comes to the fore. Thus, it can be translated *adholoka kachavadakkaran* which also connotes the underworld business going on among the prison inmates. However, the translation ‘retail seller’ appears to be inappropriate in the context.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
9	00:21:18 - 00:21:21 Yes! <u>Richmond, Virginia.</u>	ഈ... <u>റിച്ച്മണ്ട്, വിർജീനിയ...</u>

Richmond is a British brand of cigarettes. When Heywood smells it, he utters ‘Yes! Richmond’. The brand name is retained in the subtitle in spite of its lack of popularity among the target audience. But what helps the audience here to understand the sense, unlike other references in the film, is the support of the visual that shows the character smelling the band of cigarettes. It is the explanatory function of the visual as a co-text that communicates the sense that it is a brand name. It can be assumed that most of the audience can follow from the subtitle that it is the brand name of the cigarette though no name on cigarette packet or other symbols are visible in the scene. Using the brand name as a calque / loan familiarizes the target audience with such an international brand and adds to their vocabulary.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
10	01:19:31 - 01:19:33 Shit, you are <u>Rembrandt.</u>	നീ ആളൊരു <u>കലാകാരൻ</u> തന്നെ...

Rembrandt refers to Rembrandt Harmenszoon, an influential Dutch draughtsman and painter whose works are appreciated worldwide for their life-like nature. The name has become a synonym for any excellent work of art or anything of classical value.

Mr. Dufresne is here compared with and referred to as Rembrandt as he conjures up a man in official records in order to embezzle from the backdoor business of the prison

warden. The translation of Rembrandt as *kalakaran* (artist) cannot express the exact punch of the synonym of a highly proficient and popular artist. Moreover, *kalakaran* in Malayalam can be any artist (a painter, dancer, musician or magician) and cannot precise the field of art. As Dufresne conjures up a man, it would have been more appropriate if the name is replaced with the name of a renowned magician. It is a fortunate coincidence that in Malayalam *magician muthukad* (Magician Muthukad) is a popular name which is synonymous with any extraordinary or tricky kind of work. Here, therefore, the translation can go like *nee aloru muthukad anallo* which can easily communicate the magical nature of Dufresne's malpractices to 'create' a man in financial records. Thus, a cultural transposition of the name Rembrandt would be more appropriate here than translating the name into a hypernym.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
11	01:15:12 - 01:15:14 These men can learn the value... ...of an honest day's labor and provide a service to the community... ...at a bare minimum of expense to <u>Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Taxpayer.</u>	ഒരു നല്ലജോലിയുടെ വില ഈ ആളുകൾക്ക് പഠിക്കാനാവും. ഒപ്പം സമൂഹത്തിന് മൂല്യവത്തായ ഒരു സേവനവും... നികുതി അടക്കുന്ന ഓരോരുത്തർക്കും വളരെ ചുരുങ്ങിയ നിരക്കിൽതന്നെ.

In the United States, 'Mr. and Mrs. John Q Taxpayer' is a generic name to denote a hypothetical member in society, meaning any member among the common people. This is totally unfamiliar to the readers of Malayalam subtitles. But it has been fairly translated as *nikuthi adakkunnaororutharkkum* (any single tax payer). Retention of this name in the subtitle would make no sense and so it needs to be rendered in a familiar term. It is a compound name with a proper noun 'John' and a common noun 'Taxpayer' and in the subtitle 'Mr. and Mrs. John' is left out and only 'Taxpayer' is

translated. It is this literal translation/calque of the common noun that has helped the translator produce a corresponding translation for that.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
12	00:33:35 - 00:33:38 I tell you! <u>Uncle Sam!</u>	അതങ്ങനെയാ... <u>അങ്കിൾസാം!</u>

Uncle Sam is an expression used to personify American government and it was derived after the war of 1812 from the name Samuel Wilson, a nickname of the American government. This name is very specific to American culture and is used to denote the government and also, connotatively, to refer to any tall old fellow with white beard. In the film, both the meanings are equally applicable as Mr. Hadley speaks to the old fellows criticizing the government for the huge tax amount levied upon him. So the dual implication of the expression is perfectly apposite in the context. But in the subtitle it is retained as though it is a very familiar expression in Malayalam. However, it would be difficult to translate this expression as there is no corresponding usage to combine the two meanings. This loan word is easily comprehended by those target culture audience who are familiar with American movies and other foreign movies. It also adds to the multilingual vocabulary of the target audience.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
13	01:14:45 - 01:14:47 That was also when Warden Norton... ...instituted his famous <u>"Inside Out"</u> program. You may remember reading about it. It made the papers and got his picture in <u>Look</u> magazine.	ആവർഷം തന്നെയാണ് വാർഡൻ നോർട്ടൺ തന്റെ പ്രശസ്തമായ 'അകം-പുറം' പരിപാടി കൊണ്ട് വന്നത്. നിങ്ങൾ ചിലപ്പോ വായിച്ചു കാണും... എല്ലാ പത്രത്തിലും വന്നിരുന്നു... മുപ്പരുടെ ഫോട്ടോ ലുക്ക് മാഗസിനിൽ വന്നിട്ടുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

The ‘Inside Out program’ is a project introduced by Warden Norton to make the prison inmates work outside for slave wages like building roads and cutting trees as a social service. It is learned from the later scenes of the film that the project was a stratagem played by Norton in order to skim off the top when buying expensive equipment and to make the independent contractors bribe him for distributing the prisoners on a bare minimum expense thereby gaining huge finances through back door. The entire story of Norton reveals his hypocrisy and stands in sharp contrast to his image of a true Christian, as it is proclaimed by himself in the first part of the film, who believes in two things: “discipline and the Bible”. Thus, the reference ‘inside-out’ program not only refers to the exchange of prison inmates for public works, but also recounts the scandalous story of embezzlement made by Norton in different contracts of the project.

In the subtitle it is translated as *akam puram*, a literal translation of ‘inside-out’ and it does not produce the intended meaning in the context to explain it. It would be undesirable to expect all the members of the target audience are aware of such a service in prison. Moreover, the unqualified use of ‘program’ may confuse the audience and it is probable that the term could be taken for a program, just like a stage program or a TV show, as the phrase suggests. The term is understood only by the educated Americans who are aware of the current affairs and the project. It is also difficult to explain the term in the subtitle, but a better sense can be communicated if the strategy of compensation is executed and translated as *puram pani / puram panikku pokal* (working outside) because the visuals also support the concept in the context. As the term plays a major role in characterizing Mr. Norton and understanding the entire story, the central aspect of its meaning must be conveyed to the target audience. Thus its translation is compensated by rephrasing it.

The ‘Look magazine’ mentioned in the dialogue is the popular American magazine and the name is preserved in the subtitle. Though the target audience may not be familiar with the magazine, the context of the dialogue signifies that it is a popularly read magazine and emphasizes that the report of Inside Out program was published in the news in those days. The loan word Look magazine does not disturb the reader in any respect and the relevance is communicated to an extent. Hence the reference does not require further explication or description in the context.

### 5.2.3. Idiosyncrasies / Colloquial Expressions / Stylistic variants:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
14	00:09:05 - 00:09:07 Andy came to Shawshank Prison... ...in early 1947 for <u>murdering</u> his wife and the <u>fella she was banging</u> .	ആൻഡി, 1947-ൽ തന്റെ ഭാര്യയേയും <u>ലവൾടെ മറ്റവനേം തട്ടിയിട്ടാണ്</u> ശോഷാങ്കിൽ വരുന്നത്.

The narration of Andy’s life history is given in the background of the morbid atmosphere of the prison cells. But the Malayalam subtitle renders it a little funny through the colloquial expressions that refer to his wife and her lover. The word ‘*laval*’, translation of ‘she’ is an informal usage, but here it is used to denote a woman who indulges in any illegal or secret affairs especially extramarital relationships. The word ‘fella’ is translated appropriately into a more informal version, i.e. ‘*matavan*’ which means a secret lover. The deviation from standard Malayalam to the most informal one attained through lexical re-creation and creative addition enhances the audience to read and follow the narration of an extramarital affair in a funny and simple way. A formal version of these colloquial expressions would require more number of words in the subtitle and make it less interesting.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
15	00:33:02 - 00:33:05 <u>Dumb shit</u> , what do you think the government will do to me?	പൊട്ടൻ കണാരാ... എന്നോട് ഗവൺമെന്റ് എന്താ ചെയ്യാൻ പോകുന്നുണ്ട് അറിയോ?
16	00:33:05 - 00:33:08 <u>Take a big wet bite</u> <u>out of my ass is what.</u>	നല്ല മുഴുത്ത ഒരു പീസ് തന്നെ കടിച്ചു പറിക്കൂം...

The swearword ‘dumb shit’ means *pottan* or *viddi* (fool) but in the film it is translated as *kanaran*. In Malayalam it is a sarcastic term used to address a person who appears to be foolish in understanding a matter of common sense. ‘*Kanaran*’ also serves the purpose of domesticating the situation where the character is introduced as a butt of ridicule in the vernacular language. It is similar to the names like *Koya* in Malayalam which is used in the same tone to refer to a foolish person in every day conversations. The subtitle succeeds in conveying the sense of the dialogue due to the strategic transposition of a swear word into a funny way of addressing the character. Such vernacular expression can render the dialogues in a more appealing manner to the audience. The retention of direct translation of this English swear word in the target language would not make the subtitle appropriate.

The answer to the question asked by him means that a major chunk of the amount will be taken by the government and he will get only what remains. But the Malayalam translation ‘*muzhutha pees thane kadichu parikkum*’ is partially the literal translation of the English words and remains an ambiguous part in Malayalam subtitle because most of the audience immediately associates it with any food item, rather than with a financial transaction, as it is obvious in the subtitle. Though the phrase is used figuratively in the English dialogue, the partial literal translation spoils the sense of the



context. The actual sense of the dialogue can be retained if it is translated ‘*ente pocket kaaliyaakum*’ or any other expressions that suggest financial transaction and its consequence. A complete literal translation may render the subtitle awkward as the swearing words may stand in the way of translation.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
17	01:21:46 - 01:21:49 Yeah, what the hell you know about it, <u>Capone</u> ?	യ... നിങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് കോപ്പാ അറിയാ... <u>കപ്പോൺ?</u>

The translation of ‘what the hell’ into ‘*enth kopp*’ has become a perfect fit in the context as the phrase phonetically rhymes with the name Capone. It is the alliteration of the sounds ‘k’ and ‘p’ in *kop* and *kappon* that makes the dialogue more striking. Capone actually is the short name of Alphonse Gabriel Capone, an American mobster and businessman who was notorious for tax evasion and the name is relevant in the context as the discussion is on tax calculation. Though its retention rhymes with *kopp* in the subtitle, it is left undescribed in the subtitle hence and remains a strange name to the target audience. *Kopp* (nonsense) is slang in Malayalam and the subtitler’s preference to it over any other usage has made it a funny expression. This adaptation into the colloquial language makes the subtitle easy to read and follow.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
18	01:27:37 - 01:27:38 So I <u>killed</u> him. Him and this <u>tasty bitch</u> he was with.	അതോണ്ട് അവനെ <u>അങ്ങ് തട്ടി</u> ... ഒപ്പം ഉണ്ടായ ആ <u>പീറ പെണ്ണിനേം</u> ...

As discussed above (No. 16), here too the dialogue is translated most appropriately. What is remarkable here is the subtitler’s preference to translate the words ‘killed’ and ‘tasty bitch’ into the slang *thatti* and *peerappennu* respectively.

