

## Strategies Used in Translation of Comedies with Emphasis on Politeness

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### ABSTRACT

The present study sought to investigate the translation strategies in an American sitcom in Iranian EFL classes with emphasis on politeness. The participants were 50 male and female Iranian undergraduate B.A. and M.A. students majoring in English Translation, and English language teaching at the Islamic Azad University, North Tehran. The participants were administered three tests. A multiple choice test for English language proficiency PET test to determine the level of the participants. A multiple choice politeness test including politeness, impoliteness and neutral sentences to measure the politeness of humor on participants' comprehension and the participants' knowledge of politeness structures. And a translation strategies test to investigate the translation strategies in Friends series. Finding showed that there was a significant dependency between the participants' English language proficiency level and their comprehension and interpretation of politeness and impoliteness discourse in humor series. So high language proficiency affects the comprehension, perception and interpretation of politeness and impoliteness structures. The research discovered that in the translation strategies synonymy, naturalization and intra-textual gloss are the most frequent strategies which are used and performed well in translation of Friends series, according to Aixelas' (1996) and Davies' (2003) lists of strategies. The findings of the present study may have implications for EFL learners and teachers.

**KEY WORDS:** Translation strategies, sitcom, humor, politeness.

### INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to investigate the translation strategies in an American situation comedy in this study "Friends" in Iranian EFL classes with emphasis on politeness. As Xiaous (2009) believes within the scientific research world, the study of witty remarks and humor in speech and genres has attracted scholars' attention for many years. Humor has been studied from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint that includes fields like linguistics, rhetorics, aesthetics, philosophy, and sociology, just to mention a few. Situation comedy belongs to the verbal-visual mode of communication, in which the humor is brought out both through verbal and nonverbal strategies. As a kind of TV program, sitcom, especially American sitcom has become popular around the world. "Friends" is a typical example. The conversation of sitcom works as one of the main carriers of humor. The mechanisms originate in natural every day conversation. At the same time, sitcom conversation dynamics moves beyond the basic rules of our daily communication.

The word humor frequently occurs in our daily life. The word “humor” originates from Latin. According to The New Oxford Dictionary of English, the very original meaning of “humor” is “one of four liquids (blood, phlegm, choler, melancholy) in our body, said to determine a person’s mental and physical qualities.” When this word was introduced into art, it was something negative that referred to odd, funny and affected temperament. The Collins English Dictionary provides the following definition of humor

“1. the quality of being funny, 2. the ability to appreciate or express things that are humorous, a sense of humor, 3. situations, speech, or writings that are humorous, 4. a state of mind, mood”. In words of Chiaro (2005) the reproduction of verbal humor into another language depends on a number of variables mainly regarding the translator’s personality which range from whether or not they generally have a good sense of humor to the mood they are in while translating”. Vandaele (2002) believes that Sense of humor is thus not sufficient to produce a good humorous text: “Individuals may be very sensitive to humor but unable to produce it successfully. Additionally, due to cultural and linguistic dissimilarities between the source language and the target language, even the most talented translators may find it extremely difficult to translate certain types of humor.

According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007): “Humour does not function in isolation. It is not only rooted in its co-text (the dialogue sequence or scene/sequence in which it occurs, for instance), but also in socio-cultural, linguistic and even personal contexts”. That makes humor translation an extremely sophisticated process. Not only must a translator have an excellent knowledge of the source and target language, but he or she also has even humor an excellent knowledge of the source and target language.

Baker & Hochel (1998) pointed out that the concept that has undergone greatest growth in translation is subtitling. It has many advantages; it is the quickest method and the most economical to implement.

It seems that humor plays a vital role in our everyday social encounters which is rooted in a cultural context of a specific community. Humor is estimated to comprise almost one-half of the total nature of human life. In other words, our total life experience is inextricably bound up with humor. Living in the age of mass communication and media development, it is even becoming of more outstanding significance in recent translation studies. However, choosing the most natural and applicable strategies for a better transfer of humor from one language into another is indeed a challenging task for translators. Humor translation differs from other types of translation since it requires more intricate strategies (Vandaele,2002). This can be a reason that humor translation has been rarely done from English humor into Persian and has even been more neglected in the field of subtitling.

According to Armat and Googol (2012) humor translation is an extremely difficult process which causes translators many problems. Rendering humor into a different language becomes even more complicated when the translator translates film dialogues for the purpose of dubbing or subtitling. In observing our behavior in daily life, we surely realize that all of us regularly react with humor and laughter in the most different situations. Therefore, we have to admit that humor represents a central aspect of our everyday conversation and it is a general fact that all

humans naturally participate in humorous speech and behavior, which justifies Oring's (2003) point of view when classifying humor and laughter as "cultural universals" representing "a condition of our humanity".

Translation is more like a negotiation between two cultures, a transaction between two languages. One perceives the world from the window of the culture of his or her own community. Humor translation in sitcom can be even more challenging in the area of subtitling. In fact, subtitling is a unique form of translation which is quite different from other types. While watching a subtitled sitcom, most viewers are unaware of the complicated process the translator has carried out. Although humor translation seems to be a complex and multifaceted domain, there is a great volume of literature on humor and the translation of it. Indeed, different scholars have demonstrated different translation strategies for a better rendition of humor from the source language into the target language.

Sadeghpour (2011) states that translation of situation comedy and humor is one of the most difficult types of translation. Owing to its complexity, not everyone is able to work in this field. A good translator of humor must have not only linguistic skills, but also a good sense of humor in order to recognize a particular joke in the source text.

Without laughter everyday living becomes drab and lifeless; life would seem hardly human at all. Likewise, a sense of humor is generally considered a person's most admirable attribute. This is why the study of humor occupies an important place in research in English linguistics and has attracted the interest and attention of researchers for centuries (Gruner 1978).

