The audiodescription of multilingual films: audiosubtitling and beyond

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Multilingualism

- **Multilingualism**: the co-presence of two or more languages in a given society, text or individual. (Grutman, 1998)
- Many filmmakers use it as a rhetorical device to echo our society and reflect realistically accounts of emigration, diaspora, ethnic minorities, intercultural encounters, travel, etc.
- Multilingualism has challenged audiovisual productions.
Third language (L3)

- **L3**: Neither the main language in the source text (L1) nor the main language in the TT (L2) but any other language found in either text (Corrius, 2008).

- **Types of L3:**
  a) Distinct, independent language (i.e. English, French).
  b) A language with variation (i.e. English with an Indian accent in *A Passage to India*).
  c) Representation of a real language (pseudo-Italian in *A Fish Called Wanda*).
  d) Constructed language (Na’vi in *Avatar*)
Multilingualism in Audiovisual Translation

• “Multilingualism becomes both a product of translation and a problem for translation”. (O’Sullivan, 2011)

• Translation of multilingual texts – Interest among community of scholars (audiovisual translation).
  ➢ TRAMA research group – linguistic diversity in Spanish immigration films.
  ➢ TRAFILM research project – translation of multilingual audiovisual texts.
Multilingualism and AD (1)

• Research mostly centred on AST (Audio Subtitling)
  – Braun & Orero (2010); Benecke (2012); Remael (2012); Iturregui-Gallardo, Matamala, & Soler-Vilageliu (2016)

• Focus on professional and reception issues:
  – Character recognition
  – Audibility
  – Prosody
  – Interaction of AST with AD & film dialogue
Multilingualism and AD (2)

• Importance of contextual factors in AST and AD:
  – film (genre) and scene
  – linguistic make-up of the film
  – impact of intonation and sound effects
  – number and type of voices for AD and AST
Multilingualism and AD (3)

• Connections between verbal, non-verbal, aural and visual signs in multilingual films, relevant for AD and Trafilm project.
• Research on AD and specific multilingual films (Rodríguez 2013; Maszerowska, Orero & Matamala 2014; Szarkowska, & Jankowska 2015).
Selection of films (1)

• Films in TRAFILM project: 2000-2014, distributed in Spain, translated from English into Spanish/Catalan. Blockbusters: the 10 most viewed multilingual films of each year.

• AD films available at ONCE (Spanish Organization of the Blind).

• Films with diverse presence of L3, significant for TRAFILM project, or researched in connection with multilingualism or AD.
Selection of films (2)

Babel: A rich multilingual film

- It narrates 4 interrelated stories in 4 countries (U.S., Mexico, Morocco, Japan).
- Main characters speak 5 languages (English, Mexican Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and Japanese Sign Language).
- 2 secondary characters speak French.
- Languages reach the audience through the acoustic and visual channels (i.e. Japanese Sign Language).
- Japanese Sign Language = AD more challenging.
- AD is not enough for multilingual texts. Audio subtitling must interact with AD (Remael, 2012).
Babel: occurrence of L3

- ST richer than TT (audio described Spanish text).
- **Occurrence of L3 in ST:**
  1. Orally (language spoken by characters, songs).
  2. Visually (Japanese Sign Language, written words).
Babel: L3 in ST and (AD)TT: Oral dialogues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST (L1 English)</th>
<th>(AD)TT (L2 Spanish)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L3 meant to be understood or deciphered through image or subtitles</td>
<td>Spanish (L3 invisibility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 = English with a foreign accent</td>
<td>L3 = Spanish with a foreign accent (different L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 = Mexican Spanish</td>
<td>L3 = Mexican Spanish (same L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 = French</td>
<td>L3 = French (same L3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Interpreter (English-Arabic-English)</td>
<td>Presence of Interpreter (Spanish-Arabic-Spanish)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Babel: The guide acting as interpreter

Audio described version

Guide does not want to worry Richard and he says “She will be fine”.

Richard does not believe him – he reads the doctor’s body language.

Moroccan doctor speaking in Arabic to Richard who speaks English, the tourist guide is acting as an interpreter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>(AD)TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Written messages (subtitles in English) | Audio description and audiosubtitles.  
**Example**  
AD: Chieko entra en su casa. Se quita los zapatos en el vestíbulo. Lee una nota que reza: “Chieko, te he esperado. Tengo una reunión, llegaré tarde. Te he dejado la cena”.  
(Chieko arrives home. Takes her shoes off at the entrance. Reads a note that says: “Chieko, I’ve been waiting for you. I’ve got a meeting, I’ll be home late. I’ve prepared dinner.”)  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>(AD)TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Written messages (no subtitles) | 1) **No subtitles, no audio description, no audiosubtitles.**  
i.e. the French phrase “Tours du Sud” printed on the bus. |
|                             | 2) **Audio description, audiosubtitles.**  
i.e. “nuestra boda” – “our wedding” |
|                             | Male for audio description, female voice for audio subtitling (in AD) |
### Babel. L3 in ST and (AD)TT: Visual dialogues (3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>(AD)TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Japanese Sign Language (subtitled)</td>
<td>Japanese Sign language, Audio description, subtitles, audiosubtitles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colleague 1: You shouldn’t have lost your temper. We lost the game.</th>
<th>AD: Las adolescentes se cambian en el vestuario y hablan con lengua de signos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleague 1: Si no te hubieras cabreado no hubieramos perdido.</td>
<td>Colleague 1: Si no te hubieras cabreado no hubieramos perdido.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Chieko: It wasn’t my fault, it was the ref. | AD: Chieko  
Chieko: No fue mi culpa, fue el árbitro. |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| C 2: If you hadn’t been thrown out, we would’ve won the game. | AD: Otra compañera  
C 2: Si no te hubieran echado habríamos ganado |
| C 1: Why are you in a bad mood? | AD: Compañera 1  
C 1: ¿Por qué estás tan enfadada? |
| C 2: She’s always in a bad mood because nobody’s fucked her yet. | AD: Compañera 2  
2: Siempre está de mala leche porque aún no la han follado. |
| Chieko: I’m gonna fuck your dad to ged rid of my mood. | AD: Chieko  
Me follaré a tu padre para alegrarme |
Avatar: a constructed third language

• **Constructed language**: language that does not have any, and has never had any, actual native speakers.