*Thattuka* is a colloquial version of *vadhikkuka* (murder), especially when it is done very secretly and *peerappennu* is the colloquial version of ‘sexually haunted woman’. These expressions render the entire dialogue in the language of common man in the target culture and therefore are very appealing.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
19	00:50:25 - 00:50:28 Easy, peasy, Japanese-y.	ഈസിപീസി... ജാപ്പനീസി... എന്തേലും സംശയം??

This is an idiosyncratic comment that Brooks makes after introducing the prison library to Dufresne and he means that things are easy and smooth. It is learned that the sentence is character’s own addition to the film to give more direct and realistic feel to his funny character. Rather than its meaning, the rhyme it produces is what makes it more appealing. In the subtitle it is not translated, but retained in order to produce the rhyming effect of the line. In the original dialogue it does not mean more than the alliteration of /s/ sound and it will definitely be lost if translated. The subtitler, therefore, has retained it to preserve the alliterative effect.

#### 5.2.4. Customs / Festivals / Sports / Games:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
20	00:32:58 - 00:33:01 That's great! That's like winning the <u>sweepstakes</u> .	തകർത്തു! ഇതിപ്പോ കുതിരപ്പന്തയം ജയിച്ച പോലെ ആയി...

‘Sweepstakes’ is a popular form of gambling of horse race in the USA. The reference to the unexpected winning a huge amount is communicated using the metaphor of sweepstakes. But as far as the audience in target culture is concerned, this is outside their cultural frame of reference and horse and horse race do not appear in their

active vocabulary. The culture specific reference ‘sweepstakes’ in the film belongs to the games and entertainments of Americans and hence needs a cultural substitution in the translation for conveying the meaning in a better way. Though the literal translation *kuthirappanthayam* does convey the message partially, it could be rendered in subtitle using a more effective strategy. A cultural transposition of the idea ‘winning the sweepstakes’ into Malayalam would have been more suitable in the context. In the context of Malayalam, ‘lottery’, a popular example of lucky draw can be considered and it is in the active vocabulary of the common man as the metaphor of ‘lottery’ is used in the every-day life. Thus the subtitle can be rendered in a more domesticated manner and may read like this: *ippo lottery adicha pole ayallo!*

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
21	00:54:03 - 00:54:07 Year after that, they rescheduled the <u>intramural</u> season... ...to coincide with tax season.	അടുത്ത വർഷം നികുതിക്കണക്കും <u>ഫുട്ബോൾ മാച്ചും...</u> ഒന്നിച്ചു വരുന്ന രീതിയിൽ ക്രമീകരിച്ചു...

‘Intramural’ mentioned in the above subtitle is the competition in sports and games organized within the boundary of an institution, like prison. It includes all sports items in which the inmates of the prison participate for entertaining themselves. But it is creatively translated as *football match* (football match) , though it does not stand exclusively for football. Moreover, it is clear from the visuals that all the participants appear in baseball jersey, not that of football. The literal translation of ‘intramural’ is *jail sports* (jail sports) which include all items of sports and games without specifying football. The emphasis on ‘football’ can be justified by its popularity in the target culture, especially among the youngsters in Kerala. Foregrounding ‘football’ in the subtitle can be seen as mode of domestication that enables the viewers to identify their

cultural experience of sports with the one in the film. But this translation does not connote the idea that it is conducted ‘within the prison’ and the subtitler has preferred the specific item of football to the manner in which it is conducted in order to bring the film closer to the target audience.

### 5.2.5. Technical / Legal / Official Terms:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
22	00:34:26 - 00:34:30 The IRS allows a one-time-only gift to your spouse for up to \$60, 000.	60,000\$ വരെ ഭാര്യക്ക് നൽകാൻ ഒറ്റത്തവണത്തേക്ക് IRS* അനുവദിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. (*നികുതിവകുപ്പ്)

The IRS (Internal Revenue Service) is the revenue service of the United States and the abbreviation is retained in the Malayalam subtitle with the bracketed explanation at the end of the sentence. The technical term used in abbreviation here refers to the tax-free amount in terms of a gift given to one’s spouse. The retention of ‘IRS’ in the subtitle with an asterisk and the bracket, as it is discussed in example 1 and 2, makes it wordy and difficult to understand in fast reading. Moreover the Malayalam subtitle does not convey the intended meaning in the first reading and the sense of IRS provision to gift one’s spouse up to 60, 000\$ is left vague. One cannot understand whether IRS is referring to a provision in the Revenue department or whether IRS stands for the income tax department in itself. This can be simplified and replaced by more common expressions like *IRS il / nikuthi vakuppil bharyakkulla giftinu 60, 000 dollar vare tax illa*. However, ‘IRS’ cannot be left untranslated in this case because it is necessary for the audience to comprehend it because it repeatedly appears in the following subtitles: ‘IRS can’t touch one cent’ and ‘It’s legal. Ask the IRS. They’ll say the same thing’. When this reference to IRS appears in three parts of consecutive

subtitles, the challenge is whether it is to be translated in the first subtitle or in the following ones. In both cases the subtitler is caught between omission and retention.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
23	01:18:21 - 01:18:24 Now anybody gets curious, <u>FBI</u> , <u>IRS</u> ...whatever. It'll lead to somebody.	ആർക്കെങ്കിലും സംശയം വന്നാൽ, <u>FBI</u> , <u>IRS</u> ആരോ ആവട്ടെ... അവർ അന്വേഷിച്ച് ഇങ്ങങ്ങത്തും...

FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and IRS (Internal Revenue Service) are the two authorities concerned with income tax and other financial accounts. They are retained in the subtitle without any explanation. These references remain ambiguous in the subtitle as the target audience is not familiar with such agencies when they are used in abbreviated forms. It could be translated in terms of substitution or addition, using any corresponding Malayalam terms like *nikuthi vakupp* (Income Tax Department) or CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) which is familiar and more likely to be followed by Malayalam readers. However, it is to be ensured that that the suggested replacement fits the space and time slots of the subtitle.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
24	01:29:14 - 01:29:17 The country club will have his old timecards. Records, <u>W-2s</u> with his name on them.	ആ ക്ലബ്ബിൽ..എന്തെങ്കിലും രേഖകൾ ഉണ്ടാവില്ലേ? നികുതിയുടെയോ എന്തെങ്കിലും..
25	00:54:11 - 00:54:15 The guards on the opposing teams all remembered to bring their <u>W-2s</u> .	എതിർ ടീമിലെ കളിക്കാരും നികുതി ഫോം എടുക്കാൻ മറന്നില്ല.

The translation of ‘W-2’ as *nikuthi fom* is the replacement of a technical name with a common name. In financial terms, it is a technical name for a section pertaining

to the rules and regulation of income tax payment under which the tax calculations are made. It cannot be retained in the subtitle as it would not make any sense to mention the name as there is no supporting visual or other additional information in the scene. So the translation is most appropriate and conveys the sense in a simple and direct manner.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
26	00:54:31 - 00:54:34 Could you hand me a stack of <u>1040s</u> ?	റെഡ്, ആ <u>1040-ന്ററെ</u> കെട്ട് എടുത്തേ...

Just like the W-2s mentioned previously (No. 23), ‘1040s’ also stands for an application form to be filled up for claiming tax returns. During the narration of Dufrense’s busy engagement with the tax calculation, we hear this dialogue and see the response in the visuals that follow. When Dufrense asks for the stack of ‘1040s’ Mr. Red hands it over to him and it clearly understood that it is a bundle of official papers. Here, the audience will not be able follow the term if it is mentioned without the corresponding visuals. The visual co-text saves the translation so that the term is retained in the subtitle.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
27	00:43:39 - 00:43:42 They transferred him to a <u>minimum-security hospital</u> upstate.	അവരവനെ ഒരു <u>മിനിമം-സുരക്ഷാ</u> <u>ആശുപത്രിയിലേക്ക്</u> മാറ്റി...

‘Minimum security hospital’ is the type of hospital set up for special treatment of the inmates of prisons or mental asylums. It is an unfamiliar concept to the target audience and needs proper translation. But, here it is only partially translated leaving the subtitle ambiguous. If ‘minimum security hospital’ is retained, the audience may not understand it without an explanation which will make the sentence longer. In the given subtitle, the

term remains an ambiguous one. It would be easier and more sensible if it is translated exercising the strategy of Addition. Thus it can be rendered as *jail ashupathri* (prison hospital) because the concept may be familiar to the audience as no technical term is used here.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
28	01:20:29 - 01:20:32 Tommy Williams came to Shawshank in 1965... ...on a two-year stretch for <u>B and E</u> .	1965- ലാണ് ഓമി വില്യംസ് ശോഷാങ്കിൽ വന്നത്. <u>മോഷണ ശ്രമത്തിന്</u> രണ്ടു വർഷം...

‘B and E’ stands for ‘Breaking and Entering’ in American criminal law and the abbreviation is translated as *moshana shramam*. The abbreviation, of course, will bring ambiguity to the target audience if it had been retained in the subtitle. It is quite appropriately and effectively translated here so that the sense is clear in the context. It is not a direct translation because Breaking (*kuthithurakkuka*) and Entering (*akathu kayaruka*) will not make proper sense. This is rather a semantic replacement of the two terms and is an effective strategy to explain the abbreviation in the subtitle.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
29	00:52:38 - 00:52:41 If you ask for something, ask for a <u>pool table</u> .	എന്തെങ്കിലും ചോദിക്കുന്നെങ്കിൽ ഒരു <u>പൂൾ ടേബിൾ</u> ചോദിക്കൂ.

‘Pool table’ is the informal expression for pocket billiards. Here it refers to the table on which pool is played. The term looks strange to the audience as the particular game is not popular among the common people of the target culture. One is neither able to assume its meaning from the sentence nor from film context if it is not translated. But translating a term like this one is a challenge as there is no corresponding name in

Malayalam and most of the audience may be not familiar with the game. The subtitler has considered the ‘assumed knowledge’ of the audience and retained it expecting that a ‘considerable’ part of the audience is familiar with pool table. The dilemma of the subtitler here is whether it is to be retained in the subtitle or omitted on any ground.

### 5.2.6. Idiomatic / Axiomatic Expressions:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
30	00:54:47 - 00:54:52 I don't need you to tell me <u>where the bear shit in the buckwheat.</u>	യാ... ഇത് പറഞ്ഞുതരാൻ എനിക്കൊരു ബാക്കറുടെ ആവശ്യമൊന്നുമില്ല...

The idiom ‘to know where the bear shit in the buckwheat’ means ‘to explain something to a person who already knows about the same’ and the Malayalam subtitle is rendered at the cost of this amusing idiomatic expression. The scene of confrontation between Andy and the Hadley teaches the latter about the tax-free provisions of the tax department. But instead of taking it from him, he tries to have an upper hand and turns out to be arrogant. The subtitle does not capture the idiomatic sense of the sentence. The complete omission of an idiomatic expression affects the audience in terms of understanding the character’s style of speech and real sense of the dialogue.

The idiom could have been translated better as corresponding idiom exist in Malayalam. For example, the idiom *pothin kuttikku/neerkolikku neenthal padippikkuka* can capture the same sense in the same degree. So, a cultural transposition of the idiom would be a more appropriate strategy in this context. Leaving the idiomatic expression untranslated cannot be justified here on any ground because it denies cultural exchange through language.



	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
31	00:37:23 - 00:37:27 We might do business on a board, and I'll carve the <u>pieces</u> myself.	ബോർഡ് നമുക്ക് വാങ്ങാം. പക്ഷേ, <u>കറുക്കൽ</u> ഞാൻ തന്നെ ഉണ്ടാക്കും...

