

## **Multilingualism at the multiplex: a new audience for screen translation?**

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*The phenomenon of subtitling as an aesthetic or political choice within a film, rather than a strategy for the transfer of a complete work, merits further examination at a time when filmmakers are increasingly including substantial segments of subtitled dialogue in mainstream films. The potential impact of this trend on an audience assumed to be resistant to screen translation is considerable. Despite important reservations, it is argued here that the growing visibility of translation within mainstream cinema has the potential to create space for certain forms of resistance to the dominance of English in the entertainment market, and promote the development of a 'multilingual imagination' in multiplex cinemagoers.*

### **1. Introduction: another kind of subtitling**

Hitherto, audiovisual translation studies has taken for granted that subtitles are “not conceptualized at the time of film production” (de Linde and Kay 1999: 17), but are “a kind of afterthought, a supplement to the original language of the film” (Balfour 2004: 531). Such parameters undoubtedly hold for the vast majority of subtitled material, but there is a small and significant body of subtitled film and television to which they do not apply. These products are the result of an audiovisual practice we may call ‘part-subtitling’.

Part-subtitling is understood here simply as a strategy for making a film shot in two or more languages accessible to viewers. Unlike conventional subtitles, part-subtitles are appended to part of the dialogue only, are planned from an early stage in the film’s production, and are aimed at the film’s primary language audience. Such films will have no ‘original’, un-subtitled version, but will be partially subtitled for all audiences, as John Sayles observes (Sayles & Carson 1999: 233) in relation to *Men With Guns* (Sayles 1997), which was filmed predominantly in Spanish, but also in the indigenous languages Kuna, Nahuatl, Tzotzil and Maya.

This article will consider part-subtitling for anglophone audiences, although the phenomenon is not limited to anglophone film. It is argued that such subtitling, which is increasingly prominent in mainstream film, presents many problems, but also exciting possibilities, and merits further examination by scholars of audiovisual translation at a time when the subtitles to which anglophone audiences are most commonly exposed may not be subtitles in the more traditionally understood sense of the word.

## 2. Part-subtitling, vehicular matching and polyglot film

The notion that subtitles are “a supplement to the original language of the film” depends on an assumption that film is a unilingual medium, an assertion which is immediately questionable. On the contrary, foreign languages have been a presence, and a destabilising factor, in film since the advent of sound (Kozloff 2000: 80; Vincendeau 1988; Shohat & Stam 1985). Traditionally, however, foreign languages have tended to be minimised, sidelined, used metonymically for the purposes of “postcarding” to use Christoph Wahl’s (2005) term. Native tongues have been “drowned in the babble of voices in the background” (Sinha 2004: 184). Anglophone film in particular has been accused of “ventriloquizing the world”, in Shohat & Stam’s (1985: 36) words:

Hollywood [...] came to incarnate a linguistic hubris bred of empire. Presuming to speak for others in *its* native idiom, Hollywood proposed to tell the story of other nations not only to Americans, but also for the other nations themselves, and always in English.

The mimetic strategies used by hegemonic film to reflect or elide the issues surrounding language diversity and language contact echo those described by Meir Sternberg (1981) in relation to representations of multilingualism in print literature. Sternberg’s category of “referential restriction” is highly relevant. Referential restriction “consists in confining the scope of the represented world to the limits of a [...] community whose speech patterns correspond to those of the implied audience” (Sternberg 1981: 223). In cinema, referential restriction limits dialogue to speakers or learners of the hegemonic language: oddly enough, there’s always a speaker or learner of English around when you need one! This results in a “distortion of referentiality” in Willis’s phrase, (quoted in Shaw 2005: 216) which, however, has arguably begun to be addressed in recent mainstream cinema, with films such as *Amistad* (Spielberg 1997), *Lost in Translation* (Coppola 2003), *The Interpreter* (Pollack 2005) and *Babel* (González Iñárritu 2006) foregrounding issues of translingual and cross-cultural communication and misunderstanding (see e.g. Dwyer 2005).

