Full Length Research Paper

Effectiveness of a glossary of security expressions in error predictability and translation performance of movie translators

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Hundreds of thousands of strategic movies and TV series are being produced every year and almost all of them get translated into so many different languages. The present paper is an attempt to examine the role of a particular type of glossary on the translation performance of movie translators. In this study, efforts have been made to develop the first cinematic glossary of security terms for movie translators. This bilingual glossary is compiled based on the errors Iranian movie translators have committed while translating this genre of movies. The main body of this glossary was obtained from the translated screen plays of 30 popular action movies in English. In the second phase of the project, 30 translators were assigned with a translation task comprised of movie extracts. The translators had to do the translation task without having the proposed glossary in the pretest stage and in the posttest stage, with an interval of one month, the same translation task was given to the same translators with the glossary. Data was analyzed in the SPSS Software and the results of a t-test showed that the difference between participants` pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant indicating that the proposed glossary was effective in the translation performance of the participants. Findings further showed that the proposed glossary had the potentials to predict the possible errors of movie translators.

Key words: Terminology, cinematic glossary, movie translators.

INTRODUCTION

Terminology of a field of study in its common definition as 'the body of specialized words relating to a particular subject' (Collins English Dictionary, 2006) has proven itself to be highly valuable and practical in almost all fields. Terminology can also be defined as a set of negotiated terms for a knowledge community that many of them are developed by active translators and the typical example of someone in need of a terminology volume is can be a translator, too. By developing various fields of study, wordlists and term-banks emerged as practical tools to boost productive knowledge, tran-slations, report analysis and consequently enriching the technical literature.

For a long time, translators have developed wordlists mostly in two columns, one for the terms, the other for the definition in the target language, however, its heyday was around 1980 when various technical dictionaries and wordlists came to the scene. Wordlists help translators, interpreters, analysts, etc. to remain consistent in the usage of a term and avoid misconception and verbosity.

Terminology of a field of study can also be highly valuable for translation teams. The more translators work on a similar project in a team, the more urgent is the need to a glossary. It is also advantageous for students,

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instructors, analysts, academicians, decision makers, companies and academies. A relevant wordlist can duly assist them in their interpretive evaluations, and particularly draw academic or public attention to different fields of science.

National security of a nation as one of the most vital prerequisites of a country has always been a hot issue throughout the world. Intelligence life, just like any other work carries its own language, rules, and culture. Intelligence encompasses a broad range of disciplines and jobs including those that work in national security, law enforcement, and corporate security to name a few. Studies in intelligence are undertaken by think-tanks to support and influence policymakers. Whether protecting a nation or preventing a corporate competitor from conspiracy, intelligence plays a pivotal role across the public and private sectors. The importance of intelligence costs governments huge budgets every year.

To demonstrate the power and the scale of ability in safeguarding national security governments tried various ways among which the media were very influential and mind controlling. Creating thousands of movies and series showing the worldwide domination over security details manifests the gravity of this area.

One of the areas that have drawn attentions is the cultural support of intelligence organizations. In other words, governments spend millions of dollars to propagate the services of intelligence organizations. Media as the main source of support have always been a great means to this end. Tens of thousands TV series and movies have furthered this goal. The invincible domination of and control of security agencies and sometimes whitening the so-called dangerous nature of such agencies have been the common theme of these movies. Due to their strategic and political importance, these types of movies often guzzle huge amounts of money. Therefore, they are expected to meet the expectation of their financers. Expectations like the manipulation of thoughts and ideology. These sorts of movies are often translated into many languages. Accurate translation of such movies is of great importance. Conveyance of the subtleties of the specific terms related to intelligence protocols can help to have a better understanding of the content of these movies. Translation of these movies requires an adequate knowledge about the terms of intelligence and security.

This project aims to provide a cinematic glossary of terms in popular police movies to help translators reduce their possible errors in their translations of this genre of movies.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To review attempts that have been made to introduce intelligence and security terms in English, there exist plethora of books that are compiled usually by former American or British agents. These books are often alphabetical presentation of terms and in some cases narrations of their experiences in the field; however, their target readers are usually the agents, analysts, and politicians.

Burton (2005), an American former agent, in his book directly dealt with highly technical spy terms. In fact, he made a dictionary for intelligence operatives with technical jargon. Burton, in addition to the intelligence terminology, introduced actual contexts to elaborate the terms.

West (2006) then widened his intelligence chronicle to the international scope. West's second contribution included a list of acronyms, a chronology, a bibliography, and hundreds of cross-referenced dictionary entries on the agencies and agents, the operations and equipment, the tradecraft and jargon, and many of the countries involved.

In Iran, Garshasbi`s *Dictionary of Intelligence and Security Terms* (2006) serves as the main reference source for security forces. This dictionary, which was composed of terms in politics, international affairs, and security, however, was focused in the terminology of security forces. It covered a range of categories including operations, types of agents, acronyms, etc.