The plan to make chess pieces heralds Andy's plan for jailbreak. When he says "we might do business on a board, and I will carve the pieces" there is nothing unusual apparently, but it can be understood from the film that under the pretext of carving the chess-pieces he was preparing a tunnel to escape. The English phrase 'carve the pieces' is creatively translated into Malayalam so as to effect the pun in the words '*karukkal undakkuka*'. This denotes the Malayalam idiom *karukkal neekkuka* (to plan for something very cleverly and secretly) which is not hinted at in the original dialogue. Only as we learn about his escape in the latter part of the film that the word-play comes to the fore. This creative translation is facilitated by the contextual coincidence of the idiomatic usage. *Karukkal* is actually the literal translation of 'pieces', but the dual meaning it produces is a by-product of the literal translation.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
32	00:56:17 - 00:56:19 Old man's <u>crazy as a rat</u> <u>in a tin shithouse.</u>	ആ കെളുവൻ പ്രാന്താ... <u>തകരപ്പെട്ടിയിലെ എലിനെ പോലെ...</u>

The idiom in the above dialogue is literally translated in the subtitle. The reference is to Mr. Brook who is restless and violently crazy when his parole came through. The literal translation does not make any sense as the expression 'rat in tin shit house' is a strange one in the target culture. The old man here seems to be unfit to live outside the prison and is never prepared to go out even after he was granted a parole. Just like a rat that lingers around in a shit house, Mr. Brooks also is unimaginably crazy

to remain as prisoner because he was highly ‘institutionalized’. The relation between ‘institutionalized’ life in the prison and the idiom is lost in the translation as no corresponding idiom or other expression is used in the subtitle.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
33	00:52:51 - 00:52:55 in my tenure, and I've learned... ...one immutable, universal truth: <u>Not one born whose asshole...</u> <u>...wouldn't pucker up tighter than</u> <u>a snare drum when you ask for funds.</u>	അതിൽ നിന്ന് വലിയൊരു (പ്രപഞ്ചസത്യം ഞാൻ പഠിച്ചു. ഒരണ്ണം പോലും ഇല്ല... പൈസക്ക് ചോദിക്കുമ്പോ ചന്തിക്ക് തരിപ്പ് കേറാത്തവരായിട്ട്...

The idiom ‘Pucker up tighter than a snare drum’ finds a fairly suitable expression in the subtitle here. The sense is that the official authority of prison library is always reluctant to sanction fund for the improvement of library and they pull a long face whenever any request is made for financial assistance. The corresponding idiom in Malayalam is *mugam chulikkua*, but the idiom used in the subtitle *chanthikk tharippu keruka* is more funny and to the point in the context because it expresses his anger and dissent to the institution. This humorous nature of subtitle is achieved not only through the replacement of an idiom, but also through the creative addition of the translator who foregrounds the sense of humor with which the audience are brought closer to the story. It is also to be noted that the swear words in the original dialogue is camouflaged by the corresponding expression.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
34	01:17:58 - 01:18:01 I send it out into the real world, and when it comes back... - <u>Clean as a virgin's honeypot, huh?</u> - Cleaner.	- എനിട്ടു തിരിച്ചു വരുമ്പോ... - കന്യകയുടെ തേൻകുടം പോലെ <u>ശുദ്ധം, ല്ലേ?</u> - അതിലുംശുദ്ധം...

The reference is to the money that Norton amassed through his shady deals on the contracts of ‘Inside Out’ project. Having deposited in different banks and other investments, the amount is processed as ‘clean as virgin’s honey pot’ which means faithful and legal. But the subtitle has only the literal translation of the idiom and hence cannot impart the essential meaning of the expression. Though the words *kanyaka* and *thenkudam* denote a sense of purity partially, only very rarely the readers can follow the real sense from this literal translation. Moreover, the connotation that the word *thenkudam* (honey pot) creates would be different in English and Malayalam, unless one is more familiar with the erotic sense of these expressions. It could have been replaced with any usage in Malayalam that communicates the same sense in a better way.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
35	00:42:19 - 00:42:23 I don't have her <u>stuffed down the front of my pants right now</u> , sorry to say.	അതേ... ആൻഡി. <u>അവളെന്റെ പാന്റിനകത്തുള്ളത്</u> പോലുണ്ടല്ലോ ചോദ്യം...

‘Stuffed down the front of my pants right now’ explains that the picture of the film star is not readily available with him. But the subtitle lacks the same sense in translation as it does not emphasize the ‘right now’ in the original dialogue. The given translation raises the question ‘why it is stuffed down in front of the pants’ as the visual context also does not contribute any supporting hints to it. The expression is more colloquial and it has a corresponding Malayalam expression. Thus it could be better translated *oh..njan avale eppolum ente trousarinte keeshayilittu nadakkukayallo...* Translation into an informal style like this enables the reader to identify themselves with the characters and enjoy the film in a more domesticated way.

### 5.2.7. Pun / Humor / Word Play:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
36	00:44:48 - 00:44:51 - What the hell is it then? - It's a horse apple. - Bullshit! - No, horseshit. Petrified.	പിന്നെ ഇതെന്ത് കുന്താ? - കുതിരയാപ്പിൾ. - ബുൾഷിറ്റ്** !! - അല്ല!, കുതിരച്ചാണകം. നല്ല ഉണങ്ങിയത്. (**എരുമച്ചാണകം/മണ്ടത്തരം).

Wordplay is a powerful source of humor. The humor or a particular connotation works on the unique structural, semantic and phonetic merit of the given language. But they are absolutely lost when translated into a different language which is structurally, semantically and even phonetically poles apart. Here, the verbal humor is produced by the dual meaning of 'bullshit' which is a response to the comment 'it is a horse apple' which in turn is explained by 'horse shit'. The subtitle fails to reproduce the humorous connotation produced by the verbal combination in English. The translation *kuthirayappil* does not conform to the following words *bullshit* and *kuthirachanakm* in producing the dual meaning. Moreover, the bracketed explanation of the word with asterisk virtually makes it difficult for the readers to understand the word play and the resultant fun involved.

The humor and irony in the English dialogue cannot be reproduced in Malayalam as they are produced out of the meaning of the given words, but also out of the morphological structure and their double meaning in the context. These exclusive features of English words can rarely be kept when translated into Malayalam. Hence, any of the strategies of translation does not work here and only a literal translation is given in the subtitle.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
37	00:48:47 - 00:48:49 Salvation lies within.	“ഇതിലാണ് മോക്ഷത്തിന്റെ മാർഗ്ഗം...”

Very rarely, the word play and its resultant humor can be retained when it is translated to another language. The given original dialogue and its subtitle are the example of such an instance. When the book is handed over to Andy, the warden comments ‘salvation lies within’, but the connotation of ‘salvation’ and ‘within’ does not come into the play until the Bible which he hollowed out to bury his rock hammer is found out after his escape, in the last part of the film. Mr. Norton reads the same sentence written on the inner cover of the Bible which was being used under the pretext of the financial account book. The translation becomes more appealing as ‘within’ is translated as *ithilaanu* (in this) instead of *ullil* (within). It is this twist that reminds the audience about the rock hammer hidden within Bible that paved way for his salvation from prison. Salvation is translated as *moksham* which is a word used to refer to ‘redemption’ and ‘escape’ simultaneously in Malayalam too. It is the potential of the word ‘salvation’ and the visual context used that make the pun viable here.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
38	01:40:55 - 01:40:57 This is just shitty <u>pipe dreams</u> .	ഇതൊക്കെ വെറും ദിവാസ്വപ്നങ്ങളാണ്...

The phrase ‘pipe dream’ here refers to the world of fantasy proposed by Andy when he shares his future plans with Red. When the latter chuckles it off as a day dream and says ‘This is just shitty pipe dream’, it is intricately connected with the character Andy and, in a wider sense, to the film itself. Though Red uses it casually during their conversation, the pun of the word and its implication is revealed only when we learn that Andy escaped the prison through the tunnel he made using the rock hammer and

crawled through the long ‘shitty pipe’ line of the prison to get out. This double meaning of the English phrase makes it more appealing in the context, but it cannot be translated producing the same sense because the corresponding Malayalam phrase does not have ‘pipe’ or similar word in it. So, the basic pun of the word is totally absent in the subtitle. It is not any specific strategy used here, but sheer coincidence of the words ‘pipedream’ in the context and the suggested meaning even when the two characters seem to be quite unaware of the implication of the usage.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
39	01:13:36 - 01:13:58 - Treasure Island. - Robert Louis-- Stevenson. Fiction, adventure. - What's next? - I got here Auto Repair... ...and Soap Carving. - Trade skills and hobbies. Under " <u>Educational.</u> " behind you. - Count of Monte <u>Crisco.</u> - That's " <u>Cristo,</u> " you dumb shit. - By Alexandree... ... <u>Dum-ass.</u> <u>Dumb ass.</u> - <u>Dumb ass?</u> - Dumas. Know what that's about? You'd like it. It's about a prison break.	- ഭക്ഷർ ഐലന്റ്. - റോബർട്ട് ലൂയിസ്... സ്റ്റീവൻസൻ. ഫിക്ഷൻ, സാഹസികം... - എന്താ അടുത്തത്? - എന്റെ കയ്യിൽ വാഹന റിപ്പയറും... സോപ്പ് നിർമ്മാണവും. - കരവിരുതും ഹോബികളും. - അത് <u>വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ</u> ഒപ്പം നിങ്ങളുടെ പിറകിൽ. - "ദി കൗണ്ട് ഓഫ് മോണ്ടെ <u>ക്രിസ്കോ</u> " - <u>ക്രിസ്കോ</u> അല്ലെടാ 'ക്രിസ്റ്റോ'. പൊട്ടാ... - എഴുതിയത്... അലക്സാണ്ടർ <u>ഡമ്മാസ്.</u> <u>(ഡമ്മാസ്: കഴുതപ്പിന്നൻ)</u> - " <u>ഡമ്മാസ്??</u> " - " <u>ഡ്യൂമാ</u> ". അതെന്തിനെപ്പറ്റിയാണെന്നറിയോ? ആ...നിനക്കിഷ്ടപ്പെടും... ജയിൽ ചാട്ടത്തിനെ പറ്റിയാ...
40	We ought to file that under <u>"Educational"</u> too, oughtn't we?	ഇതപ്പോ നമ്മൾ <u>വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ</u> ഒപ്പം വെക്കണം, അല്ലേ?

During the classification of the books in the prison library, books on trade skills like Auto Repair and Soap Carving are placed under the category ‘educational’ and it is translated as ‘*vidyabhyasam*’. But, ‘Educational’ mentioned in this context means ‘skill or special knowledge’ under which the books on skills of Auto Repair and Soap Carving are filed. The translation does not denote this meaning primarily because *vidyabhyasam* is a word broadly used to mean any kind of knowledge and secondly it is used without inverted commas unlike in the English subtitle. It could be better if the word is put in inverted commas or translated differently, like *arivukal*. This word ‘educational’ appears also in the last part of the subtitles where the punch of the humor lies in the ironic activity of classifying a book on prison break under the category of ‘educational’. Here the humor is the ironic usage of the word ‘educational’ both for ‘trade skills and hobbies’ and prison break.

The mispronunciation of the name The Count of Monte Cristo as ‘Crisco’ and the author’s name Alexander Dumas as ‘dumb ass’ provide ample space for fun and laughter. It becomes funny because of the connotative meaning of Monte (a card game) and Crisco (a kind of vegetable fat). These connotations are totally unknown to the audience who read the Malayalam subtitles and the resultant fun is missing. ‘Dumas’ pronounced as ‘dumb ass’ also is very funny in terms of the tentative pronunciation and ironic meaning that comes to play. It’s the combination of ‘dumb’ and ‘ass’ that makes it funny and the subtitle ‘*dummas*’ fails to capture the humorous element in the word and even the explanation given in the bracket (*kazhutha ennartham*) does not produce any similar effect.

