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Synchronization in English-to-Persian Dubbing: Assessing the Dubbing Quality of the Film *The Green Mile*

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Abstract
The success of dubbed films depends on the quality of synchronization to a great extent. Failure to meet synchronization may lead target viewers to dislike or reject the dubbed product for being unnatural or unfaithful. Thus, dubbing translators often face the challenge of achieving synchronization. This becomes even more challenging in audiovisual translation, particularly when the source and target languages are categorically and structurally different. A case in point is the English and Persian language pair. Using Chaume's (2008) synchronization framework and Chaume's (2007) dubbing quality standards, this article intends to assess the synchronization quality and techniques used by the dubbing translators to tackle this challenge in the Persian dubs of the English-language film *The Green Mile*. The findings indicated that the selected film had acceptable synchronization, and the dubbing translators performed well. The findings further reveal that to achieve lip-sync, the dubbing translators use repetition, word order shift, and substitution techniques more frequently, and to achieve isochrony, they use reduction.

Key words
Synchronization; film dubbing; lip-sync; isochrony; Persian

1. Introduction

Synchronization is defined as a feature of translation for dubbing, which consists of matching the translation and the articulatory and body movements of the screen actors, as well as matching the dialogues and pauses in the translation and those of the source text (Chaume 2012). It involves isochrony (Whitman-Linsen 1992: 22), kinesic synchrony (Fodor 1976: 72), and lip synchrony (Fodor 1976: 10), the latter of which plays an important role in the dubbing quality and, unlike the other two, is only relevant in close-ups, extreme close-ups, and detailed shots (Chaume 2012).

As Chaume (2020) puts it, lip-synchronized (lip-sync for short) dubbing is the most common type of revoicing. It is defined as the replacement of the original

voice track, which follows the timing, phrasing, and lip movements of the original dialogue as closely as possible. He indicates that keeping the simultaneous action and correlation between the sounds of TL and actors' lip movements helps achieve synchrony. The lack of lip-syncing in dubbed films, the writing of non-credible unrealistic dialogue lines, the lack of coherence between text and images in a dubbing, a noticeable diversion from the meaning of the original version, bad acting on the part of the voice actors, and poor sound quality, are all aspects that may turn a dubbed product into a commercial failure. Translated audiovisual genres (films, TV series, cartoons, or documentaries) should follow certain specific conventions that help audiences recognize them and watch them in a particular way, thereby maximizing their success (Chaume 2016).

Translation for dubbing puts translators in a dilemma when they want to maintain the same ideas and plot as the original audiovisual work, and at the same time make sure that synchronization (lip-sync or isochrony) is achieved (Asaala 2014). Not maintaining the original storyline in the dubbed version of the product and low-quality synchronization in the dubbing process may damage the target audience's interest in watching it.

Dubbing synchronization is especially challenging when the source and target languages are structurally different and belong to different linguistic categories. Persian and English, as the focus of this study, are two very different languages with distinct structural differences. One key difference is that English is from the Germanic subgroup of Indo-European languages, while Persian belongs to the Indo-Iranian subgroup. This means that they have different grammatical structures, word order, and vocabulary. In Persian, the word order is SOV, while in English, it is SVO. This can lead to issues when translating between the two languages. Also, Persian has a complex system of verb conjugation and noun declension, while English relies more on word order and auxiliary verbs to convey meaning (Yarmohammadi 2002).

Few studies have been conducted to assess the quality of the synchronization of foreign films in the context of Iran. Sanatifar and Tofeeq (2022) investigated documentary voice-over (as a form of dubbing) on Iran's national television, assessing the quality of isochrony. They demonstrated a higher-than-usual quality of synchronization and concluded that, in practice, Iranian voice-over narrators adhered strongly to synchronization techniques in most segments of the selected documentary, although some slight modifications might still be applied to improve the translation of the segments.

In another study, Danaeefar et al. (2020) examined the quality of unauthorized Persian dubs of several films and revealed that content synchrony and isochrony were the most problematic types of synchrony in these Persian dubs, while character synchrony, kinesic synchrony, and phonetic synchrony were preserved at acceptable levels. In a survey-based study on Persian dubbing preferences and perception of quality standards, Ameri et al. (2018) investigated the quality of Persian dubbing in terms of synchronization and concluded that technicality, including character synchrony and isochrony, was the highest-rated and most valued quality standard by participants.

