



Discourse Markers in Translation of Pragmatics: The Case of English to Persian Subtitle Translations Across Movie Genres

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ABSTRACT

Despite a wealth of research on various linguistic and literary aspects of audiovisual translation, there is still a paucity of data on Discourse Markers (DMs) at the interplay between genre-specific dialogue movies and their translation challenges within the lens of pragmatics. This study investigates the occurrence of eleven common discourse markers (DMs) across three distinct film genres—melodrama, comedy, and thriller—and identifies the translation strategies employed to translate them in subtitles. Utilizing a corpus-based methodology, this research employs a descriptive qualitative analysis to extract data from six English-language films. The findings reveal that comedies enjoyed the highest occurrence of DMs, with 240 cases, outnumbering those in thrillers and melodramas. Notably, the study discovered that five predominant translation strategies - loan, calque, explication, transposition, and omission - were utilized across the genres. With Iranian subtitle translation, calque emerged as a favored approach. These insights provide translators with an enhanced understanding of effective techniques for rendering DMs, thereby reducing prevalent translation inaccuracies and improving intercultural competence and awareness of translation educators and translation teachers and students.

KEYWORDS: Discourse markers; Genre; Multimodality Research; Pragmatics; Subtitling; Translation Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual translation (AVT) has burgeoned into an important subfield within translation studies, driven by globalization and advancements in technology. It has become crucial for transmitting multimodal content to diverse cultural contexts (González, 2011), playing a pivotal role in bridging linguistic gaps, facilitating cultural exchange and intercultural communication (Afsari et al., 2018; Bassnett, 2011; Pym, 2010). Bassnett (2011) revealed that the translator must be acquainted with the source and target contexts to make a bridge between both languages. “Translation and translators break the boundaries between languages and cultures and cause peace between them across the world” (Afsari et al., 2018, p. 1). In essence, translators play an important role as homo communicators to transfer the culture of L1 to L2.

Recent research in AVT has particularly focused on subtitling and dubbing, highlighting the importance of cultural considerations in these practices (Galiano, 2023; Murzamadiyeva et al., 2022; Wedhowerti et al., 2020). Among the elements of audiovisual language, discourse markers (DMs) have gained significant scholarly interest due to their functional as well as pragmatic importance (Fung & Carter, 2012; Galiano, 2023; Romero Trillo, 2002). Discourse markers, which punctuate speech to signal conversational shifts and social dynamics, are often slashed or alternated in translation—potentially altering the intended communication (Crible et al., 2019). Two prevalent types of audiovisual translation, dubbing, and subtitles, have drawn much attention from researchers lately. Similar to other translation techniques, subtitling and dubbing audiovisual materials require consideration of cultural factors (Wedhowerti et al., 2020). Additionally, in this realm, the study of discourse markers (DM) has grown significantly in recent decades, and as Heine and Kaltenböck (2022) note they are based on a wide range of theatrical frameworks with or without communicative goals.

Noticeably and persistently removing DMs in the translation might lead to a text that does not reflect the social dynamics or the intended style/register of the ST, distinguishing conversational discourse such as people’s intentions, affective and referential aspects cannot be conveyed. In the last two decades, the attention to translating DMs has increasingly grown. According to Kafipour (2016), these multifunctional markers have a contribution to the cohesion of text. Accordingly, the error strategies selected in their translation assist translators in transferring their nuances more properly. Mashalchi Amiri (2014) investigated DMs as elements that maintain cohesion in the target text. Failure to translate DMs can result in unnatural and disconnected speech. However, caution should be exercised to avoid overusing DMs, as this can create an artificial tone in the writing.

Recent empirical research has changed course; more specifically, pragmatics and discourse analysis have replaced contrastive studies in traditional linguistics with a focus on semantics and lexicology. To uncover translation equivalents and translation correspondences across many languages, case studies that seek to acquire insight into the functions and distributions of DMs across languages are becoming more and more common. Accordingly, choosing an appropriate equivalent for these context-dependent markers is based on their pragmatic functions in the sentence

and whether they conform to the target language and are meaningful for different audiences (Ahmadpour Samani, 2015). As Arustamyan (2021) also note, pragmatic meaning can be verbalized through pragmatic information and poses challenges in translation of such elements in the original text.

