A Study of Subtitling Culture-Specific Items with Reference to Five Iraqi Films Translated into English

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Abstract

Culture-specific items are one of the problematic issues that subtitlers face due to several reasons, such as the cultural differences between the source and target language and the linguistic and technical constraints. This study sheds light on the strategies that subtitlers employ in the translation of these items. The taxonomy presented by Tomaszkiewicz (1993) is employed to quantitatively analyze the data derived from the translation of five Iraqi multi-genre films. The outcome shows that six of the eight strategies presented by Tomaszkiewicz (1993), which are omission, literal, borrowing, equivalence, generalization, and explication, are used by subtitlers comes to rendering culture-specific items from Iraqi Arabic into English. It also shows that the strategies of "literal translation," "equivalence," and "generalization" are the most prominent ones when rendering Iraqi culture-specific items into English.

1. Introduction

The translation of culture-specific items is one of the most challenging issues. The written texts at the bottom of the screen, which can be in the same language as the original soundtrack or a different language, are referred to as subtitles. The task can be more difficult when the source language is Arabic with an Iraqi dialect and the target language is English due to the enormous differences between the Iraqi and western cultures. The issue of cultural differences is confirmed by Al-Azzam and Al-Kharabsheh (2011:569) when they state that the "difference in social view, which gives rise to many translation problems, results from the two varying cultures and settings and cannot be bridged without giving the receptive language reader enough awareness about the values and norms of the source language."

Two factors have the heavies impact on the translation of culture-specific items: technical and linguistic constraints. Technical constraints include space (the maximum lines on the screen are two with no more than 37 characters in each), time (the subtitle should not last more than six seconds on screen), spotting (there should be a match between the subtitle and dialogue), position on screen (subtitles should are at the central bottom of the screen), and font (the type and size of the font should be taken into consideration). The linguistic constraints involve the different accents, different geographical dialects, a speaker's special way of speaking, which is called idiolect, and the dialect of a special social class which is called sociolect (Diaz-Cintaz & Remael, 2014).

Culture can also be added to the constraints that harden subtitling in. In the following pages, the concepts of Audiovisual translation, subtitling, and the types of subtitling will be touched upon. A distinction between subtitling and translation will be made. Strategies of subtitling culture-specific items will be discussed before going into the methodology of the study.

2. Audiovisual Translation (AVT)

Audiovisual translation (henceforth AVT) can generally be defined as the rendering of the linguistic content of an audiovisual product from one language into another (Lertola,2019). Hundreds of films, TV shows, series, documentaries, plays, and many other media types are produced every year. Due to this excellent production, which is different languages and cultures, AVT is highly

needed nowadays. Jorge Diaz-Cintas (2008: 5) confirms the significance of AVT and the growing interest in studying it by stating that "audiovisual translation is a field that has been growing in significance and visibility in recent decades, and many young, enterprising scholars are directing their interests and efforts to the analysis of audiovisual programmes."

Although AVT has been professionally practiced since the emergence of cinema, the first academic researches about it date back to the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. At that time, AVT has not yet gained a remarkable position within translation studies to the extent that some researches have not publicly published. More systematic researches, conferences and other events, publication of volumes, and works of prominent authors have begun to emerge in the 1990s. Today, AVT is considered a prominent field of research where Ph.D. dissertations on AVT are awarded and courses on different modes of AVT are given by different universities around the world (Diaz-Cintaz, 2009: 1-3).

As the translator's material is supposed to render is audiovisual, paralinguistic features should be considered. A film, for instance, does include not only the verbal content but also the images, signs, sounds, dialogues, etc. Gotlieb (1998, cited in Matkivska, 2014: 38) states that the translator has to deal with four different channels: 1) verbal audio channel: dialogues, offscreen voices, songs; 2) nonverbal audio channel: music, sound effects, offscreen sounds; 3) verbal and visual channel: subtitles, signs, notes, inscriptions that appear on the screen; 4) nonverbal visual channel: picture on the screen. These channels are the ones that make up the meaning of the audiovisual product, so the translator has to bear them into his/her mind. Now, it can be said that AVT is not an easy task at all.