Comparing two voiced-over documentaries, Ameri and Khoshsaligheh (2016) reveal that the voiced-over Persian version preserved isochrony at the beginning more frequently, but the translation did not respect the available time slot and continued for a few seconds after the original segment had finished, so isochrony was achieved only partially. Their study indicated that the dubbing translators preserved isochrony, while translators used the phonetic/lip-sync strategy more frequently in the dubbing of the selected film.

Regarding dubbing techniques aimed at achieving synchronization, specifically focusing on lip-sync and isochrony, there is a noticeable lack of research in the Persian context. This indicates a need for further attention and study in the areas of dubbing, synchronization quality assessment, and the techniques employed. To address this gap, the present case study seeks to evaluate the quality of synchronization (both lip-sync and isochrony) in the Persian dubbing of the American film *The Green Mile* and to examine the techniques utilized to achieve this synchronization.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Dubbing

Chaume (2013b: 107) defines (human) dubbing as consisting of "translating and lip-syncing the script of an audiovisual text, which is then performed by actors directed by a dubbing director and, where available, with advice from a linguistic consultant or dubbing assistant." He points out that it is the most common and the main mode of audiovisual translation for foreign films and television companies in some European and Asian countries (among them France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Turkey, or China and Japan, among others). Chaume (2013b) maintains that dubbing is not only a complex linguistic and cultural process but also a technical and artistic one, where teamwork is vital in achieving a high-quality product. Dubbing is also on the increase in some countries where it is being adopted for certain audiovisual genres or audiences (Chaume 2012).

2.2 Synchronization as a dubbing norm

Fodor (1976) was the pioneering scholar who put forth the topic of synchrony. He described the various types of synchronization while developing the area of study known as "visual phonetics". As remarked by González Requena (1989 cited in Chaume 2004), visual phonetics links the mouth articulatory movements of the screen actor and the phonemes that the translator should fit into his or her mouth to avoid a clash between the translation and the original message and the consequent communicative noise and loss of the reality effect. Fodor also introduced a differentiation between three types of synchrony: phonetic synchrony, character synchrony, and content synchrony.

Phonetic synchrony refers to the lip movement of the actors on screen. Character synchrony is concerned with matching the voice qualities of the dubbing actor

to the film character actor. Content synchrony refers to the consistency between the translation and what happens on screen. Fodor also proposed that sounds in the source and target versions should be similar, depending on the different types of shots or camera angles, and suggested end techniques to help achieve a similar pronunciation for dubbing actors. However, according to Chaume (2004), his standard of perfection has little to do with the reality of dubbing production, where economic and time constraints control the process.

Chaume (2004) provides a more detailed analysis covering different approaches to synchronization and a useful compendium on the topic. He classified the literature on synchrony in dubbing into four categories. The first one considers works that take a professional perspective. According to this point of view, synchrony aims to create the illusion that the viewer is watching the film in its original version and that it is not a dubbed production so that nothing distorts that perception (Chaume 2004). The second category is defined as a functionalist, which characterizes the approaches proposed by Fodor (1976). These approaches are somewhat similar to the first category, in the sense that they also emphasize that synchrony should not interfere with the perception of the audiovisual program: if we accept that the function of a functional audiovisual text is primarily to entertain the viewer, we will also accept that respect for synchronization is essential if the viewer's attention is not to be distracted from the final product (Chaume 2004). The third category is the so-called 'polysystemic' approach, which considers synchrony as the most prominent feature of naturalization.

Chaume (2004) maintains that this approach shifts the focus of attention away from the function of the translation to the conventions of the target culture. The fourth category, the "cinematographic approach", is not an entirely consistent group of proposals, as it includes disparate approaches such as the ones by Chaves (2000), Bartrina (2001), Bravo (2003), and Chaume (2003; 2004). Their common feature, however, is their notion of synchronization as one of a set of elements in the broad network of signs that make up the message, the film, and the narration (Chaume 2004).

This perspective emphasizes three generally accepted conventions. The first one is to respect lip movements. The second principle requires a translation that matches the characters' movements on screen. The last convention refers to adapting the length of the utterance in the translated text to the length of the original text uttered by the actors (Chaume 2004).

2.3 Synchronization quality standards

Brannon, Virkar, and Thompson (2023) described human dubbing as a sequence of contributions by several human actors, each with control over a different aspect of the process. The first step is an approximate literal translation of the original script by a dialogue translator. Next, a dialogue adaptor will modify this translation into a plausible script meeting the requirements for dubbing, such as isochrony, lip synchrony, kinesic synchrony, and so on. Finally, the translated and modified script will go to a production team. Voice actors, with input from a dubbing director or supervisor, have often been noted to have the freedom to

improvise or make small changes to the dialogue as it is being recorded. Experienced translators and scriptwriters translate and synchronize at the same time, i.e., the first translation option usually fits into the screen characters' mouths (Chaume 2013a). Their main task consists of ensuring that the target text is synchronized with the original one while avoiding syntactic interference.

