Indicators of Scene Changes in Persian and English Audio Descriptions: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study investigated the audio description (AD) of scene change indicators in English and Persian ADs to determine the degree to which they conform to ITC Guidance on Standards for Audio Description, along with their similarities and differences. The Persian ADs were obtained from audio-described Persian dubs of Casablanca, On the Waterfront, Psycho, Citizen Kane, and the Iranian film Sorkhpust. The English ADs were obtained from Bruce Almighty, Seven, and Fury films. To this end, 20 minutes of each film were randomly selected to be analyzed per the ITC guidelines (2000). ITC guidelines suggest that appropriate indicators must signal scene changes. The results demonstrated that appropriate indicators sometimes signaled scene changes in both English and Persian ADs, but these scene changes were also occasionally ignored. In the English ADs, the percentage for signaling scene changes was 62.83%; this was 53.33% in the Persian ADs. The difference was attributed to a higher frequency of short, simple temporal, and spatial scene change indicators in the English ADs. Moreover, potential differences in subjective interpretations of change of location, which can lead to different perceptions of scene changes and differences in the percentages of using indicators, may also account for the difference.

1. INTRODUCTION

Radio Namayesh (an Iranian radio station that produces cinema and art-related content) introduced the Persian audio description of films in 2013 and continued for approximately two years. AD has also been practiced since 2019 through the activities of the group Sevina (*cinemaie vije nabinaian*), which can be translated as the *specialized cinema for blind people*. It has audio-described approximately 15 to 20 English films in Persian.

Khoshsaligheh and Shafeie (2021) note that the Independent Group of the Blind has audio-described several Persian films. Khoshsaligheh et al. (2022) concluded that there is significant room for improvement in Iranian audio description. Since then, little has been done on the

phenomenon in the Iranian academic context; thus, it may be worthwhile to investigate a comparative analysis of the audio-description of films in the Persian language and the audio-description of films in English concerning the existing guidelines on the phenomenon. According to Truong et al. (2003), "a scene is defined as a section of a motion picture which is unified to time and space. It is made up from a series of shots from varying angles and is usually filmed in one session" (p. 6). Furthermore, Rasheed and Shah (2003) state that a scene is a subdivision of film where the time and place do not change, and a continuous action occurs in one place.

According to Alrashid and Gaizauskas (2023), a scene is "a unit of narrative in which the time, location and principal characters are constant and in which specific events which constitute the narrative are recounted" (p.144). Thus, as inferred from the provided definitions, a scene can change when the location or time changes.

According to the Independent Television Commission (ITC, 2000)[1], since scenes change in a matter of seconds, and blind and visually impaired viewers may lose track of the plot if they are not properly guided, the use of words such as "now," "now upstairs," "now outside," "in the garden," and "in the police station," among others, can assist these viewers in understanding the scene changes. In addition, ITC (2000) suggests avoiding subjective expressions such as "now we see" among others in these scene change indicators. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate how scene changes are handled in Persian and English ADs in relation to these guidelines.

Several films have been audio described for blind and visually impaired people. Audio describing films in the Persian language is a relatively new activity, initiated in 2013 by Radio Namayesh and continued by the Sevina group through the on-the-spot AD of some Persian films in cinemas. With the assistance of an Iranian movie distribution company, *Filimo*, Sevina inserted ADs into the movie soundtracks, audio describing several Iranian titles and an Iranian television series after each episode was distributed. Sevina has also recently begun audio describing classic works of world cinema, having already audio-described several titles (until this research was initiated in January 2021). According to ITC (2000), temporal and spatial indicators can be used to alert the blind and visually impaired to scene changes in films; examples include "in the afternoon," "tomorrow," "in the kitchen," "now," "outside," "inside," and others. According to ITC guidelines, subjective expressions such as "we see," and the like should not be used in scene change indicators.