AVT has many modes depending on how used to transfer the audiovisual text from one language into another or within the same language. Chaume (2013: 106 – 107) first classifies AVT into interlingual, which includes two languages, and intralingual, which occurs within the same language. The intralingual one includes subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing, respeaking, audio description for the blind and visually impaired, audio subtitling, etc. He then classifies AVT according to its position, either on the screen or next to it. Thus, captioning, the dialogues'

translation, dubbing, inserting a new soundtrack after deleting the original one, and voice-over, inserting a new soundtrack while keeping the original one, are the classifications given by Chaume, who then states that "the audiovisual text is either subtitled or revoices" (2013: 106).

Matkivska (2014: 39 - 41) also classifies AVT into two main types that are revoicing and subtitling. Each one of these two types has its sub-types. Revoicing includes the following subtypes: voice-over, narration, audio description, free commentary, and dubbing. Voice-over and dubbing are briefly explained on the previous page. Narration is translating the original audiovisual text without taking into consideration the lip movements of the original. The main goal of narration is to give a faithful translation of the original text. Audio description can be defined as rendering the visual content into spoken language. It is mainly designed for the blind who cannot signs and images and cannot get the ideas they denote. The free commentary does not aim to produce a faithful translation. Just like narration, it is not concerned with the lip movements of the original. Subtitling is also divided into sub-types such as intralingual, changing the spoken text into written within the same language, interlingual, changing the spoken text into written from one language into another, open, the viewer has to see it on the screen as it is a part of the film, and closed subtitling, the viewer has the option to hide the subtitle.

To sum it up, AVT has two primary forms that are subtitling and dubbing. All other forms of AVT can be listed under these two. Some scholars believe that there are three main types of AVT, subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over. It is assumed here that dubbing and voice-over are interchangeable, and they both lead to the same type of AVT. As this research is mainly concerned with subtitling, the following pages will be assigned to discuss its aspects, including its definition, types, the difference between subtitling and dubbing, and the difference between subtitling and translation.

3. Subtitling

Subtitling is defined by Diaz-Cintas as:

a translation practice that consists of rendering in writing, usually at the bottom of the screen, the translation into a target language of the original dialogue exchanges uttered by different speakers,

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as well as all other verbal information that appears written on-screen (letters, banners, inserts) or is transmitted aurally in the soundtrack (song lyrics, voices off) (2013: 274).

Luyken et al. (cited in Kuo, 2014: 62) give a more precise definition when they describe subtitles as "condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen." Therefore, the main features of subtitles can be extracted from the definitions mentioned above. Subtitles should be as condensed as possible, placed at the bottom of the screen, go in line with the dialogue exchanges, and render the visual and verbal contents of the audiovisual product.

Unlike dubbing, where a new one replaces the original soundtrack, subtitling keeps the original soundtrack and any other visual content as they are and conveys them to the target language in the form of text located at the bottom of the screen. Another distinction between subtitling and dubbing is that dubbing tries to be as unnoticeable as possible, while subtitling can be noticed as presented as text on the screen. Another point is that dubbing gives viewers more time to engage with the film because they do not have to read and watch simultaneously, as is the case with subtitling. However, as the characters' original voice is maintained, subtitling gives the viewers a clearer image of the characters' personalities than dubbing. Some countries prefer subtitling as it is much cheaper and less time-consuming. Others prefer dubbing since it is directed to both literates and illiterates. In general, people prefer the mode of AVT that they are familiar with (Roks, 2014: 20-24).

3.1. Types of Subtitles

In order to classify subtitles, specific parameters should be taken into account. The two main parameters are the linguistic and technical parameters. There are other parameters such as audience, writing skills, etc., they do not give a simple, precise, systematic, and understandable classification as the two main ones do (Liu, 2014: 1103-1104). Thus, subtitles classified according to the linguistic and technical parameters will only be discussed here.

According to the linguistic parameter, there are two types of subtitles: interlingual and intralingual. The interlingual subtitle is the one that includes transference of meaning from one language into another. In other words, it is the type that includes translation. The intralingual subtitling is the one

that occurs within the same language. This means that intralingual subtitling does not include transference of meaning from one language into another but a transference of mode from spoken into written within the same language. This type of subtitling targets deaf and hard of hearing people in addition to language learners (Gottlieb,1997).

According to the technical parameter, subtitles are divided into two types: open and closed. The difference between these two types is that open subtitles are essential parts of the audiovisual product and cannot be removed from the screen, while closed subtitles are optional and can be removed from the screen. The open subtitles are used in television and cinema, and the closed ones are used in television, DVD, internet, and laserdiscs (Gottlieb,1997).