Regarding quality, academic proposals of dubbing standards can also be understood as a globalizing trend attempting to make this type of translation homogeneous. Various dubbing quality standards, in general, have been discussed by Whitman-Linsen (1992), Chaume (2007, 2012, 2020), and Spiteri Miggiani (2021a, 2021b). Chaume (2007) has presented an open list of dubbing quality standards as follows: acceptable lip-sync, credible and natural-sounding dialogue, fidelity to the original product, semiotic cohesion between words and images, clear sound and volume, and adequate role interpretation. A further revisit of this model by Spiteri Miggiani (2021a) divides the quality parameters into two categories: textual quality parameters[1] and non-textual quality parameters[2].

Synchronization is one of the standards at stake in audiovisual translation, particularly in the context of dubbing. It undeniably has a direct impact on the translation process and product, and as such, it should be given due consideration in the field of Translation Studies and, particularly, dubbing in Audiovisual Translation. It was first introduced to the field of Audiovisual Studies by Fodor (1976, cited in Bartrina and Eva Espasa 2005) in his description of the content, character, and phonetic synchrony.

Character synchrony "covers the agreement between the voices of the dubbing actors and the expectations of the on-screen actor's voice" (Whitman 1992; Mayoral et.al. 1988 cited in Chaume 2004: 44). However, he explains that this kind of synchrony is directly related to the dramatization of dubbing actors, rather than a type of synchronization, and falls outside the range of synchronization to which the translator or dialog writer has access. The effects of dramatization are totally in the hands of the dubbing actors and the dubbing director.

As for content synchrony, he explains that "content synchrony, or the semantic relation between the translation and what happens on screen (images and music), cannot be considered as a type of synchronization either" (Chaume 2004: 44). The standards created by Fodor are acknowledged by Batrina and Eva Espasa (2005) but they declare that having synchrony in content and character is something prevalent in different types of translation.

2.4 Types and techniques of synchronization

Chaume (2008) defined three types of synchronization, including lip-synchrony, isochrony, and kinesic synchrony.

a) Lip-sync: Lip-sync consists of adapting the translation to the articulatory movements of the on-screen characters, especially in close-up shots. For the audience of the target language to experience the same effect as those of the source language, the dubber needs to ensure that there is lip-sync. In instances where the lips are still moving and the statement from the source has ended, the dubber fills

the gap by introducing words to the statement to help achieve synchrony of the lips. Lip-syncing becomes a challenge when the length and timing of the words uttered in the original language do not match the length and timing of the target language. Dubbing translators face the extra challenge of lip-synching on top of translating the source language dialogue into the target language. Quality film dubbing requires that the dialogue is first translated so that the words used can match the lip movements of the actor. To achieve this and to stay true to the original dialogue, additions ("fillers") will be used in the translated dialogue rather than employing strategies to reduce the dialogue/time needed for the dubbing translation. It may be necessary to modify the original translation to shorten or lengthen the time it takes to speak. The chief requirements of satisfactory synchronization involve a faithful and artistic rendering of the original dialogue, an approximately perfect unification of the replaced sounds with visible lip movements, and bringing the style of delivery in the new version into optimal artistic harmony with the style of acting (Fodor 1976).

b) Isochrony: The synchronization of the length of the translation with the screen actors' dialogues is known as isochrony (Whitman-Linsen 1992:28), i.e., when spoken, the translated dialogue must be the same length as the time the screen actor or actress has his/her mouth open to utter the source text dialogues. Isochrony is one of the cornerstones of dubbing (Chaume 2008) as it is the most important aspect perceived by the viewers. Most criticisms of a badly dubbed film stem from isochrony deficiencies since this is where the viewer is most likely to notice the fault. Instances in which the character's lips have closed at the end of an utterance but the viewer still hears the translated speech, or where an actor is speaking while the viewer hears nothing, are frequent and justified grounds for criticism by both critics and the public (Chaume 2004).

