



A Comparative Study of Multilingualism in Dubbing and Subtitling: The Case of *Mission: Impossible*

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Abstract

The growing presence of multilingualism in contemporary cinema has intensified scholarly interest in how audiovisual translation (AVT) negotiates linguistic diversity across languages and modes. While previous research has examined the translation of multilingual films, comparative studies exploring how different AVT traditions render multilingualism across both dubbing and subtitling remain limited. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the strategies employed in Persian and Russian dubbing and subtitling to represent multilingualism in English-language films. The corpus comprises the final two installments of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise, whose Persian and Russian dubbed and subtitled versions were subjected to comparative qualitative analysis. The findings reveal substantial cross-cultural and cross-modal variation in the treatment of multilingual elements. Russian AVT, particularly dubbing, demonstrates a stronger tendency to preserve and foreground linguistic heterogeneity through a wider range of translation strategies, whereas Persian AVT more frequently reduces or neutralizes multilingual cues. The results further suggest that differences in national dubbing traditions, audience expectations, and attitudes toward foreign-language presence shape translators' decisions regarding the representation of multilingualism. The study contributes to current debates on audiovisual translation and the cross-cultural mediation of linguistic diversity in film.

Keywords: Comparative analysis, dubbing, L3, subtitling, translation strategies

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1. Introduction

Migration, globalization, and social changes have created a multilingual community. Consequently, multilingualism is state-of-the-art, and many individuals now use more than one language in their daily lives. In other words, in today's world, multilingualism is no longer the exception but the norm (Angelelli, 2016, p. 32).

Such a norm is likewise evident in audiovisual products. In recent years, the number of films featuring multilingual scenes has risen sharply. This growing tendency among filmmakers to incorporate multilingualism stems from cinema's reflective function: it mirrors today's culturally hybrid and globally interconnected world (Aparicio & Bairstow, 2016). Even in monolingual films, the inclusion of diverse ethnic groups, such as Asian and African American characters, is generally common. This trend may reflect the influence of globalization, which challenges the dominance of the English language and Anglo-Saxon culture as the primary cultural forces (Mingant, 2010). Ultimately, socially and culturally, multilingualism has become an integral and inseparable feature of contemporary cinema (Szarkowska et al., 2013).

While adopting multilingualism in movies is economically beneficial, as it increases the authenticity of movies (O'Sullivan, 2011; Szarkowska et al., 2013), such a trend in audiovisual products has added another problem to the natural complexity of audiovisual translation (henceforth AVT) for translators. In other words, the challenge arises when a film incorporates an additional language that differs substantially from its primary language and carries its own cultural and contextual weight, thereby influencing the narrative even through limited occurrences. This situation poses a dilemma for translators, who must make essential decisions regarding the most suitable strategy for rendering the secondary language(s), whether to preserve the language and its intended effect in some ways or to overlook it entirely and treat translation in the sense proposed by Jakobson (1959): as the transfer of the message from one source language into a target language. For this reason, dealing with multilingualism in AVT is widely regarded as a major challenge and, in extreme cases, may be associated with untranslatability (Meylaerts, 2013).

Chaume (2013) truly highlights the significance of diverse case studies in strengthening AVT research. Descriptive analyses of case studies across different languages and cultures can illuminate how translators navigate the complexities of multilingualism. Such research not only reveals the sociocultural norms that shape translators' decisions but also provides valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners working in the field.

In this respect, this descriptive study investigates how multilingualism in films is treated in Persian and Russian through two prominent modes of AVT, namely dubbing and subtitling. More specifically, it compares these two AVT modes in a traditionally dubbing-oriented country, Iran (Ghomi, 2009), and a traditionally voice-over-oriented country, Russia (Chiaro, 2009). Through this comparative approach, the study seeks to identify potential differences in how multilingualism is managed in each country, considering the dominant AVT mode within each linguistic and cultural context.