3.2. Differences between Subtitling and Translation

 The first difference that can be spotted between the two is that the target readers of the translated text cannot compare it with the source text. Simultaneously, the viewers of subtitles can do that, especially if they are familiar with the source language. Another vital distinction between the two is that translators of written texts can add more explanations or footnotes to the source text items challenging to transfer to the target language. At the same time, subtitlers are deprived of this critical feature of the constraints imposed on them. The source text should be condensed as much as possible when subtitled, while this is not needed in translation. In translation, the written text is transferred into a written text, whereas the written text is transferred into a spoken language in subtitling. (Tornqvist, 1998:10)

4. Subtitling Culture-Specific Items

 In this section, three taxonomies presented by three scholars to render culture-specific items while subtitling will be touched upon. Tomaszkiewicz (1993, cited in Horbacauskiene et al., 2016) proposes the following strategies render culture-specific items:

1. Omission: it is used when the source culture-specific item is omitted;

2. Literal translation: this one is used when the source text and target text are too close in meaning;

3. Borrowing: when the source culture-specific item is conveyed to the target text as it is;

4. Equivalence: it is used when the source culture-specific item has an equivalence in the target culture;

5. Adaptation: when the source culture-specific item is adapted to the target culture;

6. Replacement: when the culture-specific item is replaced with deictics;

7. Generalization: when the culture-specific item is rendered to a general item,

8. Explication: as its name denotes, it is used to paraphrase or explain the meaning of the culturally specific item.

Pedersen (2011) suggests six strategies to render culture-specific items. The suggested strategies are divided into two main categories, which are source language-oriented and target language-oriented. The source language-oriented strategies are retention, specification, and direct translation. Retention is used when the source culture-specific item has an equivalence in the target culture. The specification is used when more information is added to the subtitle to clarify the intended meaning of the source culture-specific item. Direct translation occurs when the source culture-specific item is conveyed to the target language as it is.

On the other hand, target language-oriented strategies are generalization. The source item is rendered into a general item, substitution when another item substitutes the source item in the target language, and omission when the source item is left out.

Another taxonomy to deal with the subtitling of culture-specific items is suggested by Valdeon (2008):

1. Preservation of international items: maintaining cultural items that are internationally known. Examples of these items can be names of celebrities, actors, music bands, singers, and films that are popular around the world;

2. Preservation of culture-specific items: maintaining the cultural items, such as actors' names, may not be familiar to the target audience. It is assumed that the context may give the target audience a clear idea about these unfamiliar names.

3. Substitution with a different source culture item: this strategy is used to maintain the cultural flavor of the source text by using a different item that belongs to the source culture and is understandable in the target culture at the same time;

4. Substitution with an international item: when the source culture-specific item is replaced with a general and international item that is familiar worldwide;

5. Substitution with a target-culture item: when the source culture-specific item is replaced with an item that belongs to the target culture;

6. Substitution with corrupted forms of target-culture items: replacing the source culture-specific items with items that are unique to the target culture after doing some alterations;

7. Substitution with a superordinate: when the source item is omitted, and a superordinate item that clarifies its meaning is asserted to the target text;

8. Substitution with another target-culture-related term: when the source cultural item is replaced with a different target cultural item that somehow gives the same meaning.

The taxonomy employed to analyze the study's data is that of Tomaszkiewicz (1993). It is comprehensive and inclusive of the needed strategies to overcome the difficulty of subtitling culture-specific items.

5. Methodology

This study analyzes the subtitles of culture-specific items found in certain multi-genre Iraqi films and classifies them according to the strategies suggested above. Thus, the present study is descriptive and does not aim at judging the subtitles of these culture-specific items in terms of fully conveying the intended meaning of the original.

5.1. Data of the Study

Five films have been chosen to be the data of this study. The films are *Mosul; Mosul, a documentary film; Zaman: the Man from the Reeds; Baghdad Messi; and Iraq: the Women's Story*. *Mosul* is a military drama, Arabic language with an Iraqi dialect film produced by Netflix and directed by Matthew Michael Carnahan and the Russo brothers. The film tells the story of an Iraqi special force team that tries to liberate the city of Mosul from the Islamic State (ISIS). The runtime of the film is 86 minutes. The film gets a rating of 7.1/10 in IMDb, the most authoritative source of film information (Mosul, 2019a).