Accordingly, Tahami (2010) defines that humor and humorous language exist in every aspect of our lives such as literature and films where humor plays an important role in giving valuable information, and is used even in tragic situations to make the whole work enjoyable for the audiences.

However, the translatability of humor has been questioned for a long time. For humorous features to be adequately translated there has been a lot of studies the translator of a film has to make the foreign audience laugh at the same points as intended in the original text. Humor is a very common concept and it is one of the characteristics that defines us as human beings and social. This concept plays a relevant role in our lives.

Humor facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and helps distinguish figurative from literal meaning. It also helps develop visual memory and improves the capacity to solve linguistic problems. The climate made here is that as a pragmatic and sociolinguistic concept politeness and impoliteness have always been seen as dependent on context. This situatedness comes in many forms. It can involve considering contrasts (across cultural groups, languages, dialects or genres), but this is not essential. The other difficulty in the use of humor in teaching is if humor is always politeness. Humor is a very pervasive phenomenon, observable in our daily communication. Humor has been studied from many perspectives that include fields like linguistics, rhetorics, aesthetics, philosophy, and sociology. Situation comedy, which is a visual-verbal communication, enjoys much popularity on television nowadays. To make the audience laugh as much as possible is the ultimate goal of situation comedy. No sitcom can be acted out without dialogues and conversations (Slembrouk and Xiaosu 2008-9).

Friends' dialogues and conversations are the embodiment of humor, which originates from natural conversation, and at same time seems a little far away from normal daily conversation. Understanding the cultural differences between the US and Iranian could be said to be the very first step toward answering the question as to why politeness is perceived differently by Iranian and Americans.

The study of humor translation by Persian translators seems to have been highly neglected .To date, no studies have explored the existing translation strategies adopted by Persian translators in order to render humor elements. Moreover, research involving humor translation has traditionally focused on the translation of books ( Armat and et al 2012).

James Thurber (American humorist and cartoonist,1894-1961) believes that humor is a serious thing. He likes to think of it as one of our greatest earliest natural resources, which must be preserved at all cost.

Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes considered power to be a crucial element in their work when they note that laughter is used to express superiority over opponents. Humor also serves as a means to soften the seriousness of a situation and it expresses the feeling of solidarity, between self and the other (Schwarz 2010).

Nichol(2011) defines that Humor comes in many flavors, any of which may appeal to one person but not to another, and which may be enjoyed in alternation or in combination.

"Translation consists of studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstructing the same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context" (Larson, 1998: 3).

Chiaro (2004) has proposed five different strategies for the translation of humor on screen which are as follows:

- 1-Leave the VEH (verbally expressed humor) unchanged .
- 2-Substitute the source VEH with a different instance of VEH in the ( TL) target language .
- 3-Replace the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL .
- 4-Replace the SL VEH with an example of compensating VEH elsewhere in the TL text .
- 5-Ignore the VEH altogether ( Chiaro 2004p. 45) .

However, it should be noted that suggested strategies are not exclusive of humor translation but rather of any type of translation including humor as well. Furthermore, the study of humor translation by Persian translators seems to have been highly neglected .To date, no studies have explored the existing translation strategies adopted by Persian translators in order to render humor elements (Armat et al (2012).

Study of humor can be traced back over two thousand years from various fields including psychology, philosophy, physiology and so on. These flourishing humor researches in turn give rise to plenty of valuable findings and theories which can be generally included into three theories - superiority theory, relief theory and incongruity theory as traditional approaches to humor study. And in the late 20th century, humor researches have been brought into linguistic field. Freud's relief theory lays the foundation of modern linguistic research on humor, and

scholars begin to focus on humor research from different linguistic angles since Raskin (Raskin, 1985) develops the Semantic Script Theory of Humor ( Zejun & Man 2013).

The definitions of humor formed in the two different dictionaries: Humor is “the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing.”(Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary, Sixth edition, P 863) Humor is “the quality in something that makes it funny: “amusement” or “the ability to understand and enjoy funny situations or to laugh at things.”(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, P 698)

In Hay’s study (2000) she studies humor use between men and women in corpus-based conversations. The result reveals that each gender uses humor in a distinctively different ways. Davie (2003) takes a different perspective on the performance of humor. Davie sees joking as a speech activity and component of one’s communicative competence. What she is interested in is how English beginners manage to get involved in the humorous communication with English native speakers, that is, to joke with different sociocultural background through making use of various resources of the discourse context, such as lexical, socio-linguistic, prosodic, and pragmatic ones.

Sadeghpour ( 2011) believes that humor was always present in our lives and almost everyone knows what ‘humor’ is. However, providing a specific definition of this phenomenon is rather difficult. The Collins English Dictionary provides the following definition of humor: “1. the quality of being funny, 2. the ability to appreciate or express things that are humorous, a sense of humor, 3. situations, speech, or writings that are humorous, 4. a state of mind, mood”. Various definitions of humor have been presented by different scholars, and each of these definitions concentrated on a different aspect.

Additionally, due to cultural and linguistic dissimilarities between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), even the most talented translators may find it extremely difficult to translate certain types of humor. According to Díaz , Cintas and Remael (2007): “Humor does not function in isolation. It is not only rooted in its co-text (the dialogue sequence or scene/sequence in which it occurs, for instance), but also in socio-cultural, linguistic and even personal contexts” so that makes humor translation an extremely sophisticated process.

Humor could be positive or negative. The basis of judgment is based on the end result in any humorous act. It is negative when it results in distance, repulsion, nervousness while positive humor leads to interest, easiness, calmness etc.

A situation comedy or sitcom is a genre of comedy performance originally devised for radio but today typically found on television. A laugh track is often included in situation comedies. Situation comedy, which is a visual-verbal communication, enjoys much popularity on television nowadays. To make the audience laugh as much as possible is the ultimate goal of situation comedy. No sitcom can be acted out without dialogues and conversations. And these dialogues and conversations are the embodiment of humor, which originates from natural conversation, and at same time seems a little far away from normal daily conversation (Slembrouk & Xiaosu 2008-9).