The comment ‘We ought to file that under "Educational" too, oughtn't we?’ turns out to be ironically humorous when it is suggested that the book on prison break ought to be categorized ‘educational’. But here also the translation *vidyabhyasam* detains the

intended sense. One way of conveying this humorous part is to think of other possibilities of translation. It would be more suitable if ‘educational’ is translated as ‘*valiya arivukal*’ because prison break is taken as a skill just like Auto Repair and Soap Carving. The scene in the film is a sufficient clue to the imminent prison break of an educated man like Andy. In order to produce this effect, it is also necessary to use the latter translation consistently in both the places. The literal translation makes the subtitle deprived of all connotations of the context.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
41	01:16:03- 01:16:07 You have some of this <u>fine pie...</u> ...my missus made for you. You think about that.	നീ ഈ പലഹാരം കഴിച്ച് നോക്കിയേ... നിങ്ങൾക്ക് വേണ്ടി എന്റെ ഭാര്യ പ്രത്യേകം ഉണ്ടാക്കിയതാ.
42	01:17:36 - 01:17:39 He's <u>got his fingers</u> <u>in a lot of pies</u> , from what I hear.	അങ്ങേർ ആവശ്യത്തിലേറെ ഒപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന് കേട്ടു...

The use of ‘pie’ in both the subtitles above, though in two separate scenes, has a great impact in defining the character of Mr. Norton. In the first instance it is literally the pie, as it is clear in the visuals, gifted by the local labor contractor in order to woo him for getting the contract of the work. It also refers to the pie box that is used to hide the money to bribe him. In this context, the translation *palaharam/cake* is appropriate and clear to the audience. But the second instance is the idiom on ‘pie’ and certainly a play of the word used in the first instance. The idiomatic expression is built upon the connotative meaning of ‘pie’ used in the former sentence. He ironically says that “He's got his fingers in a lot of pies, from what I hear”, but its translation does not capture the sense of ‘pie’ as it is not translated literally. *anger avashyathilere opikkunund ennu kettu* is conveying only the primary meaning and cannot emphasize ‘pie’ in translation. At the



same time, the repetition of *palaharam* in the second case also would not make much sense because the comment ‘*anger kure palaharangal oppikkunndennu kettu*’ happens to be in a later and different scene in which the readers cannot be expected to remember the former instance.

### 5.2.8. Untranslated / Omitted Items:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
43	00:52:13 - 00:52:17 All he needed was a suit and tie and a <u>jiggly hula gal</u> on his desk...	ഒരു കോട്ടും ടയ്യും അലങ്കരിച്ച ഒരു മേശം കൂടി ഉണ്ടേൽ...

When Dufresne was sought after by many prison officers for helping them in terms of preparing tax returns and other financial statements, he became ‘Mr. Duffresne’, according to Mr. Brooks. He says that what Duffresne lacked was the official uniform and a well-furnished office room with a ‘jiggly hula gal’ on his table. ‘Hula gal’ is the statue of a hula dancing girl and is used to decorate office tables and drawing rooms. In the subtitle, the term has been left out and is not compensated by any corresponding word. It seems that the translator is either ignorant of the reference or conveniently skipped due to the difficulty in finding a corresponding usage.

	Graffiti	Malayalam Subtitle
44	01:56:47 - 01:56:50 His judgment cometh and that right soon.	No subtitle

We read this apocryphal verse in Ecclesiasticus written on the plaque behind which Mr. Norton hides his safe of accounts. The quotewhich is alluded to in the New Testament comes to focus on the screen just after the visual of the newspaper report is shown: ‘Corruption, Murder at Shawshank’. The meaning of the quotebecomes quite relevant when it is learned that Duresne has escaped and the judgment of Norton is

approaching. The sentence presents a sharp contrast revealing the hypocrisy of Norton and his outward appearance as faithful Christian. But the quote is missing in the subtitle and target audience cannot understand this part of the film. It can be argued that the subtitler has skipped this either he/she has concentrated only on the dialogue, not on other verbal texts in the film or this part is ignored altogether.

### 5.2.9. Other References:

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
45	00:26:34 - 00:26:36 If they catch you, you don't know me. Mention my name, we never do business again. Not for <u>shoelaces or a stick of gum</u> . Now you got that?	എങ്ങാനും പിടിച്ചാൽ... എന്നെ നിനക്കറിയില്ല കേട്ടോ!! എന്റെ പേര് സൂചിപ്പിച്ചാൽ, നമ്മൾ തമ്മിൽ പിന്നൊരു ഇടപാട് ഉണ്ടാവില്ല... <u>ഒരുപ്പൂ-ലൈസിനോ, മിഠായിക്കോ...</u> ഒന്നിനും. മനസിലായില്ലേ...

'Shoelaces or stick of gum' in the source culture is used to refer to any silly or small things that one may need in day-to-day life. Here in the subtitle it has been given a direct translation as *shoolais* and *mitayi*. This may cause a slight confusion to the audience about reference of 'shoelace'. The expression needs a cultural substitution from every-day life of the target audience so that they can easily follow it. A more appropriate translation of this usage in Malayalam would be *theppettikolli* (match stick) which can culturally substitute the English word. The sentence could be thus: *oru theppettikollikku polum vannekkaruth* (don't approach me even for a match stick).

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
46	00:56:32 - 00:56:33 He's just <u>institutionalized</u> . "Institutionalized," my ass. That's <u>"institutionalized."</u>	അങ്ങേർ " <u>സ്ഥാപനവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ടതാ</u> ". സ്ഥാപനവൽക്കരണം... മൈർ തന്നെ... അതാണ് <u>സ്ഥാപനവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ടത്</u> .

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
47	01:39:58 - 01:40:00 I been in here most of my life. I'm an <u>institutional</u> man now. Just like Brooks was.	എന്റെ ജീവിതം മുഴുവൻ ഇതിനകത്തായിരുന്നു... ഞാൻ 'സ്ഥാപനവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട' മനുഷ്യനാ ഇപ്പോ... ബ്രൂക്സ് ആയിരുന്നത് പോലെ...

'Institutionalization' here is the process by which an inmate of prison becomes part of it being influenced by its routine, discipline, physical and mental behavior. Mr. Brooks has been so 'institutionalized' that he does not want to get out and may even lose his sanity when his parole comes through. The term 'institutionalize', both in English and Malayalam, is an academic/political term and hence does not exist in the active vocabulary of the common people. Its direct translation *sthapanavalkkaranam* too is a difficult word for the common people. The term appears in three major parts of the dialogues and assumes greater significance in expressing psychological process of 'institutionalization'. In such a context it is necessary to translate it into a simple version of the same word emphasizing the institution of prison in the translation. Thus it could be translated as *jailvalkkarikkuka / jailinte bhagamakal* which does communicate the long psychological process of being part of the jail.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
48	01:35:31 - 01:35:33 We'll have us a little <u>book barbecue</u> in the yard.	ആ പുസ്തകം കൊണ്ട് നമ്മൾ മുറ്റത്ത് <u>തീക്കുണ്ഡം</u> ഉണ്ടാക്കും...

'Barbecue' actually refers to a festive gathering in which meat, fish or other food items are cooked outdoor on an open fire. According to the warden, if they are caught there will no more be any library as it will be destroyed brick by brick and all the books

will be put on fire making a 'barbecue'. It is translated as *theekundam* which means a 'fire pit' and does not carry the sense of cheerful gathering and food cooked over there. The 'barbecue' is alien to the target culture as it is practiced only by the native English speakers and therefore it needs to be translated in a better phrase that connotes its festive nature.

#### **5.2.10. Swear words / Taboos:**

In subtitling films taboos and swear words are dealt with much care as they are pertinent in revealing a speaker's personality and idiosyncrasies, contributing to audience's understanding of the film as a whole. They are also decisive in translating films to an alien culture in which the same offensive or derogatory expressions take a different sense when they are translated. Therefore usually such expressions are toned down or omitted in subtitling on the pretext of time/space constraints, though their omission may not be the best solution in all cases. Taboo words are linked to local traditions and communities and are used differently depending on particular social and religious environment, meaning that they require a different style of translation depending on the context and the way in which they are interpreted. As swear words or taboos help the audience understand what is going on at a particular point of the film story, the deletion of those words would tell upon the theme of the film and would result in "a loss in communicative effect and social implicature" (Greenall, 2011, p. 60)

It is clear that swearwords and taboos contribute to the accurate portrayal of personalities and the fulfilment of a thematic function in a film, but their translation tends to vary according to the medium. In the subtitles of the films released for cinema distribution swearwords and taboos are rendered in a more daring way on the screen than films broadcast on television, where such terms are usually toned down (Díaz

Cintas, 2001a). The primary function of subtitling is to enable audiovisual material to produce similar effect on the target culture as it has done on the source culture and therefore swearwords and tabbos also should not be neglected in the attempt. Usually such expressions are omitted or toned down due to the prospective negative response of the audience in the target culture. According to Díaz Cintas (2001b) , “there are certainly differences between the levels of acceptance of bad language and sexual references in audiences that belong to different countries and to different social and ethnic groups within the same country” (p. 65). Therefore, subtitling swearwords and taboos is to be analyzed in the particular context they are used in order to keep fidelity of the text. In Malayalam films swearwords were either beeped out or omitted as they were considered too offensive to the audience. But nowadays the audience tends to receive such expressions in their original and most words which were considered taboo or offensive began to be heard in the source language audio and retained when foreign films are subtitled to Malayalam. The following instances from the film will elaborate it.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
49	00:07:35 - 00:07:36 - Hey, Red. How'd it go? - <u>Same old shit</u> , different day.	- ഹേ റെഡ്... എങ്ങനെ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു? - <u>പഴയ മൈർ തന്നെ</u> , മറ്റൊരുദിനം...
50	00:10:50 - 00:10:51 - All right, <u>who's your horse?</u> - <u>That little sack of shit.</u>	ശരി, <u>എന്താ നിന്റെ ആളു?</u> മുനിൽ നിന്ന് എട്ടാമത്തെ <u>ആ മൈരൻ.</u>

Most of the swear words in the original dialogue are phrases containing ‘fuck’, ‘shit’ or ‘ass’ which are commonly used swear words in English. The subtitle does not keep any consistency in translating them as they are used in different sense in different contexts. In No. 49 it is translated as *mairu* (pubic hair), a taboo in Malayalam. The

speaker appears to be angry and disappointed as his appeal for the parole is rejected and then he curses himself saying ‘shit’. He uses the word here to express his strong reaction against the authority and system of prison. No. 50 translates ‘horse’ as *aal* (guy) and thus it tones down the connotation implied in ‘horse’ which is used to refer to the fellow prisoners who are assaulted by the senior inmates. The translation does communicate the sense partially, though it cannot substitute the original which has multiple connotations.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
51	00:09:59 - 00:10:01 You speak English, <u>butt-steak</u> ?	ഡാ തടിയോ, തനിക്കു് ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് അറിയോ?
52	00:11:02 - 00:11:05 I'll take that <u>chubby fat-ass</u> there.	ഞാൻ ആ... ദ... ദാ... പോണ്ണുതടിയനെ എടുത്തു...