The second film is also named *Mosul*. It is a documentary directed by Dan Gabriel. It is about an Iraqi journalist who joins the armed forces that try to liberate Mosul from ISIS. Both English and

Iraqi Arabic are used in the film. The running is 86 minutes. IMDb gives the film a rate of 7.9/10 (Mosul, 2019b).

The third one is *Zaman: the Man from the Reeds*, a drama film that tells a man who travels to Baghdad to find medicine for his wife. Amer Alwan directs it. The film has been shown in more than one international festival, such as Tribeca Film Festival in the USA, the Arab Film Festival in Tokyo, and International Arab Film Festival in Zurich. The film's runtime is 77 minutes, and it has a rating of 6.7/10 in IMDb (Zaman: the Man from the Reeds, 2003).

The fourth film in *Baghdad Messi* is an Iraqi short film directed by Sahim Omar Kalifa. The film's story is about a one-legged boy obsessed with football and its star Messi. The boy goes with his father to the city to fix their broken television in order to be able to watch the Champions League final between Barcelona and Manchester United. The film has won 88 international awards, as shown in many international film festivals. It is rated 7.3/10 in IMDb (Baghdad Messi, 2012).

Iraq: the women's story is an Iraqi documentary film about two women traveling to different places in Iraq to record the lives of the Iraqi women they meet. The film has also been shown at international festivals (Iraq: the women's story, 2006).

5.2. Data Analysis

As mentioned above, the objective of this study is to analyze the subtitles of the culture-specific items found in the data of the study. Thus, the following procedures are followed; firstly, the five Iraqi films, which are subtitled into English, have been watched. Secondly, the culture-specific items used in the films have been spotted and then transcribed with their English subtitles. Thirdly, the culture-specific items and their English subtitles have been analyzed to determine which strategies have been used to subtitle them. Finally, these items and their English subtitles have been classified according to the taxonomy suggested by Tomaszkiewicz (1993) to find out which strategies are prominent for subtitlers when dealing with culture-specific items. It is worth mentioning that 26 culture-specific items have been found in the five films, and the following pages are dedicated to their analysis.

١. : "كاسكيتة"

- Source text:اذا تريد تعرف أكثر،احسنلك لا تاخذ الكاسكيتة لعد؟

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- Subtitle: If you need to know more than that, you should not take <u>the heat</u>.

In the above example, the subtitler renders the word "كاسكيتة" as "hat." The strategy used here is "equivalence" as the SL and TL items have the same meaning.

٢. :"الحِب"

- Source text: السجون بالعراق مثل <u>الحِب</u> المكسور.
- Subtitle: Every jail in Iraq is a broken <u>urn</u>.

In the second example, the word "الحب" is rendered as "urn." The SL item refers to a big pottery vase where water is poured in to keep it cold. The TL item refers to a vase made of wood, ceramic, glass, crystal, stone, or steel. It is used to either hold the cremated ashes or hot drinks such as coffee or tea. Although the SL and TL items are used for different purposes, they are similar in form and may have similar meanings. The strategy used in this example is "literal."

٣. :"ابو ثرب"

- Source text: اسكت <u>ابو ثرب</u>.
- Subtitle: Shut up, <u>dick.</u>

The source cultural item here was rendered into the target language as "dick." The source item can be translated as "big-bellied man" and is culturally used to mean "a stupid man." The target item can also give a relatively same meaning that the culture does. This means that the strategy used in this example is "literal."

٤. "كلب ابن الكلب:"

- Source text: انعل ابوك لابو دولة الخلافة <u>يا كلب يا ابن الكلب</u>.
- Subtitle: fuck you and your so-called "state," <u>son of a bitch.</u>

"son of a bitch" is used by the subtitler as an equivalence to "كلب ابن الكلب." The source item is culturally used to express anger toward someone and be translated as "son of a dog." The target item can be used in the same way, but it may be regarded as more offensive. Then, it can be said that the strategy used here is "literal."

5. "بورك":

- Source text: وين البورك؟

- Subtitle: where is the borek?

In this example, the source cultural item "بورك" is conveyed as it is to the target language. Borek is a very famous pastry in the Middle East and Turkey. It is made of dough and meat or cheese. The word "borek" is borrowed to be used in the target culture. So, the strategy used in this example is "borrowing."