Samiee Nasr (2001) was one of the first works that drew attentions to movies as a source of information for language learners. Samiee in his first volume collected a body of sentences and expressions used in movies. He categorized the sentences into several topics and divided them into 10 chapters and each chapter covered three to five police issues. However, his target audiences as he himself noted in the preface were the English language learners. These two volumes contained separate glossaries that were extracted from the sentences. The author compiled more than 3000 English *sentences, slangs,* and *expressions* in the two volumes and brought their Persian translations too. The theme of these sentences was mainly police movies, however, included some expressions within the scope of intelligence.

Having analyzed the works done on the subject of terminology of intelligence service and espionage we come across several significant issues or drawbacks.

Firstly, major dictionaries and glossaries developed are designed for security agents and operatives to the extent that few of them are used in movies. In other words, they are too technical to be used by ordinary people. Hence, they might not be proper sources for understanding police movies. Secondly, with regard to the expanse of terms we can assume that these works are mainly reference books that in case of necessity one (mostly an agent) can refer to. The excessive inclusion of these dictionaries inevitably leads to the inclusion of many non-relevant or easy words or expression leading the works far from being concise and to the point. Thirdly, none of the works mentioned above takes the role of movie translators and generally translation into account. Put it simply, they are not designed to solve any of the problems of translators' community.

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to build up a cinematic glossary of police forces to help movie translators in their translation works. We used the following resources to come by with the results of the study.

Participants

The participants of this study were 30 MA students from the University of Isfahan who acted as translators in this project. These translators were selected based on their education in translation major. All of the selected translators have been graduated with BA degree of translation in one of the state universities of Iran. They also had the experience of professional translating i.e. translating for a living from three to seven years. They were both males (17 students) and females (13 students).

Materials

Police movies

The most important material of this study was the subtitle corpus of English police movies. The full corpus of 30 popular police movies were selected to be examined in order to build up the glossary. These movies have been selected on the basis of their recency and popularity. The list of the movies runs as follows: Mission Impossible 1 (1996); The World Is Not Enough (1999); Mission Impossible 2 (2000); Spy Games (2001); The Tailor of Panama (2001); Triple X 1 (2002); Bourn Identity (2002); Bourn Supremacy (2004); Triple X 2 (2005); Mission Impossible 3 (2006); Shooter (2007); Hit Man (2007); Bourn Ultimatum (2007); Wanted (2008); Quantum of Solace (2008); Body of Lies (2008); Echelon Conspiracy (2009); Salt (2010); Unthinkable (2010); Fair Play (2010); Inception (2010); Operation Endgame (2010); Deadly Impact (2010); Macgruber (2010); Five Minarets in New York (2010); The Dept (2011); Mission Impossible 4 (2011); Hana (2011); Devil`s Double (2011); Killer Elite (2011).

The developed glossary

The glossary made is another source of material that was used as a tool in this study. By this glossary, we made a comparison between the quality of translation performance of the translators.

Students` translations

Students` translations were the yardstick by which the significance of the proposed glossary was put into a test. Once a text was given to them without the glossary and the other time they translated the text with the glossary and the translation quality was evaluated by two raters.

Procedures

The first step to this project was the selection of the most popular movies that involved the issue of security. To this end we selected the best seller movies in the recent decades.

In the second step, we analyzed the translations of these movies in terms of equivalences for the security terms and related expressions and singled out those terms and expressions that had been mistranslated or misinterpreted. Collection of the mistranslated expressions led to a bulk of erroneous terminology.

The third step was to put these erroneous terms into an alphabetical order and finding the most appropriate English/Persian definitions for them. The correct definitions were obtained through three major sources: English Dictionaries of Intelligence or Military Terminology; Persian Dictionaries of Intelligence or Political Terminology; and the situational contexts of the movies in which a word or expression was used.

In the fourth step of the project, the glossary was presented to two language experts and two intelligence experts. Their professional suggestions were employed in the modification of the glossary.

The next major step of this project was to put the significance of the proposed glossary into a test. To this end, 30 MA students of the University of Isfahan were asked to render a text containing 20 extracts from five most popular action movies of the year 2012 *without having the glossary*. Each extract of this text contained several security-related terms and at least one erroneous word or expression that was mistranslated. After about one month, the same text was given to the same students, this time *with the glossary*. In order to evaluate the translations, two experts evaluated and scored students` translations. Then statistical methods were used by SPSS Software to ensure inter-rater reliability on the one hand, and significance of the glossary on translation quality of the translators on the other.