Although there are many different varieties of these markers in the English language, translators struggle to locate exact and adequate equivalents due to a lack of their counterparts. Translators must first be familiar with the classification of discourse markers before using various translation techniques to translate accurately. Concerning the translation of DMs, only a small number of research have focused on discourse markers in audiovisual translation, even though many have been undertaken on these markers considering their functions in written text (Alsager et al., 2020).

Despite the acknowledgment of their importance, studies addressing the translation of DMs specifically in audiovisual media remain sparse (Alizade Alvandi, 2019; Alsager et al., 2020; Bliudneva, 2019). Nevertheless, current scholarship often overlooks the complexities of translating DMs across the diverse spectra of movie genres. To address this gap, the present study seeks to discern strategies for DM translation in subtitles of comedies, melodramas, and thrillers, applying the taxonomy of Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). It aims to both underscore the relevance of DMs in audiovisual content and identify translation tactics that hold the implied meanings of the original discourse, thus informing and improving translational practices within this dynamic field. This research provides empirical evidence for the research community in applied linguistics and demonstrates how pragmatics interact with discourse, translation, and audiovisual materials. It also highlights the challenge translators, translation educators, and applied linguistics may have to incorporate intercultural competence and awareness in their academic (Ghajarieh & Safiyar, 2023), professional, and linguistic endeavors. To accomplish the purpose of this study, three research questions are adopted as follows:

1: What are the frequencies of discourse markers (DM) identified in the sample from the corpus of the study in terms of comedy, melodrama, and thriller genres?

2: What types of strategies are employed in translating the identified DMs in the subtitles, based on Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomy?

3: Which strategy is the most commonly utilized in translating the DMs in the subtitles across comedy, melodrama, and thriller genres in the sample?

LITERATURE REVIEW

EXPLORING PRAGMATIC DIMENSIONS IN AVT

The field of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) spans across a variety of disciplines, creating a dynamic landscape for audiovisual translators and linguistic pragmatics scholars. They operate within a multidisciplinary and multimodal

environment, requiring proficiency in both the relevant languages and cultures as well as semiotics. Researchers have shown a growing interest in the pragmatic dimensions within AVT, and how these linguistic aspects can influence the overall translation process.

Guillot (2010, 2016) has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), with a primary focus on cross-cultural representation and pragmatics. His extensive work included the intricacies of interlingual subtitling. This involved not only the translation of words but also the crafting of alternative representations and the generation of signifiers within a multisemiotic domain (Guillot, 2020). Sidiropoulou's (2012) work, rooted in pragmatics and semiotics, delves into stage and screen translation, scrutinizing the adaptations of English literary phenomena for the Greek stage and screen. Her analysis extends to animation films, encompassing the dubbing and subtitling industries, and drawing parallels between the translation of classics and their cinematic interpretations. Locher and Sidiropoulou (2021) underscored the potential fusion of translation studies and pragmatics, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of comprehending language transfer among cultures. This collaborative endeavor yields insightful perspectives across theoretical, methodological, and human communication through translation approaches.

As highlighted by Chaume (2012), considering the intersection of pragmatics and AVT opens avenues for comprehending the intricacies of communication in audiovisual narratives. This comprehensive approach enriches our insights into the dynamics of storytelling, where linguistic nuances, visual cues, and the overall audiovisual experience converge to shape viewer perceptions. According to Locher and Messerli (2020), the field of pragmatics is increasingly recognized as a critical element in the domain of audiovisual translation. In their analysis of the pragmatic aspects of translation, these scholars conceptualize the translation task as an undertaking that constructs meaning applicable to a foreign fictional artifact. This construction involves the interpretation of cultural representations. Furthermore, their theoretical framework for translation surpasses the traditional paradigm, which solely focuses on the transfer from a source text to a target text. It incorporates the concept of cross-cultural mediation, a notion propounded by Bassnett (2012), and is intimately associated with the interpretative activities performed by translators. This expanded viewpoint posits that translation is a complex process encompassing not merely linguistic conversion but also the sophisticated negotiation of cultural nuances in audiovisual materials.

DISCOURSE MARKERS AS PRAGMATIC INDICATORS IN AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

As one of the key elements of the audiovisual field, discourse markers have attracted significant attention during the past decade. As Peterlin and Moe (2016) stated, discourse markers are pragmatic elements, and translating them can be challenging. They specifically investigated hedging as discourse markers that has been considered as a potential issue in intercultural communication. Discourse markers are dependable on levels of pragmatic performance and the type of task to be performed (Youn, 2023). They can go beyond their literal concepts (Irmayidh & Izreaji, 2023) and can be challenging to translate due to their context-based attributes in translation (Liebeskind & Oleškevičienė, 2023).