‘Butt-steak’ in No. 51 and ‘chubby fat-ass’ in example 52 denote the fleshy ass of the new guys in the prison and are used in the film with sexual implication. But, in the subtitle they are toned down and simply translated as a ‘fat guy’. The subtitle does not bring into the translation the connotative meaning which marks the comments in the context given. These taboo words, when rendered in subtitles, are no more taboos, but only derogatory expressions referring to the buttock of a person. The gay sexual connotation that is obvious in the dialogue is ultimately lost in translation.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
53	00:11:11 - 00:11:13 <u>Fresh fish</u> today!	- പുതിയപിള്ളേർ!
54	00:11:25 - 00:11:26 - What do you say? - <u>That tall drink of water</u> <u>with the silver spoon up his ass.</u>	- റെഡ്, ഏതാ നിന്റെ ആൾ? - <u>മറ്റേടത്തൊരു</u> <u>വെള്ളിക്കരണ്ടിയുമായി</u> <u>ജനിച്ചു അവൻ തന്നെ...</u>

The expressions ‘horse’ in No. 50 and ‘fish’ in No. 53 clearly communicates the homosexual implications of the comments made by the prisoners about the new coming inmates. ‘Horse’ and ‘fish’ stand for the homosexual partner who they are searching for. These words are not translated into corresponding taboos in Malayalam; rather they are coated in casual expressions. The usage ‘born with a silver spoon in his ass’ in example 54 is a parody of the idiom ‘born with the silver spoon in his mouth’ and its literal translation in the subtitle does not produce the sense of the original dialogue.

	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
55	00:12:56 - 00:12:58 You eat when we say you eat. You shit when we say <u>you shit</u> , and piss when we say you piss. You got that, <u>you maggot-dick motherfucker?</u>	ഞങ്ങൾ പറയുമ്പോ നീ തിന്നും...! ഞങ്ങൾ പറയുമ്പോ നീ തൂറും... ഞങ്ങൾ പറയുമ്പോ നീ മൂത്രമൊഴിക്കും... <u>മനസിലായോടാ പന്ന മോനെ?</u>
56	00:23:57 - 00:24:00 - What you in here for? - Didn't do it. <u>Lawyer fucked me.</u>	- ഹേവുഡ്, നിന്നെ എന്തിനാ ഇവിടെ ഇട്ടത്... - ഞാൻ ഒന്നും ചെയ്തില്ല. <u>വക്കീൽഊമ്പിച്ചതാ...</u>

Subtitles No. 55 and 56 contain offensive words that reveal the emotional state of the speaker. The first one is the reply to the question asked by one of the new inmates about the routine of the food. The translation of ‘you shit when we say you shit’ is remarkable here as the subtitle communicates the direct meaning in the appropriate sense. In the second instance, ‘lawyer fucked me’ also is a harsh reply to the question. Here the speaker means that the lawyer has played a trick or cheated and sent him to the prison. The subtitle corresponds to this meaning by using the word *oombikkuka* which implies the meanings of both the fucking and deception.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
57	A bunch of <u>ball-washing bastards!</u>	കയ്യിട്ട് വാരാൻ കുറെ മൈരോള്ട്...
58	00:21:35 - 00:21:39 Why don't you give him some of your cigarettes instead? <u>Lucky fuck!</u>	ലക്കി ഫക്ട്.
59	01:48:36 - 01:48:38 Man vanished <u>like a fart in the wind.</u>	ഒരുമനുഷ്യൻ, ക്വാറ്റത്തിട്ടു വളി പോലെ അങ്ങ മാഞ്ഞപോയി!!
60	00:22:13 - 00:22:16 <u>What the fuck do you care, new fish?</u> <u>Doesn't fucking matter</u> what his name was. He's dead.	അറിഞ്ഞിട്ട് നിനക്ക് എന്ത് മൈരിനാ? ഇനി അറിഞ്ഞിട്ട് ഒരുമൈരും ഇല്ല... അവൻ തീർന്നു...

All the above examples show that swear words in Malayalam have not been muted in the film, but effectively subtitled. Taboos and swearwords used in the film are not very crucial in understanding the story in general, but they reflect the mood and attitude of the speaker who use them in different occasions. It is to be importantly noted that the translation of swear words and taboos is popularized by the fansub initiative to subtitle foreign films to Malayalam. The film audience in Malayalam realize that a film gets completely translated when all verbal elements including taboos and swear words are sufficiently translated. Translation of these elements also signifies the attempt to domesticate the English film which is otherwise set aside as the other and foreign.

	<b>English Sound Track</b>	<b>Malayalam Subtitle</b>
61	00:24:06 - 00:24:09 <u>You think your shit smells</u> <u>sweeter than most.</u> Is that right?	നീ ഒപ്പിച്ചത് എല്ലാരെക്കാളും കേമമായി എന്ന് തോന്നുന്നുണ്ട്... അല്ലേ?



	English Sound Track	Malayalam Subtitle
62	00:15:44 - 00:15:47 Bet you wish <u>your daddy</u> <u>never dicked your mama!</u>	അച്ഛൻ അമ്മയെ കണ്ടു മുട്ടിയീല്ലായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ, എന്ന് തോന്നുന്നില്ലേ..!

The two examples given above show how the swear words are toned down in the target culture. The expression ‘you think your shit smells sweeter than most’ is a punching one which could have been translated with a corresponding offensive usage in Malayalam. But it would make the sentence longer and consequently will not fit into the given time slot. In the next example the phrase ‘dady never dicked your mama’ is used to insult the prisoner in the worst possible way and the sense is completely communicated in the source language. But when it is subtitled in Malayalam it does not contain any ‘fucking’ element in it, rather it is toned down to a plain expression without such implication.

The translation of culture specific references discussed here are only representative examples from the film. Of course, there are expressions which cannot be specifically classified into any categories mentioned here. They are present in the film in the form of expletives, exclamations and others. Unlike the two films analysed in the previous chapter, which involve local customs, cultural and religious practices, historical figures and events, this film does not specifically represent any particular community in terms of creating the theme of the film. The references mentioned in this film are film stars / popular musicians, national figures and legal and technical terminologies which are translated either by retaining them or substituting them properly. Most characters in the film use Standard English and therefore the dialogues are subtitled more faithfully than the ones in the other two films in which the dialectical variation and colloquial expressions are often sacrificed in their subtitles. Most of the idiomatic expressions and puns in this film are effectively subtitled conveying the essential idea though Malayalam language has a different lexical and phonetic system.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study of film subtitles in audiovisual translation underlines the fundamental postulation that it is a distinct kind of text and its diasemiotic translation in a multisemiotic context determines the way films are received and interpreted. The technical constraints and linguistic choices in subtitling compel the subtitler to prioritize verbal expressions in the film which in turn influence the representation of social, cultural, political and ideological implications of the dialogues and visuals in their diverse dimensions. It is also challenged by the change of medium from speech to writing which has to compete with the cognitive level of the viewer in terms of number of words and reading speed. Culture-specificity of verbal items makes the text of a film more complex as it entails both interlingual and intercultural translation and only a translation expert with bicultural exposure can produce viewer-friendly subtitles.

The analysis of subtitles of the selected films is not only an exploration of the limitations of audiovisual translation, but also an exposition of the possibilities provided by subtitles to translate film for audience belonging to a different culture and language. The translation strategies used to subtitle CSRs like names of various kinds, official or legal terms, humor and idiomatic expressions are not uniform in all instances of the selected films and they vary according to the agency of communication, co-texts of the visuals and music and the content of each expression. While some transcultural references are retained in the subtitle as they convey the intended meaning without any kind of translation, some others are omitted or partially translated triggering questions of credibility and authenticity.

The nature and function of different CSRs are not uniform in all genres and all modes of translation. Culture specificity itself is relative and this is obvious from

the examples taken from two different languages because cultures are neither stable nor clear-cut, rather they are dynamic and subject to different kind of alterations. This relativity is well reflected in the taxonomy of CSRs proposed for the present study. Many of the CSRs are genre specific and therefore the translation behavior is to be closely related to the ‘genre-related’ norms in order to carry out a more fruitful research in the field. It would be interesting to carry out a diachronic study analyzing how certain references that are named in SL, but do not seem to have an equivalent in the TL may eventually make it into other language and culture. Similarly, it is also to be noticed how the nonexistence of words or terminologies corresponding to the governmental, religious, casteic, historical, etc. in the TC can limit the inventory of possibilities available to the translators. The editorial choices such as the selection and rejection of dialogues to be translated are problematic parts of every film, especially when they include crucial or a high number of CSRs. This involves smoothing out culture bumps and result in an impoverishment of the films in the target text which lacks the cultural and linguistic markedness of the original. All these affect the manipulative translational behavior and the way it becomes fundamental to many decisions taken in the translation process.

It was the researcher’s hypothesis that at least some parts of the selected films could potentially give rise to ideological and representational issues due to the opacity of significant parts in the verbal dialogues. It is on this conviction that *1921* and *Adaminte Makan Abu* and *The Shawshank Redemption* are brought under study. Multiple idiolects of the same language, vocabulary of different social classes, varieties in terms of caste and creed and shift of speech patterns according to the addressee reveal that the structure of a language affects the speaker’s cognitive process and the way in which they conceptualize

the world and people. The increased number of manipulative translation strategies, remarkably omission, used in the subtitles of *1921* and *Adaminte Makana Abu* marks a clear translation behavior in subtitling Malayalam films. This implies the standard of English subtitles and its status in Malayalam film industry. One of the major aims of analyzing the data was to identify various strategies used for subtitling CSRs emphasizing the challenging and sensitive linguistic elements whose translation/non-translation has greater ideological and sociolinguistic implications. Most of such elements have been analyzed in detail in their respective chapters and an attempt has been made to find out striking regularities and subtitling patterns in translation of the films.

Major strategies considered for the analysis in the study are Retention, Specification, Direct Translation, Generalization, Substitution, Omission and using an Official equivalent, based on which Retention and Omission are frequently used in most cases. Specification and Substitution, two strategies which could prove more successful in several instances have been rarely used because they require bicultural knowledge and linguistic competence for appropriate wording. In *Adaminte Makan Abu* institutional names, official names and designations and terms used in religious circles are retained in subtitles because of technical limitations and word counts in each line of the subtitle. But, in most cases, they fail to impart the sense which is uniquely characterized in the source language. Several scenes of the film are rich in ironical, idiomatic and sarcastic expressions, but they could not be transferred to the target language. Humorous dialogues that involve social satire and self-criticism are either literally translated or omitted altogether resulting in inadequate representation of the characters and drainage of the spirit of the repartees made by people living in rural area. The songs in this film are to be considered essential in communicating the theme more powerfully rather than

revealing the mood and emotional appeal of the characters. The song in the middle of the film should have been subtitled in order to facilitate an emotional identification between the characters and viewers.

The dialogue in the opening scene of the film presents the social satire of Muslim community. This discussion is centered on the attitude of the upper class believers towards the inmates of the orphanage in the locality. The institution is referred to as 'yatheemkana', the Arabic translation of 'orphanage', in the source language, but the subtitle has retained 'Yatheemkana' explaining it in bracket. In effect, the institution mentioned in the SL is described in the subtitle using two words: 'yatheemkana' and 'orphanage'. Here the former word stands for a religious institution and the latter for a secular one and explicating 'yatheemkana' as 'orphanage' would convey only the idea of a secular institution without any belonging to a religious circle. Moreover, the reader most probably reads an English word in bracket than going for the transliteration of a non-English word given within quotes. It would also be difficult for the target audience to understand the religious affiliation of the term when there are no corresponding visuals to support the concept. Thus, the religious connotation of a word used in a reserved circle of Muslim community is understood by the target audience in a secular and popular sense creating a cultural divide in the communication. This technical manipulation of a word results in ideological misrepresentation in the film and denies the audience the occasion to understand the internal social structures that reflect hierarchies of power relations operating between the residents of orphanage and other members of Muslim community. The manipulated notion of the institution of orphanage and its status in a religious community influences the way people understand the film's critical stand towards religion and the satirical comments that form the main thread of the film.