The study conducted by Slembrouk and Xiaosu (2008-9) was an attempt to investigate the underlying mechanisms of humor found in the American situation comedy "Friends" from the theoretical perspective of the Cooperative Principle (CP). It was intended to find out how far away the conversations in this situation comedy move from our daily communication and whether the Cooperative Principle is enough to explain the mechanism of humor here.

According to Schechter (1998) dubbing, in which the original dialogue is translated and recorded by other actors, is a common practice in European countries such as France and Italy. Audiences in those countries are interested more in hearing dialogue in their own language than in reading subtitles from the bottom of the screen. Dubbing is preferred by those who see subtitles as a visual intrusion. In action movies, for example, audiences might find it exhausting to read subtitles while following the actions of characters. Meanwhile, subtitling has some requirements on the audience's literacy. In Mexico, dubbing is more welcome because 13% of the country's viewers do not read subtitles

The advantage of subtitling, compared to dubbing, is that it allows the audience to capture the character's original voice and gives a sense of authenticity. If the language of the audience differs greatly from that of the movie (in terms of grammar structure, syntax, and so forth), dubbing might not be appropriate. Lack of synchronisation can easily be observed by the audience (Zaoh 2009).

Zaoh (2009) adds that sometimes, the translator can even use creation, i.e., adding extra information when appropriate (although not given by the TV program or movie itself) to help the audience understand CSIs. For example, in Friends, many dialogues mentioned some movie stars or singers. Creation can be used in this situation. By putting some extra information about these stars or singers, the translator can help the audience figure out why these names are spoken of.

According to Baker (2003), pragmatics is an important ideology underlying translation, especially in translating utterances in daily communication. Because of the complexity of contextual factors in daily communication and the frequent occurrence of implicatures, translation should pay more attention to the actual meanings of utterances in different situations than on the literal meanings. In the researcher's view, language should not be interpreted identically regardless of contexts. Omission and addition are two other strategies which might be used. The first of these, omission, involves CSIs being ignored if these items are difficult to translate or do not contribute significantly to the original text.

It is important to include a definition of what the researcher means by politeness. Politeness can be defined as the management of words and actions to enable one to gain other people's positive recognition of his/her words and actions. It can also be defined as a form of social behaviour which aims to enhance one's self-esteem and improve socialisation outcomes in various social settings (Watts & et al, 2005).

Jandt (2004) holds that the politeness reflected in verbal planning and execution is indicative of one's pragmatically relevant declarative knowledge, knowledge that reveals the speaker's internal structure. In general, one's internal structure has components such as knowledge, wants,

attitudes and feelings. These may all be said to be affected by the cultural environment to which one is exposed. Politeness is taken as a deviation from rational efficiency, because politeness normally requires the intense use of implicature and encourages inferences, which might lend some obstacles to straightforward interactions. Another view toward politeness is that it is a product of rational efficiency in cases where face wants are satisfied.

Stevens( 2007) defines that politeness is said to have the capacity to showcase the values, norms and notions possessed by a specific cultural group. In other words, underlying the behaviour patterns or language that exhibit politeness are some core components of a culture.

Bergen (1992) opines that teachers who use strategies that promote the connection between humor and learning usually provide students with their best school experiences especially when ESL teachers share the same background culture with most of the students.

Humor facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and helps distinguish figurative from literal meaning. Similarly, it helps develop visual memory and improves the capacity to solve linguistic problems. The devices that we can use to add humor to a language class range from idiomatic expressions, riddles, or proverbs, pronunciation, games, comics, the use of regalia, jokes or typical grammatical errors( Horwitz 2007).

Tarhan (2015) suggests to English learners that to speak English naturally there are 6 great TV shows as the same time to improve English listening comprehension too. Tarhan suggests "Friends" (1994-2004) among as 6 great TV shows. "Friends" is a popular American sitcom. What makes "Friends" so appealing (interesting) is its sense of humor, as well as its universal themes. Why it is helpful: catching up with the dialogue in "Friends" might not be easy. The characters often speak fast. But there is also a lot of physical comedy and repetition (using the same words and jokes) — even if learners do not understand everything they will get what is going on. The language is conversational and you'll also learn how to understand basic humor through the dialogue.

As Shanthi ( 2015) notes for several reasons, watching English TV series is one of the best ways to improve your English language skills. In addition to showing you the language that people really use in everyday life, TV shows are great entertainment, which helps with your motivation. Indeed, by actively watching TV series, you can gain an incredible amount of useful vocabulary, common expressions, and even grammar points without ever opening a textbook.

According to Shanthi you can already learn a great deal from just the first *ten seconds* of the scene of Friends sitcom : useful and common phrasal verbs (**break down** and **take (something) off**), colloquial expression,( **for the love of God**), expressions — **You'll be sorry!** — that are popular for making threats. "You'll be sorry!" is a synonym of another common expression "You'll regret it!", contracted version of the modal **would** ("I'd listen to her"), combining the present perfect (**I have seen**) with the adverb of time (**ever**), using a second conditional construction like the following: "*If I were you*, I'd listen to her.", making an apology, and uses some very common language to express regret:( **We feel terrible** and **We're very sorry**),and final point about **pronunciation**. "*Don't look at him !to* "Don't look at'm!" This type of **word reduction** is exceedingly common in casual spoken English. In just a two-minute clip, we've learned about verb tenses, modals, phrasal verbs, personal pronouns, making threats, expressing

regret, and some popular colloquial expressions .In just a two-minute clip, we have learned about verb tenses, modals, phrasal verbs, personal pronouns, making threats, expressing regret, and some popular colloquial expressions. Not bad.

The researcher of the present study also studied two weblogs related to learning English language : English Language and Culture Weblog in other country and an Iranian English Learning We blog ;and it is found that Watching TV sitcoms is one of the best ways to improve English vocabulary and to learn how to speak English more fluently.