• **Types**:
  a) Mixture of words from different languages (i.e. “Cityspeak” in *Blade Runner*).
  b) Combination of made-up terms (i.e. “Na’vi” in *Avatar*).
Avatar: Na’vi in ST and (AD)TT

- Na’vi (subtitles in ST)

- Na’vi (no subtitles in the ST)
  a) Message not required for understanding (audio description does not give information)
  b) Deciphered from images (audio description used to clarify the message in the Na’vi language. No audio subtitles)
Avatar Example: seeds of the sacred tree

• Jake and Neytiri looking at the seeds falling from the sky.
• Jake grabs one, she holds his arm to stop him frightening them.
• Message deciphered from images in the ST – Audio description to help decipher the message.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xUyNdisu2M
The Memoirs of a Geisha (1)

- *The Memoirs of a Geisha* (Rob Marshall, 2012) is a film with relatively little presence of L3, but is relevant for analysis, and has been previously researched in connection with AD (Rodríguez 2013; Szarkowska, & Jankowska 2015).

- There is outstanding interaction between film dialogue and AD in their treatment of Japanese: there is strong connection between verbal and non-verbal aspects, both visual and aural.
The Memoirs of a Geisha (2)

- **Ekubo** (a sweet rice cake, with a red circle dimple in the centre, connected to mizuage, i.e. the loss of virginity)
- Ekubo and its container (**little box**), mentioned and shown on screen.
• AD : De noche, Mameha le da una cajita.  
[At night, Mameha gives her a little box]

• Dialogue: Ekubo. En el momento adecuado déselo a Nobu, con discreción.  
[Ekubo. At the right moment slip it to Nobu – discreetly].

• AD: Con disimulo Sayuri saca el ekubo y bajo la mesa lo coloca en la pierna de Nobu.  
[Sayuri takes out the ekubo craftily and slips it on Nobu’s leg under the table.]
Love Actually (1)

• *Love Actually* (Richard Curtis, 2003) is a film with medium presence of L3.

• It was used in the first stages of the Trafilm project, in order to define a manageable unit of analysis and to refine our analytical model.

• It has been analysed in connection with multilingualism by Carol O’Sullivan (2011).
Love Actually (2)

A story in the film shows the peculiar communication between a monoglot English writer (Jamie) and his monoglot Portuguese maid (Aurelia):

Over the course of several scenes, their relationship develops in near-silence, apparently by sheer power of attraction. In one key scene [...], the two speak extensively to each other, again without any verbal basis for communication, and yet magically alighting on the same topics of conversation [...]. Their gestalt communication is [...] well established.

(O’Sullivan 2011: 67)
Love Actually (3): Jamie’s and Aurelia’s looks

• AD. Se miran y sonríen.
  [They look at each other and smile.]
• AD. Se miran a los ojos.
  [They look at each other in the eyes]
**Inglorious Basterds (1)**

- *Inglorious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009) is an emblematic multilingual film.
- Translation and multilingualism are thematised (O’Sullivan 2011: 1-4).
- It has been important in defining the parameters of analysis for the Trafilm project (Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa 2014).
- The film has been the focus of a monograph on avenues for research on AD (Maszerowska, Matamala, & Orero, 2014).
• Zoller (Spanish with German accent): Y ella es, generalmente, la intérprete del doctor Goebbels, mademoiselle Francesca Mondino.

[Zoller: And normally, this is Dr Goebbels’ French interpreter, Mademoiselle Francesca Mondino.]
Inglorious Basterds (3)

• Francesca: Bon jour.
• AD. Shosanna la mira [Shosanna looks at her]
• AD. Goebbels la penetra estando ella a gatas. [Goebbels penetrates her doggy style]
Inglorious Basterds (4)

• HICOX: Tres vasos.  
[Three glasses]
• AD. Hicox levantó (sic) los dedos índice, corazón y anular.  
[Hicox held up (sic) index, middle and ring fingers.]
• AD. Ella levanta índice, corazón y anular.
[She holds up index, middle and ring fingers.]
• AD. Muestra el pulgar.
[She shows her thumb]
Inglorious Basterds (6)


[Bridget: That's the German three. The other is odd. Germans would, and did notice it.]
Inglorious Basterds (7)

• AD. Landa encuentra el autógrafo de Bridget a Wilhelm
  [Landa finds the autograph from Bridget to Wilhelm (Max’s father)]
• Landa: Für Max, alles Liebe.
• Audio Subtitle =Subtitle:
  Para Max, con cariño.
Conclusions (1)

- Multilingual texts – challenge for Audio description.
- L3 – audio description + audio subtitling.

Audio subtitling in multilingual films:
1) Audio subtitling versus no audio subtitling.
2) Overlapping versus no overlapping of voices.
3) Use of male or female voices.
Conclusions (2)

Audio Description of multilingual signs:

1) Text on screen. Audio subtitling, audio description or omission.

2) Visual L3. Audio description or omission.

• Interplay between film dialogue and AD
Conclusions (3)

• Thematization and visibilization of translation in multilingual films

1) Cultural references and concepts are visualized, mentioned or paraphrased, in film dialogue and audio description.

2) Presence of interpreters as characters.

3) Filmic gaze. Visualization versus replacement of translation.
References