Hasainar Haji who represents the elite stratum of the community dictates and controls the life of the unprivileged sections like orphans and destitute. Placing himself on a high pedestal of social privilege and religious piety, Haji expects others to be loyal and subservient to him. It is this discriminatory power which is fundamentally based on his economic status and social nobility that enables him to dictate 'their status' referred to in the subtitle (No.1 & 2). The 'modest way' (as given in the translation) is reduced to 'status' in the subtitle. When the expression 'modest way' clearly reflects the submissive mode of behavior in the presence of the so called elite people, 'status' remains as a neutral term that fails to communicate the connotation of this social hierarchy. This is again revealed in the scene when Hasaianar Haji demands tablets for gas trouble from Abu who gives them for free. Thus the 'status' assigned to the economically lower class of the community can be visualized in several scenes of the film. In the scene mentioned above, the dialogue has no supporting visuals of the orphanage residents who disturb the prayers in the mosque and therefore the intended meaning is to be communicated only through the words in the subtitle. The neutral expression of 'status' twists the representation and tones down the nature of relationship between the two strata of the community.

This social demarcation is again obvious in the scene (No. 7 & 8) in which Abu meets Hasainar Haji to discuss his ambition to go on hajj. Haji tells him that he went on hajj all the four times through 'Akbar Travels of Kozhikode' whereas Abu plan to go through 'the Hajj Committee'. The two terms act as signifiers to the economic status of Haji and Abu and underpin the source culture's public notion of Hajj among the rich and the poor, particularly Haji's insincere and commercial line of religious practice and spirituality. But as both terms are retained in the subtitle without any explanation the target audience may not capture the polarity between the two characters in terms of their spirituality, power relations and economic status. Moreover, 'Haj committee' does not

make the said sense in a non-Muslim culture or in a state where Haj is not a pilgrimage subsidized by the government.

Many other references like *katheeb*, *subihi*, *swaff* (No. 3) , *mukri* (No.12) , *farlu* (No.13) , which are used as loan words from Arabic to Malayalam and widely used in the religious and secular domains of the source culture are inadequately translated, omitted or retained ineffectively because most of them have no corresponding English words. Haider's critical comments on the society and his idiosyncratic satirical remarks (No.5 & 12) against orthodox religious practices operate in the film, making its text rich and more culture specific, but it has been analyzed that they lose their vigor and punch in their respective subtitles. Even the silent character Ushtad who is presented in the film as a spiritual guide to Abu and to the whole village, also speaks non-verbally to the audience. All these traits of communication characterize the ideology, social structure, belief systems, religious practices, linguistic peculiarities and notions of spirituality of a community and they, more than serving the film story, play a central role in articulating the unique identity of that community and culture. It is these characteristics which are sacrificed in the translation from the Malabar Malayalam which embodies a distinct vocabulary and usage, to the global and secular English. In other words, the specific nature of the local culture is assimilated to a global culture and it is eventually lost. This divide between Malayalam and English resulting in inadequate translation and ineffective strategies rewrites the film through the subtitles and offers a rather manipulated image of society.

*1921* is a film whose historical and communal orientation caters very much to the ethno-regional representation of the society of Malabar region in Kerala. The study finds that major parts of the film are either poorly subtitled or left unsubtitled with a few

instances of exception. Unlike other two films, *1921* is rich in characters and hence replete with names in various categories of personal, geographical, ethnic, official, institutional, etc. In most cases these names are important in communicating the historicity of the film and identity of the characters, but the subtitles do not follow any regular strategy in rendering them intelligibly to the target audience. There are random cases in which they are retained, literally translated and some core dialogues in which they are totally omitted or partially translated. As a historical film, it is incumbent to be faithful to its history as far as possible in terms of representing patriotism of the participants in the anticolonial revolt, social and communal inequalities and social criticism achieved through the idiosyncratic expressions of emotional and intellectual connotations. The social evil of untouchability, for example, and the physical discrimination and mental afflictions which different communities suffered in the historical age are not represented adequately in the subtitle because the terminologies rendered in subtitles fail to convey the social impact of such evils and other inhuman practices. Omissions of this kind, partial or complete, tend to lead to greater departures from the ST and the original dialogue exchanges are adapted in such a way that they usually transform the meaning of the sentences substantially. The linguistic variety of Malayalam used by upper class Hindus and Arabic influence in the dialogues of Muslims are fundamental in communicating the identity of each community represented in the film. But they are either carelessly omitted or vaguely rendered in subtitles.

The film *1921* shares several rudiments of *Adaminte Makan Abu* in that both films are set in the locale of Malabar and in the pluralistic society and multicultural milieu of Hindus and Muslims. However, *1921* differs from the latter as it tries to reproduce the historical age of pre-independent India, specifically the provinces of



Ernad and Valluvanad in the erstwhile Madras state under British government, spreading light on the historic revolt variously known as *Malabar Rebellion*, *Mappila Outrage* and *Peasant Revolt* and revealing its affiliations to the social, political and religious developments of 1920s. The theme of the film is communicated through a lot of interrelated episodes that are strewn around in different realms of communal polarization, religious fanaticism, social evils of untouchability and ritual pollution and economic exploitation of serfs and landlords. It is the uniqueness of the social conditions in the film that makes it distinct in representing the history and culture of a people who revolted simultaneously against the colonial power and social injustice.

The historicity and social content of the film is largely entrenched in the verbal dialogues of each character as well as in the costume and setting. Most CSRs and other verbal expressions used in the film are caste ridden, regional specific and communal oriented and therefore their translations are crucial in delineating the life of the people in that era to the target audience. Characters are often identified by their names which covertly reveal their religion, caste, occupation, etc. and in a film recounting the historical rebellion names of its pioneers and political leaders are worth mentioning. The names of the personalities to whom heroic reverence is paid is paid in source culture are omitted or replaced with a collective name in the subtitle. This is clear in the references mentioned (No. 1 and 24) in which the names are either omitted or changed to 'warriors' or 'leaders'. Names are used as powerful references in the film to discriminate people on the basis of religion, caste, and social hierarchy in a manner that the characters' names themselves stand for their identity. The references (No. 4 and 8) in which personal names are important to communicate religious identity and conversion, references (No.7 and 25) in which the low caste girl is addressed

derogatively and names of other low caste communities are also disapprovingly mentioned and distorted in the subtitle either by omitting them or retaining without sufficient explanation. An important CSR which is recurrent throughout the film and substantial in defining the political and historical bearings of the film is *kilafath*. But the term is not explained in the subtitles, especially in the parts mentioned in the analysis (No. 20, 21 and 29). Though the term is retained in the subtitle, the target audience will have to look up to understand it. Religious rituals and social customs as explained in the references (No. 5, 6, 8, 9 and 26) do not contextualize them in the respective subtitles nor do communicate the emotional intensity of the people who practice the rituals. Omissions and large scale text reduction in the examples (No. 9, 12, 18, 19 and 22) alter the text of each scene and give the target audience a different idea because, in most of the scenes, they are verbally expressed without the support of the visuals. The subtitles seem to be ineffective here when the target audience has to depend only on the partial rendering of the original dialogue. The subtitles explained in (No. 10, 11, 14, 15 and 17) contribute to assert the ethnic identity and individual characteristics of the central characters, but inadequately communicate the indigenous systems and practices of knowledge, religious faith, and patriotism.

*The Shawshank Redemption* is a film that thematically focuses on ‘redemption’ and ‘hope’: the hero’s physical redemption from the prison induced by his hope and spiritual redemption of all human beings by nourishing one’s hope. The film makes its themes eloquent through punching dialogues, symbolic cuts, indicative lighting and metaphorical use of actions, characters and images. The film is a powerful commentary on crime or sin and its redemptive and rehabilitative aspects both in religion and society. When Frank Darabont adapted Stephen King’s novella *Rita Heyworth and Shawshank Redemption* into

a film, he metamorphosed characters, reduced their number and inserted additional scenes in order to make the film more musical and visually appealing. The film is replete with personal and geographical names, technical and official terms, biblical references, scriptural quotes and idiosyncratic verbal formulations of different characters. These verbal components and their translation are significant for the target culture in making sense of the film, but, as it was seen in the analysis chapter, several CSRs are inadequately translated, partially translated or omitted altogether.

An important CSR is found at the beginning of the film, as explained in example No.1: ‘Divorce in Reno’ which is a significant reference because the idea of ‘easy divorce’ is communicated through the compound term. It also helps the audience understand the concept of marriage and divorce as presented in the source culture and reveals Dufresne’s wife’s licentious attitude towards extramarital relations. Names mentioned in the CSRs (No. 2, 3, 4 &10) refer to popular film actresses and screen stars, but they are initially mentioned in the verbal narration and visuals appear only in the later part of the film. Names of these popular figures are always on the lips of American youngsters and the names themselves stand for pin-up girl images in the source culture. But the target culture viewers, unless they have exposure to Hollywood actors, cannot make sense of them when they are mentioned in the narration. Names of other prisons referred to in different parts of the film (No. 6 and 7) are retained without any description while the technical codes used denoting sections in the penal codes (No. 28) is aptly translated. The official codes, though they are different in India and America, inform the audience about the criminal history of the prisoners. At the same time, technical terms (No. 22, 23, 24 & 25) used in income tax calculation which Dufresne has mastered and skillfully performs in various occasions are retained without

translation and yet they partially make sense in certain scenes. References used as brand names (No. 8, 9, 11 & 13) are popular among the source culture audience and play their role in conveying multiple connotative meanings, but in most cases they are retained in the subtitle without producing such an effect.

There are CSRs which are decisive in the production of meaning and fundamental in understanding the film story, but most of them are poorly translated or retained vainly. The ‘inside out program’ (No.13) which is an important episode revealing Norton’s character is found subtitled quite inadequately, in a sense, despite the fact that a corresponding term is available in Malayalam. It is also to be noted that the term is less source culture specific and more intercultural. However, the visuals of ‘inside out program’ help the audience to assume meaning in the context. ‘Educational’ as in (No. 40) and ‘institutionalized’ as in (No. 46 & 47) are strong phrases that underpin respectively the ironical and psychological message of the film. Literal translation of ‘educational’ in the library scene cannot impart the characters’ paradoxical comment on knowledge and educational systems. ‘Institutionalization’, for that matter, is literally translated and it is too formal an expression for the common target culture audience to understand. What makes the subtitles domesticated and thereby more appealing to the target audience is the reproduction of informal dialogues and colloquial expressions preserving the spirit of the conversations and propriety of their context. Most of such expressions as discussed in (Nos. 14 to18) and the swear words or taboos discussed in (Nos. 49 to 62) have been successfully subtitled and they are well received in the vernacular of the target audience. Certain CSRs (No. 20, 27 and 29) that badly need cultural substitution are partially translated or omitted altogether and they appear awkward in the subtitles while certain other CSRs (like No. 21) is brilliantly rendered in

subtitle. The ‘intramural’ mentioned in the dialogue (No.21) refers to baseball, but it has been translated to ‘football’ even when players in baseball jersey are shown on the screen. This cultural substitution reflects the subtitler’s preference of football which is more popular in the target culture than baseball.

Idioms and wordplay that play a major role in defining each character, creating proper mood in respective scenes and imparting theme of the film with a touch of humor are not found consistently rendered in the subtitle. Some of them (No. 30, 31, 33 &37) are effectively translated without losing their connotation; some others (No.32, 36, 38, 39 & 41) are translated at the cost of humour. Actually, these expressions that are made outside the prison influence audience’s formation of the characters’ identity and their representation in the source culture. The quote CSR (No. 44) ‘His judgment cometh and that right soon’ that appears on the plaque of Norton’s office wall is so powerful that it reveals the hypocrisy of Norton and the paradox of ‘Redemption’ and, in a sense, challenges the concepts of sin and purity of faith as represented in the film. But it is not subtitled and this omission affects the film’s capacity for religious critique which is expressed through several images, quotes and connotative phrases. Thus, the Malayalam subtitle of *The Shawshank Redemption* is a demonstration of how foreign films can be subtitled in a minority language like Malayalam and a renunciation of the dominance of English subtitles in world films. In its attempt to decolonize the cinematic experience, subtitles in the regional language try to domesticate the cultural experiences represented in the American movie.

