Book review: رویکردی به دوبله فیلم *[An Approach to Film Dubbing],* Bizhan Choobineh, Porseman Publication, Tehran (Iran), 2011, 124 pp.[1]

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For the past 70 years, interest in dubbing has steadily increased in Iran. Studies about audiovisual translation into or from Persian are now gaining more visibility in the international context and more researchers have started looking into this interesting realm of translation. Research on Persian audiovisual translation has mainly appeared in the form of journal articles, master's theses and conference presentations. Surprisingly, five books have been written on dubbing in Iran by Iranian dubbing practitioners rather than by academic scholars of translation. Among the books, three address the dubbing tradition and its history in Iran (Mannani, 2010; Zhirafar 2014a, b, written in Persian) while the others were mainly concerned with the dubbing process and its methodological and theoretical aspects (Tahami 2010; Choobineh, 2011, written in Persian). That being said, one should not forget the volumes written by Hamid Naficy, the Iranian film studies scholar, on the history of cinema in Iran from the very beginning (Naficy 2011a, b, 2012a, b, written in English). The monograph being reviewed here, listed among the second group, is an attempt to introduce, present and teach different dimensions of dubbing. The audience of the book, as the author claims in his introduction, seems to be voice talents and students of voice acting as well. But it can be of use for anybody interested in dubbing either as a practitioner or as a researcher working in this domain.

The book is divided into five chapters from the history of dubbing to dubbing around the world. It also contains a very brief introduction as well as a glossary of English key terms and their Persian translations. The author presents dubbing from three perspectives, namely; "the birth of sound, the position of sound and dialogues in cinema"[2], "dubbing the dialogues of the cinematic productions (intralingual dubbing)" and "dubbing cinematic productions into another language (interlingual dubbing)". The first issue is addressed in the first chapter where the author posits that the word "dubbing" was first used in the United States, as an attempt to make silent films voiced. For him, adding sound—not only the dialogues but also the sound effects—to films is dubbing, and with

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[1]The book can be bought on this website (in Persian):
http://shahreketabonline.com/products/37/26599/%D8%B1%D9%88%DB%8C%DA%A9%D8%B1%D8%AF%DB%8C_%D8%A8%D9%87_%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%87_%D9%81%DB%8C%D9%84%D9%85

[2]Quotes translated from the Persian original into English by the reviewer.

this form dubbing was created. In this chapter, the author gives a good overview of sound development in the world of cinema and calls dubbing the art of creativity and new equipment, or the beautiful metaphor "the Cinderella of the film industry". Therefore, dubbing, in this chapter, is introduced as an intralingual form. As for this type of dubbing, the author exemplifies his point with films such as *Broken Lullaby* (1932): After shooting the film on location, the dialogues and sound effects were added to it in a studio.

One of the highlights of this monograph is the history of dubbing in Iran, which is presented in Chapter 2. Like any country in the world, the audiovisual translation tradition in Iran began with the introduction of silent films, which were made meaningful and understandable by the help of a screen translator called *Dilmaj* (see also Naficy 2011a). The author presents the history of dubbing in Iran and how it was established and developed and how the first film—*Premier Rendez-Vous* (1941)—was dubbed into Persian by Ismail Kushan in Turkey in 1946, as Turkey had the required equipment for dubbing. The chapter ends with a chronological overview of issues pertaining to dubbing in the Iranian cinema.

Chapter 3 explains dubbing and "Dubbing Literature". Like the first chapter, the author has a broad definition of dubbing focused mainly on intralingual dubbing—called doubling or post-synchronization dubbing (see Naficy, 2011b)—, though interlingual dubbing is also discussed. The interesting point here is that voice-over is also taken as a form of dubbing when the author explains dubbing in Russia and Poland (p. 45). More importantly, a section is also devoted to subtitling, where it is criticized for its text reduction techniques and the way it projects the translated text, which forces the viewers to focus on the subtitles rather than on the images. The rest of the chapter discusses the necessity of knowing the structure of films and screenplays. The emphasis has been laid on understating the language of the film script and its specialized translation.

It is Chapter 4 that links linguistics to dubbing. As the author puts it, translation of a film requires the command over principles of linguistics like pronunciation, diction, clarity and grammar. The title of this chapter seems to be misleading, as a reader expects a linguistic discussion of dubbing; however, several sections have been devoted to voice acting, particularly when he asserts that articulation, body and creativity are the three significant elements of characterization. The author then touches on the principles of voice acting by borrowing ideas from Plato. After a review of the necessary competencies that a voice talent should acquire, the chapter suggests the idea of balance in dubbing quality; in other words, balance or consistency in voice acting or characterization, in particular in TV series. A pitfall of this chapter is that the author has left many parts unexplained and further elaborations for a better understanding of the ideas are absolutely required. To give an example, the author introduces seven principles of the proper articulation of the sentence, but he does not define them well. For instance, it is not clear what the author means by "familiarity with telecommunication" or what "communication meaning" is (p. 72). The author then rightly recommends that a critical perspective towards previously dubbed products should be adopted. This can help to

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spot mistakes so that they can be corrected or not repeated in future products. While a section is dedicated to dubbing directors, it is difficult to find any information about translators, editors or dialogue writers. Probably, for the author, the dubbing director plays an important role in the dubbing process and acts as a second director, or, perhaps, this is due to his emphasis on intralingual dubbing. Again, on page 77, the author lists the principles of dubbing supervision, but they are not well-explained. By way of illustration, it is not clear to a reader what he means by "using the science of criticism in analyzing the characters for the voice talents" (p. 77). The concept of "lip-synch" is also introduced in this chapter. But the author does not limit this concept to lip movements, as pauses and duration of the character's utterance are also involved in this type of synchronization. The last part of the chapter offers information about Automated Dialogue Replacement, Rythmo Band and Foley Sound Effect. Lastly, this lengthy chapter ends with a discussion of dubbing (dis)advantages and language planning. As to the latter, the idea of dubbing language (in particular interlingual dubbing) is discussed. For the author, inappropriate equivalents at the lexical level can lead to the invasion of foreign words in the target language and culture.

Chapter 5 is fully devoted to a description of dubbing countries including Italy, Germany, France, China, India, Pakistan, Brazil and Canada, among others. The author lists the name of other countries, among which he mentions Finland, Portugal and Romania, where dubbing is only used for children's programs. More importantly, Russia is also included on the list of dubbing countries, although the author adds that the original soundtrack can be heard under the translation track in Russian dubbing. This might be due to lack of any word for voice-over in Persian and it is also called dubbing by some (but not all) in the industry.

Although the book's language is lucid, a lack of coherence is felt in some parts. While the author is elaborating on the technical concept of lip-synch on page 85, he suddenly introduces four types of voice talents. In addition, the English equivalents of the new concepts are given within the text in a parenthesis; one may, however, wonder why some were given in the footnotes. Another minor problem pertaining to the presentation of the English concepts within the text or in the footnotes is the lack of any systematic way of presentation. When presenting four principles of linguistics in dubbing on page 57, the first one is given in lowercase while the others are fully in uppercase. Despite this, the book's several shortcomings can be ignored in comparison with its assets and being among the scarce monographs on dubbing in Iran.

In brief, *An Approach to Film Dubbing* is a fascinating read and a good source for film studies and translation studies students as well as voice acting learners, though the latter would benefit more. The volume will also appeal to other readers, especially researchers from the field of audiovisual translation.

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