Rating scale

Evaluation of the accuracy of the expressions and concepts of the text was done basically on the basis of error-free rendition of the expressions and concepts. Errors in this study were defined as those mistranslations which seriously impaired the transference of meaning. An important point that needs to be mentioned is that other translation quality criteria such as naturalness and the like were not the focus of analysis in the translation assessment and analysis of the present study. The conveyance of the meaning of the specific pre-determined expressions and concepts was the yardstick in our evaluation.

Research questions

(1) Does the proposed error-based cinematic glossary of security terms have potentials to predict the possible errors movie translators may make?
(2) Does the application of a cinematic glossary of security terminology have significant effect on the performance of movie translators?

RESULTS

The error-based cinematic glossary of security terms

Having analyzed more than 30 movies in a sentence by sentence trend, we found certain security-related words or expressions that were mistranslated, at least once, by movie translators. We singled out each of the erroneous words that was spotted in the Persian translations of the movies. The criteria of labeling "error" were the dictionary definitions of these words as well as the contexts of situations. Detection of erroneous words and expressions led to a collection of over 200 words which built up our error-based cinematic glossary of security forces. These words included names of agencies, weapons, operative forces, various titles and expressions (Appendix A).

Table 1. Paired samples test.

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means					95% Confidence interval of the difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	12.784	.001	-10.194	58	.000	-7.11667	.69814	-8.51415	-5.71918
Equal variances not assumed	-		-10.194	44.256	.000	-7.11667	.69814	-8.52345	-5.70988

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of scores in pretest and posttest by the two raters.

Rater		N	Mean	SD	SD error
Rater 1	Pretest	30	18.2000	3.50763	.64040
	Posttest	30	25.5000	1.83359	.33477
Rater 2	Pretest	30	18.7000	3.31298	.60487
	Posttest	30	25.6333	1.93842	.35391

Significance of the glossary

In the last phase of the project, the applicability of the glossary was put to a test. To this end, three popular action movies of the year 2012 including *Taken*, *Bourne Legacy*, and *Sky Fall* were selected (Appendix B). Their Persian translations of security terms were analyzed and 20 sentences that each contained at least one security term with erroneous translation were randomly selected to be given to the translators as their translation task.

We detected 36 instances of mistranslations of security-related expressions in these three movies. Analysis showed that 29 of the mistranslated expressions (80%) had already been spotted during the developing stage of the glossary. In other words, the errors were included and somewhat anticipated in our proposed glossary. This indicated that the glossary was successful in its anticipation of translators` errors to a great extent. However, there were seven security terms that were not in the glossary, yet we added to it later. The words included: *Heads-Up*, *Mobile*, *Encode*, *Decode*, *Defector*, *Cryptanalysis*, and *Surveillance Sweep*.

Then the text was given to the participants in two phases. Phase one (pretest); without the proposed glossary and phase two (posttest); after about one month, with the glossary. In order to obtain inter-rater reliability, a correlation was made among the sets of scores of these two raters. Inter-rater reliability coefficients were obtained on both pretest and posttest scores of the two raters. Inter-rater reliability was .95 for the pretest scores and .82 for the posttest scores, i.e., the correlations were significant.

Above all, results of the translation evaluations showed that the difference between the scores of pretest and posttest was significant (sig=.001/t=-10.194, p<.0005). In other words, translators` performance was noticeably

better when they had the proposed glossary at their disposal. The mean scores of raters 1 and 2 in the pretest were respectively 18.2 and 18.7 from 30. The mean scores of raters 1 and 2 in the posttest were, however, 25.5 and 25.6, respectively.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the t-test and the descriptive statistics of scores in pretest and posttest by the two raters, respectively.

Conclusion

In this project, the researchers attempted to analyze more than 30 popular action movies in this genre to create the first cinematic glossary based on the errors translators committed in translation of security-related terms and expressions. This glossary contained over 200 terms and the English and Persian definitions of these terms were obtained through military dictionaries as well as professional experts. To examine the effectiveness of this glossary on the translation performance of the participants, three popular action movies of the year 2012 were analyzed and the security-related mistranslations were detected which showed that the glossary had included 80% of the errors in these three movies. In other words, the proposed glossary proved to be able to predict a large portion of errors that movie translators may get trapped in. This study also showed that translators` performance was significantly improved when they had the proposed glossary at their disposal. Their pretest and posttest scores depicted major difference between the mean scores of these two phases.

This project showed that an error-based glossary can highly assist translators in their translation products and many more of other types of glossaries can be compiled to facilitate the translation process in different genres.

Another major implication of this study is that error-based glossaries can be a turning point in the life of glossaries and dictionaries in the case that they devoid the unnecessary terms and expressions and that they are strictly to the point that obviate the need for unnecessarily comprehensive dictionaries.

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Appendix A. The error-based cinematic glossary of security expressions which is the main contribution of this study. Due to space limitations, we just have brought the list of terms and expressions.