The study of communication in Cultural Studies carried out by Stuart Hall and his analysis of encoding and decoding made in the context of television message can appropriately be applied to film subtitling too. Just like the visual and acoustic parts in a

television program constitute different codes, subtitles also function as codes, although they are produced and inserted most often at a later phase of film production. The visual and acoustic ideas are directly encoded in the film text through shooting and dubbing, but subtitling is to be taken as process or re-encoding of the speech already encoded in the film. This re-encoding involves a complex process of translation from spoken source language to the written target language. It is here that Stuart Hall's (1973) theoretical perspectives of encoding and decoding of television message becomes relevant. Hall's elaboration of sender – message - receiver pattern to the wider dimensions of production – distribution-consumption is analogous to subtitler/translator - subtitle - reader. His considerations of encoding and decoding moments as 'determinate moments' is crucial in subtitling as well because the moments of subtitle production and its appearance on the screen is not a random moment, but a determinate one. The production of subtitles in their 'discursive form' and 'message form' is influenced by a number of aspects operating in linguistic and technical levels of subtitling. An utterance in the source language is converted to subtitle after the subtitler interpreting its meaning in the original and making lexical choices. These aspects of interpretation and lexical choice of a subtitle defines its 'message' form. According to Hall,

Of course, the production process is not without its 'discursive' aspect: it, too, is framed throughout by meanings and ideas: knowledge-in-use concerning the routines of production, historically defined technical skills, professional ideologies, institutional knowledge, definitions and assumptions, assumptions about the audience and so on frame the constitution of the programme through this production structure. (Hall, 1973)

Technical and professional conventions, assumptions about audience, linguistic competence and bicultural knowledge of the translator are all parameters governing subtitling. It is the discursive aspect of subtitle that enables audience decode it in synchrony with other codes on the screen. The assumptions about audience are central in subtitling as well as in television message to understand the process of reception of message. In his essay Hall (1973) quotes Phillip Elliot: “audience is the ‘source’ and ‘receiver’ of the television message”. In subtitling, expectations about the imagined audience and their reading habits followed by their feedback function as the source of subtitle production and determine its textuality and discursive power in the film text.

The translational incongruities between the source language and subtitle may arise out of the failure of certain translation strategies, the shift from the speech to writing or cultural and linguistic disparities between the two. According to Hall (1973) , “ The degrees of symmetry – that is, the degrees of ‘understanding’ and ‘misunderstanding’ in the communicative exchange – depend on the degrees of symmetry/asymmetry (relations of equivalence) established between the positions of the ‘personifications’, encoder-producer and decoder-receiver”. Subtitles require dynamic equivalence than formal equivalence in translation to enable the viewers read them fast in harmony with visuals and sound track. The CSRs in a film being hard nuts in subtitle translation often loses their equivalence in the translation process and tend to distort and rewrite the original as they lose the coordination of meaning between the original and subtitle. Hall makes it clear: “What are called ‘distortions’ or ‘misunderstandings’ arise precisely from the *lack of equivalence* between the two sides in the communicative exchange” (Hall, 1973).

The viewers’ task of reading subtitles involves the activity of decoding the message at a faster pace and relating their meaning with other discourses at play. This

status of film viewers is anticipated in the production of subtitles in terms of deciding word limits and number of lines in subtitle, but the reader's capacity/incapacity to make creative association with other referents ends up in the failure of communication.

Hall has remarkably explained this:

“By the word *reading* we mean not only the capacity to identify and decode a certain number of signs, but also the subjective capacity to put them into a creative relation between themselves and with other signs: a capacity which is, by itself, the condition for a complete awareness of one's total environment”. (Hall, 1973)

There is a considerable semantic gap between what is intended by the film director and what is received by the audience in the source culture, and between what is intended by the subtitler and what is deciphered by the audience in the target culture. CSRs in subtitles are encoded according to the ‘dominant’ and ‘preferred’ interpretations of cultural discourses pertaining the film and viewers are expected to decode according the ‘preferred meanings’, but the viewers actually have to take a negotiated position, taking certain ideas for granted and leaving out some others. The ‘preference’ and ‘dominance’ operative in the selection of specific translation strategies also determine the CSR's ‘preferred meanings’ in each context. The strategic choice of deletion or retention of a CSR, for example brings about a difference in the meaning. Unless the viewers are competent enough to read the subtitles according to the discursive intentions of translator, an undistorted communication is always at stake:

The viewer does not know the terms employed, cannot follow the complex logic of argument or exposition, is unfamiliar with the language, finds the concepts too alien or difficult or is foxed by the expository



narrative. But more often broadcasters are concerned that the audience has failed to take the meaning as they – the broadcasters – intended. What they really mean to say is that viewers are not operating within the ‘dominant’ or ‘preferred’ code. Their ideal is ‘perfectly transparent communication’. Instead, what they have to confront is ‘systematically distorted communication. (Hall, 1973)

It is can be fluently understood from the analysis done in the previous chapters and the discussions that followed it that the verbal transformation and practical constraints inherent in subtitling ultimately result in manipulation and rewriting of the film and this is to be addressed at a wider range of translation. Manipulations in audiovisual translation occur at technical and ideological levels, often technical manipulations effecting ideological manipulation. Technical manipulations can be understood from the instances of fitting a sentence to the fixed slot of subtitle and also from the instance of text reduction and alteration in order to catch up with the assumed reading speed of the target audience. Film translation is always considered as the process of importing foreign productions into a target culture and it implies the penetration of unfamiliar elements which are bound to be manipulated or adjusted by the dominant ideology of the target culture. In other words, what is translated, and how it is translated, is determined by the interests and structure of the host target cultural system. Analyzed this way, the linguistic difference between Malayalam and English and the divide between the two cultures operate in translation practices and very often decide the translatability/untranslatability of certain items.

As discussed in the introductory chapters, translation does not happen in a vacuum and so it is not free from subjectivity and bias of the translator and other agents

involved in the translation process. Strategies adopted in subtitling are decisive in determining the end product as they perpetuate racial stereotypes, frame ethnic and gender prejudices and present outdated role models and concepts of good and bad. According to Toury (1995), owing to their social conditioning, translators are programmed to adopt a certain behaviour based on a set of accepted norms, which have developed from successful, well-established conventions. This is quite true in the case of subtitlers when they translate films. Power and political dominance and professional and financial challenges, rather than linguistic asymmetries between languages act as motivating factors and catalysts in the way cultural values are translated. Moving from a passive role of mere transmitters of information, subtitlers are now considered to be active agents participating in shaping the ideological discourse of their culture, whose system of values they may consciously or unconsciously accept, contributing to their dissemination or subversion. Translation Studies nowadays seem to have moved on, represented by a paradigm in which deviations from the original are regarded as permissible and the typical pre-eminence of the source text can be overturned in favour of the interests of the target culture. Seen from this perspective, the role of the translation scholar is to unmask the ideology that motivates and justifies those precise deviations and, in so doing, to expose the power struggle at play between different social agents participating in the translation process.

Subtitles manipulate film primarily through the intersemiotic shift from speech to writing. This shift poses a challenge of transcribing the original sound track already produced in synchrony with the visuals. This usually forces subtitler for text reduction in which the subtitler, after interpreting and making choices, presents the text in a 'readable' manner to the target audience. Technical limitations that directly or indirectly

influence text reduction make the practice much more constrained and interferes with the translatorial freedom of the subtitler. According to Gottlieb,

The idea of not reducing the text volume in subtitling would be counterproductive to optimal audience comprehension – and result in poor translation. The point here is that a large part of the reduction (still found) in subtitling follows directly from its diasemiotic nature; the deletion or condensation of redundant oral features is a necessity when crossing over from speech to writing – a language mode more concise than oral discourse. (Gottlieb, 2005, p.19)

Text reduction being an inevitable strategy in subtitling, presents the original in an embryonic state with potential to be expanded and interpreted by the readers. The practice of condensing and abridging the original text yield distortions and alterations not only in the target text but also in the source text because translation is always a rewriting of the original. Hermans (1985b) and Lefevere (1992) sets out to analyse translation from a slightly different perspective; one that would highlight any meaningful discrepancies between the source and the target texts, seen from a socio-cultural perspective rather than a purely linguistic one, and that would look into the possible reasons for such departures. Genzler and Tymoczko (2002) go a step further when they state that translation is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture.

In the light of the observations made on the strength of Lefevere's theoretical perspectives, it can be concluded that subtitling is a 'refraction' which occur in the original film texts "that have been processed for a certain audience or adapted to a certain poetics or a certain ideology" (Lefevere, 1981 b, p. 72). Thus, subtitled films are no longer transparent reflections of the original, but distorted products for which equivalences hardly work. Analyzing the process of translation and the strategies involved in subtitling, it would not be an exaggeration to call subtitlers "artisans of compromise" (Lefevere, 1992a, p. 6).

In short, subtitling can be described as a partial translation, with several verbal expressions left untranslated, appropriately omitted, technically condensed or weakly retained in the translation. While it is believed that subtitles support the target audience in understanding the film on a general level, they can, in fact, present only a distorted version of the entire film due to the fundamental shift from speech to writing and diluting cultural specificities and other implications of verbal elements that are substantial in understanding characterization, vernacular features, intercultural exchanges and, above all, appreciation of film as an artifact. In these circumstances it can be stated that subtitling, is a 'refraction' of the dialogues in the original language. What is possible in subtitling is not a coherent translation, rather a metonymic replacement facilitating a negotiated viewing. Therefore, it can be rightly said that subtitling is a rewriting of the film, produced on the strength of the 'imagined knowledge' of the target audience.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

English subtitling in Malayalam film industry suffers from due recognition and authenticity because subtitling is considered as a marginal activity in the industry, though it helps films reach globally. Most often, subtitles are produced by individuals

and distributed without serious consultation with the director or script writers. As subtitles produce another version of the film in a different language, it must be dealt with scrupulously by experts in translation, assisted by the supervision of the film crew. It also requires instructions and suggestions from the viewers as well as from film experts to ensure the readability and reception of subtitles. Subtitles are usually completed just before the release of film and hasty procedures of translating, editing and subtitling, often with less financial expense, affect its quality in several respects. Therefore sufficient time is to be allotted for the same in the same manner as time is consumed for script writing, shooting and editing. The service of bilingual writers, screen writers and translation experts would prove beneficial in this regard when they work in a team and discuss cinematographic, linguistic and cultural issues embedded in each scene of the film. This suggests the need for making more financial investment and allotment of time for subtitling at par with the amount spent for other phases of film making. Due acknowledgement of the subtitler's name in the credits is necessary as it facilitates authenticity and accountability of the given subtitles. As subtitles are creative additions to the film, formal scrutiny and certification also are advisable in the case of subtitling, in the line of censoring the actions and scenes. This official facelift in film industry will enhance the quality subtitles and make them more authentic and reliable.

Malayalam subtitles of foreign films expose the potential of Malayalam language to empower itself by appearing on the screen. In most cases, Malayalam subtitles of foreign films are created and uploaded on the web by individuals interested in the field of translation or the amateur groups like Msone. The growing trend of fansubbing foreign films in Malayalam amounts to enrich the language with the help of digital technology and facilitate translated versions of films which play an important role in intercultural exchange. Subtitles are thus produced every day by different

individuals and agencies, but they are not accorded due credit and recognition because most of the translators remain unknown or they are amateur translators whose names are not acknowledged in the translation. Moreover, multiple versions of subtitles are available on the internet as many subtitlers attempt the same film and subtitles produced by individuals are directly uploaded on the web without any scrutiny or modification. This informal status of Malayalam subtitling can be improved by linking film industry with academic institutions or departments which can produce authorized versions of subtitles in a systematic manner. Departments of different languages, Film Studies and Translation Studies can offer academic and professional opportunities for training in subtitle translation. This in turn will benefit students, teachers, language experts and film professionals to design courses in audiovisual translation and pursue research in language and culture of Malayalam and foreign films.