Crible et al. (2019) tended to refer to discourse markers as a polyfunctional phenomenon that can be interpreted differently in contexts. Based on Rozumko (2021), translating such linguistic elements necessitates accurate pragmatic inferences and a meticulous selection process from a broad range of potential functional equivalents in the target language.

Fung and Carter (2012) underscored the crucial role of discourse markers (DMs) in spoken interaction, citing their frequent occurrence in spoken corpora. Additionally, they categorized these elements into interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive groups based on their functions. Kafipour (2016) emphasized that discourse markers such as "well," "right," and "now" are ambiguous and functional elements. Grasping the complexity inherent in the functionality of discourse markers (DMs) presents a formidable challenge, which renders their translation even more arduous. Without an understanding based on pragmatics research, discerning the function and finding equivalents in the target language is an onerous task. Despite this obstacle, DMs are indispensable in maintaining discourse cohesion by accurately conveying the speaker's intended meaning. As Benetó (2023) also note, discourse markers are considered as prefabricated elements that bring orality to a script to a certain extent. The challenge intensifies during translation due to the ambiguity of whether DMs maintain analogous functions across languages.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON DISCOURSE MARKERS TRANSLATION

Hosseini's (2014) study explore the differential utilization of DMs across action, comedy, and romance genres in English movies. The findings of the study suggested a reciprocal relationship between movie classifications and DM usage, documenting that interjections and hesitations are most recurrent within comedic films. Her analysis further affirmed the linkage between the prevalence of specific DMs and the comedy genre.

Additionally, Kafipour's (2016) research employed Chaume's (2004) model to dissect translation errors associated with five prevalent DMs in a selection of drama films. The analysis categorized errors into distinct classifications including, but not limited to, translation to alternate DMs, verbatim translation, and exclusions. Kafipour sought to elucidate the error classifications about DMs' functions. The findings revealed a predominant tendency towards omissions, with the remainder of errors distributed among the other categories.

In their empirical research, Crible et al. (2019) adopted annotation in conjunction with translation identification to investigate the functions, omissions, and translation equivalents of English DMs into Czech, French, Hungarian, and Lithuanian. The research focused on commonly used DMs: "and," "but," and "so," and featured an evaluation of all markers in the connected dataset. The study showed the inconsistency in marker specification for both monolingual and bilingual speakers. It illuminated the application of translation and annotation as methodologies for a comprehensive analysis of under-specification, considering both monolingual and bilingual lenses. The research further broadened its scope beyond theoretical postulation by empirically scrutinizing three extensively used discourse markers within a corpus of TED Talks.

Complementary to this, Morozova (2020) augmented the body of research involving parallel corpus translation of English DMs into European Portuguese, uncovering prevalent omissions such as DM deletion, partial DM deletion (the omission of one source DM out of two), and DM addition (the insertion of a DM not present in the source language). These methodologies are employed by translators in their efforts to replicate DMs effectively in the target language.

Some of the most recent studies on discourse marks include an investigation by Benetó (2023) who demonstrated how the marker's position in discourse markers can affect a translation in the case of a TV series based on improvisation. Hamad and Sabir (2022) is another recent study that examines how five pragmatic markers are translated from English into Kurdish in movies, focusing on errors made by translators. The findings reveal that deletion was the most frequent error. In 2023, Galiano also examined pragmatic markers in English, dubbed and original Italian movies appearing in film dialogues and identified translation strategies for rendering pragmatic markers in dubbed Italian films.

METHOD

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This corpus-based study adopted a descriptive qualitative method to gather and analyze the data. The study also incorporated a comparative aspect to examine the translation strategies used for discourse markers (DMs) in subtitles across various film genres.