A
Active Measures
Affiliation
Alias
Ambush
A.P.B
Assassination
Asset
At Large

B
Bargaining Chip
Black Budget Project
Black Ops
Blackmail
(Security) Breach
Bring Somebody In
Bug Sweeper/Detector

C
Call
Call the Shots
Cancel Somebody
Captor
Cease Fire
Chain of Command
Charge
C.I.A
Civil War
Classified
Clean Patch
Clean Sweep
Cleaner
Clear
Clear Somebody`s Name
Clearance
Code Black (Red)
Collateral Damage
Comm
Company
Compromise
Confess
Conspiracy
Contact
Contingency Plan
Copy
Counter Intelligence
Cover Story
Cover-Up
Covert Operation
Cyanide

D
Dark
Deadline
Debrief
Decoy
D.O.D
Dossier
Double
Double Agent
Double Cross
Drone
Duress Code

E
Echelon
Electrocution Device
E.T.A
Ethnic Cleansing
Exchange Fire
Execution
Exfiltrate
Exonerate
Expose
Extraction (Pullout)

F
Fail-Safe Plan
False Flag Operation
Federal Agent (Fed)
Fit the Profile
Flak Jacket
Frame Somebody
Friendly Shot
F.S.B
Fugitive

G
Ghost Protocol
Go-Bag
Grab Team
Green
Green Light

H
Handler
Have a Lead on Someone
Headquarters (HQ)
Hit
Hit Man (Hitter)
Hit Squad
Hostage

I
Infiltrate
Inside Job
Intercept
I.R.G.C

J
Jam
John Doe

K
Keep Tabs on Somebody
K.G.B
Kidnap
Kill Squad
Krav Maga

L
Langley
Lay Low
Leak
Lethal Injection
Leverage
Low-Key

M
Magazine
Manhunt
Marksmanship
Martial Law
Masquerade as Somebody
Massacre
Mayday
Mercenary
M.I.5
M.I.6
MIA
Mole
Mossad
Mugshot

N
Narc Somebody Out
Neutralize
N.O.C
N.S.A

O
O`clock
Off-Grid
Off-Limits
Off-the-Record
On the Run
Ops

P
Payback
Pin Somebody Down
Pinpoint
Plan B
Ploy
Point Blank
Prime Suspect
Pro

Q
Quid Pro Quo

R
Reaper
Reconnaissance
Recruit
Red Herring
Red Flag
Rig the Camera
Roger
Rogue Asset
Run-Down

S
Sabotage
Safe House
S.A.S
S.D.R
Self-Destruct
Set up a Perimeter
Set Somebody Up
Shadow Government
Sharpshooter

Shoot-To-Kill Watchlist
Shredder
Silencer/Suppressor
Situation
Sleeper Agent
Sniper
Stand By
Strike Team

T
Tactical Team
Tail
Take Somebody Out
Tap
Task Force
Threat Level
Tip Somebody Off
Trace
Tracker
Traitor
Transmitter
Treason
Turncoat
Have a Twenty
Twenty Four/Seven (24/7)

U
Undercover
Under the radar

V
(Have) Visual

W
Walk-In
Whereabout
Whistleblower
Wire
W.M.D

Appendix B

The sentences that were extracted from the three action movies of the year 2012. It is as well the task that was given to the students to translate in the pretest and posttest phases. The intelligence-related terms are underlined as well.

1-   I am the one who call the shots in this operation.
2-   I was the first recruit to get out alive, I am going to make certain that I am not the last.
3-   They told me I killed a cob, I was 18 so they were able to charge me with murder one, I was sentenced to die with lethal injection.
4-   Six years ago I was taken out of prison and was forced to become an assassin for a secret unit of government, a black ops program called Division that is now gone rogue.
5-   He`s been identified as Jason Bourne, he is still at large and considered extremely dangerous.
6-   It is a remote for the electrocution device, in case he needs a little motivation.
7-   The girl has been inside these walls long enough to know how we operate, if she contacts with someone that`s the breach in security.
8-   I wasn`t just any cleaner. I was Division`s cleaner, in house, I was a reaper. I cancelled other agents.
9-   Division is in a Code Black, there won`t be any back-up.
10-   He is a way better double agent than I ever could possibly be.
11-   It`s not a good time, to blow your cover, keep waiting for the follow-ups.
12-   I did a surveillance sweep, and there`s no one physically watching my apartment.
13-   Seemingly we got a situation at the site, prep a team to intercept.
14-   'Timeout' was a duress code under His authority.
15-   We didn`t open fire, he was probably killed by a friendly shot.
16-   He`s exposed, someone must have tipped him off.
17-   I wear wires when I meet him, I hope to get him to talk.
18-   Things got complicated … they ran a series of false-flag missions in the Middle East.
19-   I got a twenty on the subject.
Many intelligence experts believe it was an inside job.