c) Kinesic synchrony: The synchronization of the translation with the actors' body movements is known as kinesic synchrony. This type of synchrony is a crucial aspect of dubbing. It requires dubbing actors to adjust their words to match the movements of the original speakers' articulations (Chaume 2012). Different languages may incorporate a variety of gestures, allowing speakers to convey meaning through body language without using words. Consequently, when dubbing from languages that rely more on written language into a verbal system that relies more on spoken language and has limited physical expression, a gap often emerges between the on-screen visuals and the audio heard by the audience (Danaeefar et al. 2020). Chaume (2008: 132–133) defines kinesic synchrony as the synchrony with body movements, such as shaking or nodding the head. In most cultures, shaking the head means 'no,' while nodding means 'yes.' For instance, when an actor nods, it visually conveys that the character agrees with something. Consequently, if nodding means 'yes' in the target culture as well, the dialogue coming from the actor's mouth should not include a negative response. If it does, as Chaume (2008: 132–133) points out, there would be a clear conflict between the visual and auditory cues, undermining the illusion created by the dubbing.

In regards to synchronization techniques, Matamala (2010: 105–106) provides a categorization that focuses on synchronization but also includes further changes such as those that take place during the language revision or even later in the process, in the actual recording. Both in the synchronization stage and the recording, they include *Reduction*: the number of syllables of the original is reduced; *Repetition*: some words are repeated; *Amplification*: the text is made longer; *Modification*: the length of the utterance is kept the same but the sentence is altered; *Changed Order*: the same words are kept but in a different order, and *Deletion*: some part of the utterance is deleted but the rest remains the same.

Chaume (2008: 135) presents the following techniques of synchronization: *Repetition* of the word or words in the source language when the words are identical or very similar in both source and target language; *Word order shift* (syntactic or informative – topic/comment) so that the word containing the marked phoneme coincides with another word in the TL containing similar or identical phonemes; *Substitution* of the target word, which is in principle the literal translation of the source word, for a synonym, antonym, hypernym, hyponym, or any other stylistic resource that respects the original meaning; *Reduction* or *amplification* of the word, phrase, or sentence, a technique that can be combined with others, and *omission* of a word or sentence constituent or *addition* of a new element, techniques that in some cases might be considered as translation errors in written translations, but are permitted in AVT, especially in dubbing.

As for the isochrony techniques, those outlined by Chaume (2008: 135) are utilized as follows:

- *Amplification*: the expansion of the dubs using translation techniques, such as repetition, gloss, periphrasis, anacoluthon (when a sentence abruptly changes from one structure to another), paraphrase, (longer) synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms or general terms, and hyponyms or words or phrases whose semantic range is included within that of another word.

- *Reduction*: ellipsis of performative verbs, modal verbs, interjections, markers of the phatic function (i.e., the use of language for the sake of interaction, which can be observed in greetings and casual discussions of the weather, for example), expressions performing purely social functions (hello, good morning, yes, no, thanks, sure, certainly), vocatives, surnames, and proper names; omission of redundancies with the images; use of deictics instead of nouns and phrases, of all-purpose words like 'thing' or 'stuff', of (shorter) synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, metaphors, and metonymy.

This latter categorization of Chaume's (2008) synchronization techniques was employed in the present study due to its relevance, recency, and precision to analyze the techniques that the dubbing translators used to achieve synchronization.

Dubbing assistants, dialogue writers, dubbing directors, or translators performing this function must analyze what types of shots they are dealing with. Traditionally, dubbing countries are only concerned with close-ups and extreme close-up shots showing only the character's face. Dialogue writers, then, adapt

the translation to the articulatory movements of the on-screen characters, paying particular attention to ensure that the translation respects the open vowels and bilabial and labiodental consonants pronounced on screen. Dubbing primarily consists of domesticating a foreign product to make it seem realistic, credible, and in tune with the audience's expectations and experiences. Therefore, the translation should contain an open vowel or a bilabial phoneme where the screen actor articulates an open vowel or a bilabial phoneme in the original. Fodor's (1976) pioneering work goes into much more detail on phonetic synchrony, but in practice, lip-sync is only observed in close-ups and extreme or big close-ups (Chaume 2008).

In close-up shots, dubbing translators or scriptwriters match an open mouth or a closed mouth with open vowels or bilabials in the translation. Vowels or consonants, however, do not have to be identical. Open vowels in the ST - /a/, /æ/, /a:/, /e/ - must correspond with open vowels in the translation, but rotations are possible. This means that translations can use vowels other than those in the source text in the same position. The exact correspondence between vowels is not required: an /ae/ can substitute an /e/ and vice versa, if necessary, although sometimes an exact match is preferable. Even in the more demanding case of bilabials, words in the target language do not have to have the same consonants as the source: a /p/ can easily be replaced by /m/, /b/, or even by the labiodentals /f/ or /v/.