CORPUS OF THE STUDY

The study's corpus comprised six English-language movies across three genres: thriller, comedy, and melodrama. Two recent movies were selected for each genre based on: a) the availability of a reliable Persian-subtitled version, b) the presence of discourse markers in the subtitles, c) the film's popularity, as indicated by high ratings (over 6.8 on IMDb) and international film festival awards. The genres and corresponding selected movies are listed in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Selected genres and related movies as the corpus of the study

Thriller	Comedy	Melodrama
The Gentleman (2020)	Palm Springs (2020)	The Call of the Wild (2020)
Knives Out (2019)	Booksmart (2019)	Little Women (2019)



DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

In the first phase of the data collection procedure, six movies from three different genres including melodrama, comedy, and thriller were selected based on purposive sampling. Movies and their Persian subtitles were downloaded from websites, specifically *Film2movie* for the films and *Subf2m* for subtitles.

To ensure the presence of an adequate number of DMs for analysis, the first 15 minutes of each movie were transcribed and reviewed. When the suitability of the selected content was established, the researchers found and categorized each instance of the following DMs: Alright, Yeah, You know, You see, Oh, Well, Of course, Okay, Because, I mean, and Actually. Subsequent to the classification of DMs, Persian subtitles were downloaded from Sub2m. Extracted discourse markers in the English subtitles were compared with their Persian counterparts to determine the translation strategies employed by the subtitle translator according to Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomy. This was followed by a calculation of frequencies and percentages for analysis and addressing the research questions.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and sum were calculated for the DM categories and translation strategies. The overall frequency of applied translation strategies for the identified DMs was tabulated. Finally, Chi-Square Tests were used to determine if significant differences existed in the frequency of DM usage and translation strategies across melodrama, comedy, and thriller genres.

RESULTS

To address the first and second research questions, the occurrence frequency for each type of DM in the corpus of the study was calculated. Table 2 shows the frequency for each DM.

Table 2. DM categories in each genre

Movies	Melodrama		Thriller		Comedy	
Discourse Marker (DMs)	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%
Alright	8	8	14	16	3	1
Yeah	7	7	18	21	53	22
You know	4	4	3	4	11	5
You see	5	5	0	0	0	0
Oh	22	22	21	25	27	11
Well	7	7	12	14	26	11
Of course	15	16	0	0	13	5
Okay	5	5	3	4	35	15
Because	20	21	0	0	40	17
I mean	0	0	7	8	15	6
Actually	4	4	7	8	17	7
Total	97		85		240	

As demonstrated in the table above, a total of 97 instances of predetermined discourse markers (DMs) were identified in melodramas, 85 in thrillers, and 240 in comedy films. Significantly, comedy movies exhibited a notably higher frequency of DM usage in dialogues and monologues. Specifically, common DM categories such as "alright," "well," "okay," "actually," "oh," "you know," and "yeah" were observed across all genres. The findings revealed "oh" as the most frequently occurring DM category in melodramas and thrillers, while "yeah" was predominant in comedy films. Additionally, "you see" did not occur in thrillers or comedies, and "I mean" was absent in melodramas. The reason for the higher frequency of translation strategies for subtitling each DM in melodramas is presented in the subsequent table.

Table 3. Translation strategies adopted in subtitling DMs in melodrama

Discourse Marker (DMs)	F	Translation Strategies								
		Loan	Calque	Explication	Substitution	Transposition	Lexical	Compensation	Addition	Omission
Alright	8		3	3		2				
Yeah	7		6			1				
You know	4		4							
You see	5		3	1	1					
Oh	22	18				1				3
Well	7		7							
Of course	15		10	3	2					
Okay	5		4			1				
Because	20		15	2		3				
I mean	0									
Actually	4		2							2
Total	97	18	54	9	3	8				5

The table above presents six categories of Diaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomy of translation strategies found in melodrama movies, including loan, calque, transposition, explication, substitution, and omission. Specifically, it was observed that calque (literal translation) was the most prominent subtitling strategy in melodramas, accounting for 56% of the employed strategies in 54 cases. Conversely, the use of lexical creation and compensation strategies in subtitling DMs was absent in melodramas. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that for the translation of three specific categories of DMs - "you know," "well," and "actually" - only one strategy, namely calque (literal translation), was adopted by the subtitle translation in melodramas.