All of the foreigner and Iranian English learners admitted that there are 10 reasons why modern American sitcoms should be a regular part of the English learning diet:

1-There is no better way to learn American slang and how people really talk.

2-Sitcoms have more realistic contexts of the English language compared to English course books (maybe your teachers would disagree, but it is true).

3-You will improve your conversational skills.

4-The English you hear in sitcoms is more likely to be everyday English – in other words it is more real.

5-You will improve your listening skills as you will be able to hear a variety of different accents.

6-You will begin to learn and understand different cultural references that are made and feel more connected to a country and the language.

7-You will finally move closer towards understanding different kinds of humor.

8-When you are a frequent watcher of one sitcom, you do not have to continuously get to know new and different characters or plots like you would have to in a movie therefore you will be able to guess more and understand what is being said through your background knowledge of the sitcom.

9-There is more repetition of words and phrases in sitcoms which will help you understand them quicker.

10-Sitcoms are more predictable in other words you can guess easily what is going to happen next therefore it is easier to understand and follow the story.

In the Iranian TV World Association Weblog to answer the question that what are the best movies and TV series to improve English ? 50% of members vote to watch sitcom Friends ,40% vote two sitcoms Friends and How I met your mother, and 10% suggest the other movies and sitcoms.

The word “sitcom” is actually the combination of two words: **situation comedy**. You can recognize a sitcom by the sound of laughter every time something funny is said or done. Sitcoms show characters in a shared environment—a home, an office—and put humor into the everyday situations they encounter. Some examples of popular sitcoms you might know are “Friends”, “How I Met Your Mother”, and “That ‘70s Show.”

The series *Friends* was shown in American television for about ten years from 1994 to 2004. It was created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman and consists of ten seasons and 238 episodes which each used to run about 22 minutes. The series is frankly spoken about the lives of six characters. Except the fact that Friends was extremely famous and seen by millions of viewers, it also got a lot of awards as there is for example the Emmy Award 2002 in the category



“Outstanding Comedy Series” and many more. There are some passages in this episode in which one character is insulted more or less explicitly and these scenes are accompanied with laughter. (Bauer 2007). Friends has been one of the top television series since its debut on NBC. It has been nominated for “American Comedy Award” for many times and actually won the award in 2000. It is also the most successful situation comedy of all times in the United States in monetary terms. (Xiaous 2009)

## **METHODOLOGY**

**PARTICIPANTS:** The participants were 50 male and female Iranian undergraduate B.A. and M.A. students majoring in English Translation, and English language teaching at University of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran .They ranged from 18 to 30 in terms of age. The L1 of all students was Persian.

### **INSTRUMENTS AND MATERIALS**

In the present study, the following instruments were utilized:

1 – (PET) Preliminary English Test. In the present study, there was a pretest to homogenize the participants .The participants were administered a PET test. PET is one of the famous and standard tests for determining for the EFL learners' level of language proficiency. This test contained 85 multiple-choice, 30 items tested the grammatical knowledge, and 25 items examined the vocabulary knowledge of the learners. The test also contained four reading comprehension exercises followed by 30 comprehension questions.

2 -An American Friends series English and Persian subtitles. The Iran Film Site was used to extract English and Persian subtitles Friends series in order to make questionnaires. Indeed, the reason for choosing this site as a source was because it contained many famous and popular American movies and TV series subtitles, and it is one of the best source for downloading subtitles both English and Persian.

3– A test of 50 sentences including: polite , impolite and neutral sentences. A politeness test included 50 polite ,impolite sentences and neutral sentences which extracted from sitcom Friends series in order to estimate the being politeness or impoliteness of humor in the Friends series. Some of the sentences were chosen purposely and some of them were chosen randomly to achieve the best result.

4- A test of translation strategies: 25 English and Persian subtitles of Friends Dialogues. A translation strategies test included 25 dialogues extracted from 30 episodes of Friends series to investigate translation strategies in this sitcom. The dialogues were extracted from 30 episodes from Iran Film Website.

## **PROCEDURES**

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following procedures were followed: The data that would be used in this study was the results of the three tests that were administered, that is, the Preliminary English Test, a test containing 50 politeness, impoliteness and neutral sentences and a translation strategies test. First of all a multiple-choice PET proficiency test was administered to participants. The test consisted of 85 grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension questions. Throughout this study, the researcher sought to examine whether the dialogues in sitcom Friends are polite or not. To achieve this goal, 50 participants took the test containing 50 politeness, impoliteness and neutral sentences. Then the participants took the translation strategies test in order to investigate the translation strategies in sitcom Friends according to Aixela(1996) and Davies '(2009) translation strategies. The translation test was included 25 dialogues items were extracted from Friends series. The participants were asked to read the English and Persian subtitles and decide on the kind of translation strategies and then write the translation strategies for each dialogue. Then the strategies were found, compared and contrasted with the original subtitles from Iran Film. At the end, the questionnaire were scored, statistical procedures were being employed to measure the descriptive statistics of the results which will be reported. The results will then be used in verification of the research hypothesis.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

After all the tests were administered and the data were collected, to test the research hypotheses and to answer the research questions, in order to compare the scores, an independent T-test were used. In addition we could find out whether there is any relation between humor and politeness. And which translation strategies were applied in Friends series subtitle. In the case of having positive effect, the result enables the researcher to reject the null hypothesis.

## **RESULTS**

The data collection procedure was carefully performed and the raw data was entered into SPSS (version 19.0) to compute the required statistical analyses in order to address the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1-Is there any relation between humor and politeness in Friends sitcom series ?

2- Are there any relationship between learners' English proficiency level and their interpretation of politeness in sitcom series ?

3-Which strategies of Aixelá's model of translation theory may have been adopted by the translators of Friends Series subtitles in practice?