Based on the above background, the current study examines how scene changes are managed in Persian and English ADs following ITC guidelines and determines the extent to which these ADs adhere to the guidelines. Also, possible similarities and differences between the Persian and English ADs will be identified, along with a brief explanation of the possible causes for the differences based on the data.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Semiotics can be simply explained as the scientific study of signs. According to De Saussure (1916), the sign can be defined as the relation between two concepts: the signifier, a linguistic means referring to a psychological concept (the signified). In addition, Bayramov (2020) adopts the definition of sign from the Hurufism movement and defines a sign as "the relationship between the signifier and the signified, of which it consists, as well as the referent - the real object that is subject to signification" (p. 18). Sanders Pierce stated that semiosis is a philosophical concept consisting of a triangle of signs, the real object it represents, and the interpretant (the effect of the interpretation process on the interpreter); the combination of these

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[1] Referred to as ITC in the article

three factors produces an effect that cannot be achieved by the pairs of this triadic structure (Hoopes, 1991).

Mcgonigle (2013) argued that films are also combinations of different verbal, auditory, and visual signs produced by elements such as genre, mise-en-scène (composition), montage, and camera techniques that represent a narration of real-life events in the form of audio-visual content. Thus, it is reasonable to state that films are holistic signifiers consisting of a sequence of visual, auditory, and verbal signifiers. Gottlieb (2017) described intersemiotic translation as a type of translation "in which the semiotic channels used in the translated product differ from those used in the original" (p. 53). Intersemiotic translation is defined by Jakobson (1959) as "an interpretation of verbal signs using nonverbal sign systems to emphasize the concept of transformation" (p. 261).

Audio description is a type of translation that translates visual content signifiers into verbal signifiers for blind and visually impaired individuals to comprehend. Consequently, this research also fits within the framework of semiotics and intersemiotic translation studies. Several rules and guidelines must be followed when translating from one sign system to another because different sign systems have distinct ways of expression.

The ITC Guidance on Standard for Audio Description provides audio describers with practical instructions on how to describe various visual elements in audio descriptions. Scene transitions are one of the visual elements discussed in the ITC's *Prioritizing Information* section. This study also examines how scene changes have been handled in English and Persian ADs to determine their compliance with ITC guidelines, identify similarities and differences, and propose possible explanations for these potential variations.

1.2.Research Questions
1) To what extent have English and Persian ADs audio described indicators of scene changes?
2) What are the possible similarities and differences between English and Persian ADs regarding audio description of scene changes, and what are the possible reasons behind the differences?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
2.1.What is Ad?

AD has been defined by numerous individual scholars in the field, organizations that provide ADs, and organizations that provide guidelines for the practice; some of these guidelines are discussed in this research to clarify the topic. Kleege and Wallin (2015) state that AD is "the process of translating visual information into words for blind and low-vision individuals." Typically, such descriptions have concentrated on films, museum exhibitions, internet images video, and live theater (p. 1).

Rai et al. (2010) defined the practice as "an additional commentary between the dialogue of a film/ television program that tells the viewer what is happening on the screen so that they can keep up with the action; it bridges the gap in accessibility for a blind or a partially sighted person when watching a film/TV program" (p. 1). According to Ramos (2015), audio description (AD) is a type of audio-visual translation whose purpose is to describe the image; whether the image is used in cinema, theatre, a feature film, or dance, AD makes the audio-visual content accessible to blind people by inserting verbal descriptions between dialogues and music, so that the blind and visually-impaired experience a feeling similar to that of the sighted audience.

Matamala and Orero (2007) viewed AD as a form of intersemiotic translation within the context of audio-visual translation and attempted to develop a curriculum for teaching the practice. Snyder (2005) regarded AD as a literary art form and poetry, rendering the visual in

not only verbal but also aural and oral modes by employing concise, imaginative vocabulary, which is beneficial for both the partially-sighted and the blind and even sighted people, providing the former with access to what they cannot see due to their particular condition, and the latter with what they may be able to see but are unable to fully perceive the image.

2.2. AD from Past to Present

AD was introduced in Spain during the 1940s (Díaz Cintas et al., 2007, as cited in Fryer, 2016). According to Fryer (2016), audio description was practiced during World War I in 1917 (English blind soldiers benefited from the descriptions of cinematographic images of Scott's expedition created by Lady Waterlow). According to ITC (2000), AD on television was first implemented in Japan, where live performers added descriptions to silent films to benefit illiterate or insufficiently literate individuals. Snyder (2005) stated that AD was initially developed in the United States; the concept was conceived by Chet Avery, a blind clerk at the Department of Education who was inspired by services such as subtitling for deaf people. Therefore, he urged organizations for the blind to help blind people gain access to films by including verbal descriptions. Then, Margaret Pfanstiehl, a blind woman who read newspapers for blind individuals on a radio station, began providing verbal descriptions of performing arts with the assistance of her husband.