The frequency of the translation strategies for subtitling each of the DMs in the thriller movies is depicted in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Translation strategies adopted in subtitling DMS in thriller movies

Discourse Marker (DMs)	F	Translation Strategies							
		Loan	Calque	Explicitation	Substitution	Transposition	Lexical	Compensation	Omission
Alright	14		11			3			
Yeah	18		14	1					3
You know	3		3						
You see	0								
Oh	21	14				4			3
Well	12		11						1
Of course	0								
Okay	3		3						
Because	0								
I mean	7		7						
Actually	7		1			3			3
Total	85	14	50	1		10			10

According to Table 4, a total of five categories of Diaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomy of translation strategies, including loan, calque, transposition, explicitation, and omission, were identified within thriller movies. Calque (literal translation) was found to be the most frequently used subtitling strategy in thrillers, occurring in 50 cases and accounting for 59% of the employed strategies. Conversely, there was no utilization of lexical creation, substitution, addition, and compensation strategies in this genre of movies. It is notable that the subtitle translators employed only one strategy, namely calque (literal), in the translation of four specified categories of the intended DMs (because, I mean, you know, and of course) in the thriller movies.

The frequency of the translation strategies for subtitling each of the DMs in the comedy movies is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Translation strategies adopted in subtitling DMs in comedy movies

Discourse Marker (DMs)	F	Translation Strategies								
		Loan	Calque	Explication	Substitution	Transposition	Lexical	Compensation	Addition	Omission
Alright	3		1	1						1
Yeah	53		49	1	1					2
You know	11		9	1		1				
You see	0									
Oh	27	20		1		4				2
Well	26		17	6		1				2
Of course	13		10			1				2
Okay	35		30							5
Because	40		37							3
I mean	15		8		5					2
Actually	17		12	2						3
Total	240	20	173	12	6	7				22

Based on the data in Table 5, a total of six categories of Diaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomy of translation strategies, including loan, calque, transposition, explication, substitution, and omission, were observed in comedy movies. It was identified that calque (literal translation) was the most dominant subtitling strategy, with 173 occurrences, accounting for 72% of the employed strategies. However, there was no use of lexical creation, addition, and compensation strategies in subtitling DMs in the comedy movies. It is noteworthy that the lowest variation of translation strategies was observed for 'because' and 'okay', for which only two strategies, including calque and omission, were employed, with a special dominance of the calque strategy in both cases.

Table 6. Comparison of translation strategies in subtitling DMs in three movies

Movies	Melodrama		Thriller		Comedy	
Strategies	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%
Loan	18	19	14	16	20	8
Calque	54	56	50	59	173	72
Explicitation	9	9	1	1	12	5
Substitution	3	3	0	0	6	2
Transposition	8	8	10	12	7	3
Lexical creation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Compensation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Addition	0	0	0	0	0	0
Omission	5	5	10	12	22	10

As indicated in the above table, calque (literal) translation emerged as the most dominant and frequently used strategy for subtitling DMs in all three movie genres. Additionally, it was found that there was no utilization of lexical creation and compensation strategies in the selected genres. Specifically, the employment of five translation strategies, including loan, calque, explicitation, transposition, and omission, was consistent across all intended genres of the movies.

SAMPLES FOR THE USE OF EACH STRATEGY

Loan is a translation strategy employed when the original word or phrase from the source text is directly incorporated into the target language and text, as no appropriate translation exists and both languages utilize the identical term. This strategy is accepted to be a foreignizing strategy. As the analysis of data indicates, loan strategy was only employed in subtitling “*oh*” in all three genre of movies. Some examples of the DMs translated by loan strategy have been illustrated in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Examples of DMs from three genres of movies subtitled by loan strategy

Movie	Source Text	Subtitling	Time	DMs Category
Melodrama	Oh, just call me Mother, or Marmee.	اوه فقط منو مامان یا مارمی صدا کن	00:12:00	OH
Thriller	Uh oh. Marta keeps it solid.	اوه مارتا محکم نگهش دار	00:26:00	OH
Comedy	Oh, did you hear back from Princeton?	اوه از پرینستون جواب گرفتی!!	00:34:24	OH

The examples in Table 7, extracted from selected melodrama, comedy, and thriller movies, illustrate that the discourse marker "oh" has been consistently translated using the loan strategy. "Oh" is a common and versatile discourse marker often used in combination with other words or phrases. In these cases, the subtitle translators opted to directly borrow the English word and transmit it into Persian without making any changes.

Calque is a literal translation of source text words or expressions into target text ones, maintaining faithfulness to the source text and often having a foreignizing effect. The analyses indicate that calque (literal translation) was the most dominant and frequently used subtitling strategy in all three genres of movies. Specifically, the calque strategy accounted for 56%, 59%, and 72% of all adopted subtitling strategies in melodrama, thriller, and comedy, respectively.