Where reference is not restricted to a single speech community, Sternberg posits two ‘poles’ of linguistic representation: ‘homogenization’ and ‘vehicular matching’. The homogenizing convention, equivalent to Shohat and Stam’s ventriloquizing, “retains the freedom of reference while dismissing the resultant variations in the language presumably spoken by the characters as an irrelevant, if not distracting, representational factor” (Sternberg 1981: 224). Homogenising films such as *Little Big Man* (Penn 1970) or *Schindler’s List* (Spielberg 1993) represent heterogeneous speech communities (Cheyenne and Anglo, Polish and German) through English only, sometimes spoken with an accent to identify characters as belonging to a specific speech community. Vehicular matching, by contrast, “[suits]

the variations in the representational medium to the variations in the represented object” (223). The resulting polyglossia seems to offer a good example of the filmic text as a ‘polyphonic play of voices’ (Stam 1991: 255). Vehicular matching, with or without subtitles, does not by itself constitute any kind of solution to the problems of representation and othering on screen – as Joshua Miller puts it (2003: 140), “linguistic specificity as an ethical component of ethnic particularism will not solve systematic structures of racist and gendered violence”. At the same time, as Seyhan (2002) argues, “neither an emphatic perception of linguistic difference and its attendant challenges nor the condition of cultural translation can exist in the monolingual environment”. Vehicular matching would seem to constitute a necessary, if not sufficient, requirement for film to begin to embrace the plurality of natural languages and to engage with the post-Babelian translations and miscommunications which accompany the co-existence of languages.

On film, any substantial degree of vehicular matching must either incorporate interpreting or be accompanied by subtitles, unless the filmmakers intend the audience not to understand (as was the case, for instance, in *The Sheltering Sky* (Bertolucci 1990) where Arabic and French are used without translation in order to reflect the protagonists’ own incomprehension of their environment). Diegetic interpreting, where foreign-language dialogue is translated by a character on screen, can be cumbersome and time-consuming, as was seen, for instance, in the scenes of diegetic interpreting, sometimes further mediated by a mobile telephone, in the recent *Lady in the Water* (Shyamalan 2006). Part-subtitling offers an efficient solution.

Part-subtitling is found across many screen contexts which include the several categories of polyglot film identified by Christoph Wahl (2005). Films arising from experiences of exile and diaspora, what Hamid Naficy calls ‘accented’ films, commonly mix languages (Naficy 2001: 24-25). Arthouse and independent film have long experimented with multilingualism, with the work of the US directors John Sayles and Jim Jarmusch and the British director Ken Loach being perhaps particularly characteristic. Films from lesser-spoken language communities may be partly filmed in English for commercial purposes where the domestic market is not large enough to recoup a film’s costs (Woods 2004). Several recent television series in the United States have also presented viewers with substantial subtitled sequences. The enormously popular show *Lost* (2004-present) features two Korean-speaking characters whose dialogue is subtitled in English, as are the lengthy flashbacks to their past life in Korea. The more recent show *Heroes* (2006-present) features Japanese characters whose conversation is similarly subtitled.

Mainstream film, with its globetrotting narratives of conflict, exploration and colonialism, has also long experimented with part-subtitling, although its use seems to have been more widespread in recent years. Clint Eastwood’s diptych *Flags of our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006),

which recount the battle of Iwo Jima from both sides, each in their respective language, was preceded by *The Longest Day* (Annakin, Marton and Wicki 1962), which recounted the Normandy landings, and *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (Fleischer, Fukasaku and Masuda 1970), an account of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, both of which were filmed by multiple crews and directors in the respective national languages, with subtitles. Memorable part-subtitled films include *Never on Sunday* (Dassin 1960), filmed in Greece in a mixture of English and Greek and taking advantage of the bilingualism of its star Melina Mercouri; *The Godfather Part II* (Coppola 1974), much of which was shot in a mixture of Italian and Sicilian, and *Sophie's Choice* (Pakula 1982), where flashback scenes to Sophie's past were filmed in Polish and German.