**Investigation of the first and second research question**

The first research question sought to investigate whether there is any significant relation between humor and politeness in the sitcom Friends series or not. To do so , a multiple regression procedure was used. Frequency and percentage of the items of the questionnaire that the participants selected as polite are represented in Table 1. As evident from Table 1, the mean score for 40 items of the questionnaire are noticeably greater than the test value 3 (Not sure) of the questionnaire. One sample *t*-test (Table 1) was performed on each item to check whether they were selected significantly as polite or not.

Table 1: *Frequency & Percentage of Politeness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy "Friends"*

C	Very impolite		Impolite		Not sure		Polite		Very polite		N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%					
Item 3	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	28	56%	21	42%	50	4.40	.54	18.52	.000
Item 5	1	2%	4	8%	7	14%	32	64%	6	12%	50	3.76	.85	6.35	.000
Item 7	0	0%	5	10%	4	8%	36	72%	5	10%	50	3.82	.75	7.76	.000
Item 8	0	0%	7	14%	1	2%	41	82%	1	2%	50	3.72	.73	6.98	.000
Item 10	0	0%	3	6%	5	10%	36	72%	6	12%	50	3.90	.68	9.39	.000
Item 11	0	0%	13	26%	3	6%	34	68%	0	0%	50	3.42	.88	3.36	.001
Item 12	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	41	82%	7	14%	50	4.10	.42	18.68	.000
Item 13	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	45	90%	50	4.90	.3	44.33	.000
Item 14	0	0%	2	4%	2	4%	42	84%	4	8%	50	3.96	.53	12.74	.000
Item 15	0	0%	6	12%	1	2%	43	86%	0	0%	50	3.74	.66	7.88	.000

Item 16	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	19	38%	31	62%	50	4.62	.49	23.36	.000
Item 17	0	0%	1	2%	2	4%	43	86%	4	8%	50	4.00	.45	15.65	.000
Item 18	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	14%	43	86%	50	4.86	.35	37.52	.000
Item 20	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	44	88%	5	10%	50	4.08	.34	22.43	.000
Item 21	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	41	82%	7	14%	50	4.10	.42	18.68	.000
Item 22	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	27	54%	23	46%	50	4.46	.5	20.51	.000
Item 23	0	0%	0	0%	5	10%	42	84%	3	6%	50	3.96	.4	16.89	.000
Item 24	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	25	50%	25	50%	50	4.50	.51	21.00	.000
Item 25	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	39	78%	9	18%	50	4.14	.45	17.83	.000
Item 27	0	0%	4	8%	5	10%	41	82%	0	0%	50	3.74	.6	8.73	.000
Item 28	0	0%	0	0%	3	6%	41	82%	6	12%	50	4.06	.42	17.67	.000
Item 29	0	0%	12	24%	10	20%	28	56%	0	0%	50	3.32	.84	2.68	.010
Item 30	0	0%	6	12%	6	12%	38	76%	0	0%	50	3.64	.69	6.53	.000
Item 32	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	17	34%	33	66%	50	4.66	.48	24.53	.000
Item 34	0	0%	1	2%	5	10%	42	84%	2	4%	50	3.90	.46	13.75	.000
Item 35	0	0%	6	12%	6	12%	36	72%	2	4%	50	3.68	.74	6.49	.000
Item 36	0	0%	1	2%	10	20%	39	78%	0	0%	50	3.76	.48	11.28	.000
Item 37	0	0%	4	8%	2	4%	41	82%	3	6%	50	3.86	.64	9.51	.000
Item 38	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	47	94%	1	2%	50	3.98	.25	28.10	.000
Item 39	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	45	90%	5	10%	50	4.10	.3	25.67	.000
Item 40	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	26	52%	24	48%	50	4.48	.51	20.74	.000
Item 41	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	21	42%	29	58%	50	4.58	.5	22.41	.000
Item 42	0	0%	3	6%	10	20%	37	74%	0	0%	50	3.68	.59	8.19	.000
Item 43	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	41	82%	9	18%	50	4.18	.39	21.50	.000
Item 44	0	0%	0	0%	4	8%	46	92%	0	0%	50	3.92	.27	23.74	.000
Item 45	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	43	86%	7	14%	50	4.14	.35	23.00	.000
Item 46	0	0%	9	18%	5	10%	35	70%	1	2%	50	3.56	.81	4.88	.000
Item 47	0	0%	8	16%	5	10%	37	74%	0	0%	50	3.58	.76	5.41	.000
Item 49	0	0%	3	6%	3	6%	44	88%	0	0%	50	3.82	.52	11.10	.000
Item 50	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	18	36%	32	64%	50	4.64	.49	23.92	.000

As Table 1 above shows, one sample *t*-test was performed on each item to check whether they were chosen significantly polite or not. T-test was significant ( $p < .05$ ,  $t$ -value  $> t$ -critical, 2.02).

Frequency and percentage of the items of the questionnaire that the participants chose as neutral are laid out in Table 2. Table 2 indicates that the mean score for only 6 items of the questionnaire are close to the test value 3 (Not sure) of the questionnaire. We applied one sample *t*-test (Table 2) on each item to test if they were chosen significantly as polite, impolite or neutral.

Table 2: *Frequency & Percentage of Neutral Politeness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy "Friends"*

Items	Very impolite		Impolite		Not sure		Polite		Very polite		N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%					
Item 1	1	2%	18	36%	16	32%	15	30%	0	0%	50	2.90	.86	-0.82	.417
Item 2	0	0%	17	34%	6	12%	27	54%	0	0%	50	3.20	.93	1.53	.133
Item 6	2	4%	15	30%	4	8%	29	58%	0	0%	50	3.20	1.1	1.40	.168
Item 9	0	0%	16	32%	8	16%	26	52%	0	0%	50	3.20	.9	1.57	.124
Item 19	2	4%	20	40%	3	6%	25	50%	0	0%	50	3.02	1.4	0.14	.892
Item 31	2	4%	24	48%	3	6%	21	42%	0	0%	50	2.86	1.3	-0.96	.341

One sample *t*-test (Table 2) was not significant ( $p > .05$ ,  $t$ -value  $< t$ -critical, 2.02) for 6 items of the questionnaire presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: *Neutral Politeness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy "Friends"*

1. Chandler: Alright, so I'm back in high school, I'm standing in the middle of the cafeteria, and I realize I am totally naked.
2. Ross: No I don't, to hell with her, she left me!

