

Cultural (Re)Negotiation: Women Representation in the Persian Dubbing of *The Boys*

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Abstract

The portrayal of women in audiovisual translation (AVT) is a sensitive and significant area of study, as it can reveal how cultural values are reinforced or challenged through the dubbing process. This study analyzes the Persian-dubbed version of the first and second seasons of *The Boys*, focusing on the treatment, abuse, and peripheral roles assigned to its female characters. Employing a qualitative, socio-constructivist approach (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2003), the analysis examines the manipulations made to gendered representations within the dubbed dialogues. The findings indicate that the dubbing introduces changes that reinforce the obedience of women and undercut their acts of resistance against patriarchal structures, while softening or altering references to women's experiences of abuse. These findings offer critical insights into how gender representations are culturally negotiated in AVT. The study ultimately contributes to broader discussions on the intersection of translation, culture, and gender, highlighting how dubbing can serve as a site for ideological mediation.

Keywords: Audiovisual translation, Persian dubbing, women's representation, gender representation, ideological shifts

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1. Introduction

The relationship between translation and women has long been contentious, rooted in the historically peripheral status assigned to both, as argued by Simon (1996), who contends that translation and women have been positioned as subordinate figures within their respective hierarchies, and by Chamberlain (1998), who highlights the perceived inferiority of women in relation to men and of translation in relation to the source text. Andone (2002) likewise discusses the tendency to position women as marginal figures, a condition that has shaped the status of both. These parallel positions have made translation an important site for investigating gendered power relations. With the development of translation studies and the advancement of women's rights, examining how women are represented through translation has become increasingly significant.

This concern is particularly relevant because language is not neutral. Media language may conceal an underlying androcentrism in which men are centered while women are relegated to the periphery (Green & LeBihan, 2001). Sheldon (1990) similarly argues that languages reflect male-centered attitudes contributing to the invisibility of women's experiences. Translation can thus be understood as a practice through which gendered meanings and power relations may be reproduced, negotiated, or transformed. Bourdieu (2002) contends that patriarchal discourses become naturalized in ways that legitimize and reproduce gender inequality. The study of gender in translation is therefore concerned not only with the visibility of women but also with the ideological mechanisms through which gendered representations are constructed and maintained.

Gender itself has been conceptualized in various ways. De Marco (2006) relates gender to the roles that men and women perform in society, whereas von Flotow (1997, p. 99) defines it as a sociocultural and ideological construct. Von Flotow (2009) identifies the aim of gender-oriented research as exploring gender as an analytical category and examining how language reflects power relations between the sexes. Such a perspective is particularly relevant to translation because linguistic choices participate in the construction of gender identities rather than simply reproduce pre-existing meanings. Gendered representations may be reshaped when texts move between languages and cultures, making translation an important arena for examining language, ideology, and gender.

Research on women and translation has consequently expanded beyond written translation to encompass audiovisual translation (AVT). Said (2022) argues that media translation provides fertile ground for examining gendered manifestations of language. Audiovisual products combine linguistic, visual, and cultural modes of meaning-making, creating multiple sites at which gender can be represented and transformed. Such practices contribute to the construction of gender identities and facilitate the reconsideration of sexual difference (Federici & Leonardi, 2013). At the same time, sexist language can function as a means of maintaining the existing social order (McQuail, 2005). Within AVT, the translation of gender-related meanings thus deserves attention as a broader sociocultural and ideological process.

von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández (2018) identify three major approaches to gender in AVT: the translation of feminist material in Anglo-American audiovisual products, differences between dubbed and subtitled versions, and the translation of gay and queer identities. Dubbing is particularly significant because its constraints encourage substantial modifications to the source text (Chaume, 2018). Pruys (2009) further argues that a dubbed version can be regarded as an autonomous text in which equivalence is inevitably altered. Dubbing thus provides a relevant context for investigating whether and how gendered meanings are retained, weakened, or transformed when audiovisual products cross linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Empirical research demonstrates that such transformations have significant implications. Feral (2011b) investigated how feminine voices are adapted in AVT to conform to audiences' assumed gender values,