Phonetic articulations of close phonemes help the translator find solutions that lend credibility to target dialogues in extreme close-ups with closed lips. In these cases of close-up shots, it should be noted that phonetic equivalence overrides semantic or even pragmatic equivalence: it is much more important to find a word with a bilabial consonant than to find a synonym or a similar word in the TL. Bilabial consonants and open vowels are easily interchangeable, thus opening the possibilities for translation and encouraging creativity. Translators must bear in mind that the function of the translation is to maintain the impression of reality by matching open vowels and bilabials where screen characters in close-ups visibly open or close their mouths. Fortunately, these instances are scarce in films. The seven techniques outlined by Chaume (2008) are repetition, word order shift, substitution, reduction, amplification, omission, and addition.

Isochrony is one of the cornerstones of dubbing as it is the most important aspect perceived by the audience (Chaume 2008). Most criticisms of a badly dubbed film stem from isochrony deficiencies since this is where the viewer is most likely to notice the fault. Instances in which the characters' lips are closed at the end of an utterance but the viewer still hears the dubbed speech, or where actors are speaking while the viewer hears nothing, are frequent grounds for criticism (Chaume 2004). It is the task of the dubbing translators to fit the translation into the mute screen actors' mouths in the dubbing studio. If the translation for dubbing does not fit the screen actors' lip movements, the dialogue writer will have to expand or reduce the translation. The two techniques of amplification (as a dominant technique to expand translation) and reduction (as a dominant technique to reduce the translation) are monitored by relevance theory[3] and by the conventions governing audiovisual genres in each culture and period. In the

case of both amplification and reduction in dubbing, several stylistic resources or dubbing techniques are available to help the dubbing translators overcome problems posed by isochrony (Chaume 2008: 134–135).

3. Methods

3.1 Material

Films require synchronization at all levels and with the highest quality to succeed. Producers, distributors, and exhibitors understand that the success or failure of a dubbed film hinges on its synchronization. This synchronization encompasses various aspects, including lip movements, open and closed vowels, pauses, and syllables, as well as facial movements that match the actions of on-screen characters.

The data for this study consists of the English dialogues from the film *The Green Mile* along with its Persian-dubbed version, titled مسیر سبز (*The Green Path* in Persian). This American crime drama film, which incorporates elements of fantasy, is adapted from the 1996 novel of the same name by Stephen King. Directed by Frank Darabont, the film has a runtime of 189 minutes and was released in 1999.

The film is presented in a flashback format and narrates the story of Paul, a corrections officer on death row during the Great Depression in the United States, along with the supernatural events he experienced. *The Green Mile* was chosen for analysis due to its high IMDb rating of 8.6/10, as well as its nominations for and wins of several awards.[4] It received four Academy Award nominations: Best Picture, Best Supporting Actor for Michael Clarke Duncan, Best Sound Mixing, and Best Adapted Screenplay. Amir-hk6565 was the translator for this film, while Khosro Khosroshahi served as the dub director for IRIB Dubbing Affairs. In Iran, the film won an award for Persian dubbing. It was selected for this research due to its numerous close-up and extreme close-up shots, which were essential for analyzing lip-sync and isochrony.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

To analyze the data, the film was viewed carefully with a particular focus on the close-up shots. For broader research purposes, the authors of the paper examined 30 shots from the film, although only 9 of those shots are discussed in this paper. A key common feature of all the shots analyzed is that the characters' lip movements are visible, as they are positioned 40-50 cm from the camera.

The English dialogues and their corresponding Persian dubs were transcribed, analyzed, and compared for lip-sync features and isochrony. This comparison examined the original soundtrack alongside the Persian dubs. The techniques used by Persian dubbers to achieve isochrony and lip-sync were identified and described. For lip-sync techniques, we referred to those outlined by Chaume (2008:135), including repetition, word order shift, substitution, reduction, amplification, omission, and addition. Regarding isochrony techniques, we also utilized

those described by Chaume (2008:135), specifically amplification and reduction.

4. Results and discussion

The following section demonstrates the original dialogues in English and their corresponding dubbed versions in Persian. For the limited word count of the article, a sample of ten cases is analyzed, and glossed to show the exact placement of the words, as this is important in synchronization.

4.1 Analysis of lip-sync

In this first section, the quality of five selected segments is analyzed in terms of lip-sync standards.

(1) Usually, death row is called 'the last **mile.'**

معمولا به بند اعدامی‌ها می‌گفتیم «آخرین **مایل**».
[usually.to.death row.we called. last **mile**.]

