

Beyond Monolingualism: A Descriptive and Multimodal Methodology for the Dubbing of Polyglot Films

Elena Sanz Ortega

University of Edinburgh, UK and University of Granada, SPAIN

E-mail: elena.sanz(a)ed.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The days of English as the hegemonic language of cinema are slowly disappearing. Nowadays, filmmakers from different film industries are gradually embracing a multilingual shoot where languages coexist and play a key role within a film's diegesis. This polyglot reality has brought up interesting questions and issues for the discipline of Translation Studies, where translation has been traditionally understood more in terms of going from one source language into one target language. Within the field of Audiovisual Translation (AVT), studies have concentrated on films where the presence of foreign languages is either sporadic or secondary and, as such, foreign languages have been mostly relegated to purely linguistic approaches. However, films in which foreign languages constantly reoccur or have a primary function have been hitherto widely disregarded, despite presenting the most complex scenario. Similarly, although researchers increasingly stress the relevance of film language on translational solutions, multimodal approaches to multilingualism in films remain scant.

In light of this, the present thesis designs a descriptive and multimodal methodology to investigate the issue of multilingualism at every stage of the dubbing process and to explore the effect of dubbing on both the plot and characterization of polyglot films. This methodology is further complemented by para-textual information and semi-structured interviews to obtain a global perspective of the translation of the multilingual aspect. To this end, this thesis examines four polyglot films in which it is difficult to determine a predominant language. By investigating those with recurring use of languages, this project accounts for the most complex films in terms of language quantity and interplay to transcend textual restrictions and incorporate further issues surrounding translation as both process and product.

The examination of original polyglot films brings to light the relevance of intermediate translations (i.e. translations conducted from an existing translation) for the dubbing process as these are the foundations of the 'rough' translation on which the whole process relies. In turn, the macrostructure analysis unveils the use of a plethora of AVT modalities when dealing with foreign languages. Similarly, it suggests that decisions at this level depend on a complex interplay of factors of diverse natures such as filmmakers' requests, screening habits, financial means, and film features. At the micro-textual level, a thorough list of translation techniques is compiled and their application is measured in relation to the influence of signifying codes. Additionally, a close linguistic examination of dialogue reveals a tendency towards standardisation, although certain nuances are sometimes enforced by character synchrony or added optionally to minor characters. Throughout these analyses, it becomes evident that all dubbing agents manipulate some aspects of multilingualism. Ultimately, this

study suggests that dubbing affects polyglot films by hiding certain linguistic connotations and by providing different information to domestic and target audiences.

KEYWORDS: descriptive and multimodal methodology, dubbing, horizontal and vertical dimensions, polyglot films, translation effect.

Completion of Thesis:

Place: University of Edinburgh (UK) and University of Granada (Spain)

Year: 2015

Supervisors: Dr Charlotte Bosseaux and Professor Dorothy Kelly