- 
6. Chandler: Yes, please don't spoil all this fun.
9. Rachel: I can see that. You look like you slept with a hanger in your mouth.
19. Barry: You know, you were right? I mean, I thought we were happy. We weren't happy. But with Mindy, now I'm happy. Spit.
31. Monica: Joey, this is sick, it's disgusting, it's, it's—not really true, is it?
- 

Frequency and percentage of the items of the questionnaire that the participants chose as impolite are displayed in Table 4. A quick look at Table 4 reveals that the mean score for just 4 items of the questionnaire are considerably lower than the test value 3 (Not sure) of the questionnaire. One sample *t*-test (Table 4) was conducted on each item to test whether they were chosen significantly as impolite or not.

Table 4: *Frequency & Percentage of Impoliteness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy “Friends”*

Items	Very impolite		Impolite		Not sure		Polite		Very polite		N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%					
Item 4	0	0%	17	34%	29	58%	4	8%	0	0%	50	2.74	.6	-3.07	.004
Item 26	26	52%	24	48%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	50	1.48	.51	-21.30	.000
Item 33	5	10%	42	84%	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%	50	1.96	.4	-18.29	.000
Item 48	3	6%	28	56%	4	8%	15	30%	0	0%	50	2.62	.99	-2.72	.009

As Table 4 above shows, one sample *t*-test was performed on each item to check whether they were chosen significantly polite or not. *T*-test was significant ( $p < .05$ ,  $t$ -value  $> t$ -critical, 2.02) for the following 4 items of the questionnaire (Table 5).

Table 5: *Impoliteness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy “Friends”*

- 
4. Joey: Here's a little tip, she really likes it when you rub her neck in the same stop over and over and over again until it starts to get a little red.
26. Monica: Really. Well, at least 'big girls' don't pee in their pants in seventh grade!
33. Monica: What? So you guys don't mind going out with someone else who's going out with someone else?
48. RACH: Yeah, what're you saying, you just sort of put away feelings or whatever the hell it was you felt for.
- 

Likert data of the questionnaire was measured on the interval data, so we used parametric test (i.e., one sample *t*-test) in order to answer this research question. Creswell (2008) suggests that for Likert data to be treated as interval data there is need to develop multiple categories within a scale, establish equality of variance between each value on the scale and normality of the data.

The descriptive statistics for students' total ideas as appeared in Table 6 shows that the mean score is 3.78 with the standard deviation of .11. This mean score is considerably greater than the value (3), representing "Not sure" choice. Besides based on Table 4.7, the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors do not exceed the ranges of +/- 1.96. So scores have normal distribution.

Table 6: *Descriptive Statistics for Total Politeness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy "Friends"*

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
50	3.781	.1104	-.863	.337

Figure 1 below is a histogram that demonstrates the distribution of the students' ideas about the politeness of humor in Persian translation of American situation comedy "Friends". As Figure 1

illustrate, all of the students have expressed that the American situation comedy “Friends” is polite. Also the scores have formed a bell shape signifying normal distribution of the scores.

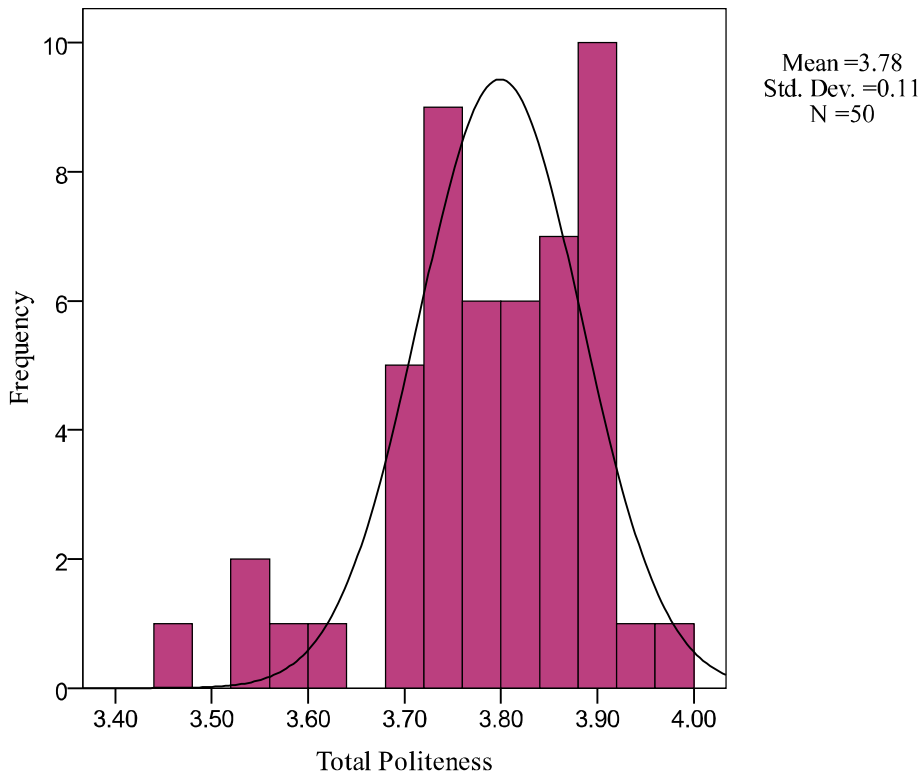


Figure 1 Total politeness of humor in Persian translation of American situation comedy “Friends”

The results of one sample *t*-test that was used to explore the politeness of humor in Persian translation of American situation comedy “Friends” are provided in Table 7 below. Based on Table 7, the one sample *t*-test was significant,  $t = 6.93$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ , in fact the *t*-observed (6.93) was higher than the *t*-critical (2.06), with 95% confidence interval ranging from .225 to .416; consequently it is concluded that the most of the students believe that American situation comedy “Friends” is polite.