In this segment (08:10:00), while the phrase 'the last mile' could be normally translated as 'آخر خط' /the end of line/, which is more acceptable to Persian viewers, the word 'mile' was repeated in the dubbed version. In other words, the dubbing translators borrowed the same word, 'مایل' [mile], in Persian. Moreover, to achieve lip-sync and through a word order shift, the dubbing translators used the word 'مایل' /mile/ in the final position while it should normally be placed after the word 'اعدامی‌ها' [death row]. The dubbing translators intended the character's lips to synchronize and mimic the same words and sounds (/m/, /ai/, /l/) in the dubbed form as the one pronounced in the original form.

(2) You should have taken the day off to see the **doctor.**

باید امروز رو مرخصی میگرفتی میرفتی **دکتر.**
[must.today.you took a day off.visited.**doctor**.]

In segment 2 (10:50:00), 'doctor' was repeated in the original utterance and the dubbed version in the same final position. Although in Persian, the verb regularly appears in the final position, the dubbing translators shifted the word order and used 'دکتر' [doctor] in the final position to synchronize the word 'دکتر' /doctor/ with the same word 'doctor' in the original utterance.

(3) **Make** your blood curdle.

مو به تن آدم راست میشه.
[hair.on.human's body.is straightened.]

In segment 3 (19:02), the expression 'make your blood curdle' starts with the bilabial sound /m/. The dubbing translators translated it as 'مو به تن آدم راست

میشه'. In other words, to achieve lip-sync, the dubbing translators substituted the original expression with a Persian expression to synchronize the bilabial sound /م/ [m] in the starting word 'مو' [hair] in the dubbed version with the same sound /m/ in 'make'.

(4) We were going to the hospital in **Vicksburg**.

قرار بود بریم بیمارستان **ویکس برگ.**
[were supposed.we go.Hospital.**Vicks Burg**.]

In segment 4 (2:18:16), the name 'Vicksburg' is expressed at its regular final position. However, to achieve lip-sync and through a word order shift, the dubbing translators used it at the same final position in the dubbed version instead of using it before the verb 'بریم', which regularly appears at the final position.

(5) **Soolin,** at the museum, she started to **translate** the **codes** for us.

سولین تو موزه داشته **ترجمه** می‌کرد **کدها رو** واسمون.
[**Soolin**.in.museum.was **translating**.codes.**for** us]

In segment 5 (1:59:00), the dubbing translators used two techniques to achieve lip-sync: first, they repeated the word 'سولین' [Soolin] in the dub (both starting with the same sound /s/). The dubbing translators also shifted the position of the verb 'ترجمه‌می‌کرد' [translate] in the dub (both starting with the sound /t/) to be synchronized with the original utterance in almost the same position. In Persian, the verb is regularly placed in the final position. Then, they repeated the same word 'کدها' [codes] in the dub (both starting with the sound /k/). This is so, while they could simply use the Persian word 'رمزها' [codes]. Finally, they made a shift in the position of the prepositional phrase 'for us' to the final position in the dub and used 'واسمون' [for us] instead (both starting with close labial sounds /f/ and /v/) to synchronize it with the same original word.

4.2 Analysis of isochrony

In this section, the quality of five selected segments is analyzed in terms of isochrony standards.

(6) That year, I had the worst urinary infection of **my life**.

در اون سال من دچارعفونت ادراری وخیمی شدم.
[In that year.I.got.urinary tract infection.severe.]

In segment 6 (09:05:00), the dubbing translators omitted the words 'my life' from the original utterance to make the dubbed version shorter to achieve isochrony. If they did not do so, the dub would be longer than the original utterance, and they would fail in synchronizing the two. In other words, by using the reduction technique, they intended to synchronize the dubbed version with the original one.

(7) **I think** he just wants to see one cook up close.

اون میخواد یک اعدام با صندلی الکتریکی رو از نزدیک ببینه.
[he.wants.an execution.with.electric chair.from.close distance.see]

In segment 7 (24:22:00), the dubbing translators have clarified the meaning of the verb 'cook up' in the original utterance by adding the expression 'اعدام با صندلی الکتریکی' [execution with an electric chair]. Thus, to achieve isochrony and to compensate for this extra length of amplification, the dubbing translators omitted the sentence 'I think' to match the dubbed version with the duration of the original utterance.

(8) It was; it was also the year of John Coffey.

اون سال **یه زندانی را آوردن** به اسم جان کافی.
[that year.**a prisoner.they brought.**called.John Coffey.]