The existing body of literature indicates that multilingualism has been examined from a variety of perspectives within the field of audiovisual translation at the international level. Among the strategies identified, the transfer of L3 into L2 has emerged as one of the most frequently adopted solutions, particularly in the dubbing of natural languages. This tendency often leads to the neutralization or reduced visibility of multilingualism in the target text. However, the majority of previous studies have focused primarily on the dubbing or subtitling practices of a single country or language. To the best of our knowledge, comparative investigations into the treatment of multilingualism across different linguistic and national contexts remain limited. Furthermore, no study to date has specifically examined

how multilingualism is rendered in Persian dubbing in comparison with Persian subtitling. The present study seeks to address this gap by raising the following research questions:

1. What strategies are employed to render multilingualism in Persian dubbing and subtitling of English-language films?
2. What strategies are employed to render multilingualism in Russian dubbing and subtitling of English-language films?
3. How does the representation of multilingualism differ across Persian and Russian dubbing and subtitling of English-language films?

2. Literature Review

Díaz Cintas (2019) posits that AVT is regarded as an academic discipline and also a professional activity involving the localization of audiovisual media content with the assistance of various translation practices. Literally, the word “audiovisual” entails two intertwined parts: “audio”, which reflects linguistics as dialogues, music and noises, and “visual”, which conveys non-linguistic information such as images and colors (Aparicio & Bairstow, 2016). Chiaro (2009) also highlights that among the multiple AVT modes, dubbing and subtitling are the two prevalent techniques globally employed for rendering audiovisual materials.

Dubbing is a process that utilizes the auditory channel for translation, whereas subtitling is a visual method that involves displaying a written translation on the screen. According to Palumbo (2009), dubbing has emerged as the predominant approach of AVT in numerous countries, significantly enhancing the viewing experience by creating a familiar linguistic environment for the target audience. This practice involves the meticulous replacement of the primary movie’s audio track with another recorded soundtrack in the target language, thereby ensuring that the dialogue is comprehensible and culturally resonant for viewers (Chaume, 2013). Conversely, subtitling allows viewers to engage with the original audio while simultaneously reading the translated dialogue, thereby preserving the authenticity of the film’s original performances (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007).

Natural differences between dubbing and subtitling may influence the translational decisions for conveying the source text elements, including multilingualism, into the target text. In this vein, Meylaerts and Şerban (2014) emphasize the bilingual nature of subtitling in comparison with dubbing. In other words, despite the inherent technical differences between dubbing and subtitling, the principal factor distinguishing the two modes in the context of multilingualism is the preservation of the original voice track in subtitling, which can potentially “contribute to the linguistic plurality of the film” (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2020, p. 81).

These differences between dubbing and subtitling become particularly significant when audiovisual texts contain multiple languages. In such cases, translators must determine how languages other than the primary language of the source text should be represented in the target version. This issue has received increasing attention in audiovisual translation research, particularly through the concept of L3, which provides a framework for examining the treatment of multilingualism in translated audiovisual texts. Towards proposing a model for dealing with multilingualism in dubbing, Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011) suggested that the primary language of the original movie is L1. Hence, the dubbed language of L1 would be L2. Any other languages present in either the original movie or the dubbed one are L3, which could be distinguished by L3ST (source text), i.e., the L3 present in the original movie, and L3TT (target text), i.e., the L3 present in the dubbed or subtitled version (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011).

In this vein, the relationship between L1 and L3ST, as well as the target audience's degree of familiarity with the latter, may significantly influence translators' approaches to rendering L3ST (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Savoldelli & Spiteri Miggiani, 2023; Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014). Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011) further distinguished between natural languages (i.e., languages spoken by real communities) and invented languages (i.e., languages created by scriptwriters). Such a distinction may also affect the strategies employed to convey linguistic variation. Whereas natural L3s are often neutralized in Persian dubbing (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2024; Sabrkonande et al., forthcoming), Golchinnezhad and Amirian (2022) reported contrasting findings with respect to invented languages. Building on the framework proposed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa, they investigated the treatment of invented languages in Persian dubbing. Their study focused on *The Hobbit* and *Avatar*, both of which contain a range of fictional languages, including Na'vi, Sindarin, Quenya, Khuzdul, Ancient Dwarvish, and Black Speech. All available dubbed versions of these films were included in their analysis. The researchers evaluated the use of the three main strategies for rendering L3 including repetition, deletion, and substitution with L2. They found that repetition occurred most frequently, indicating an emphasis on maintaining the visibility of the invented L3s in the dubbed versions.