Table 7: One Sample T-test for Politeness of Humor in Persian Translation of American Situation Comedy “Friends”

Test Value = 3					
T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
6.935	24	.000	.32093	.2254	.4164

all the scores are above the test value 3 representing “Not sure” choice of the questionnaire. Besides, based on Table 7, the minimum score is 3.46, and the maximum score is 3.98.

### The investigation of the third research question

The second research question sought to investigate the translation strategies according to strategies of Aixelá's (1996) model of translation theory in Friends series from English into Persian subtitle and davies (2003) translation strategies. Figure 2 contains the descriptive statistics:

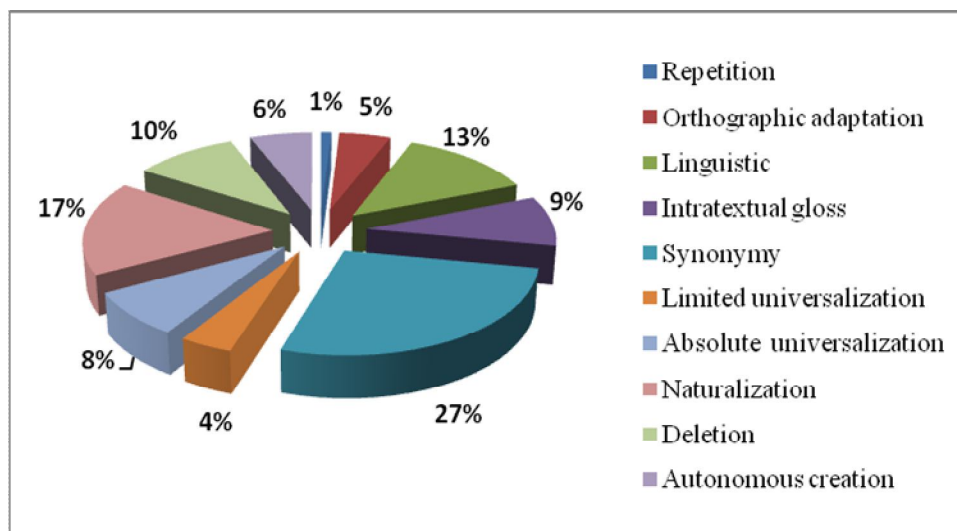


Figure 2. Frequency of Strategy's Usage in Friends series

According to Aixelé (1996) and Davies (2003) translation strategies the research discovered that in the translation in series Friends, Synonymy, Naturalization, and Intra-textual gloss are the most frequent strategies which are used and performed well, succeeding to help the Iranian audience understanding the humor.

As the chart shows, it is divided into ten parts. And among the strategies its synonymy that has the more usage in dealing with humor translations, and after that its naturalization that has the most usage. Among rest of the strategies there is no more significant difference based in the usage in the translation of humor and they sequence based on the usage is as following: 13% linguistic, 10% deletion, 9% Intra-textual gloss, 8% absolute universalization, 6% autonomous creation, 5% orthographic adaptation, 4% limited universalization, and only 1% repetition.

## Discussion

Regarding the first research question of this study, the outcomes supported the positive relation between humor and politeness and on the other hand the positive relation between the learners' English efficiency, and their interpretation of politeness in sitcom Friends. This finding of the present study showed that there are politeness dialogues in humor too. So the result indicated the politeness sentences in the politeness questionnaire.

Yang (2014) states that in the subtitling translation in American sitcom humor element is an essential part of the sitcom. However, the loss of humor is very common in subtitling translation, so the vivid and accurate translation for humor in sitcoms has become a challenge for the translators.

Some researchers believe that teachers who use strategies that promote the connection between humor and learning usually provide students with their best school experiences. A sitcom is

produced to amuse the audience, so the audience might be well aware that lines in Friends are designed to make them laugh and are not to be taken serious.

There are many sitcoms with many different kinds of humor, so it is easy to find a kind of humor that you can enjoy and understand. Watching a sitcom is a great way to learn English through humor since they often show real, everyday situations and conversations. They add humor to these common life moments and sometimes help us see them from a different point of view. At the very bottom of most sitcoms, though, are the interaction between the characters and how their personalities deal with the world. Even "Friends" has some serious moments in between the laughter, like this dramatic moment between Rachel and Ross, or the time Phoebe gives away her triplets. Sitcoms also give you hints about where the jokes are thanks to the laughter. If you hear laughter but are not sure why, you might have missed something funny.

Regarding the second research question, the experimental results revealed the translation strategies have had the significance role to understanding and transfer the exact and willing message in movies and in this study sitcom Friends series. The result of frequency of the efficacy shows that one of the strategy which has a significant difference with the rest of the strategy is synonymy . The another strategy is the Naturalization which has the characteristic similar to the synonymy. This finding of the present study is consistent with a number of studies such as Sharifian & Akbari (2014) that found translation of polite expressions is of significant importance particularly in subtitling process.

This is due to the fact that audience plays a key role in this vein. Popularity and dispopularity of translation are all pertained to the reaction of the target audience. In this direction, one of the most pivotal facets of translation is regarded as translation politeness in the target language. More specifically, polite expressions show someone's ideology, culture, and language patterning. It is noteworthy that politeness translation can vary from language to language. It means that every language has the specific rules in dealing with different situations. The ultimate goal is to satisfy the needs of the target audience. However, translator should consider some facets in this connection. First, she/he should regard the cultural background of target language. This is due to the fact that cultures might vary with one another to a great extent. Second, translator should be gotten familiar with the taste of target audience in order to transfer the approximate intention of the source text. (Akbari & Shahnazari, 2014).