It is no coincidence that the stars of all three of the above films (Mercouri, Robert de Niro and Meryl Streep) all of whom were acting partly in a language not their mother tongue, were nominated for Academy Awards. The disproportionate representation of part-subtitled films at award ceremonies reflects the cultural capital of vehicular matching. Part-subtitling is associated with an ethical approach to filmmaking. Steven Soderbergh's attitude when making *Traffic* (Soderbergh 2000), which is partly set in Mexico, was that "If these people don't speak Spanish, the film has no integrity. You just can't expect anyone to take it seriously" (Lemons, quoted in Shaw 2005: 215). It also has overtones of representational adequacy, as in John Sayles's pragmatic argument for filming *Men With Guns* in Latin American languages: "I felt I wasn't going to buy it if it was in English, if it was a bunch of people walking around Latin America speaking English with Latin accents" (Sayles & Smith 1998: 234). In some cases the move towards vehicular matching stems from a "desire to correct past socio-linguistic insensitivities" (Shaw 2005: 215).

If one of the features of 'foreign language' use in popular film over the decades has been its marginalisation, one of the striking features of part-subtitling is its volume. If we take it that the average subtitled American feature film contains about 600 titles, and the average subtitled European film contains 1,000 (Finney 1996: 22), then the multilingual commitment shown by recent filmmakers is evident. *Land and Freedom* (Loach, 1995) which tells the story of an English volunteer fighting in the Spanish Civil War, has 328 titles. *Traffic* has 251. *Syriana* (Gaghan 2005), written by the same writer, has 252 titles. *Kill Bill 1* (Tarantino, 2003) and *The Last Samurai* (Zwick 2003), both partly shot in Japanese, have 158 and 188 titles respectively. The recent transamerican film *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (Jones 2005) has 143. Subtitled foreign dialogue is no longer used merely as ornament, to mark location or nationality, but becomes a vehicle for plot and character development. While in the past part-subtitling may have constituted "a few and 'exotic' cases" (Gottlieb 2004: 84), this appears to be changing.

Closer attention is also being paid to the aesthetics of subtitling. In the television series *Heroes*, subtitles appear beside the characters whose

speech they convey, more in the manner of the speech bubbles of comic books. The thriller *Man on Fire* (Scott 2004), which has a pronounced visual aesthetic based on fast editing and a constantly moving camera, also makes several innovations in the way the subtitles are presented.<sup>1</sup> Subtitles enter from the edge of the image, move rapidly across the screen and change size to represent the volume of speech. Subtitles appear word by word or letter by letter. In his commentary for the DVD release of the film the director Tony Scott refers to the subtitles as “another character” in the film, a reflection of the changing status of subtitles, no longer necessarily “a product conceived as an after-thought rather than a natural component of the film” (Sinha 2004: 174).

The potential impact of this trend is considerable. Anglophone audiences have long been considered resistant to subtitles by studios and distributors. One result has been the limited distribution of subtitled films, which further exacerbates the problem. Indeed, a fairly recent study (Ogan 1990) argues that low interest in foreign films in the United States is due much more to lack of access than lack of interest or unwillingness to read subtitles. Ogan concludes that consumers with an interest in foreign film will actively seek out such products (1990: 74). At the same time, audiences – and this is also clear from class discussions with my own students – do not necessarily distinguish between post-subtitling in the conventional sense and part-subtitling as described above. This suggests that part-subtitling and subtitling for the domestic market, as in *Men With Guns* or the extremely successful *Passion of the Christ* (Gibson 2004) may function as important vectors in the introduction of new audiences to subtitled films and the engagement of their interest in seeking out further foreign-language products – what Seyhan (2002) has called the development of a “multilingual imagination”.

### **3. Problems and pitfalls of part-subtitling**

Before making large utopian claims for part-subtitling, we should consider some of its pitfalls and drawbacks. The more mainstream the context, and the larger the target audience, the more likely these drawbacks are to appear. The analysis which follows will draw heavily on subtitled Native American languages on screen, both because there has been a marked increase in the use of subtitled Native languages in the past fifteen years and because the films involved illustrate many of the problems of part-subtitling.