By contrast, Sabrkonande et al. (forthcoming) analyzed 15 English-language films with a particular focus on the treatment of Russian as a natural L3 across two different platforms: an official streaming service and a non-official website. Drawing on the model proposed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), the authors found that the Russian language was predominantly neutralized through translation into Persian or complete deletion. Moreover, they identified an additional strategy whereby Persian dubbing studios inserted non-original utterances in order to enhance the transparency and comprehensibility of scenes for the target audience. In a similar vein, Khoshsaligheh et al. (2024) investigated the representation of multilingual features, including both verbal and non-verbal elements, in the Persian dubbing of multilingual films. Drawing on the frameworks proposed by Ortega (2011) and Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), the study analyzed ten multilingual films. The results demonstrated that verbal indicators of linguistic diversity were largely neutralized in the dubbing process, leading to a reduced representation of multilingualism. Furthermore, numerous non-verbal elements were modified in accordance with the sociocultural norms of the target culture, underscoring the influence of domestic cultural values on audiovisual translation practices.

Another critical challenge inherent in multilingual audiovisual productions arises when L3ST coincides with L2, as discussed by Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011). In this regard, Reverter Oliver (2024) examined this phenomenon by analyzing how the French-dubbed version of the English-language series *Emily in Paris* handled the original occurrences of the French language. In this case, French functioned simultaneously as both L2 and L3, thereby creating a distinctive overlap in the translation process. The study ultimately identified four recurrent strategies: the use of English as the L3 to recreate a multilingual environment, the reformulation of dialogue into French, the retention of French insertions as they appeared in the original version, and the simulation of an interlanguage effect through the use of a marked French accent.

Although the majority of research has concentrated on dubbing, a limited number of studies have also examined the strategies employed in subtitling multilingual films and the differences between subtitling and dubbing approaches. For example, Mehdizadkhani and Chen (2023) investigated multilingual features in six English-language films containing additional languages, focusing on their treatment in Chinese dubbing, professional subtitling, and fansubbing. Their findings indicated that professional dubbing occasionally signaled instances of multilingualism, albeit without consistent translational patterns. In contrast, neither professional subtitles nor fansubs generally marked the presence of L3. Despite this limited explicit marking of multilingualism, professional subtitling proved more effective in conveying multilingual nuances, particularly in preserving the coherence and narrative intent of the original films.

Exploring a different linguistic context, Bosch Fábregas (2023) examined the representation of L3 across two Spanish varieties in the *Family Guy*, episode *Road to Rhode Island*. The study compared Latin American and Peninsular Spanish dubbing and subtitling, highlighting the ways lexical and linguistic challenges were addressed in each version. Particular attention was paid to the role of L3 and the strategies employed to reproduce its communicative function. Notably, the Spanish DVD version introduced an additional third language in translation in order to preserve the original function of multilingualism in both the dubbed and subtitled versions.

3. Methodology

Through a descriptive approach, this research aims to characterize the solutions employed in treating L3 in English-speaking films.

The corpus for this study is drawn from the *Mission: Impossible* franchise, in which multilingualism constitutes a central and recurring feature. The films are typically shot in diverse geographical locations around the world, thereby incorporating a wide range of languages and cultural contexts. The presence of multiple languages contributes significantly to the construction of the narrative atmosphere and the representation of setting. For this reason, the franchise offers a particularly suitable case study for the analysis of multilingualism in audiovisual texts. Accordingly, the last two installments of the franchise were selected for analysis, and their details are outlined below:

- *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One* (2023), directed by Christopher McQuarrie; Persian title: *مأموریت غیرممکن ۷: روزشمار مرگ*; Russian title: *Миссия невыполнима: Смертельная расплата, часть 1*
- *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning* (2025), directed by Christopher McQuarrie; Persian title: *مأموریت غیرممکن ۸: روزشمار نهایی*; Russian title: *Миссия невыполнима: Финальная расплата*

The Persian dubbed and subtitled versions of the selected films were obtained from the Iranian streaming platform *Filimo*. The Russian-dubbed versions were sourced from the website *Anwap.film*.