In segment 8 (09:13:00), the proper name 'John Coffey' is assumed to be ambiguous for the target viewers. The dubbing translators made it clear to the target viewers by amplifying that he was a prisoner, hence, they added the words 'یه زندانی را آوردن' in the dubbed version. Due to this expansion, and to achieve isochrony, the dubbing translators omitted the phrase 'it was' in the dubbed version, which appears twice in the original utterance.

(9) How are you feeling about that?

بگو ببینم چه احساسی داری؟
[tell.me.what.feeling.**you have**?]

In segment 9 (36:52:00), the dubbing translators added the sentence 'بگو ببینم' [tell me] in the dubbed version to compensate for the short duration of the dub compared with the original utterance, hence achieving isochrony.

(10) On the day of my judgment, when I stand before God and he asks me why did I .... Did I kill one of his true miracles? **What am I going to say?**

می ترسم روز قیامت وقتی جلوی خداوند حاضر میشم و خداوند از من بپرسه چرا یکی از معجزاتشو کشتم. چی دارم بگم؟ **جوابشو چی بدم؟**
[I'm afraid.Resurrection Day.when.before.God.I will appear.and.God.asks me.why.one of his miracles.I killed.hat.I have.to say?. **His answer.what.I give?]**

In segment 10 (02:40:30), the original utterance is isochronally shorter than the dubbed version. Thus, by amplifying the question 'جوابشو چی بدم؟' [What answer I give to Him?] to make it clearer to the target viewers and to achieve isochrony, the dubbing translators synchronized the translation with the length of the original utterance.

Tables 1 and 2 show the statistical results (out of 30 cases analyzed) of the seven lip-sync and two isochrony dubbing techniques that are used in the dub-

bing of the film.

Table 1. Results of lip sync techniques

Techniques	F	P
1. Repetition	10/30	50%
2. Word order shift	6/30	30%
3. Substitution	4/30	20%
4. Reduction	0/30	0%
5. Amplification	0/30	0%
6. Omission	0/30	0%
7. Addition	0/30	0%

Table 2. Results of isochrony techniques

Techniques	F	P
1. Reduction	7/30	58%
2. Amplification	5/30	42%

Table 1 shows that lip-sync techniques of *repetition*, *word order shift*, and *substitution* are used more frequently. As shown in Table 2, the isochrony techniques of *reduction* and *amplification* are used extensively throughout the film.

Although this study explores synchronization strategies and techniques within the audiovisual genre of film, the findings align with those of Sanatifar and Tofeeq (2022), who examined documentary voice-over in Iran, demonstrating that narrators strongly adhere to synchronization principles and techniques, particularly isochrony. However, the findings partially support those of Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2016), who compared English documentaries translated into Persian, and found that while isochrony was consistently maintained at the beginning of the voice-over, the translation failed to adhere to the designated time slots, leading to extensions of a few seconds beyond the original segment, thus partially adhering to isochrony.

Additionally, the current study confirms the findings of Ameri et al. (2018), which state that character synchrony and isochrony are the highest-rated and most valued quality standards among participants. However, the findings of this study partially contradict those of Danaeefar et al. (2020), who indicated that content synchrony and isochrony posed significant challenges in Persian dubs of the films they analyzed, while character synchrony, kinesic synchrony, and lip synchrony were generally maintained at acceptable levels.

As Chaume (2004) stresses, the success or failure of dubbed films hinges on various synchronization techniques. In other words, it significantly affects how target viewers react to dubbed films. This study explores the strategies and techniques used in the process of dubbing the American film *The Green Mile*. It examines how synchronization is handled when dubbing for a Persian audience. The study uses Chaume's (2007) model, which includes three synchronization strategies: lip-sync,

isochrony, and kinesic synchrony. For this study, lip-sync and isochrony techniques are considered. Both strategies are observed in the dub of the selected film. Additionally, to establish synchronization, the dubbing translators used the three lip-sync techniques of *repetition*, *word order shift*, and *substitution* more frequently than they did the other four. The most important reason for using the repetition technique is to synchronize identical or very similar sounds and pronunciations of the dubs with the actors' lip movements (particularly labial and labiodental).

Word order shift was also frequently utilized, most likely as a result of the dubbing translators' need to lip-sync the dubs more easily with the original dialogues by rearranging words syntactically or semantically (topic and comment) so that the words containing the marked phoneme coincide with other words in the dubs containing identical or comparable labial and labiodental phonemes. It appears that by *substitution*, i.e., the literal translation of the original words or replacing them with a synonym, antonym, hypernym, hyponym, or any other stylistic resource that respects the original meaning, the dubbing translators were able to lip-synchronize specific words and terms properly, particularly proper nouns or names.