#### **3.1 Native American languages on screen**

Linguistic treatment is a key element in the stereotyping of Native Americans in cinema (Kilpatrick 1999; Meek 2006). As Shohat and Stam put it (1994: 192), “the ‘Indians’ of classic Hollywood westerns, denuded of their

own idiom, mouth pidgin English, a mark of their inability to master the 'civilized' language". Sometimes an alien-sounding language is used, but rarely a native language. In the case of the film *Scouts to the Rescue* (James, Taylor, 1939), for instance,

The Indians were given a Hollywood Indian dialect by running their normal English dialogue backwards. By printing the picture in reverse, a perfect lip sync was maintained, and a new 'Indian' language was born. (Kilpatrick 1999: 37)

A move away from such homogenizing practices seemed highly desirable. The release of *Dances With Wolves* (Costner, 1990) is perceived as such a turning point. One of the most memorable features of the film is the inclusion of substantial sequences of subtitled Lakota Sioux dialogue. In fact, *Dances With Wolves* was by no means the first film to do so. *Windwalker* (Merrill 1980), filmed partly in Cheyenne, and *Roanoak* (Egleson 1986), much of whose dialogue was in Chippewa, preceded it (Castillo 1991: 21, 23). It is certain, however, that the very great commercial success of *Dances With Wolves* brought subtitles to a wide audience who were surprised and fascinated that Native American characters might have their own language, capable of expressing affection, humour, perplexity, irony: in short, the full range of expression and emotion.

The cognitive impact of hearing the Lakota language spoken at such length and "with a remarkable degree of success" (Kilpatrick 1999: 129) on screen left a lasting impression on viewers and put pressure on filmmakers to follow suit. In the decade and a half since then, native American languages have been widely used, mostly with subtitles, but occasionally with diegetic interpreting, in films including *Black Robe* (Beresford 1991), *Last of the Mohicans* (Mann 1992) and *Thunderheart* (Apted 1992), *Geronimo: An American Legend* (Hill, 1993), *Dead Man* (Jarmusch 1995) and *Last of the Dogmen* (Murphy 1995), *Windtalkers* (Woo 2002), *The Missing* (Howard 2003), *The New World* (Malick 2005) and the miniseries *Into The West* (2006). Though none of the films equals *Dances With Wolves*' 277 titles, *Black Robe* has 184 titles translating the languages of the Huron, the Iroquois and the Algonquin, and *The Missing* and *Geronimo*, both filmed in Apache, have 100 and 84 respectively. Subtitles are also found in films where Native American culture is not a major focus, including *Natural Born Killers* (Stone, 1994) and *Hidalgo* (Johnstone 2004). As a "genuine engagement with the concrete forms of expression of other cultures" (Seyhan 2001: 7), this can only be a positive step, although subtitles risk perpetuating some screen stereotypes in ways which are discussed in the following sections.

### 3.2 Problems of subtitling Native American languages

Screen representations of Native Americans through English have been comprehensively described in a recent article by Barbra A. Meek (2006) which relates dysfluent speech forms to the different stereotypes of Native Americans. Meek identifies a particular kind of language she refers to as “Hollywood Injun English” (2006: 95) or HIE. HIE is characterised by

- the lavish use of pauses;
- lack of tense;
- lack of contraction;
- deletion (of subject pronouns, articles and auxiliary or modal verbs);
- substitution (of subject pronouns).

The cumulative effect of these linguistic features is to represent Native Americans as “linguistically underdeveloped or lacking in grammatical competence” (100). HIE is further characterised by specialised vocabulary (106-107) including ‘chief’, ‘wampum’, ‘peace pipe’, ‘brave’, ‘squaw’ and so on. There is also a tendency to use formal syntactic structures to express Native American nobility (107) and metaphors of nature (108-109) to convey the common perception of Native Americans as ecologically hyper-aware.

It would seem obvious that one of the advantages of vehicular matching on screen would be the transcending of these linguistic conventions, but unfortunately some of them are merely displaced into the subtitles. Subtitles may even exacerbate the problem of contractions, since subtitles use fewer contractions than spoken speech does. Although subtitles avoid the cruder forms of ungrammaticality identified by Meek, they share in the sententiousness characteristic of the ‘noble savage’:

- (1) Have you heard all that I have said? (*Dances With Wolves*)
- (2) I was just thinking that of all the trails in this life, there is one that matters most. It is the trail of a true human being. I think you are on this trail, and it is good to see. (*Dances With Wolves*)
- (3) A dream is more real than death or battle. (*Black Robe*)
- (4) I have just seen my power. An iron horse comes over the desert. (*Geronimo*)
- (5) Moving spirits don’t make happy men. (*The Missing*)

Many of the films also recycle lexical items which act as indexes for ‘Injun’ culture, including ‘tomahawk’, ‘white man’, ‘chief’, ‘warrior’, ‘medicine

man', 'hunting grounds'. In *Last of the Mohicans*, the villainous Huron Magua says at one point that "You speak poison with two tongues".