٦. "تَكَّة":

- Source text: هذني كم تَكَّة؟

- Subtitle: how many cartons is that?

The subtitler in the above example uses "carton" as an equivalence to the source item "تَكَّة." Iraqis use the source item to refer to a carton of cigarettes. Thus, both items give the same meaning, and then the strategy used here is "equivalence."

٧. "نركيلة":

- Source text: نركيلة بالاربي جي.

- Subtitle: A hookah for RPG.

In this example, the "equivalence" strategy is also used as the source item "نركيلة" is rendered as "hookah." Both items refer to a pipe that consists of a long stem connected to a bowl of water and is used to smoke tobacco. Nowadays, hookah has gained huge popularity in western culture.

٨. "زايرة":

- Source text: خير زايرة؟ صحة وعافية وطولة العمر ان شاء الله.

- Subtitle: May God preserve you!

"زايرة," literally translated as "visitor," is a cultural item used by Iraqis to refer to women who once visited the Holy Shrines. These shrines are sacred sites located in different cities of Iraq; Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, and Samarra. Iraqi Shia Muslims visit these shrines in order to pay respect to their holy Imams. So, visitors of these shrines, or even old men and women, are referred to by Iraqis as

"زاير" or "زايرة" as a kind of respect. No translation can be found in the subtitle for source cultural item "زايرة"; thus, the strategy used here is "omission."

٩.   "الحواف:"

- Source text: الحرس والحواف صاروا فرد جف.

- Subtitle: guardians and <u>thieves</u> go hand in hand.

  "الحواف" is a cultural item used in certain Iraqi rural areas to refer to thieves. Both source and target items then give the same meaning, and the strategy used is "equivalence."

١٠. "حجي:"

- Source text: اسف <u>حجي</u> ما عدنا هذا الدوه.

- Subtitle: I'm sorry we don't have it.

  "حجي" is a word used to refer to men who went on a pilgrimage to Mecca or also to old men as a kind of respect. The source cultural item is omitted in the subtitle, and the strategy used then is "omission."

١١. "زاير" and "نذر:"

- Source text: <u>زاير</u> اذا عندك <u>نذر</u> انا حاضر.

- Subtitle: <u>pilgrim</u>, if you have a <u>wish</u>, I'm here for you.

  The subtitler renders the source cultural items "زاير" and "نذر" as "pilgrim" and "wish" respectively. As explained before, "زاير" is used by Iraqis to refer to men who visited the Holy Shrines. The target item "pilgrim" is a general term used to refer to people who start a journey to sacred places for religious reasons. This means that the strategy used here is "generalization". the second source item, "نذر," is used in the source culture when one asks God to help them fulfil a wish they have. As the source and target items give the same meaning, the strategy used is "literal."

١٢.   " الامامين:"

- Source text: والله انا جاي وناذر نذر واطلب من الله ومن <u>الامامين</u> بس كون نجمة تصير زينة.

- Subtitle: I have only one wish that God cures my wife.

The source item "الامامين" refers to two Imams of Shia Muslims, Imam Musa Al-Kadhim and Imam Muhammad Al-Jawad, whose Holy Shrine is located in Baghdad. Shia Muslims believe that God has given these two Imams a great status, so they visit their shrine to ask them to help fulfill their wishes. No equivalence can be found in the English subtitle for the source cultural item, which means that the strategy used is "omission."

١٣. " سيّد:"

- Source text: ادعيلنا سيد.
- Subtitle: pray for me.

  The same strategy used in the previous example, i.e., "omission," is also applied to this example as the source item "سيد" is omitted from the English subtitle. The source item is a title that is given to the living descendants of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

١٤. " ابو الجوادين:"

- Source text: فدوة لاسمك بس طيّب نجمة يا ابو الجوادين.
- Subtitle: Oh Holy Imam, I call upon your name to cure my wife, Najma.

  The source item "ابو الجوادين" is a title used by Iraqis to refer to Imam Musa Al-Kadhim. It is rendered to a general item which is "Holy Imam," and then the strategy used here is "generalization."

١٥. " دادة:"

- Source text: دادة أم عباس بعدج ليهسة هنا!
- Subtitle: Om Abbas, you are still here at this time!