Table 8. Sample of DMs from three genres of movies subtitled by calque strategy

Movie	Source Text	Subtitling	Time	DMs Category
Melodrama	Yeah, I know, there's a lot to explore	بله میدونم چیزای زیادی برای پرسیدن هست	00:42:23	Yeah
Thriller	Sure. Of course. I should get these back to the table.	حتما البته.. باید اینارو به میز برگردونم	00:55:12	Of course
Comedy	Well. Thank you all for getting together like this	خوب ممنون از همه بخاطر جمع شدنتون...	00:27:02	Well

In the first example from melodrama movies, the discourse marker "Yeah" has been translated into Persian as "بله," which is its exact dictionary meaning. The translator chose to employ an exact literal translation of the intended discourse marker without altering any features of the target language, Persian. In the second example from a thriller movie, "of course" as a discourse marker was translated into Persian as "الته," one of the main dictionary meanings of

the intended discourse marker. In the third example, "well" was subtitled as "خوب" using a literal translation, indicating that the subtitle translator opted for a straightforward and accessible strategy without integrating any creativity.

Explicitation is “a strategy by which the translator makes such information explicit in the TT, which is only implicit in the ST”. In this strategy, the subtitle makes the source text more comprehensible for the target audience, which makes it a domesticating strategy. In the explicitation strategy, the subtitle translator may generalize the word or phrase with a hypernym or specify it with a hyponym.

Table 9. Examples of DMs from three genres of movies subtitled by explicitation strategy

Movie	Source Text	Subtitling	Time	DMs Category
Melodrama	I don't know many people, and felt rather strange at first, you know	هیچ وقت موفق نمیشه توجه میکنی	01:23:23	You know
Thriller	yeah. My mom built her business	معلومه..مامان من کسب و کار خودش رو ساخت	00:45:32	Yeah
Comedy	Well, there's a first time for everything.	معلومه هر چیزی یه شروعی داره	01:11:43	Well

In the first example, which has been selected from melodrama movies, the discourse marker *You know* has been translated into Persian as توجه میکنی. The denotative meaning of the intended DM is میدونی in Persian, while the translator has changed the direct meaning and integrated some features of the target language (Persian) in subtitling this DM. In other words, the subtitle translator has tried to domesticate the DM to make it much clearer and more understandable for the Persian audience.

In the second example taken from the thriller movie, the word *Yeah* as a discourse marker has been translated into Persian as معلومه which is a domesticated equivalence for *Yeah* in Persian. In other words, the translator has not resorted simply to the dictionary meaning of the DM and employed a much more creative and target language-oriented strategy in subtitling the discourse marker.

In the third example, which has been drawn from a comedy movie, the translator has made explicit the implicit meaning hidden in *well* by translating it as معلومه in Persian.

Substitution is a type of explicitation, they are somewhat identical, however, the translator uses this strategy to translate the words owing to some constraints including a lack of space for using long-term equivalents in subtitles. As replacing a cultural term with a target culture equivalent may result in the loss of local color, this strategy is accepted as a domestication strategy.

Table 10. Examples of DMs from three genres of movies subtitled by substitution strategy

Movie	Source Text	Subtitling	Time	DMs Category
Melodrama	Leave the dog alone! Buck! - You see!	سگ را تنها بگذار! باک!	00:23:12	You see
Thriller	I mean.. I just want to make sure the slipper fits you	فهمیدی!! سگ را تنها بگذار! باک! فهمیدی!!	00:43:21	I mean
Comedy	You see, I knew him once	میدونی قبلا میناختمش	01:02:00	You see

Evidently, the translator opted for "فهمیدی" as an equivalent for "You see" and "I mean" in the subtitles, likely due to time and space constraints. While there's a subtle distinction between explicitation and substitution, a longer discourse marker was employed as a replacement for a shorter one in the target language.

The transposition strategy involves replacing a cultural term in the source text with another in the target text, making it a domesticating strategy.