One film which makes strenuous attempts to render a language in the subtitles that is fresh and free of some of the hoarier linguistic markers of Indianness is Ron Howard's *The Missing*. This is achieved through the use of contractions and idioms and the deliberate inclusion of humour and vulgarity:

- (6) Where did you find this squashed penis?
- (7) - Chaa-duu-ba-its-iidan? Hasn't someone killed you yet?  
 - You still owe me three lion hides, you know.  
 - Forget the hides. Give us your horses and your guns and we'll call it even.
- (8) - Now look. You pissed her off.  
 - How can you tell? You people look pissed off all the time.
- (9) - Do you still go up north and fool around with that fat Zuni girl?  
 [...]
  - No. She started to like me too much.

The film achieves some surprising linguistic effects by these means, and offers a persuasive account of its trilingual context (Spanish, Apache and English).

Two further problems should be mentioned to which subtitled Native American languages are particularly exposed. One is fluency. Although the traditional practice of casting non-Native Americans in Native roles (we must remember that the films under discussion are overwhelmingly written, produced and directed by Euroamericans) is increasingly considered unacceptable, Native actors still tend to be cast, particularly for large roles, without regard to their own tribal origin or linguistic competence. Non-native-speaking actors learn their lines phonetically, read them off cue cards or, in more recent times, are prompted via unobtrusive ear-pieces. As a result, the language is not infrequently difficult for native speakers to understand. Even in *Dances With Wolves*, whose language work is held up as a model, male characters were inadvertently given a feminine inflection (Kilpatrick 1999: 129). The phenomenon of linguistic inaccuracy and indeed incomprehensibility is by no means limited to Native American languages, but they are particularly vulnerable.

The problem of fluency is exacerbated by two factors. The first is the small numbers of speakers of some Native languages, which makes it often impractical to look for mother-tongue speakers for film roles; promotional materials for *The Missing* stressed that Chiricahua Apache has 300 fluent speakers left. The second is the sheer phonetic and phonological otherness of the languages in question. Where audiences are likely to find



themselves, regardless of linguistic accuracy, “adrift on an alien sea of indecipherable phonic substance” in Stam’s memorable phrase (1989: 68), filmmakers may feel less pressure to achieve linguistic precision. The danger of this last situation is satirized in the film *Hot Shots!* (Abrahams, 1991) in which subtitled dialogue which is ostensibly in a Native American language soon turns out to be a macaronic non-language composed of Native American tribal names and other verbal material. The particular danger of subtitles in relation to Native American languages is that they may become just another representational trope, like feathers or tomahawks, that they will lose that sense of surprise and, at times, paradigm shift which will re-configure the linguistic landscape of their audience.

The second problem endemic to representations of indigenous peoples is their persistent location in the past. The final moments of *Dances With Wolves*, *Black Robe* and *Geronimo*, in particular, emphasise the decimation of Native cultures to extinction point, masking any connection with tribal communities or living languages today. Multilingualism is presented as the sole preserve of the past, giving way to a modern monolingualism, and hence leaving little space for the activation of a multilingual imagination in the audience.

### 3.4 Polyglossia, polyphony and pseudotranslation

It will be clear by now that no facile equation is being made here between polyglossia and polyphony, in the Bakhtinian sense of a plurality of voices. The co-existence of different natural languages within a film does not necessarily correlate with openness to other cultures; on the contrary, in some mainstream film (*Showdown in Little Tokyo* (Lester 1991); *Behind Enemy Lines* (Moore 2001)) subtitles become just one more way of distancing the anglophone viewer from the othered enemy. Here we may usefully draw on Sukanta Chaudhuri’s distinction between monolingualism and unilingualism. Chaudhuri defines monolingualism as “the literal state of knowing or using only one language” (1999: 72-73) and unilingualism as “a mindset or ethos that operates in terms of only one language”, arguing that “unilingualism is entirely compatible with knowledge, even deep knowledge, of several languages; indeed, it is often seen at its most entrenched and intolerant in multilingual situations” (1999: 73). Openness to other cultures is not precluded by monolingualism or implied by polyglossia. Two cinematic accounts of the siege of the Alamo well illustrate our argument. *The Alamo* (1960) directed by John Wayne, adopts a linguistic policy of referential restriction, with almost no Spanish spoken in the film and no interest shown in the interior life of the Mexican characters. By contrast, *The Alamo* (Hancock 2004) makes substantial use of subtitled Spanish dialogue (113 titles). However, most of this is in the mouth of General Santa Anna, played by the Mexican actor Emilio Echevarría as a sadistic tyrant. Little attempt is made to present a nuanced picture of the diverse loyalties among the characters,