drawing on *Sex and the City* and analyzing how American feminism was rendered in the French dubbed and subtitled versions. The findings showed that, although subtitles retained most references, the dubbed version tended to delete, weaken, and transform allusions to feminist culture. In the Persian context, Khoshsaligheh et al. (2019) examined the representation of women in four Anglophone films dubbed into Persian. Changes—including omissions, reframing, and other modifications—were motivated by sociocultural and religious considerations, occurring across several dimensions: removal of songs by female singers; replacement of references to casual relationships; exclusion of kissing and hugging; blurring of women's attire; and elimination of sensual gestures. Barreto Schöster and Lopez Tinoco (2024) found that Latin American Spanish reduced sex-related language in *Fleabag*, whereas Peninsular Spanish intensified it through swearwords and feminist discourse absent from the original. Likewise, Bazzi (2024) found that female empowerment in *Frozen* (2013) was manipulated in the Arabic dubbing to produce a more patriarchal representation and make content more acceptable within Arab society, diluting feminist messages considerably.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that dubbing can significantly reshape the representation of women. Transformations are not uniform: they may involve omission, weakening, intensification, reframing, or addition of gendered expressions, varying according to target sociocultural norms (Zaragoza Ninet & Ricart Vayá, 2020). Despite these contributions, further investigation is needed into how the representation of women is transferred across different dimensions and reshaped within specific target contexts. Against this background, the present study focuses on the transfer of the representation of women into the Persian context through dubbing. By investigating differences in the representation of women across various dimensions and examining how these are rendered in Persian, the study aims to address the lacuna in the literature concerning how multiple dimensions of women's representation are transformed in audiovisual translation and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how dubbing may reproduce, negotiate, or reshape gendered meanings in the Persian context.

2. Methodology

This study examines the first two seasons of the series *The Boys* (2019–2026), developed by Eric Kripke for Amazon Prime Video, which were dubbed into Persian by Qualima Dubbing Studio. The series consists of five seasons, each comprising eight episodes of approximately one hour in length. Seasons 1 and 2 were selected for this study due to their abundance of references to the abuse of women in the workplace, rape, and the relegation of women to peripheral roles. The feminist theme of the series reaches its climax in season 2 with the introduction of the character Stormfront, who consistently questions the role of women within the corporation and their peripheral status, while also acting as a supporter of another character, Starlight, who faces sexual harassment at work. Additionally, the series contains numerous references to open relationships and non-conventional types of relationships. This study investigates how these dynamics and the peripheral roles of women in the series are rendered in the Persian dubbing, and how the Persian-dubbed version manipulates the portrayal of female characters.

The methodological framework employed for this research is a qualitative approach with a socio-constructivist perspective (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2003). This approach aims to study how multiple systems of signification interact in television shows. For this study, the first two seasons of the series were streamed in their entirety, and a content and comparative analysis between the English original and the Persian dubbed version was conducted. The shifts identified in the dubbed version were extracted to examine how women are portrayed and presented in the dubbed version compared to the original. Additionally, all instances pertaining to the unequal status of women in the original version were extracted to compile the corpus for this study.

3. Results and Discussion

In the series *The Boys*, the portrayal of women is largely peripheral. Although the female characters are superheroes regarded as saviors of their nation, the series nonetheless depicts the unequal treatment of women and men, even among those who are the “chosen ones”. The series contains numerous instances of extramarital relationships, which the dubbed version has transformed into conventional ones. Additionally, instances of sexual harassment and abuse were toned down in the dubbing. References to extramarital and premarital relationships were manipulated, and a range of shifts from minor modifications to the dialogue to major alterations that changed the overall dynamic of scenes were identified. These modifications exemplify how AVT functions as what De Lauretis (1987) terms a “technology of gender”—a social technology that discursively produces gender and shapes representations of identity (as cited in Barreto Schöster & Lopez Tinoco, 2024, p. 56).

Instances related to women’s appearance can be observed in several exchanges in the dialogues. In one instance, Starlight talks to her mother about her job interview to become a superhero, explaining that she has a low chance of being accepted. She suggests that Countess will probably get the position instead, remarking, “Besides, Countess probably got it. She’s so good in a room”. In the Persian dubbed version, this is rendered as “Probably Countess will be accepted; she is much more attractive”. As can be inferred from the source text, the expression “good in a room” suggests qualities such as social competence, effective interpersonal skills, and the ability to perform well in a professional or high-pressure setting. In contrast, the dubbed version explicitly interprets the expression in terms of physical attractiveness. Thus, while the source dialogue leaves the basis of Countess’s potential success associated with her ability to perform effectively in a social setting, the dubbed version attributes it to her appearance. This shift changes the dynamics of the scene by transforming the basis of selection from competence and professional ability to physical appearance.