Table 11. Examples of DMs from three genres of movies subtitled by transposition strategy

Movie	Source Text	Subtitling	Time	DMs Category
Melodrama	Went through here first. - Alright, let's go, let's go.	اول از اینجا گذشت. - باشه، بریم، بیا بریم.	00:45:38	Alright
Thriller	Alice you can keep watching your show it's alright.	آلیس، می‌تونی به تماشای نمایش ادامه بدی، اشکالی نداره	01:15:33	Alright
Comedy	Yeah, sorry.	حق با تویه ببخشید	00:51:26	Yeah

In the first and second examples, "alright" has been translated into Persian as "باشه" and "اشکالی نداره", respectively. It is evident that the translator opted to replace the popular dictionary meaning of the discourse marker, i.e., "خیلی خوب", with the mentioned Persian equivalents, leading to domestication. In other words, these proposed translations appear to be more commonly used in Persian as elements of interpersonal communication. In the third example, the discourse marker "Yeah" has been translated as "حق با تویه", where the translator simply replaced an English discourse marker with an equivalent that holds a common cultural meaning. It's important to note that transposition is a common strategy in translating interjections, which are a subcategory of discourse markers.

Omission is defined as the most domesticating strategy, as it involves the complete exclusion of a potentially unfamiliar element from the source text. Instead of translation, it entails the act of omitting a word.

Table 12. Examples of DMs from three genres of movies subtitled by omission strategy

Movie	Source Text	Subtitling	Time	DMs Category
Melodrama	I don't think he's gonna move...Oh he'll move	فکر نمی کنم حرکت کنه...حرکت کرد!!	00:34:04	Oh
Thriller	It's a kind of turmoil you know	یه جور سردرگمیه!	01:00:34	You know
Comedy	It's Viktor and Rolf Flower bomb alright	اون ویکتور و رولف فلوریه	00:45:03	Alright

In the first example, the translator has omitted *oh* in the Persian subtitling of the dialogue. However, it seems that deletion of this DM is not a satisfactory strategy in the given case because it might overwhelm the accurate and complete transmission of the real sense of the expression. On the contrary, in the second and third examples, the omission of *You know* and *Alright* when subtitling the intended expression into Persian might not hinder the satisfactory understanding of the dialogue.

DISCUSSION

The results revealed a number of noteworthy patterns in the translation of discourse markers spanning various film genres. Compared to comedy films (240 instances) the genres of melodrama (97) and thrillers (85) in particular displayed noticeably lower frequencies of DM usage. In keeping with this genre-specific variation, Hosseini (2014) claims that comedy discourse generally employs more markers to encourage humor and informal interaction. Our analysis broadens this understanding by demonstrating how different genres call for distinct DM translation techniques. The use of calques as a translation technique which is used in 56% of melodramas, 59% of thrillers and 72% of comedies has both advantages and disadvantages. Despite faithfully preserving the original texts meaning, this literal translation approach may not always capture the pragmatic roles that DMs play in diverse cultural contexts. In contrast to Kafipour's (2016) finding, that omission is the main strategy this finding suggests a possible shift in translation practices or variations in corpus selection. It does, however, support Ahmadpour Samani's (2015) findings that dubbed versions are better for literal translation.

The high number of calque translations indicates that translators often regarded DMs as semantic rather than pragmatic elements, according to our analysis. While maintaining surface meaning, this approach may not adequately describe the cultural and interpersonal roles of DMs. Their pragmatic roles in both the source and target languages must

be carefully considered for DM translation to be effective, as Rozumko (2021) notes. By demonstrating how genre-specific contexts impact these translation choices, the current study adds to this understanding. The sparse use of domestication strategies (such as substitution and transposition) suggests a potential gap in cultural adaptation. This research endorses Peterlin and Moes' (2016) assertion that DMs bring about unique challenges for cross-cultural communication.

Our findings suggest that more advanced techniques for preserving both pragmatic function and semantic meaning could be beneficial for translators. As demonstrated by the higher frequency of omission in comedy (10 percent) compared to melodrama (5 percent), translators may be more inclined to forgo DMs in genres where visual and contextual cues can compensate for their loss. The analysis also revealed some intriguing patterns in the way specific DMs were managed. *Oh* is consistently loan translated across genres indicating recognition of its universal emotional function and supporting Guillot's (2020) observations about the cross-cultural stability of specific pragmatic markers. Considering Crible et al. (2019), the different methods used for more complex markers such as "well" and "you know" show how hard it is to keep them multifunctional.