and the result is a film whose surface polyglossia fails to disguise that it is very nearly as unilingual as its predecessor.

A further key feature of part-subtitling is its frequent status as a kind of pseudotranslation. Pseudotranslations are defined by Toury as “texts which have been presented as translations with no corresponding source texts in other languages ever having existed – hence no factual ‘transfer operations’ and translation relationships” (1995: 40). In this case, a text in another language does exist, but the original script is contained in the subtitles, and the ostensible ST is in fact the TT. The script may be translated either by language consultants or by the actors themselves into the ‘foreign’ language, as is the case, for instance, in the television shows *Lost* and *Heroes*. In shooting Sayles’s *Men With Guns* the Native American cast members translated the Spanish script into their own languages, “then, if they fumbled their dialogue on-camera, had to tell Sayles about their mistake” (quoted in Miller 2003: 143).

This pseudotranslation requires us to look at subtitles, which are usually perceived as being a form of translation which “allows the viewer access to the original text without at the same time destroying valuable aspects of that material’s authenticity” (Kilborn 1993: 646), rather differently. Filmgoers who choose to watch subtitled films traditionally do it partly as a way of accessing other cultures on the grounds that “subtitles offer a way into worlds outside of ourselves. They [...] embed us” (Egoyan and Balfour 2004a: 30). Pseudotranslated subtitles, on the other hand, have no originary linguistic world but our own, and might therefore seem to constitute an example of that dangerous “‘pseudo-polyphonic’ discourse, [...] which marginalises and disempowers certain voices and then pretends to undertake a dialogue with a puppetlike entity that has already been forced to make crucial compromises” (Stam 1991: 263). To discount them entirely for this reason would, however, be to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The pseudotranslated status of much part-subtitling does not necessarily diminish the complexity of the translational transactions taking place. For instance, two of the main characters in *Mystery Train* (Jarmusch 1989) are Japanese tourists, played by Japanese actors who spoke little English. Jarmusch, who does not speak Japanese, describes the mechanics of their collaboration as follows:

I wrote the script in English, and then a Japanese director named Kazuki Oomori translated my script into Japanese. I worked on the dialogue with the actors and my interpreter, Yoshiko Furusawa. As with all actors, I let them improvise in rehearsal, and then I changed my script according to what made us all feel most comfortable about the language. For me, the creation of a character is always a collaboration with the actor, which also comes from writing with specific actors in mind. In Japanese the process was a little complicated, since I couldn’t know exactly what the nuances of the changes were. My interpreter was very helpful in trying to explain

those nuances, but I couldn't know precisely how the dialogue was changing. I had to rely on intuition and trust the actors. Then, when the film was shot, I had yet another translator translate the Japanese dialogue back into English, and then I translated that English into my choice of English, and my retranslation is what appears in the subtitles. In the end the subtitles are pretty close to my original script. (Hertzberg 2001: 94).