Audio-visual content descriptions for blind people has also been provided in Poland since the 1990s. Jankowska and Walczac (2019) reported that the practice originated in Krakow as part of a project supported by the Polish Ministry of Culture and the Polish Association for the Blind; these audio described versions, which were named "*typhlo-films,*" the Greek word for "blind." In 2006, screening in Bialystok featured AD in its modern form and without freeze frames, marking the actual beginning of the practice's development in Poland. In Iran, a similar practice (*Pardeh Khani*) was used as a traditional form of storytelling, in which a narrator told a story based on images displayed on a screen. This type of storytelling was not exclusive to blind audiences but was very similar to AD. *Pardeh Khani* was a form of story narration in which a narrator would sequentially narrate (mostly religious) tales displayed on screens (*Pardeh*) (Fadaei, 2014). *Pardeh Khani* was first practiced in Iran during the Qajar era (between 1777 and 1922) (Chelkowski, 1998, as cited in Fadaei, 2014).

Audio description of films in Iran for the blind and partially sighted is a recent activity starting in January 2013. From January 2013 to February 2015, Radio-Film, a radio program produced by Radio Namayesh (an Iranian radio station that produces art-related content), provided audio descriptions of several films (Baei, 2018). In October 2020, the audio description of films in Radio-Film was reinstituted (Radio and Television Cultural Group of the Young Journalists Club, 2020). Sevina, an independent art group, has also employed audio descriptions of films in the Iranian context (initials in Persian standing for cinema specialized for blind people).

The group's activities began on July 19, 2019, with the live audio description of the Persian film The Warden (*Sorkhpust*) at Tehran's Charsou Cineplex ("Aks | Prinaz Izdiar, Habib Rezaei Va Galareh Abbasi dar ekrane "Sorkhpust" barie nabinaian," 2019). Since then, the organization has produced art-related for the blind and partially sighted. Until January 2021, when the data for this study were collected, the group was engaged in three main types of audio describing art-related content for the blind and partially sighted, namely, live audio description of Iranian films in Charsou Cineplex in Tehran, Iran, producing cinema and TV related art materials such as audiobooks and podcasts through a program called Radio Sevina, and adding ADs to both Iranian and foreign dubbed films independently, or in cooperation with the Iranian VOD service *Filimo*.

Sevina group had audio described 42 film titles and animations for the blind and partially sighted as of the date of data collection for this study (January and February 2021), including two animations, 15 classic films from the world cinema (the dubbed versions), eight films from the Iranian post-revolutionary cinema, and 17 classic films from the Iranian pre-revolutionary cinema independently. In addition, the group independently audio described a 19-episode Persian series (Sevina- Cinema for the Blind: Movies, n.d.)

2.3.The Importance of Narrative in ADs

Multiple studies have addressed the issue of selecting the most narratively relevant visual elements for audio describing multimedia content. According to Remael and Vercauteren (2013), the problem with the selection or non-selection of visual clues in the ADs is that audio describers have a visual background of the real world, unlike a large portion of the blind audience. Consequently, several visual cues that audio describers may take for granted may be lost in the mental narrative created for the blind viewer. The study highlighted the significance of film beginning in audio describing a film and suggested the visual clues that should be considered when describing the film's beginnings, such as grand images, symbols, walk-and-talk scenes, visual metaphors, settings, mood, set-up visuals, continuity visuals, wallpapering, image systems, and business.

Kruger (2010) also examined how the narrative concept should be built for blind audiences. The study introduced audio narration (AN), a subjectively narratively relevant audio description, focusing on focalization as a narrative visual cue that must be handled with care when audio describing multimedia content. According to Jahn (2021), focalization concerns how focalizers perceive information (characters). Kruger (2010) reported that specific camera techniques, such as camera angle, signal this visual cue. Special attention must be paid to the rendering of shot length, the dynamism or stasis of the shots, and the types of cuts between scenes when audio describing films, not by naming the techniques but by describing the focalizations in a way that places the blind audience in a position to experience the film events from the perspective of the characters. To this end, Kruger (2010) suggested using focalization markers such as temporal and spatial deictic expression to deal with focalizations in multimedia content.