Another instance occurs when Frenchie describes a woman he saw in an elevator in the city center to Hughie. The exchange takes place when Hughie asks Frenchie what it was like to take a life, prompting Frenchie to recount the first woman he killed. In describing her, Frenchie draws attention to her appearance and presents her as a refined woman. He eventually notices that she has dirt under her fingernail, which he finds incongruous with her otherwise refined appearance, and remarks, “I say, oh, strange for such a refined woman like this”. The Persian dubbed version renders this as “I said to myself, it’s unlikely for a dandy woman like this”. Here, the source expression “refined woman” is replaced with “dandy woman”, corresponding to the Persian term «فرتی». Whereas “refined” carries a predominantly positive connotation and presents the woman as elegant and sophisticated, “dandy” can carry mildly disapproving connotations in the target language. As a result, the dubbed version implies that the woman is excessively preoccupied with her appearance, producing a characterization that diverges significantly from the original. This is consistent with Gill’s (2007) account of postfeminist media culture, in which the body serves both as a locus of women’s power and as a site of difficulty, one that demands constant management, discipline, and change.

References to women’s chastity can be particularly sensitive when they conflict with the religious and sociocultural values of the target community. This tension is evident in a speech Starlight delivers to young people at a church, where she is expected to present herself as a virgin and conceal her extramarital relationship. Under this pressure, she conforms by lying about her chastity, stating, “I’m a virgin. Saving myself for my future husband”. In the dubbed version, however, this reference is substantially altered: her virginity is reframed as a breakup with her partner, rendered as “I broke up. I didn’t want to marry soon, but he did”. Consequently, the meaning of the scene is significantly modified. As a result, the emphasis on premarital relationships and female chastity—central elements of the original scene—is considerably diminished. Zanotti (2012) documents a similar alteration involving a reference to virginity in the Italian dubbed version of *Grease* (1978), where the expression

“virgin pin” is rendered as “golden pin”, thereby obscuring the original reference to virginity. It can therefore be inferred that references to female virginity are particularly susceptible to mitigation or reformulation in dubbing when they are considered culturally sensitive. Thus, the alteration observed in the present study may be understood primarily as a form of cultural and ideological mediation.

During her final speech at the church, Starlight decides to speak publicly for the first time about a man who sexually harassed and abused her in the workplace. She argues that extramarital relationships are not inherently immoral; rather, the truly immoral act is the abuse she experienced. She states, “If you have sex before marriage that’s, that’s not immoral. What’s immoral is the guy who shoved his dick in my face”. In the dubbed version, however, this is rendered as “If you have made a mistake before marriage, you have not become corrupt. The corrupt one was that man who imposed himself on me. He is the corrupt one”. Interestingly, in the dubbed version, having a relationship is characterized as a “mistake”, although the dialogue continues to state that it is not immoral. This modification creates a tension between the source and target versions. While the original scene suggests that having an extramarital relationship should not be regarded as a moral transgression, the dubbed version introduces the idea that engaging in such a relationship before marriage constitutes a mistake, even as it denies that it is immoral. This minimal shift may be attributed to the fact that the dubbing of this series was carried out by a private studio that attempted to remain as faithful to the source text as possible. By introducing only a subtle alteration, the studio may have sought to avoid a radical departure from the original, which aligns with findings from previous research showing that private studios have more freedom in dubbing (Peimani, 2016; Rezvani Sichani & Afrouz, 2019; Rezvani Sichani et al., 2021).

More revealing, however, is the shift in how sexual harassment is portrayed. In the source material, Starlight uses explicit and forceful language to describe the abuse she experienced and directly identifies the behavior as harassment. In the Persian dubbed version, by contrast, the tone is noticeably softened. The abuser’s actions are implicitly rendered as “imposing himself on her”, a phrasing that diminishes the severity of the incident. Rather than fully conveying the gravity of the abuse, the dubbed version makes the incident more general and implicit. This shift likely stems from the presence of taboo language in the original, which is typically toned down in dubbed versions. As Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2014) found, the general approach in AVT regarding taboo language is to soften it, with deletion being the most frequent strategy in their analysis of 642 instances of taboo language across four American crime films. This weakening of explicit depictions of sexual violence aligns with Feral’s (2011a) observation that dubbing functions as a “filter”, determining which elements of the source text reach viewers and which require naturalization. While Feral (2011a) documented this phenomenon primarily in relation to feminist culture and female achievements, the present study extends the finding to the domain of sexual violence. It demonstrates that the naturalization process operates across various types of content that may threaten patriarchal notions of gender roles and relations.