The procedure adopted for this study was carried out in three stages. First, the original films were watched in full to identify all instances of language variation. Each occurrence of L3 in the source text (L3ST) was defined as any spoken segment not belonging to the main language of the film (L1) and was coded as a distinct analytical unit.

In the second stage, the Persian and Russian dubbed versions were analyzed. For each L3ST instance, the corresponding dubbed segment was examined and coded according to the strategy employed. To determine which strategies are used for dubbing, the analysis was done to see if the L3ST is replaced with L2 (the target language of the dubbing), remains as L3ST, is replaced with another language, or is deleted altogether.

The same L3ST instances were subsequently traced in the Persian and Russian subtitled versions. Given that the original soundtrack remains accessible in subtitling, the analysis first determined whether the L3 was translated into L2, rendered using another language, or left untranslated. In addition, any paralinguistic strategies (e.g., explanatory notes, symbols, or visual cues) used to signal multilingualism were identified and recorded. These supplementary strategies were analyzed qualitatively and are reviewed in the Discussion section.

Finally, all L3ST instances and their corresponding renderings in the dubbed and subtitled versions were presented in two separate tables, organized by film installment. This step enabled systematic comparison across translation modes and target languages.

4. Results

This section presents the findings concerning the strategies employed to render multilingualism in the two film installments, which are discussed in two separate subsections. Furthermore, selected excerpts from the Iranian and Russian AVT modes are comparatively illustrated to provide a contextual analysis of the results.

4.1. *Mission: Impossible - Day Reckoning Part One (2023)*

The analysis of language variation transference within the *Mission: Impossible - Day Reckoning Part One* (abbreviated as *MIDRPO*) revealed distinct strategies in the Persian and Russian AVT modes. In the Persian dubbing and subtitling, the instances of multilingualism are predominantly neutralized. In the Persian dubbing, this neutralization is primarily achieved by substituting the original third language (L3) with Persian. Consequently, the target Persian audience is unlikely to perceive the presence of these secondary languages in the dubbed version. Similarly, while the Persian subtitling also tends to neutralize multilingualism by translating the instances of multilingualism into Persian, the audience's awareness may depend on their aural familiarity with languages beyond English.

In contrast, the Russian subtitling, much like its Persian counterpart, largely conveys L3s by translating them into Russian (L2). However, a notable strategy employed in the Russian subtitling of the analyzed episode involves explicitly marking the introduction of a new language by appending its initials at the beginning of the translated sentence. Furthermore, in infrequent instances, certain French phrases are retained in the subtitling in the original form, preserving a specific French color intended by the source film. Interestingly, the Russian dubbing exhibits a markedly different approach, with the majority of L3s being left unchanged in the dubbed version, thereby presenting the source text's multilingualism highly visible to the audience. An exception to this is observed when the L3 in the source text (L3ST) is Russian itself; in such cases, it is dubbed as Russian (L2). Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the specific strategies employed by Iranian and Russian audiovisual translators in treating multilingualism across these modes.

Table 1. Strategies Used for Multilingual Instances in *MIDRPO* (2023)

	Persian Dubbing	Persian Subtitling	Russian Dubbing	Russian Subtitling
English (L1)	Persian (L2)	Persian (L2)	Russian (L2)	Russian (L2)
Russian	Persian	Persian	Russian	Russian
Italian	Persian	Persian	Italian	Russian
French	Persian	Persian	French	Russian, French

As illustrated in Table 1, the Persian and Russian dubbing adopt markedly different approaches to the treatment of language variation. In certain instances, the substitution of L3 with L2 may result in a degree of narrative incongruity, particularly when the multilingual element is functionally embedded in the plot. For example, in one scene of *MIDRPO* (2023), Ethan, while being pursued, attempts to leave a building stealthily in Rome, holding Grace hostage. In an effort to escape, Grace abruptly stops in the

middle of a crowd and loudly accuses Ethan of sexual harassment in Italian, thereby attracting the attention of bystanders, who speak Italian as they are in Rome. Her strategic use of Italian proves effective: as Ethan attempts to calm the agitated crowd, Grace manages to escape.