  The source item "دادة," which means "sister," is used by Iraqi women when they address other women. The item is omitted from the English subtitle, and then the strategy used in this example is "omission."

١٦. " كرة عينج:"

- Source text: هذا زمان اجاج كرة عينج.
- Subtitle: here is Zaman coming back to you.

The same strategy of omission that is used in the previous example is used in this example as the source item "كرة عينج" is omitted from the English subtitle. The source cultural item is an expression used by Iraqis to congratulate or express happiness for someone who receives good news.

١٧. " عباية" and "الكاظم":

- Source text: هاي عباية اشتريتليجياها من الكاظم.

- Subtitle: I brought you back a chador from Baghdad.

The source items "الكاظم" and "عباية" are rendered as "tchador" and "Baghdad" respectively. "عباية" is a long and black garment worn by Iraqi women to cover up their whole body. "Tchador" is also a long garment worn by women to cover up their whole body, but it comes in different colors. Tchador is worn by Iranian women and a few Iraqi women. As the target item gives a close meaning to the source item, the strategy used here is "literal." The second source item "الكاظم" refers to the markets nearby the Holy Shrine of Imam Al-Kadhim, which is located in Baghdad. The strategy of "generalization" is used here as it is rendered as "Baghdad."

١٨. " طنطة":

- Source text: رونالدو طنطة.

- Subtitle: Ronaldo is gay.

"Gay" is used by the subtitler to render the source cultural item "طنطة." The source item is considered a kind of underestimation used by certain Iraqis to refer to men thought to look like women by their haircut style and clothes. The target item gives a close meaning to that of the source one; thus, the strategy used is "literal."

١٩. " البسطية":

- Source text: اي بس اذا وعدتني تساعدني بالبسطية.

  - Subtitle: Ok... If you promise you will help me more with the work.

The source item "بسطية" is a big table used in public bazaars to sell grocery or any other products. The strategy of "generalization is used here since the source item is rendered to a general item, i.e., "work."

٢٠. " حمام العليل:"

- Source text: انا هذني اشتريهن من <u>حمام العليل</u>.

- Subtitle: I buy them from <u>any nearby market</u> I can find.

  The source item "حمام العليل" refers to a famous district in the province of Mosul where many markets can be found. The subtitler tends to use the strategy of "generalization" for the general item "market" is used to render the source one.

٢١. " بركع:"

- Source text: ذبي هذا <u>البركع</u>.

- Subtitle: you can throw away your <u>burqa</u>.

  The source item "بركع" refers to a piece of cloth worn by women to cover up their faces in some Islamic communities. This item is conveyed to the target language as it is, which means that the strategy used here is "borrowing."

٢٢. " حجاب:"

- Source text: انا وتلاثة او اربع بنات مجنه نلبس <u>حجاب</u>.

- Subtitle: me and some other girls were not wearing <u>the headscarf</u>.

  "حجاب" is a term that refers to a piece of cloth, which looks like a scarf, used by Muslim women to cover up their hair. As the name denotes, the target item "headscarf" gives an explanation of the function and the usage of the source item. So, the strategy used in this example is "explication."

٢٣. " البوشية والجفوف:"

- Source text: المرأة حجبها ولبسها <u>البوشية والجفوف</u>.

- Subtitle: They want us to <u>cover up our women</u>, dress them in the Hijab.

  "البوشية," which can be rendered as "burqa," and "جفوف," literally translated as "gloves," are used by some Muslim women to cover up their faces and hands. The subtitler does not render the

source items and decides to paraphrase them as they are rendered as "cover up our women." The strategy used by the subtitler is "explication."

After discussing the above examples, it can be seen that the subtitlers of the Iraqi films have resorted to more than one strategy to overcome the difficulty of subtitling culture-specific items. The next section tends to shed light on these strategies.

5.3. Discussion of Results

Twenty-six culture-specific items have been spotted in five Iraqi films, and different strategies have been used to subtitle them. The following are the strategies used by the subtitlers:

1. The strategy of "omission": the subtitlers have opted for this strategy in subtitling six culture-specific items which are "زايرة", "حجي" "حجي", "الامامين", "سيد", and "كرة عينج". The subtitlers might have thought that omitting these items would not affect the meaning of the English subtitle. Although the aforementioned items have no equivalence in English, they could have been rendered by using the strategies of "literal translation" or "generalization."