The series contains numerous references to the abuse and rape of women. Interestingly, the Persian dubbing either softens these references or alters them altogether. In one instance, Starlight helps a girl who is about to be raped by several men and is later blamed for intervening. She explains the reason for her intervention by stating that “they were about to rape a girl”. In the dubbed version, however, the word “rape” is rendered as «تعرض» (“assault”), which carries a different connotation and does not fully convey the specific meaning of “rape” in the source text. Similarly, when the characters refer to the same girl, Starlight explains that “it was a date rape, I think”. In the Persian dubbed version, however, this is rendered as “I think they wanted to harass her on the date”. Here again, “rape” is translated using a less explicit term meaning “harass”. These two instances suggest that the term “rape” is treated as a sensitive expression in the dubbed version. By replacing it with less explicit terms,

the translation reduces the directness of the reference and transforms an explicit representation of sexual violence into a more implicit one.

The following examples are even more revealing. Butcher explains to Hughie that he is pursuing Homelander because Homelander raped his wife. In the Persian-dubbed version, however, the word “rape” is omitted altogether and replaced with the expression “made her miserable”. This modification substantially changes the motivation underlying Butcher’s confrontation with Homelander. As a result, Persian-speaking viewers may not fully understand the nature of the abuse that constitutes a central motivation for Butcher’s actions. Rather than explicitly identifying rape as the source of his anger and desire for revenge, the dubbed version presents the event in vague and ambiguous terms. In another interaction, a doctor explains to Homelander that the woman became pregnant because of the rape. In the Persian dubbed version, however, her pregnancy is rendered as “colon cancer”, suggesting that the woman developed colon cancer because of Homelander. This alteration not only changes the factual meaning of the dialogue but also fundamentally transforms the atmosphere and implications of the scene. As Zanotti (2012) contends, modifications to the source material can have a direct impact on narrative coherence, and the present example constitutes a clear instance of such interference. According to Fawcett (2003), these alterations are sometimes rooted in ideological issues.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate a clear tendency in the Persian dubbing of the series concerning representations of rape and sexual abuse. While the original series explicitly addresses sexual violence and provides women with a space to articulate and confront the abuse they experience, the dubbed version repeatedly treats such references as sensitive material requiring mitigation. Through euphemizing, omission, and semantic substitution, explicit references to rape and sexual violence are softened or silenced. Consequently, the target version reduces the explicitness of the reference to sexual violence and weakens the force of the original discourse surrounding the incident. The present study demonstrates that the semantic force of representations of sexual violence can be reduced through the softening of explicit references and the omission or reformulation of key terms. Such modifications may be associated with the culturally sensitive or taboo status of explicit references to sexual violence in the target context, rather than necessarily reflecting a gender-specific form of ideological intervention.

The dubbing of this series shows a clear tendency to manipulate and conventionalize relationships outside marriage by reframing them as marital or socially acceptable relationships. When Hughie talks to Starlight about his girlfriend, who was killed by a superhero, he states, “My girlfriend died”. In the dubbed version, however, she is referred to as his fiancée: “My fiancé died”. This modification is significant given the sociocultural context of Iran, where relationships outside marriage are subject to considerable social and religious restrictions. The consistent replacement of terms referring to girlfriends and boyfriends with terms such as “fiancée” suggests a broader strategy of conventionalizing non-marital relationships and adapting them to the norms of the target culture. Similarly, at church, women are talking about their previous relationships, and one girl refers to her ex-boyfriend, stating, “Like my last boyfriend was obsessed with Ed Sheeran”. In the dubbed version, however, her “ex-boyfriend” is again rendered as her “previous fiancé”: “Like my previous fiancé loved Ed Sheeran”. This modification follows the same pattern observed in the previous example, suggesting that the dubbing systematically reframes premarital relationships in terms of socially sanctioned relationships. This pattern was observed consistently across the different episodes examined in the study and aligns with the findings of Khoshsaligheh et al. (2019), who noted that all references to illegitimate relationships are either changed to marriage-like ones or simply omitted.