The rendering of this scene differs considerably across the two dubbing versions. In the Persian dubbing, Grace's Italian utterance "*A Pervertito*" is replaced with «خجالت بکش مردک چشم چرون» [back translation: *Lecherous, are not you ashamed of yourself?*] in Persian, while Ethan's Italian reply "*Lei è la mia cliente. È la mia cliente. Grazie*" is rendered as «نه نه نه. ببینید ایشون موکل منه. اون خانم موکل منه. با اجازه» [back translation: *No, no, no. She is my client. That lady is my client. Excuse me.*] in Persian. In other words, the L3 is conveyed through the Persian dubbing by L2, i.e., the Persian language. One of the most prominent differences of the strategy used in the Persian dubbing in this case compared to the Persian and Russian subtitling that used the same strategy is that it used more words, or specifically two phrases, for dubbing a single phrase. This may raise concerns regarding lip-synchrony and isochrony, which constitute two of the principal technical constraints of dubbing. Nevertheless, the Persian dubbing manages to maintain an acceptable degree of lip-syncing, suggesting careful adaptation at the performative level.

By contrast, the Russian dubbing preserves the original Italian phrases, thereby retaining the multilingual dimension of the scene. In this context, the Italian utterance remains at least partially comprehensible to the audience due to paralinguistic cues, including the reactions of surrounding characters and other visual elements. Moreover, this strategy appears more contextually natural, as it reinforces the Italian setting of the narrative and preserves the functional role of multilingualism within the plot.

The only case where the Russian dubbing does not keep the original audio of an L3 is at the beginning of MIDRFP (2023), where a Russian officer, aboard a submarine in Sevastopol, reads a mission report. In this case, because the L3 in the source text coincides with the target language (L3ST = L2), the dubbing studio retains Russian but revoices the lines using a voice actor. This approach ensures voicing consistency of the Russian language throughout the dubbed version while avoiding discrepancies that might arise from integrating the original audio.

The rendering of this scene is as follows. The Russian officer's original utterance, "*Отчёт О миссии. Подводная лодка Российской Федерации К599, «Севастополь». Операция «Подкова».*" [back translation: Mission Report. Russian Federation submarine K599 Sevastopol. Operation: Podkova.], is revoiced in the Russian dubbing as "*Отчёт о миссии. Российская подводная лодка К599, «Севастополь». Операция «Подкова».*" In the Persian dubbing, the same utterance is rendered as «گزارش ماموریت. زیردریایی کی ۵۹۹ متعلق به پایگاه نیروی دریایی سواستوپول روسیه. عملیات پودکوا» [back translation: Mission Report. Submarine K599 belonging to the Russian naval base of Sevastopol. Operation Podkova.].

As this comparison indicates, the Russian dubbing text deviates from the original script, suggesting reformulation by the dubbing studio without an apparent justification. However, this particular scene presents no significant challenges concerning lip-synchrony or isochrony, as the actor's mouth is not visible during the Russian dialogue. In contrast, the Persian dubbing offers a Persian literal translation of the original Russian sentences, effectively omitting any explicit marking of the language variation.

Another strategy observed, particularly in the Russian subtitling, is the retention of L3 by presenting the original dialogue in its written form. This approach can be exemplified by a scene in which Degas attempts to de-escalate a situation with French-speaking passengers on a train. To assuage their fear and confusion, Degas addresses them in French, a language they understand, urging them to exit the wagon. This is immediately juxtaposed by Jasper Briggs, who intervenes by reloading his pistol and issuing an English command for a swifter evacuation. This contrast in linguistic strategies is made more apparent by the Russian subtitler's decision to preserve the original French dialogue in written form.