Jarmusch's polyglot films stem from an interest in and desire to work with actors from different countries and language communities. As such, his working methods are likely to differ from, for instance, those of a studio production like *The Missing*, but that too offers a space for a dialogue between cultures. A telling account of the modalities of translation and collaboration in mainstream cinema is provided by the short bonus feature 'Apache Language School' on the Region 1 Widescreen Special Edition DVD of *The Missing*. Two language consultants, Euroamerican linguist and academic, Scott Rushforth, and a Chiricahua linguist, Elbys Hugar, are interviewed in the course of the featurette, alongside the director, Ron Howard, one of the stars, Tommy Lee Jones, and other actors involved in the production. In the course of less than six minutes, radically different discourses are given screen time. For Howard, one of the major features of interest is Hugar's own status as a great-great-granddaughter of the Apache leader Cochise. In this Howard is attempting to fit Hugar into a cinematic context in which she too is on display for her 'Indianness'. Hugar, on the other hand, resists such a classification, exhibiting a friendly but detached attitude to the other agendas and interests underpinning the making the film. Although the segment is heavily edited and has no claims to disinterestedness, having like all other DVD extras a promotional function, at several points Hugar departs from the discourse of the film's authenticity to speak of the Chiricahua Apache language as a cultural good worthy of respect in itself. A few moments of footage are given of Hugar working with several cast members on the sounds, as well as the meaning, of the Apache words. For Hugar, the ultimate aim of her own contribution to the film is the recognisability of the Chiricahua dialogue, something which the film seems to have achieved, if Richard Benke's (2003) account of the response of Apache viewers is to be believed. Not only was the film easily comprehensible, to adult speakers at least, but the opportunity to hear the language on screen as part of a major motion picture became a source of pride and interest for younger Apache who knew little of their language. Quietly and with some dignity, a way has been found to yoke the purposes of this mainstream Hollywood movie to activism on behalf of an endangered language.

#### 4. Part-subtitling and the multilingual imagination

Despite the problems presented by part-subtitling discussed above, we are now in a position to conclude that polyglossia on screen does facilitate crucial forms of resistance to the traditional monolingualism, fringed with exotic linguistic noise, of popular Anglophone film. Two principal reasons can be given.

For one thing, even in those cases where the scriptwriter effectively writes the subtitles and then goes about finding collaborators to translate them into the represented language(s), that translation will always exceed the scriptwriter – and, indeed, the collaborators. As Bakhtin argues, language is multiple and holds within itself a multitude of voices. At every stage of the process, the languages used will evoke what has been omitted. Each word “directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents [...]” (Bakhtin 1981: 276). Extensive research by d’Ydewalle and others has shown that watching subtitled foreign languages greatly aids the acquisition of FL vocabulary, but this is not quite what we are discussing here. Even inauthentic language can still act as a stimulus to learning a language or finding out about a culture (Matisoff 1980). This stimulus is facilitated by technology. The FAQ on the *Apocalypto* (Gibson, 2006) fansite [apocalyptowatch.blogspot.com](http://apocalyptowatch.blogspot.com) includes a question about the language of the film which was shot entirely, if not authentically, in Yucatec Mayan. This question in turn links to a webpage about the Mayan language, [www.mostlymaya.com/yucatec\\_maya\\_intro\\_.htm](http://www.mostlymaya.com/yucatec_maya_intro_.htm), and on to a glossary ([www.mostlymaya.com/EnglishMayan.html](http://www.mostlymaya.com/EnglishMayan.html)), which further links to the Yucatec Maya programme at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A momentary interest on the part of a viewer of the film would be enough to embark on the slow but rewarding process of learning the language.

The second, and more compelling, reason to argue for part-subtitling as a trigger for the multilingual imaginations of viewers is that the inclusion of multiple languages in a film both stems from and promotes the consideration of precisely those problems of communication and misunderstanding that remind viewers they live in a world of competing languages and worldviews.

This topic raises a number of questions for future research. There is, for instance, evidence that filmmakers minimise dialogue for the purposes of part-subtitling. John Sayles is described as “[writing] his dialogue to fit the subtitle format of thirty-two characters per line. What evolved was a screenplay style he describes as part haiku and part catechism” (Molyneaux, quoted in Miller 2003: 143). This might suggest empirical research into comparative reading speeds for this form of subtitling. Given that much part-subtitling displaces the original script into the subtitles, further empirical research on linguistic features is indicated. Much interesting work also remains to be done on audience reception of subtitles,

especially if current trends continue and part-subtitling continues to be the mode in which multiplex cinemagoers most commonly encounter audiovisual translation.