In another instance, Homelander reveals Maeve’s secret on a television show, specifically that she has a girlfriend named Elena. In the source text, he describes Maeve as “a strong proud lesbian with a beautiful girlfriend Elena”. In the dubbed version, however, this relationship is transformed into a sisterly relationship: “Maeve has a very old secret, which is that she has a beautiful sister named

Elena". Thus, her sexual orientation and relationship with Elena are concealed through the replacement of the romantic relationship with a familial one. A similar alteration occurs when Maeve talks to Homelander about her relationship with Elena, stating, "We had a relationship once". In the dubbed version, however, she says, "We are stepsisters". The contrast between the source and dubbed versions is particularly significant. In the original, Homelander explicitly states that Maeve is proud of having a girlfriend, whereas the dubbed version reframes the relationship as a secret and subsequently presents Elena as her stepsister. Thus, a relationship that is openly acknowledged in the source is transformed into a familial relationship that must be concealed in the target version. This shift not only changes the semantic content of the dialogue but also alters the ideological positioning of the relationship: what is presented as an openly acknowledged relationship in the source becomes a hidden and potentially stigmatized one in the dubbed version. This finding resonates with Barreto Schöster and Lopez Tinoco's (2024) analysis of the Latin American Spanish dubbing of *Fleabag*, where female bisexuality is likewise rendered less explicitly, as the protagonist's response to a question about her sexual orientation places "a less pronounced emphasis on" her attraction to women (p. 62). In the Persian dubbing, this reduction in explicitness takes a different form, with same-sex relationships being reframed through familial rather than romantic terms.

In the final instance, when Maeve tells Homelander that her relationship with Elena was a one-time occurrence, she states, "We had a relationship once". In the dubbed version, however, she says, "We are stepsisters". This manipulation is taken further when Elena is initially introduced as Maeve's sister, while the explanation for concealing the relationship is rendered as "because she was her stepsister". This constitutes a substantial manipulation of the original dialogue and the auditory code. By replacing a romantic relationship with a familial relationship, the dubbing fundamentally alters the audience's interpretation of Maeve's character and the narrative significance of her relationship with Elena. Consequently, Persian viewers may receive a substantially different representation of the characters and their relationships from that intended in the original series.

The study also revealed instances which can be broadly categorized as "manipulation in discourse". An example is when a woman describes herself as a feminist in the church. Interestingly, this explicit reference to feminism is manipulated in the Persian dubbed version and rendered as "I love life". The woman's original statement is, "I'm a feminist, but I'm also very sexual and I don't see that contradictory". This alteration conceals the woman's self-identification as a feminist and removes the ideological significance of her statement. Moreover, the continuation of her speech, in which she explains that although she is a feminist, she does not consider feminism incompatible with satisfying her own needs, is omitted entirely from the dubbed version. Consequently, both the explicit reference to feminism and the subsequent explanation of her position are censored, significantly reducing the visibility of feminist discourse in the scene. This concealment of explicit feminist discourse is consistent with Bazzi's (2024) analysis of the Arabic dubbing of *Frozen*, which found that the original themes of female empowerment and independence were systematically manipulated to produce a representation of women that was more acceptable within Arab society (p. 40). Similarly, Feral (2011b) documented a marked tendency in the French dubbing of *Sex and the City* to delete, weaken, and transform allusions to American feminist culture (p. 391). In the present study, self-identification as a feminist is not merely weakened but entirely substituted with a non-ideological statement ("I love life"), representing a particularly thorough erasure of feminist discourse. This convergence across multiple cultural contexts—Persian, Arabic, and French—suggests a broader pattern in dubbing practices where feminist ideology is treated as content requiring manipulation or elimination.

In another instance, Stormfront tells Starlight about her favorite character and explains that the character did not care about being polite. She states, "She never cared about being polite". In the Persian dubbed version, however, this utterance is rendered as "It wasn't important to that girl. She didn't necessarily want to be a polite girl". This modification results in a slight attenuation of the

characterization. While the original presents the woman as somewhat rebellious and less concerned with conventional expectations of politeness, the dubbed version conveys a milder form of the same characterization by suggesting that she was not particularly interested in being polite. The force and confrontational quality of the original statement are therefore weakened. This example reflects a broader tendency to soften representations of women who display rebellious, assertive, or confrontational behavior. This also aligns with Bazzi (2024), who found in her study on the dubbing of *Frozen* into Arabic that female empowerment had been manipulated to produce a perception of women that is more acceptable within the Arab context. The weakening of rebellious behavior in the present study similarly reduces the protagonist's agency and determination to challenge expectations, echoing the pattern Bazzi identified in the Arabic dubbing of *Frozen*.