The rendering of this scene across the two subtitling versions is as follows. Degas's original French utterance, "*Mesdames, messieurs. Excusez-moi. Sortez ...*" [back translation: Ladies and Gentlemen, excuse me, go out ...], is retained in its original French form in the Russian subtitling as "*Mesdames, messieurs. Excusez-moi*", whereas the Persian subtitling renders it as «آقایون خانم ها. عذر میخوام. برید بیرون» [back translation: Ladies and Gentlemen, excuse me, go out ...]. Jasper Briggs's English command, "*Everybody out. Back of the train*", is translated into Russian in the Russian subtitling as "*Всем выйту. В хвост поезда*" and into Persian in the Persian subtitling as «همه برید بیرون. برید عقب قطار» [back translation: Everybody, go out. Go to the back of the train.].

4.2. *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning* (2025)

The analysis of multilingualism in *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning* (abbreviated as *MITFR*) indicated that the Persian dubbing and subtitling mostly substituted L3 with L2 (Persian). Only in some cases is the Native language preserved in the dubbed and subtitled version. Conversely, the Russian subtitling attempted to mark the nature of the multilingualism of the film. Specifically, the Russian subtitling, considering the general knowledge of the target audience, did not translate the phrases that are internationally potentially well-known to more explicitly mark the multilingual nature of the film. The Russian subtitling also did not translate any Russian utterances within the film (in cases where L3ST=L2).

The Russian dubbing extended this preservation of multilingualism even further. In the original version, Ethan Hunt's English dialogue is dubbed into Russian. Crucially, however, his L3 dialogue, originally in French, is delivered in French by the Russian voice actor. This decision maintains voicing consistency and highlights the original multilingual feature of Ethan. In contrast, Paris, who primarily speaks French, is not re-voiced, except for a single English utterance that is subsequently dubbed into Russian.

These contrasting strategies underscore the Russian dubbing studio's deliberate efforts to retain and foreground the movie's original multilingual character, unlike the Persian approach, which favored assimilation of multilingualism.

Table 2. Strategies Used for Multilingual Instances in *MITFR* (2025)

	Persian Dubbing	Persian Subtitling	Russian Dubbing	Russian Subtitling
English (L1)	Persian (L2)	Persian (L2)	Russian (L2)	Russian (L2)
Russian	Persian	Persian	Russian	(No Translation)
French	Persian	Persian, (No Translation)	French	Russian, (No Translation)
Native Language	Persian, the Native language	Persian, (No Translation)	the Native language	Russian, (No Translation)

In one of the instances where the Russian subtitle explicitly marks multilingualism is when Paris wants to accompany Ethan to kill Gabriel. However, Ethan does not agree with her idea and persuades her to stay, and Paris accepts. The rendering of this exchange across the two subtitle versions is as follows. Paris's original French utterance, "*Gabriel est en bas. Je viens avec toi*" [back translation: Gabriel is downstairs. I'm coming with you.], is translated into Russian in the Russian subtitling as "*Там Гэбруел. Я поўду с тобою*", whereas the Persian subtitling renders it as «نه، گابریل اون پایینه. بزار منم باهاتون بیام» [back translation: No, Gabriel is down there. Let me come with you.]. Ethan's French reply, "*Son heure viendra*" [back translation: His time will come.], is rendered into Russian as "*Его время ещё придёт*" and into Persian as «وقت اون هم میرسه» [back translation: His time will come.]. Finally, Paris's French response, "*D'accord*" [back translation: Ok.], is left untranslated in the Russian subtitling, while the Persian subtitling renders it as «باشه» [back translation: Ok.].

In this context, all the French phrases are rendered into Russian except for the last one. The last French phrase is more internationally recognized than the other ones, which are used for agreement. The narrative context, particularly Ethan's solo mission, provides sufficient clues to ascertain the phrase's meaning, even for those lacking proficiency in French. This selective approach diverges significantly from the Persian subtitling, which translates all French dialogue in its entirety.