2.4.Linguistic Features of ADs

Several studies have been conducted to determine the unique characteristics of ADs and the potential differences between the common language and AD language. Reviers (2018) examined the language of Dutch motives in a corpus of 39 Dutch movies containing 154,570 words to investigate the language of ADs and compare it to common and subtitle language using Halliday functional grammar. The frequency of open-class words was greater in ADs than in subtitles and ordinary language. Given that the role of ADs is similar to the experiential meta-function of language (describing events) and that open class words (content words) are the linguistic elements used to fulfill this meta-function, the higher frequency of open class words in the language of ADs could be justified from a functional grammar perspective.

Matamala (2018) also examined the language characteristics of ADs. The study compared professional and student-created ADs for the 14-minute film *What Happens While*. The results revealed a greater number of AD units, sentences, and words and greater variability in professionally developed ADs compared to student-developed ADs. The Mann-Whitney tests showed that the differences between the numbers were not statistically significant. Matamala (2018) also compared the language of ADs to a corpus of written ordinary language; the results revealed a longer average sentence length in the general language corpus, which could result from time and space constraints in the context of ADs. Additionally, the study revealed an increase in the frequency of open-class words in AD and general languages.

Jiménez-Hurtado and Soler Gallego (2015) investigated the linguistic characteristics of pictorial ADs in the museum context. The study juxtaposed the ADs for blind people in the New York Museum of Modern Art with the audio guidelines for sighted visitors. Jiménez-Hurtado and Soler Gallego (2015) identified two differences between the ADs for blind visitors and the audio guidelines for sighted visitors: 1- Rather than providing information on the artists and the contexts in which the artworks were created, the pictorial ADs for blind people focused primarily on describing the artworks. On the other hand, the audio guides for sighted visitors focused equally, if not more, on the artist and the circumstances surrounding the artwork's creation. 2- The ADs for blind people resembled objective descriptions of the artworks, with position being the fifth most frequently occurring semantic category. In contrast, the audio guidelines for sighted individuals resembled subjective expert interpretations of the artworks, with the semantic categories of emotion, cognition, and speech occurring most frequently in these audio interpretations.

Perego (2018) also examined the linguistic characteristics of pictorial ADs created for blind people at the British Museum in London. The study used corpus methods to determine the linguistic idiosyncrasies of museum ADs. The study results revealed that museum ADs had a low level of lexical variation (type-token ratio) and used simpler words with fewer characters (low mean word length), demonstrating the importance of using a limited number of lexicons in addition to the simple language in ADs. Due to the unique communicative function of pictorial ADs, lexical density (the ratio of content words to functional words) was relatively high (description). It utilized lengthy, convoluted sentences, which made them more similar to complex works of fiction, deviating from the standard AD guidelines, which encourage being as concise and straightforward as possible.

2.5.ITC Guidance On Standards for Audio Description: A Brief Review

ITC Guidance On Standards for Audio Description was published for the first time in May of 2000 by the British Independent Television Commission. The set of guidelines is a comprehensive premier covering a wide range of audio description-related issues. These issues include how ADs are prepared, how they are inserted into film soundtracks, practical guidance on how audio description should be done and the essential elements that must be considered when audio describing films, legal issues regarding the broadcasting of audio described materials, and explanations of the various audio described genres in the British broadcasting system.

Several studies have utilized ITC guidance or provided their own explanations of the set of guidelines. For instance, Orero and Wharton (2007) used ITC guidelines as one point of reference when guiding students through the audio description of a Spanish film to determine the practicability of several widely used sets of guidelines on the practice (*Torrente 3*). The AD of colors, the introduction of new characters in the ADs, the selection of appropriate vocabulary for the audio description of violent scenes, audio describing while the music was playing in the film, audio describing while the opening and closing titles were being played, and the appropriate rendering of jargons and terminologies in the audio description were the elements that should have been handled with care and consideration of the guidelines extracted from five different sets of guidelines.

Rai et al. (2010) emphasized the significance of clarity and conciseness in ITC regulations. According to Rai et al. (2010), ITC guidance encourages precision over wordiness and complexity and recommends avoiding elements such as pretentious imageries, stylish phrase changes, and excessive description that lead to complexity and circumlocution in ADs.