Another example concerns Stormfront's criticism of the peripheral roles given to women superheroes. In this scene, Stormfront criticizes the director for the roles he assigns to female superheroes. In the original, she directly addresses the director and attributes responsibility to him by saying, "You write all women as either unknowable Hickock bitches or Michael Bay fuck dolls". In the dubbed version, however, this is rendered as "Your role models are either stupid women in Hitchcock films or amateur actresses", thereby reducing the director's direct responsibility for the representation of women. Furthermore, Stormfront describes the roles as "unknowable Hickock bitches" and "Michael Bay fuck dolls", whereas the Persian dubbed version renders these expressions more neutrally as "stupid women" or "amateur actresses".

This modification is particularly significant because, in the source text, Stormfront's criticism targets the objectification and sexualization of women in the film industry, especially the use of women's bodies and appearances as cinematic commodities. In the dubbed version, however, the target of criticism shifts from the practices of the male director and the objectification of women to the women themselves, who are characterized as either "stupid" or "amateur". As a result, the original critique of the sexual objectification of women is substantially weakened. Rather than reproducing the original statement with the same degree of lexical explicitness, the dubbed version modifies some of the terms used to characterize women who perform these roles. Although the overall critical orientation of Stormfront's statement is largely retained, the attenuation of expressions such as "stupid" and "amateur" slightly reduces the confrontational force of the original utterance. This modification suggests that the dubbing process may prioritize the mitigation of potentially sensitive or offensive lexical items, while leaving the broader meaning of the statement relatively intact.

Queen Maeve's characterization is manipulated in the dubbed version, particularly in relation to her attraction to women. In one example, when the marketing team discusses how Maeve should be presented to the public, her description as a "goddess" is rendered as "sensitive" in the Persian dubbed version. Specifically, the dubbed version replaces the original emphasis on her physical appearance with a characterization of Maeve as "sensitive". The source text states, "Now, Queen Maeve, a goddess, but our empress of the other world struggles inside", whereas the Persian dubbed version renders this as, "Now Queen Maeve, who is very sensitive, but internally struggles with her true personality". This pattern is repeated in another example. When Elena refers to Maeve's orientation to the marketing team by saying, "You know Maeve is bi, right?", the dubbed version once again renders this characteristic as "sensitive", as in "You know Maeve is sensitive". These modifications suggest that, rather than emphasizing Maeve's beauty or superhero persona, the dubbing repeatedly associates her with the more traditionally feminine trait of sensitivity. This shift can be interpreted as an attempt to align Maeve's characterization with conventional notions of femininity.

The manipulation of the original message is further demonstrated when the marketing team continues their discussion regarding how to portray Maeve. In this scene, the marketing team explains why they have selected a menswear-style outfit for Elena and refers to research conducted by the Pew Research Center concerning women in relationships. The source text states, "Pew Research shows that two

feminine women in a relationship sends a problematic message". In the Persian dubbed version, however, "Pew", referring to the research organization, is rendered as "women's organization", as in, "According to the Women's Organization, those who are powerful and sensitive are more successful in life". Although the original reference is not related to Maeve's characteristics and instead concerns the rationale behind Elena's clothing, the dubbed version introduces a characterization of Maeve as "powerful and sensitive". This addition is particularly significant because it associates female strength with sensitivity, suggesting that even powerful women and female superheroes possess traditional emotional characteristics. Thus, dubbing further reinforces the recurring tendency to construct sensitivity as a defining characteristic of femininity.

There were also other instances regarding women. For instance, Homelander comments on the women's performance while they are acting, stating that "girls get it done". In the dubbed version, however, this expression is rendered as "women play more cautiously" (or "play well"). The phrase "get it done" in the source text suggests that the women are capable of successfully accomplishing the task. In contrast, the dubbed version shifts the emphasis toward their cautiousness. This modification therefore alters the characterization of the women by replacing an emphasis on competence and effectiveness with an emphasis on carefulness. Consequently, the dubbed version can be interpreted as contributing to a somewhat more favorable portrayal of women by highlighting their ability to act carefully and effectively.