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## Filmography

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>The Alamo</i> (1960)                    | USA                                 |
| USA  | Dir. Walter Hill                    |
| Dir. John Wayne                            |                                     |
| <i>The Alamo</i> (2004)                    | <i>The Godfather Part II</i> (1974) |
| USA  | USA                                 |
| Dir. John Lee Hancock                      | Dir. Francis Ford Coppola           |
| <i>Amistad</i> (1997)                      | <i>Heroes</i> (2006-present)        |
| USA  | USA                                 |
| Dir. Steven Spielberg                      | NBC                                 |
| <i>Apocalypto</i> (2006)                   | <i>Hidalgo</i> (2004)               |
| USA  | USA                                 |
| Dir. Mel Gibson                            | Dir. Joe Johnston                   |
| <i>Babel</i> (2006)                        | <i>Hot Shots!</i> (1991)            |
| France/USA/Mexico                          | USA                                 |
| Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu           | Dir. Jim Abrahams                   |
| <i>Behind Enemy Lines.</i> (2001)          | <i>The Interpreter</i> (2005)       |
| USA  | UK/USA/France                       |
| Dir. John Moore                            | Dir. Sydney Pollack                 |
| <i>Black Robe.</i> (1991)                  | <i>Into the West</i> (2005)         |
| Canada/Australia                           | USA                                 |
| Dir. Bruce Beresford                       | Dreamworks                          |
| <i>Dances With Wolves</i> (1990)           | <i>Kill Bill I.</i> (2003)          |
| USA  | USA                                 |
| Dir. Kevin Costner                         | Dir. Quentin Tarantino              |
| <i>Dead Man</i> (1995)                     | <i>Lady in the Water</i> (2006)     |
| USA/Germany/Japan                          | USA                                 |
| Dir. Jim Jarmusch                          | Dir. M. Night Shyamalan             |
| <i>Flags of our Fathers</i> (2006)         | <i>Land and Freedom</i> (1995)      |
| USA  | UK/Spain/Germany/Italy              |
| Dir. Clint Eastwood                        | Dir. Ken Loach                      |
| <i>Geronimo: An American Legend</i> (1993) | <i>Last of the Dogmen</i> (1995)    |
|  | USA                                 |

- Dir. Tab Murphy  
*Last of the Mohicans* (1992)  
USA  
Dir. Michael Mann
- The Last Samura* (2003)  
USA  
Dir. Edward Zwick
- Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006)  
USA  
Dir. Clint Eastwood
- Little Big Man* (1970)  
USA  
Dir. Arthur Penn
- The Longest Day* (1962)  
USA  
Dir. Ken Annakin, Andrew Marton & Bernhard Wicki,
- Lost*. (2004-present)  
USA  
Touchstone Television
- Lost in Translation* (2003)  
USA/Japan  
Dir. Sophia Coppola
- Man on Fire*. (2004)  
USA/UK/Mexico  
Dir. Tony Scott
- Men With Guns*. (1997)  
USA  
Dir. John Sayles
- The Missing* (2003)  
USA  
Dir. Ron Howard
- Mystery Train* (1989)  
USA/Japan  
Dir. Jim Jarmusch
- Natural Born Killers* (1994)  
USA  
Dir. Oliver Stone
- Never on Sunday* (1960)  
Greece  
Dir. Jules Dassin
- The New World* (2005)
- USA  
Dir. Terrence Malick
- Passion of the Christ* (2004)  
USA  
Dir. Mel Gibson
- Roanoak* (1986)  
USA  
Dir. Jan Egleson
- Schindler's List* (1993)  
USA  
Dir. Steven Spielberg
- Scouts to the Rescue* (1939)  
USA  
Dir. Alan James and Ray Taylor
- The Sheltering Sky* (1990)  
UK/Italy  
Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci
- Showdown in Little Tokyo* (1990)  
USA  
Dir. Mark L. Lester
- Sophie's Choice* (1982)  
USA  
Dir. Alan J. Pakula
- Syriana* (2005)  
USA  
Dir. Stephen Gaghan
- The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (2005) USA/France  
Dir. Tommy Lee Jones
- Thunderheart* (1992)  
USA  
Dir. Michael Apted
- Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970)  
USA/Japan  
Dir. Richard Fleischer, Kinji Fukasaku & Toshio Masuda
- Traffic* (2000)  
German/USA  
Dir. Steven Soderbergh
- Windtalkers* (2002)  
USA, Dir. John Woo
- Windwalker* (1983)  
USA, Dir. Kieth Merrill

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Deborah Shaw for drawing this film to my attention.