

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)

- Love Actually, 2003.
- Babel, 2006.
- Avatar, 2009.
- Inglorious Basterds, 2009.
- The Memoirs of a Geisha, 2012.

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:
 - i. Orally (language spoken by characters, songs).
 - ii. Visually (Japanese Sign Language, written words).

Babel: L3 in ST and (AD)TT: Oral dialogues

ST (L1 English)

L3 meant to be understood or deciphered through image or subtitles

L3 = English with a foreign accent

L3= Mexican Spanish

L3= French

Presence of Interpreter (English-Arabic-English)

(AD)TT (L2 Spanish)

Spanish (L3 invisibility)

L3 = Spanish with a foreign accent (different L3)

L3 = Mexican Spanish (same L3)

L3 = French (same L3)

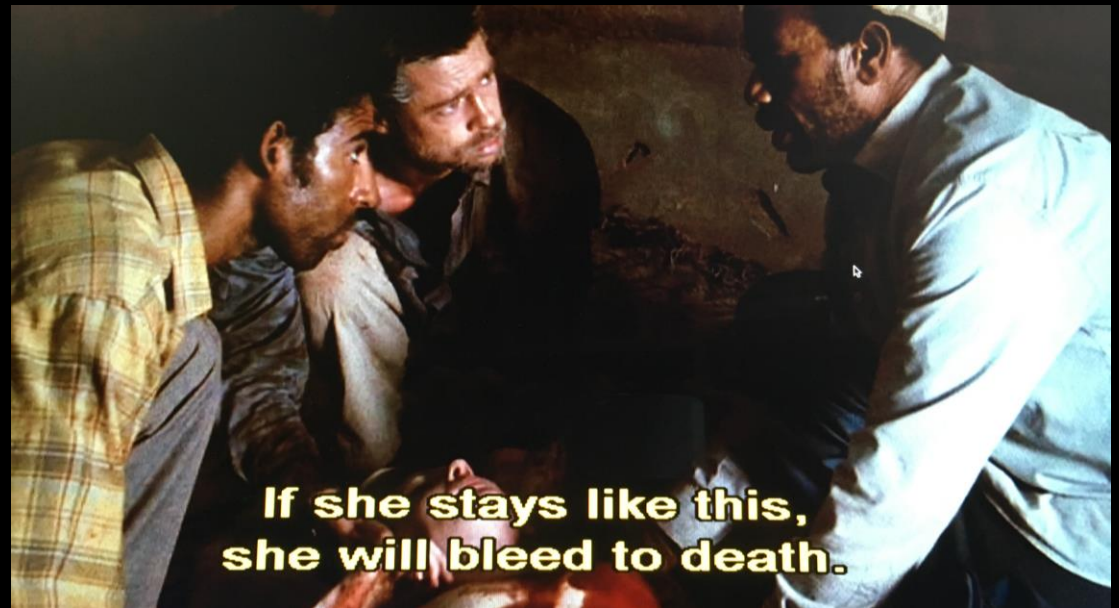
Presence of Interpreter (Spanish-Arabic-Spanish)

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.

Babel. L3 in ST and (AD)TT: Visual dialogues (1)

| ST | (AD)TT |
|---|---|
| Written messages (subtitles in English) | <p>Audio description and audiosubtitles.</p> <p>Example</p> <p>AD: Chieko entra en su casa. Se quita los zapatos en el vestibulo. Lee una nota que reza: “Chieko, te he esperado. Tengo una reunion, llegaré tarde. Te he dejado la cena”.</p> <p>(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.”)</p> |

Babel. L3 in ST and (AD)TT: Visual dialogues (2)

| ST | (AD)TT |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Written messages (no subtitles) | <p>1) No subtitles, no audio description, no audiosubtitles. i.e. the French phrase “Tours du Sud” printed on the bus.</p> <p>2) Audio description, audiosubtitles. i.e. “nuestra boda” – “our wedding”</p> <p>Male for audio description, female voice for audio subtitling (in AD)</p> |

Babel. L3 in ST and (AD)TT: Visual dialogues (3)

| ST | (AD)TT |
|--|---|
| The Japanese Sign Language (subtitled) | Japanese Sign language, Audio description, subtitles, audiosubtitles |

EXAMPLE

Colleague 1: You shouldn't have lost your temper. We lost the game.

AD: Las adolescentes se cambian en el vestuario y hablan con lengua de signos
Colleague 1: Si no te hubieras cabreado no hubieramos perdido.

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 get 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.



The Memoirs of a Geisha (3)

- AD : De noche, Mameha le da una **cajita**.

[At night, Mameha gives her **a little box**]

- Dialogue: **Ekubo**. En el momento adecuado dáselo 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).

Inglorious Basterds (2)

- 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.]



Inglorious Basterds (5)

- 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: (accented Spanish) Nosotros hacemos esto. Así indicamos el tres. Lo otro es extraño. Un alemán se daría cuenta.

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

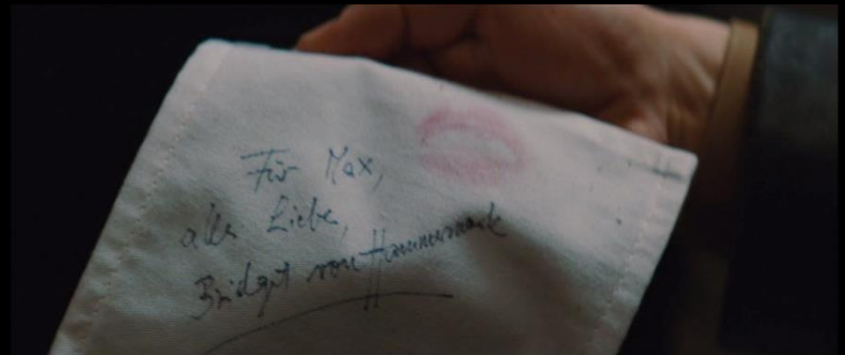


Inglorious Basterds (7)

- 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.

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