### **Scope for Further Research**

This study has focused only on the translational issues of Culture Specific References in the selected films by comparing the original dialogue and the subtitle from a translational perspective. The research has not considered the actual subtitling situations, i.e. the situations of producing subtitles in the professional environment and their reception by the target audience. What is attempted here is an analysis of the subtitle text from the perspective of the researcher and there certainly exists a gap between academic observation and real experience. Therefore, the study can be extended to the study of actual conditions of subtitle production in terms of the linguistic competence of the particular translator, bicultural knowledge, technical facilities, economic and political factors, etc. on the one hand and to the knowledge level of the target audience, habit of reading subtitles, reading speed, educational status, etc. on the

other. This is to be investigated thoroughly and the required information can be collected from the respective sources. This can be accomplished by collecting statistical data from the subtitles of a given film and analysing it. This would enable the researcher to identify the translation strategies used in each context and the justifications made for choosing or preferring the lexical choices made in the subtitle.

The research also has to incorporate an empirical study of the reception by audience who watch subtitled films both in English and Malayalam because the actual experience of viewers differs from the hypothetical conclusions of the researcher in terms of their visual literacy, intercultural experiences and encyclopedic knowledge of the people and events presented in the film. This would also enable the researcher to identify the viewers' knowledge of source culture of the film and their expectations about the translation in the target language as audience consists of heterogeneous groups belonging to diverse educational, social and religious background and their reading and interpretation of subtitles differ significantly. Multiple readings of same subtitles reveal cultural variations in the reception of films. After all, every text is to be read and it is the readers who produce the actual meaning in their own way.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW

This interview was conducted by the researcher with Mr. Vivek Ranjit, a young professional subtitler based in Kochi, Kerala. A postgraduate from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, Mr. Vivek has been in the field for the last six years. He has texted English subtitles for more than fifty Malayalam films and is one of the few and well known subtitlers in south India.

**Question 1:** What are the circumstances that led you to the field of a professional subtitler?

**Answer:** It was in the latter half of 2011 that I tried my hand, though not seriously, on *Beautiful* by Anoop Menon on his request to send it for the national award. Earlier, Malayalam films were hardly subtitled when screened out of the State, except when they were sent for the national awards or screened in film festivals. I was just out from Film Institute, Pune and was to join Mr. V.K. Prakash as Assistant Director. Mr. Anoop Menon, the screen writer whom I was already familiar with asked me to try to subtitle his film and I had to sit, listen to each dialogue carefully and transcribe it.

**Question 2:** *Beautiful* was the first film to be subtitled. How was its feedback?

**Answer:** I had already watched the film and it was quite interesting to work on it. The dialogues, especially those of Padmarajan were easy as it carried similar dialogues from his previous film *Thoovanathumbikal*. I finished it and as I was a novice in the field I sent it in a Word document and the remaining work was done at

the subtitle centers at Mumbai or Chennai. There were, of course, technical problems as the translation and inserting of the subtitle was done by different hands. But, now I am doing everything related to subtitling, right from spotting to transcribing, translating, editing and inserting in a full-fledged manner. It was a great experience though the film was not selected for the award. In 2013, I got another opportunity to subtitle *David and Goliath* as suggested by Mr. Anoop.

**Question 3:** Do you know about any film which was subtitled without the award motive?

**Answer:** It was in and after 2012, when *Thattathin Maraythu* and *Banglore Days* were released that subtitles were popularly demanded and used in theatres. Earlier, Malayalam films were subtitled only for the purpose of screening them in Gulf countries because they required subtitles in English in order to translate into Arabic, according to the censorship regulations. Many Malayalam films undergo large scale editing and many important parts are edited out as it happened in the case of *Mayanadi*. But, these subtitles were limited to the Middle East and were never circulated globally.

**Question 4:** Can you mention other films you have subtitled?

**Answer:** As I was the Assistant Director of V.K. Prakash, I could subtitle *Natholi oru Cheriya Meenalla* and *Nirnnayakam*. *You too Brutus* was another one. The first film that I subtitled and screened in theatre was *Kunhiramaynam* (2015) though films like *Banglore Days* were subtitled before it by somebody else. The film *Drishyam* was a hit film that attracted viewers across the country, but it was not subtitled.

I started this venture independently after contacting some of the directors and friends and sharing a post in Facebook about this new field of subtitling for Malayalam films. I explained the need for subtitling as Malayalam films are very rich in content and

enjoy a large viewership across the globe if subtitled in English. The post received good response and all of my friends motivated me to launch the enterprise and *Kuhiramayanam* and *Kohinoor* were the first fruits. I am now working on *kammaram* and *Swathanthryam*.

**Question 5:** What are the rates of remuneration for subtitling in the industry?

**Answer:** Most of the subtitles for Tamil movies and a few Malayalam movies are produced by a Chennai based agency at the rate of around Rs. 1, 000, 00 per film. When I started my career I had to compromise a lot and even after years of experience I am struggling for a good payment. As the industry does not take subtitles as serious as films, they hesitate to pay the subtitler reasonably. There were unfortunate experiences of being underpaid and even cheated.

**Question 6:** How much time is given for completing a work and how is the final version prepared?

**Answer:** It depends on each case. I get maximum two weeks to subtitle a film and I complete one film within 4-5 days average. There are instances when I finish a film in just one day. The time also depends on the genre of the film. Comedies take more time as the subtitle has to reproduce the humor and fun in the best probable manner whereas action or thriller films take less time. Films like *Ankamali Diaries* and *Poomaram* were challenging ones to subtitle in terms of their vocabulary and sentence construction when translated from a language like Malayalam to English. Editing, proof reading and preparation of final version are all done by myself and directors very rarely are keen on scrutinizing it. Sometimes, there are changes in scenes and songs made at the last minute and this creates difficulties as I have to repeat my work. Even after the final version of subtitle is prepared the film undergoes minor changes without the

subtitled being informed. This drastically affects the spotting of the subtitle and results in incongruent subtitles.

**Question 7:** What are the challenges in the translation, especially words specific to our culture and social customs?

**Answer:** Translating humor is very difficult. Songs and other locally known expressions also are hard nuts in translation. In some cases I have to use brackets to explain, but it does not work well. In *Jomonte Suvisheshangal*, for example, when the hero plays dumb charades for the name of a film *Njaan Gandharvan* I had to substitute it with the name of the holly wood film *I, Robot*. In the same film the expression *thanthonni* was substituted with ‘psycho’. As I am a screen writer too, it helps me understand the craft of the film language and I do it confidently. It is not only the translation that matters, but the what and how of communication also is very important. Similarly, swear words are very special in subtitles. Malayalam has plenty of swear words and their variant forms compared to English which has a limited number of swear words. In this respect, *Ankamali Diaries* was a much appreciated film across the country for retaining the punch of original swearwords in the subtitle.

**Question 8:** In what format do you get the films? Do the directors instruct you to follow any particular style, words, usages or methods in translation?

**Answer:** Usually they provide the final cut video and they don’t hesitate to give it. The script or dialogue list will not work as the final cut may be different from the script. It will be again different when the film is dubbed. But they don’t make any suggestions or interfere and I have full freedom in translation.



**Question 9:** Subtitling requires mastery of language. How are you inclined to language and writing?

**Answer:** My primary education was in Toc H public school, Kochi and I graduated from Loyola College Chennai. As a graduate I had a flair for writing that led me to Film institute, Pune. After my undergraduate days, I used to write film reviews on my blog when internet and social media became popular. As I am a cinephile, I want a career in films and so I am practicing both as a script writer and subtitler to cherish my writing skill.

**Question 10:** Does censorship affect subtitles in any way?

**Answer:** No. Subtitling and censoring are done in different sections, often parallel. Subtitles are not considered in censoring and it does not affect the film.

**Question 11:** Translators follow some strategies to render the text more appealing. Can you talk about the translation strategies used in your subtitling?

**Answer:** In several instances, I had to replace Malayalam phrases and names with corresponding English ones. For example, in *Jacobinte Swargarajyam*, a chubby character is introduced as *ingottu thirinjal idavela babu, angottu thirinjal nedumudi venu* and I changed it into the names of English counterpart because retaining the Malayalam names will not work for a foreign audience. Similarly I had to replace many proverbial and local expressions in the subtitles of *Natholi Oru Cheriya Meenalla*. Brackets are very rarely used when I subtitle.

**Question 12:** How do you go about subtitling songs?

**Answer:** In the beginning of my profession, I did not subtitle songs. Later, I began to do it at the request of the directors. Nowadays, most of the songs in a film are subtitled due to censorship issues in foreign countries, especially in Gulf countries. I personally don't prefer to subtitle the songs as the attempt will spoil the beauty of the lyrics. In some cases, I had to seek external help for the translation of the lyrics and my mother and cousin have been very helpful in this regard. I have seen subtitles of songs in some films which have compromised the lyrics for rhyming words.

**Question 13:** What are the steps of editing and making the final version of subtitles?

**Answer:** I do it myself and very rarely the directors are interested to read the final version. I am interested more in the visual than in the text. I try my best to keep the viewers undistracted while reading subtitles and so my policy is to make it as simple as possible in order to communicate to anyone with basic knowledge of English. Visuals and sounds are the most important part of a film and subtitles are only a tool to watch it.

**Question 14:** Usually the name of the subtitler does not appear in the credits. Do you think that it must be credited duly?

**Answer:** In the past, the name of the subtitler never appeared in the credits. When I began to subtitle, I entered my name at the end of the subtitles and for a few years it ran in the rolling credits at end of a film. Now, as I insist on it, it appears in the starting credits giving its due acknowledgement. I have been awarded nine Hundred days Trophies for subtitling.

**Question 15:** Omissions are very common in subtitles. Do you have experiences of omitting any remarkable part of a film?

**Answer:** Of course some dialogues, humor and counter arguments are very difficult to translate. But I usually don't omit any part as such; rather fill the gap using any suitable words. It is true that some expressions are untranslatable and their translation will not work.

**Question 16:** Do you try to domesticate Malayalam in subtitles? What are the strategies used commonly?

**Answer:** Mostly, I try to give proper English translation. But in some cases where names of food items, dress, etc, for example, are crucial in a dialogue, I try to retain the words. Because, I believe that film is a medium of cultural exchange and culture specific words are to be shared as any word can be looked up easily nowadays.

**Question 17:** Theatres have a great role in screening subtitled films. Can you share your experiences?

**Answer:** It is very unfortunate that theatres are quite irresponsible in their display of subtitles. Very often, I have to request or intimidate to get a subtitle played. Even theatres in big cities like Mumbai and Delhi are very reluctant to display subtitles. But, most theatres in Chennai offer subtitle regularly and they specifically mention it in their ads and it has been really helpful for the viewers.

**Question 18:** What are your suggestions for improvements in the field of English subtitling for Malayalam films?

**Answer:** Cooperation of theatres is very important in ensuring the popularity of subtitles. It would be a sweeping change if all theatres across the country play the subtitles of Malayalam films regularly and perfectly. It is also necessary these days to play the subtitles in Kerala itself as we have growing number of foreigners, tourists and

workers from other states. As it is done in Tamilnadu, subtitles can be played in one show in a week. Above all, time always matters. The more time is given the better will be the quality of subtitles and last minute changes always adversely affect the profession.

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