According to Dabbaghian and Int J ,Adv (2014) American television audiences will have associations with all Culture Specific Items (CSIs) ; however it is likely that the Persian subtitle translators were not always aware of these associations.

As Akbari & Shahnazari ( 2014) mention ,Eventually, Persian renderings mostly utilize compensation to cover all facets of source language. This is due to the fact that language patterning and background of Persian and English language are so diverse in which even professional translators cannot depict the stable and feasible framework. Henceforth, translators have to eliminate some parts of rendering and consequently compensate the eliminated parts in rest of the translation so that the Persian audience can connect him/herself to the exact content or intention of the source language completely. Due to space and time limitation, Persian renderers

lose some of the parts of the text and then gain the throughout the Persian translation. Henceforth, it seems that Persian renderings are less polite than that of the English ones. For instance, translation of negative politeness such as deference to the bald on record in the Persian transition shows that the intended translation is less polite than English language.

Among the strategies its synonymy that has the more usage in dealing with humor translations, and after that its naturalization that has the most usage. And among rest of the strategies there is no more significant difference based in the usage in the translation ,and they sequence based on the usage is as following: 13% linguistic, 10% deletion, 9% Intra-textual gloss, 8% absolute universalization, 6% autonomous creation, 5% orthographic adaptation, 4% limited universalization, and only 1% repetition.

## CONCLUSION

Humor seems to play an important role in our everyday communication. Accordingly, a proper transference of the humorous effect from one language into another is probably of a remarkable significance. This is particularly the case when most TV programmes, including sitcoms are loaded with humor as their primary element. Keeping this point in mind, the present paper made an effort to examine how humor travels between languages and cultures through subtitling , the focus of this study, and whether is the sitcom Friends series polite or not. In conclusion, humour translation seems to be a daunting task which inevitably challenges almost all translators. It necessitates a lot of time, endeavour, and energy particularly in the area of subtitling. Humour is a complex cultural phenomenon that demands a broad inclusive outlook for its translation (Armat et al ,2012).

Davies (2003 )suggests there is no absolute rule for translators to adopt certain strategies . “The only constant is change”. There is not a one-size-fit-all approach in the world for dealing with any issue, and subtitling is no exception to this maxim.

The findings of the research appear to suggest that Synonymy, Naturalization and Literal translation or Intratextual gloss as translation strategies for dealing with humor most of the times lead to the most effective translation equivalents.

In researchers opinion movie series and sitcom series are one of the tools that transfer the socio-cultural features of a nation worldwide. As Tarhan(2015) believes if you want to improve your listening comprehension skills without getting bored or annoyed, watching a TV series is the way to go. However, there are many unique benefits that only television shows have to offer English learners.

An international study has discovered that *Friends* is the most popular television show for helping people learn English .Research by Kaplan International Colleges revealed that watching the popular sitcom assists the largest number of people who are studying to improve their language skills.The study found that 82% of people said watching television programs helps them learn English and 26% claim to have enhanced their understanding of the language from enjoying episodes of the popular sitcom Friemds, which originally aired between 1994 and 2004.(Martin 2012).

*Friends* enjoys enormous popularity with young Iranian audiences, who watch it on TV or on the Internet. Many websites are recommending *Friends* as effective material for English language study, not only because its lines show the daily discourse of American people but also because it is thought to provide some insight into American culture. A secondary aim of the study was to analyze the politeness in *Friends* series.

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Living in the age of mass communication and media development, it is even becoming of more outstanding significance in recent translation studies. However, choosing the most natural and applicable strategies for a better transfer of humor from one language into another is indeed a challenging task for translators. Humor translation differs from other types of translation since it requires more intricate strategies (Vandaele, 2002).

Gruner (1978:1) emphasizes this point thus without laughter everyday living becomes drab and lifeless; life would seem hardly human at all. Likewise, a sense of humor is generally considered a person's most admirable attribute. This is why the study of humor occupies an important place in research in English linguistics and has attracted the interest and attention of researchers for centuries.

Humor facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and helps distinguish figurative from literal meaning. Similarly, it helps develop visual memory and improves the capacity to solve linguistic problems. Humor is a special topic in audiovisual translation (AVT) studies because in films they give valuable information, but its management in audiovisual translation is restricted by technical, linguistic, and cultural constraints (Veiga, 2009, p. 2, 3)

Shanthi (2015) believes that for several reasons, watching English TV series is one of the best ways to improve your English language skills. Indeed, by actively watching TV series, you can gain an incredible amount of useful vocabulary, common expressions, and even grammar points without ever opening a textbook.

The present study may also have implications for humor and sitcom series translators, material writers, textbook authors, curriculums of language institutes.

## **SUGGESTION FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study focused on translation strategies in the American sitcom *Friends* series in EFL classes and learning English through humor with emphasis on politeness. We do need to acknowledge, of course, that this study was a short period experiment, the general findings of which would need to be replicated before any firm conclusions can be drawn. For those who are interested in conducting research in the area of translation strategies, sitcom politeness in humor, the following questions are suggested for further research.

1. This study suggested that there is relation between humor and learners' interpretation and their attitudes of comprehension of politeness in humor. But, it did not test the other characters, knowledge, aspects and their effects of learners on comprehension of politeness and humor interpretation; these can be subjects for future research.
2. Investigating the impact of watching humor series and movies on teaching slang and expressions can be another area for research.
3. This study was carried out through one of the sitcom series ; other and different sitcoms may lead different results.
4. having English learners to watch and use movies as one of the useful tools may have various effects on learning language; hence taking their differences into account can be a new area for research.
5. The sample size in the present study was small and limited , so this research can be conducted with a larger sample
6. The age and gender of the participants were not considered as variables, so further research can take these variables into consideration.

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