3. METHODS

The research was a descriptive study that attempted to describe the similarities and differences between how scene changes were handled in English and Persian ADs. In addition, the study evaluated the audio description of scene transitions in English and Persian films per ITC guidelines (2000). According to ITC (2000), movie scenes change in a matter of seconds; therefore, if these scene changes are not signaled properly by proper indicators, the blind audience may lose the threat of the story or narrative by not knowing that the scene (the time or location in the film) has changed. The English audio described films were downloaded from iTunes, and their ADs were extracted by playing the films on iTunes (Apple Inc.) desktop.

The films in Persian were obtained from *Sevinagroup.com* in the format of soundtracks added to the dubbing soundtracks; these mixed soundtracks were then added to the film. Then, 20 minutes of each film's English and Persian ADs were analyzed randomly. The scenes in the chosen segment of each film were extracted based on the following criteria: Truong et al. (2003) define a scene as "a section of a motion picture which is unified to time and space." It comprises a series of shots from varying angles and is usually filmed in one session" (p. 6). Since a change of location could sometimes be subjective, entering or exiting a door was considered a point of reference for changes of location other than more obvious changes of location, such as moving from a mountain to an apartment or from the ocean floor to a bedroom. The benchmark against which our films were evaluated was the following part from the second category (*Prioritizing Information*) of practical audio description guidelines provided by *ITC Guidance on Standards for Audio Description*.

3.1. Films

The films investigated were made up of the Persian dubbed versions of four classic English films audio described in Persian by *Sevina*: *On the Waterfront (1954)*, *Casablanca (1942)*, *Citizen Kane (1941)*, and *Psycho (1960)*. *The Warden (Sorkhpust, 2019)*, audio described in Persian by *Sevina-Filimo* Cooperation. The Persian films were selected using a convenient sampling technique from a list of the most recently audio described films by *Sevina* and *Sevina-Filimo* cooperation by October 2020 (the time of selecting the films for the research project from which this article was extracted). The English films used for the English ADs were chosen randomly from a list of audio-described *App Store* (Apple Inc.) films available until October 2020. The English films included *Fury (2014)*, *Seven (1995)*, and *Bruce Almighty (2003)*. Due to financial restrictions on purchasing and downloading audio described films, the number of English-language films was lower. The Persian films were chosen from the films audio described recently by *Sevina*.

3.2. Data Collection

Twenty minutes of each of the films were randomly selected due to time limitations for the analysis of the entire time of the films. Then, as mentioned previously, scenes were extracted from these film segments. After the scene changes were extracted, they were compared with their corresponding section of ADs to determine if and how they were signaled by appropriate indicators. Additionally, the scene changes and their corresponding ADs were analyzed using subjective statements such as "now we see" and similar phrases.

3.3. Data Analysis

The units of data analysis in this study were scene changes extracted from the selected sections of the films and juxtaposed with their corresponding ADs to determine whether scene changes have been included in English and Persian ADs and how they have been handled in both English and Persian films concerning *ITC Guidance for Standards for Audio Description*. First, a level of conformity to ITC guidance was calculated based on the relative frequency of scene changes included in the ADs and the relative frequency of not using subjective statements in the audio description of the scene changes. The numbers obtained for Persian and English ADs were subsequently compared and contrasted, and the similarities and differences were

explained. Based on the data, the possible causes for the differences in the audio description of scene changes between the English and Persian ADs were also discussed. Finally, examples of scene changes and their corresponding AD sections from both English and Persian ADs were provided and discussed in detail.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As explained in the principles of audio description in ITC guidance, setting the scene is an element that audio describers must not neglect when audio describing a movie. Scenes change in a matter of seconds, and the blind and visually impaired could lose track of the narrative if they are not properly guided. The use of words such as "now," "now upstairs," "now outside," "in the garden," and "in the police station," among others, can aid blind viewers in understanding scene changes. All the scene changes were extracted and compared to their corresponding sections of ADs to determine whether they had been included in the descriptions, as well as to determine the similarities and differences between English and Persian ADs, as well as the possible causes for the differences. A summary of the results can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1: Audio description of scene changes

AD language	No. of scene changes	No. of scene change indicators in Ads	Percentage of scene change indicators in ADs
English	109	68	62.38
Persian	120	68	53.33

As shown in Table 1, a total of 109 scene changes were identified in the English ADs based on our analysis of the definition above. Among the 109 scene transitions in the ADs, 68 were signaled using various indicators, including spatial and primarily temporal indicators such as "now," "later," and "outside," among others, accounting for 62.38% of all scene transitions. In the Persian ADs, 120 scene changes were observed and analyzed, of which 64 were signaled by various indicators, such as spatial and temporal indicators, accounting for 53.33% of all indicators. The numbers and statistics show that the percentage of English and Persian ADs that use indicators to signal scene changes differs by 8.95%. The data shows that the percentage of signaling the changes of scenes in the English ADs is 62.83%, while the number is 53.33% for the Persian ADs.