It is noteworthy that the greatest range of translation techniques was found in comedies, suggesting that this genre may require greater flexibility in dynamic translation. The results obtained by Wedhowerti et al. (2020) show that there are particular challenges when translating linguistic elements associated with humor. Our study advances this understanding by demonstrating how genre-specific requirements impact the translation methodology selection. The absence of lexical creation and compensatory strategies across all genres is noteworthy and potentially problematic. According to Morozova (2020), these strategies can be helpful tools for upholding pragmatic functions when direct equivalents are unavailable.

The findings also demonstrate how important it is to consider multimodal factors when translating DM. Chaume (2012) argues that when translating audiovisual content, it is important to take into account both verbal and non-verbal elements. As per our analysis, translators may need to devise more intricate methods to integrate these elements, particularly in genres, where DMs are crucial for character development and narrative advancement. These results have important implications for future pedagogy and translation practice. Since DM usage and translation clearly follow genre-specific trends more targeted approaches to audiovisual translation training are needed. While Huseynova (2024) suggests that translation success requires a deep understanding of linguistic, pragmatics and cultural dynamics, our findings suggest that genre analysis and discourse should be listed among these important considerations. To put it another way successful audiovisual translation depends on the translators' ability to integrate their knowledge of genre analysis with their pragmatic competence. Translators are able to handle the intricate relationship between linguistic markers and contextual requirements across various film genres thanks to this intersection of pragmatic knowledge and genre-specific understanding which guarantees more nuanced and culturally appropriate translations.

One noteworthy finding from the data was that the translators did not find these crucial communicative components within a discourse segment to be significant. Their preference was to either duplicate or remove the same Discourse Marker (DM) from the original text. In this regard, the findings of the present study align with those of Hamad and Sabir (2022), who similarly identified deletion as the most prevalent strategy employed in the translation

of pragmatic markers in audiovisual materials. As such, intercultural incongruity may result from this tendency. English, for instance, frequently uses the discourse marker, *um*, to denote the need for thinking time. Listeners in Iran however might find this sound unsettling because it sounds like a baby telling their parents that they are hungry. All in all, the authors contend that translators need to move beyond semantic equivalence and develop more nuanced, pragmatic oriented and genre-sensitive approaches that preserve both the meaning and function of discourse markers in audiovisual translation.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Discourse markers are important linguistic elements used to convey the speaker's intention and coherence relations between textual units. Translators can successfully transfer them to the target language (TL) by understanding both languages and cultures, enabling the target audience to comprehend the pragmatic meaning of discourse markers. Utilizing the appropriate strategy during the translation of discourse markers is crucial for achieving high-standard translation.

The findings revealed that in melodrama and thriller films, *"oh"* was the most common category of discourse markers. It is considered as the frequent discourse marker in the movie *Avengers: Endgame* (Ussolichah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, *"yeah"* was the most common in comedy films. The results suggested that subtitling of discourse markers in melodrama movies utilized all six categories of Diaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) taxonomy of translation methods, including loan, calque, transposition, explicitation, substitution, and omission. While maintaining the original DM occasionally appears to be a helpful strategy, it cannot be used in different situations (Ebrahimi et al., 2022). For instance, when translators cannot find any proper equivalent in the target language, they inevitably use the calque strategy for those discourse markers that the target audience is already familiar with. However, the high usage of this strategy may represent a lack of understanding of the context in which these markers occur.

In addition to the calque strategy, the second most frequently used strategy in melodrama and thriller movies was the loan translation, which is due to some common qualities related to discourse markers in both languages, making their meaning transparent for the target audience. However, the most common strategy in comedy movies was omission. While applying this strategy in some cases may distort the message of discourse and fail to convey the pragmatic intention of characters in movies, in some cases, due to vivid pictures in the movies, the general point of the message can be transferred. However, this may not be the case in other contexts.

The study has important implications for audiovisual translation, providing insights for professional and freelance translators, English language instructors, researchers, students, and linguists. However, there are limitations to the study, such as the need for a larger corpus for each genre, inter-rater reliability for transcriptions and different categorization of discourse markers in the audiovisual area. Further studies are suggested to explore these markers in a larger context with additional film genres and to conduct experimental research to understand the impact of discourse markers on shaping specific genres. Parallel studies in other countries can shed more light on how the translation of discourse markers from a pivot language (e.g., English) may need different types of strategies to deal with the challenges of audiovisual translation in various languages. It is hoped that future studies will focus more on pragmatic aspects of translation with the aid of advanced theories of linguistics in pragmatics.



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