To preserve the multilingual essence in the Russian dubbing, in many cases of the movie, the French words or phrases are uttered by the voice actor. This can be illustrated by another occasion. In this instance, Paris's original French utterance, "*Mais il y a toujours un mais*" [back translation: but, there is always a but.], is kept unchanged in the Russian dubbing, whereas the Persian dubbing renders it as «اما، همیشه یه امایی هست» [back translation: *But, there is always a but.*]. Subsequently, Benji's interjection, "*Mais, we don't have Luther's poison pill*", is rendered in the Russian dubbing as "*Mais, у нас нет ядовитой пилюли*", with the French word "*Mais*" re-voiced in French by the Russian actor, thereby underscoring Benji's bilingualism for the Russian audience. The Persian dubbing, by contrast, renders the same utterance as «اما، قرص سم لو تر دست ما نیست» [back translation: *But, we do not have Luther's poison pill*], fully translating all dialogue.

As this comparison shows, in the Russian dubbing, Paris's sentence remains untranslated. Subsequently, Benji's interjection, beginning with the French word "*Mais*", is also re-voiced in French by the Russian actor, thereby underscoring Benji's bilingualism for the Russian audience. This contrasts sharply with the Persian dubbing, which fully translates all dialogue, effectively erasing any trace of multilingualism and diminishing the nuance of character development.

The only case in which the Persian subtitling does not translate a French phrase is when Paris wants to clarify the time that is needed to operate. In this rare case, the Russian subtitling instead translates the French phrase. This instance occurs when Benji explains the timing of the drive's activation. Benji's original English utterance, "*Remember, when that drive lights up, you'll know the Entity's inside. You have 100 milliseconds*", is rendered in the Russian subtitling as "*Запомни, диск засветится, когда Интеллект будет внутри. Будет 100 миллисекунд*" and in the Persian subtitling as «یادت نره. وقتی اون هارد روشن شد، می فهمی که موجودیت توشه. ۱۰۰ میلی ثانیه وقت داری» [back translation: *Remember, when that drive lights up, you'll know the Entity's inside. You have 100 milliseconds.*]. Paris then responds in French, "*Un clin d'œil*" [back translation: A blink of an eye], which the Russian subtitling translates as "*Мгновение ока*", whereas the Persian subtitling leaves it untranslated. This constitutes the sole instance in which the Persian subtitling does not render a French phrase into Persian, while the Russian subtitling, contrary to its usual pattern, translates it.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the Persian and Russian dubbing revealed that, in all cases except certain instances involving the Native language and Russian, the Russian dubbing sought to foreground the presence of other languages by retaining the original sentences in the dubbed version. In some cases, to maintain voicing consistency, the dubbing actors themselves performed the utterances in the other language. For instance, in MITFR (2025), the Russian voice actor for Ethan Hunt also delivered the French lines, and the same applies to Benji's voice actor. However, another character in the film, Paris, who is originally French and speaks French throughout the movie, had her French utterances as L3 not performed by any voice actor. In cases where L3 = L2 (both Russian), the L3 elements were retained in Russian, either with the assistance of the voice actor or without it. In MITDR (2023), where the Russian lines are dubbed by a Russian voice actor, the original sentences were reformulated in the dubbed version. Nonetheless, to a lesser extent, reformulation was also observed in the Russian-subtitled version of the same case. Reverter Oliver (2024) found the same strategy in her study, as French utterances as L3 were reformulated in French in the dubbed version of *Emily in Paris*.

On the other hand, the Persian dubbing rendered L3 into Persian in almost all cases, except for certain instances of the Native language. This treatment of L3 in the Persian dubbing is consistent with the established tradition noted by Khoshsaligheh et al. (2024) and Sabrkonande et al. (forthcoming).

While the co-presence of dubbing and subtitling is a recognized practice for multilingual films (Beseghi, 2017), neither the Persian nor the Russian dubbing incorporated subtitling for language variations. This approach deviates from the strategy proposed in Netflix guidelines (as cited in Savoldelli & Spiteri Miggiani, 2023).