With a deeper look at the data, it becomes apparent that English ADs have almost used a balanced combination of temporal and spatial indicators to signal the scene transitions in the movie narrative; for instance, words such as "now" and "later" are frequently used in the English ADs as temporal indicators, signaling a change of scene in a short, helpful manner. In addition to the more specific naming of locations, such as "at the studio," "in an American encampment," "on the boat," and "at Small Wonder's daycare," short, simple spatial scene change indicators such as "inside" and "outside" were used to indicate scene transitions. In contrast, using the Persian equivalents of short, simple temporal indicators such as "now" and "later" is much less frequent and nearly nonexistent in the Persian ADs.

Furthermore, in terms of spatial indicators, the Persian equivalents of short, simple words such as "inside" and "outside" were less frequent than longer, more space-intensive place names. Consequently, this reduced use of brief, simple temporal and spatial indicators in the Persian ADs can be viewed as a possible explanation for the lower proportion of indicators in the Persian ADs. Also possible differences in subjective interpretations of change of location (one element that changes the scene, as mentioned), which can lead to different perceptions of scene changes and thus differences in the percentages of using

indicators to show scene changes in the ADs, can also account for the lower percentage of scene transition indicators in the Persian ADs.

According to ITC (2000), another factor to consider when audio describing scene changes is to avoid subjective statements such as "now we see," "now we have," and "now we watch," among others, in the scene change indicators. Both the English and Persian ADs in the study were analyzed for their use of such phrases when describing scene changes in movies. The outcomes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Avoiding subjective statements in scene change indicators

AD language	No. of subjective phrase avoidances	Percentage of avoiding subjective phrase avoidances
English	67	98.52
Persian	63	98.43

As shown in Table 2, of the 68 indicators used to indicate scene changes in the English ADs, 67 (or 98.52%) were devoid of any subjective statements such as "we see" or other subjective statements. In the Persian ADs examined, 63 of the 64 indicators used for signaling scene changes lacked subjective statements and complied with ITC standards, which accounts for 98.43% of all indicators. Thus, based on the numbers and statistics provided, it can be concluded that both English and Persian ADs almost fully adhere to the ITC guidelines regarding the avoidance of subjective statements when signaling scene changes; however, as mentioned previously, the percentage of using indicators to signal scene changes differed between English and Persian ADs. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss several spatial and temporal indicators in the English ADs and the shots of the scene-changing moments.

Figure 1. Scene change one from Bruce Almighty

In the opening minutes of the movie *Bruce Almighty*, Bruce and the camera crew are preparing a report on a bakery, and there are several time-lapsed shots of the bakery. There is a scene transition between each time interval for capturing different shots for the report (change of time). This image is an example of a scene transition accompanied by a cut to a new shot for a report in a motion picture. The AD in this segment of the movie is as follows:

 AD 1: Later…… (the film dialogue) ………

As evident in the AD, the transition of time (the change of scene) has been rendered appropriately with the word "later," which, according to ITC guidelines, is a way to help blind people not lose track of the plot when scenes change in a matter of seconds. Three

occurrences of the same word in the same location indicate time transitions between bakery shots. "Later" is a temporal scene transition indicator, but as previously mentioned, spatial scene transition indicators can also be used when the change of scene is caused by a change of place as opposed to a change of time; the following is an example of a spatial scene transition indicator used in the AD of the same movie.

Figure 2. Scene change two from Bruce Almighty

In Figure 2 from *Bruce Almighty*, there is a spatial transition of a scene from the bakery report on the couple's TV to their apartment; the corresponding AD reads as follows:

AD 2: *Now in their cozy apartment*, Bruce and a long-haired blond watch a tape of a broadcast.