As for achieving isochrony, the dubbing translators have employed the two techniques of *reduction* (58%) and amplification (42%). The most likely explanation for the use of reduction/omission is that fewer Persian words would make it easier for the dubbing translators to synchronize the length of the dubs to the duration and length of the character's lip movements. The data analysis shows that reduction is used more with the ellipsis of modal verbs, interjections, markers of the phatic function (i.e., the use of language for the sake of interaction in greetings and casual discussions), or expressions performing purely social functions (such as 'I think' in segment 7), omission of redundancies, and matters that do not carry core meaning. Dubbing translators might also utilize the *amplification* technique to disambiguate utterances. When they assume a word, phrase, or sentence is unclear to the target viewers, they explain it, as seen in segments 7 and 8. This technique was probably used by the dubbing translators mainly to bridge a potential cultural gap and aid the viewers in processing the complex material by reducing the cognitive effort needed to understand and enjoying the film fully by referring to ideas already known to them. For example, in segment 7 (24:22:00), the utterance 'I think he just wants to see one cook up close' the verb 'cook up' seems to have been perceived by the dubbing translators as ambiguous for the target viewers, and has been translated by using the amplification technique and adding the phrase is 'اعدام با صندلی الکتریکی' [executing with an electric chair], hence clarifying it for them.

The present study shows that while dubbing translators more frequently employed the lip-sync strategy in the selected film, they also incorporated isochrony and considered the length of the characters' dialogues. The data analysis reveals that dubbing translators can use a combination of strategies, as demonstrated in segments 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10. They do not rely on a single technique. This highlights that dubbing is a more complex process of achieving synchronization than merely using a single technique, showcasing the creative skills of the dubbing translators.

5. Conclusion

The film industry in Iran relies on dubbing. As a result, dubbing companies and professionals must create high-quality dubs for foreign films to ensure that the impact on target viewers is similar to that experienced by viewers of the original version. In other words, it should feel as though the film was originally produced in the target language. To achieve this, two critical standards – fidelity and synchronization – must be maintained. Translators and dubbers need to strike a balance between these two aspects.

Taking into account the context of Persian dubbing and drawing on Chaume's (2007) standards for dubbing quality, this study demonstrates that the translators of the film *The Green Mile* not only preserved the storyline of the original film but also adhered to key dubbing standards, particularly in terms of lip-sync and isochrony. As a result, the Persian-dubbed version of *The Green Mile* was evaluated as having acceptable lip-sync and received recognition for its dubbing quality. However, since a single film constitutes a very limited dataset for reaching broad conclusions, the findings should be generalized to other contexts with caution. This study helps fill a knowledge gap in the field of dubbing and provides insights into the synchronization processes used in dubbing both in Iran and in other countries.

One significant yet somewhat minor finding of this study is the application of Chaume's (2008) framework, originally designed for English-Spanish pairs, to the language pair English-Persian. This study demonstrates that other researchers can also utilize this framework to analyze synchronization in dubbing across diverse linguistic contexts.

The findings of this study have significant implications for both the Iranian and global contexts, particularly for translators, dubbing directors, dubbing performers, and dubbing studios. These insights can help create viewer-centered dubbing that enhances synchronization. The findings are especially valuable for the dubbing industry as they highlight important aspects to prioritize during the dubbing process.

Dubbing companies can use these findings to produce effects on the target language viewers that are either identical to or comparable with the effect experienced by viewers of the source language. As noted by Chaume (2008), institutions may consider offering courses on dubbing, where students can benefit from this research to learn about the strategies and techniques employed by dubbers and translators in film dubbing. In essence, the findings could be instrumental in designing and planning dubbing-related courses within university curricula. Additionally, the findings may serve as a resource for instructors working in dubbing training institutes as well as for translators. Since instructors are the only link in the dubbing chain responsible for making necessary corrections, they need to receive training in this area to effectively bridge the gap between dubbing and translation.

Notes

1 Adequate lip synchronization; Natural-sounding dialogue; Cohesion between dubbed dialogue and visuals; Fidelity to source text; Agreeable phonesthetics

2 Suitable voice selection; Convincing voice performance; Natural-sounding intonation; Appropriate sound quality.

3 This theory argues that the audience will search for meaning in any given communication situation. Having found the meaning that fits their expectation of relevance, they will stop processing (Gutt 1991 cited in Chaume 2008).

4 Source: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120689/

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