As discussed earlier, compared to dubbing, subtitling allows the audience to hear the original audio track. Nevertheless, explicitly marking the presence of another language through subtitling may still be necessary, as many viewers may not be sufficiently familiar with foreign languages to recognize a linguistic shift. In the Persian subtitled versions, almost all multilingual instances were translated into Persian, thereby masking multilingualism. However, certain utterances of the Native language were left untranslated, and in some cases the subtitles explicitly indicated that a Native language was being spoken, thus highlighting the presence of linguistic diversity. By contrast, the Russian subtitled versions occasionally retained the original written form of certain French sentences. In some instances, French phrases, either insignificant to the plot or presumed to be familiar to the target audience, were left untranslated. Through this strategy, viewers could potentially infer the meaning of these utterances from visual cues and the progression of the narrative, while still perceiving the presence of another language. Our findings regarding the treatment of multilingualism in the Russian AVT are quite consistent with Mehdizadkhani and Chen (2023), who also found that dubbing performed better in conveying the multilingualism of the movies compared to the subtitling. However, our findings contrast with those found by Bosch Fábregas (2023), given that we did not find any language other than L2 or L3ST employed for representing language variation in the dubbed or subtitled versions.

The similar treatment of the Native language i.e., not translating it across all AVT modes in both countries, may stem from its unfamiliarity to the target audiences. In other words, the perceived obscurity of the Native language may have led translators to handle it in a manner comparable to invented languages, which are typically left unchanged, as noted by Golchinnezhad and Amirian (2022).

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that the Russian AVT, particularly dubbing, generally demonstrates a stronger tendency to mark multilingualism and preserve original language variations in comparison to the Persian dubbing. This divergence may stem from translators' priorities, ideological motivations, and different sociocultural norms within each country (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011). Various factors may shape the sociocultural norms and, consequently, influence the strategies adopted by audiovisual translators. As discussed earlier, the degree of cultural and linguistic familiarity with L3 in the L1 context, as opposed to the L2 context, may play a significant role. For instance, some French phrases may be more familiar to Russian audiences than to Iranian audiences, possibly due to historical and intercultural encounters between Russia and France. Such familiarity may have encouraged the Russian audiovisual translators to preserve most French utterances in the films, even occasionally in their original French form in the Russian subtitles. Another factor potentially influencing the divergence in translational choices regarding dubbing is the distinct history of the two countries in relation to this practice. Iran has traditionally been a dubbing-oriented country, with deeply rooted sociocultural norms that shape its approach, including strategies for dealing with multilingualism. Such long-standing traditions in handling multilingual instances have influenced the strategies chosen by translators in dubbing as well as subtitling. This is why numerous studies have confirmed the use of neutralizing strategies for L3 in the Persian dubbing and even in the subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (Rezvani Sichani et al., 2023). Conversely, as Chaume (2013) argues, dubbing is a relatively new and increasingly dominant mode of AVT in Russia. Therefore, due to the lack of deeply rooted dubbing traditions, there may be greater flexibility in the treatment of multilingual instances in the Russian dubbing.

Overall, this comparative study demonstrated that the two Russian AVT modes, particularly dubbing, made more consistent efforts than their Persian counterparts to foreground the multilingualism present in the last two installments of the Mission: Impossible franchise. The analysis suggested that this divergence cannot be attributed to a single factor; rather, it appeared to stem from a combination of sociocultural conditions, prevailing translational norms, and the historical predominance of dubbing within each national context. Additionally, differing strategies were shown to influence both the context of the films' plots and character development.

As outlined in the Introduction, the findings of this study contribute to ongoing discussions on the treatment of multilingualism in AVT. The results offer practical insights for AVT practitioners when navigating linguistically heterogeneous texts, while also providing a comparative perspective that may inform future scholarly inquiry.

At the same time, the relatively small size of the corpus limits the generalizability of the findings. Nevertheless, the study opens avenues for further international and cross-cultural research on multilingualism in film, extending beyond dubbing and subtitling to other AVT modes. Future studies could, for instance, investigate the treatment of multilingualism in voice-over across different countries or explore cross-cultural variations in the strategies used to render invented languages in multilingual audiovisual productions.

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