In the description above, the italicized indicates a scene change in which both the time and location change and a new scene is created. The word "now" indicates a change in time, and the phrase "in their cozy apartment" implies a change in location, creating a new scene in the movie. As previously mentioned, there are instances in which scene transition indicators do not appear in the ADs; below is another example from the audio-described version of the movie *Bruce Almighty*.

Figure 3. Scene change three from Bruce Almighty

As previously mentioned, there were instances in the ADs where a scene change occurred without any transition indicators. Due to the potential intervention between the original dialogue and the audio description, a number of these instances were not audio described with a transition indicator. In Figure 3 from *Bruce Almighty*, the scene shifts from Grace in the daycare to Bruce beside *Niagara Falls*. Due to the brief time interval between dialogues, which may cause intervention, no indicators demonstrate this transition; however, a short scene transition indicator such as *Niagara Falls* could have been used immediately after the previous dialogue to ensure that blind viewers do not lose the plot. The small transition between the description and the subsequent dialogue, which begins with a phone call, could have been omitted. Also, there were instances where the transition between dialogue and description was overlooked without any opportunity for intervention; the following case from *Bruce Almighty* could be considered an example of missing scene transitions.

Figure 4. Scene change four from Bruce Almighty

In Figure 4 from *Bruce Almighty*, there is a scene change from Bruce, who is on a boat beside *Niagara Falls* and has just been informed that his rival has been selected as the successor of a newly retired anchorman, rendering him out of control, to a shot of his rival in the studio. At this point, Bruce chuckles angrily for a few seconds, giving the audio describer enough time to describe the transition by some type of indicator as "at the studio" or "in the studio," which is also used in some other transitions, however, the audio describer missed the change of scene. The blind audience cannot fully follow the plot of the movie.

The following section analyzes and discusses several scene changes from the Persian ADs. The first scene change is from the film *Casablanca*. This occurs when the scene transitions from *Casablanca Bazaar* to a police station, and a policeman begins reading a telegraph message into a microphone. A shot of this scene is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Scene change five from Casablanca

The Persian AD for the scene opening is as follows:

AD 5: مردی در ادارهٔ پلیس

[A man in the police station]

In this first case of a scene change, the change of scene and the opening of the new scene are very well indicated by the phrase "in the police station" and help blind people to have control over the thread of the movie narrative by this phrase. As can be seen, there are no subjective expressions such as "we see" or "in front of us."

The second scene transition example is from the movie *On the Waterfront*.

In the scene change depicted in Figure 9 from the movie, the location changes from in front of Joey Doyle's apartment to in front of Jonny Friendly's bar. The shot where the transition occurs is described in the next section, followed by the AD and analysis.

Figure 6. Scene change six from On the Waterfront

The AD in Persian description is as follows.

AD 6: جلوی بار جانی فرندلی، چند تا مرد مراقبن، یه پاسبون یه مرد مست رو از بار بیرون میاره

[*In front of Jonny Friendly's bar*, some men are watching, and a policeman takes a drunk man out of the bar.]

As observed in the Persian AD, a spatial scene change indicator indicates the transition from Doyle's apartment to Jonny Friendly's bar, which aids the blind in not losing track of the movie's plot during such rapid transitions.

The other scene to discuss in this part has been taken from the film, *Sorkhpust (The Guardian)*. In the first transition analyzed, which can be seen in Figure 10, there is a change of location from Colonel Jahed's office (the guardian of the cell) to the cell of a captive who has recently gone missing, and the jail staff are searching to find him; the shot where this scene change occurs and the accompanying AD for the scene change are as follows:

Figure 7. Scene change seven from Sorkhpust

The AD for the scene change in Persian is as follows:

AD 7: جاهد داخل سلول زندانی مفقوده.

[Jahed is in the missing prisoner's cell.]

As can be observed, the description of the change of scene is in the form of a complete sentence, not a simple phrase. Such types of indicators were used in the Persian ADs in several cases. The problem with this type may be the fact that the part mentioning the change of location or time (change of scene) is not placed right at the beginning of the change of scene, and as was recommended in ITC guidelines, indicators may better be placed right at the beginning of the shot, where the change of scene occurs. Thus, a more appropriate description for the shot could be:

Suggested AD 1: *In the missing prisoner's cell*, ……… Jahed ……….