2. Literal translation: six source culture-specific items have been rendered by using this strategy. Examples are the subtitling of "الحب", "ابو ثرب", "كلب ابن الكلب" "نذر", "عباية", and "طنطة" into "urn," "dick," "son of a bitch", "wish," "tchador," and "gay" respectively. This is the most frequently used strategy in addition to the strategy of "omission." It can be said that if the subtitlers had used this strategy instead of the strategy of "omission" in dealing with the six culture-specific items mentioned above, it would have been used twelve times.

3. Using the strategy of "borrowing": this strategy has been used two times when the two culture-specific items "بورك" and "بركع" have been rendered as "borek" and "burqa." If it can be assumed that the two target items are already borrowed and known to users of English, it will better to say that the strategy used here is "equivalence."

4.   Equivalence: this one has been used in subtitling four cultural items as the items of "كاسكيتة" "تكة", "نركيلة", and "الحواف" have been subtitled as "hat," "carton," "hookah," and "thieves." If the assumption made above were true, this strategy would be used six times.

5. "Generalization": the subtitlers have resorted to this strategy in subtitling five culture-specific items. Examples are the rendering of "زاير" "ابو الجوادين" "الكاظم", "البسطية", "حمام العليل", into "pilgrim," "Holy Imam," "Baghdad," "work," and "market."

6. Explication: Three culture-specific items have been subtitled by using this strategy when "حجاب" has been subtitled as "headscarf" and "بوشية" and "جفوف" as "cover up our women."

As seen above, six out of the eight strategies suggested by Tomaszkiewicz (1993) have been used by the subtitlers. The strategies of "omission," "literal," "equivalence," and "generalization" are the ones that are used the most. The least used strategies are "borrowing" and "explication." The reasons behind that are borrowing may not be convenient to target readers, especially if the items to be borrowed are not familiar to them, and explication can not always be used as subtitles are limited to two lines with no more than 37 characters in each. As the strategy of omission can be replaced with the strategy of literal translation or generalization, it can be said that the most prominent strategies to deal with culture-specific items in subtitling are "literal translation," "equivalence," and "generalization.   To sum it up, the chart below shows the usage percentage of each strategy used by the subtitlers:
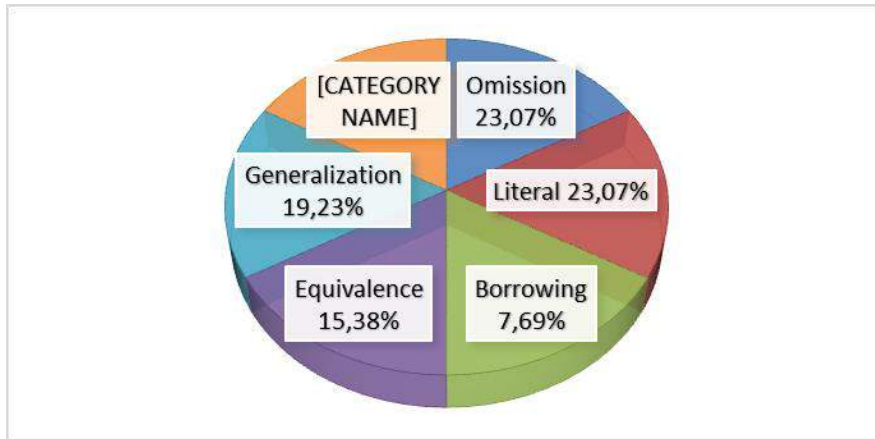
Usage Percentage of Subtitling Strategies

7.   Conclusion

The present study tries to find out how culture-specific items have been subtitled in five Iraqi films. It arrives at the result that although culture-specific items are very difficult to be subtitled due to the constraints that subtitling imposes, certain strategies can help subtitlers overcome this difficulty. Thus, subtitling strategies like omission, literal, borrowing, equivalence, generalization, and explication can be used by subtitlers when dealing with culture-specific items. When the source language is Iraqi Arabic, and the target one is English, the strategies of "literal translation," "equivalence," and

"generalization" are considered as the most prominent ones as the Iraqi culture-specific items have either English equivalences or close and general items in English. The study has also concluded that with the help of the aforementioned strategies, subtitlers need to be fully aware of the source culture and target culture so they can render the source culture-specific items in an appropriate way.

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