In the second example, Elena refers to the clothes selected for her by the marketing team and explains that she does not want to wear clothing that resembles menswear. In the source text, she describes the outfit as looking like "menswear", thereby explicitly associating her discomfort with its masculine appearance. In the dubbed version, however, her reference to menswear is rendered as "puppet costumes". Consequently, her discomfort with the masculine appearance of the clothing is transformed into a negative evaluation of the clothing itself. Rather than emphasizing the tension between femininity and masculine-coded clothing, the dubbed version frames her dissatisfaction as a reaction to the clothes being strange, inappropriate, or unattractive. This shift removes the gender-related dimension of her original statement and instead redirects attention toward the perceived oddness or aesthetic quality of the clothing.

In the last example, A-Train's girlfriend tells him that she put a great deal of effort into her appearance because she believed she would finally be introduced to the public as his partner. In the source text, she specifies that she had her hair done, threaded her eyebrows, and waxed her body "like a plucked chicken". In the dubbed version, however, these details are reduced to "I did my hair, fixed my eyebrows, and spent a lot of time getting myself ready". What is worth noting here is that while the dubbed version preserves her references to her hair and eyebrows, it changes her mention of body waxing into the more general phrase "getting myself ready". Khoshsaligheh et al. (2019) found that the female body was often omitted, blurred, or removed from scenes in their corpus due to religious or political considerations. This study aligns with their findings, illustrating that the female body is treated as sensitive content—not only requiring manipulation or censorship in the visual domain but also being concealed in the auditory code as well. In other words, the female body is something that needs to be covered up, even in speech.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the Persian dubbing of *The Boys* revealed numerous instances involving women's appearance, relationships, peripheral roles, and resistance to patriarchal norms. From the beginning of the series, particularly in scenes depicting workplace harassment against Starlight, the source text contains various instances that challenge the unequal treatment of women. Regarding women's appearance and the female body, the dubbing sometimes attempted to obscure references to

women's bodies through the auditory code, treating the female body as sensitive content that required manipulation. References to women's chastity and virginity were likewise softened or altered. In several instances, the target version appeared to conform to the norms of the target culture, in which premarital and extramarital relationships are more strongly stigmatized. A noticeable tendency was therefore observed to transform such relationships into marital relationships or forms of sisterhood. Regarding sexual abuse and rape, the dubbing demonstrated a tendency to soften such references, sometimes representing rape more generally as abuse. In other cases, however, the manipulation was more extensive and resulted in substantial changes to the original meaning. These shifts suggest that the treatment of references to sexual violence in the dubbed version was not limited to lexical modification but could also involve broader semantic and ideological changes.

The analysis also identified instances in which women's resistance to patriarchal discourse was modified in the dubbed version. In the source text, some female characters explicitly challenge male authority and patriarchal expectations, including through criticism of the ways in which men control, sexualize, or comment on women's clothing and appearance. In the dubbed version, however, such criticism was sometimes transformed into a more general form of resistance concerning clothing or appearance, while in other instances responsibility was shifted toward the women themselves. Furthermore, characteristics associated with conventional femininity were occasionally introduced or emphasized in the dubbed version, particularly through the portrayal of women as more sensitive and less rebellious or confrontational. Taken together, these findings suggest that, in this case study, Persian dubbing tends to reinforce more conventional representations of women and, in some instances, contributes to the silencing or weakening of women's voices. This tendency is particularly significant because the source text frequently portrays women as actively challenging patriarchal norms and resisting male authority.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study should be interpreted considering its limitations. First, this study constitutes a single case study and focuses on the Persian dubbed version of *The Boys* produced by one dubbing studio. As such, the findings are situated within the specific textual, cultural, and production context examined here and should be understood as reflecting the particularities of the case under investigation rather than broader patterns in Persian dubbing or wider cultural attitudes and norms. In addition, the analysis was limited to dubbing and did not consider other forms of audiovisual translation, particularly subtitling. Moreover, the study focused specifically on the representation and translation of references related to women and therefore does not encompass all aspects of gender representation in the series.

Future research could expand this line of inquiry by examining how representations of women in Western audiovisual products are transformed when transferred into different cultural contexts. Comparative studies could also investigate different modes of audiovisual translation, including professional subtitling, fansubbing, and fandubbing, to determine whether similar patterns of manipulation occur across different AVT modes. Furthermore, future studies could compare the treatment of gender-related references in dubbing produced by public and private sectors and examine whether institutional contexts influence the strategies employed to translate representations of women. Such research could provide a broader understanding of the relationship between audiovisual translation, gender representation, and cultural norms in the transfer of Western media across different linguistic and cultural contexts.

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