After the scene in the prisoner's cell, another scene changes from inside the cell to Jahed's office, which is not described by the audio describer. The shot and AD for the new scene are as follows:

Figure 7. Scene change seven from Sorkhpust

The AD in the Persian language is as follows:

AD 7: همه‌ی بلندگوهای زندان رو روشن می‌کنه

[He turns on all the speakers of the prison.]

As evident, the AD has not used any indicators to show the fast change of scene and has gone straight to what is happening in the new shot, which may be unnecessary because there was sufficient time for providing a short indicator and there was no dialogue that could interrupt the description; thus, a more appropriate description would have included an indicator for the change of scene:

Suggested AD 2: *In his office*, Jahed turns on all the prison speakers.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Movies are made of various scenes that build up a holistic signified called an audio-visual product. A scene changes when the location or time changes in the film, and all the shots unified in space and time are considered one scene. ITC (2000) has explained the audio description of scene changes under the heading *"Prioritizing Information"* in the section dealing with practical guidelines for the practice of AD, given that scene changes occur in a matter of seconds. In addition, ITC (2000) suggests two essential considerations for audio description of scene changes in motion pictures: All scene changes must be signaled by appropriate indicators (spatial, temporal, or both) so that the blind audience does not lose the plot thread in the few seconds it takes for a scene to change. 2: Audio describers are instructed not to use subjective statements such as "now we see" "now we have," among others, in the indicators they use to signal scene changes and instead use neutral expressions without using personal pronouns.

This study examined the audio description of scene changes in English and Persian ADs to determine their conformance with ITC guidelines, similarities and differences, and the possible causes for the existing differences. The English ADs were taken from the movies *Fury (2014)*, *Seven (1995)*, and *Bruce Almighty (2003)*. The Persian ADs were taken from the dubbed versions (in Persian) of *On the Waterfront (1954)*, *Casablanca (1942)*, *Citizen Kane (1941)*, and *Psycho (1960)*, in addition to the Persian film *The Warden (2019, Sorkhpust)* audio described in Persian. The results indicated that 62.38% of the scene changes extracted from the English films and 53.33% of the scene changes extracted from the Persian ADs were properly signaled by appropriate scene change indicators. The numbers showed about 9% higher conformity to ITC guidelines in English ADs.

Detailed data analysis revealed that English ADs employed an almost balanced combination of spatial and temporal cues to indicate film scene changes. In the English ADs, words such as "later," "now," and "tomorrow" were frequently used to indicate a change of scene due to a change in the film's narrative time. Also, the English ADs used simple short spatial indicators to signal the scene changes caused by a change in the location (space) in the film narrative; words such as "inside" and "outside" were very

frequently used by the audio describers in addition to more specific indicators of new locations such as "at the studio," "in an American encampment," "on the boat," and "at Small Wonder's Daycare," among others, to signal scene changes caused by a change in the location (space) in the film narrative.

In Persian ADs, however, the use of the Persian equivalents of the short, simple words such as "later," "now," "tomorrow," and others, which are "بعد" "حالا" "فردا", and others, was significantly less frequent and nearly nonexistent. Regarding the use of short, simple spatial indicators such as "inside" and "outside" ("داخل" and "خارج" in Persian), their frequency was again much lower compared to the English Ads, and the Persian ADs primarily used location-specific names, such as "in Jonny Friendly's bar" among others, which require more space and time to describe. It was observed that both English and Persian ADs signaled more than 50% of the scene changes in the examined films, which is a fairly high percentage. Nonetheless, both English and Persian ADs can improve in this regard by indicating more scene changes and by increasing the use of short, simple spatial and temporal indicators, which require less time and space and are well-suited to the limited context of AD.

Regarding avoiding subjective statements in scene change indicators, 98.52% and 98.43% of the indicators used in English and Persian ADs, respectively, were devoid of any subjective language, per ITC guidelines. Overall, although both English and Persian ADs investigated had signaled more than half of the scene changes, there is still room for improvement in both English and Persian ADs, with the ADs missing on the scene changes in approximately 37 and 48% of all scene changes investigated respectively, particularly in the Persian ADs with approximately 9% less conformity to the guidelines above. As previously stated, the most effective way to signal scene changes is through the increased use of brief, simple indicators of time and location, such as "now," "later," "outside," "inside," among others, and their Persian equivalents, which do not require much time or space and meet the needs of the limited context of ADs.

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