

Article 2 Subtitling's cross-cultural expressivity put to the test: A cross-sectional study of linguistic and cultural representation across Romance and Germanic languages

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Abstract

This article focuses on linguistic and cultural representation in AVT as a medium of intercultural literacy. It has two objectives: it puts to the test increasingly accepted assumptions about AVT modalities' distinctive meaning potential and expressive capacity (e.g. Guillot 2016a, 2017 for subtitling), with a case study of communicative practices in their representation, via AVT, in subtitles across Romance and Germanic languages. The second objective is to make a start on a neglected question to date, by considering, concurrently, the respective potential for representation of different types of languages, Indo-European in the first instance, in different pair configurations.

The study applies to (Romance) French, Italian, Spanish and (Germanic) English and German and uses a cross-cultural pragmatics framework to explore representation, per se and comparatively across the languages represented in the main data, Lonnergan's 2016 feature film *Manchester by the Sea*. Data is approached qualitatively from a target text end in the first instance and primarily, in a subset of scenes from across the film. Quantitative analysis is used complementarily for diagnostic purposes or as a complementary source of evidence, with initial focus on types of features identified in earlier studies as a locus of stylised representation in subtitling with evidence of distinctive pragmatic indexing (e.g. pronominal address, greetings, thanking; Guillot 2010, 2016b).

The study is a pilot study and is exploratory at this stage, but part of a broader endeavour to inform debates about, and build up the picture of, AVT as cross-cultural mediation and, ultimately, promote our understanding of films in translation's societal impact.

Key words: Subtitling, linguistic and cultural representation, expressive capacity, Romance and Germanic languages

1 Introduction

How do different languages draw on their expressive capacity to deal with linguistic and cultural representation in interlingual subtitling? How is the specificity of their expressive means harnessed to the specificities of the subtitling modality? How are shared features managed in this process?

These questions are as yet unexplored and their range makes them complex to handle. The aim of this article is to make a start, by providing a platform for more comprehensive and extensive enquiries, with a report on early insights from a pilot case study, from a cross-cultural pragmatics perspective, of subtitle data in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish for the same 2016 Lonnergan film, *Manchester by the Sea* (*MBS* for short).

The research takes up the larger question of what is involved in linguistic and cultural representation in film interlingual subtitling, with two objectives:

- to put further to the test assumptions about AVT modalities' distinctive meaning potential and expressive capacity (e.g. Guillot 2019, 2016b for subtitling, Pavesi 2018 for dubbing), with a case study of communicative practices in their representation, via AVT, in film data subtitled into and/or from Romance and Germanic languages;
- to make a start on a neglected question to date, by considering, concurrently, the respective potential for representation of different types of languages, European for now.

On a theoretical level, the discussion is intended as a springboard for articulating the dialectic between the meaning-making of internally multimodal AV texts in their broader intersemiotic context and the sense-making of audiences engagement with, and responses to, mediated audiovisual products.

It will take more than the few examples discussed here to ascertain the theoretical potential of the comparative approach tried out for this small scale case study. It is thus exploratory at this stage, but part of a broader endeavour to inform debates about, and build up the picture of, AVT as cross-cultural mediation and ultimately promote our understanding of films in translation's societal impact, the long term drive for the TPF project¹ which prompted the study.

The contextualisation and account of data and methodology in opening sections briefly identify the theoretical and practical underpinnings for the case study. Subsequent

¹ AHRC-funded Research Network project *Tapping the Power of Foreign Language Films: Audiovisual Translation as Cross-cultural Mediation* (PI Guillot, Co-I Desilla; AH/N007026/1 www.filmsintranslation.org).

analyses cover main findings to date under three headings: critical points, covert expressive features and aspects of indexing. Their implications in the concluding section are explored by reference to emergent recontextualisations of AVT, with interdisciplinary input from Translation Studies and the Pragmatics of Fiction.

2 Film subtitling as intercultural mediation and the test of languages: background, rationale, methodology

2.1 Cross-cultural pragmatics and other underpinnings

Communicative practice for the purposes of this paper is understood in a wide sense, i.e. not literally or relating just to the representation of particular verbal instantiations, of enactments of politeness, for example. It extends to mechanisms of interaction and meaning-making observed within the framework of interaction, as conveyed in the multimodal textual context of subtitles. Pragmatics is likewise broadly defined as how language is used in social contexts and how exchange participants in communicative situations generate or manipulate meaning (speaker meaning, contextual meaning, inference, relative distance, etc., all of which are potentially the locus of difference across cultures (Yule 1996)), and here harnessed to the idiosyncrasies of AVT, and subtitling in particular.

Subtitles are *de facto* cross-cultural by dint of the unusual co-presence and interplay of source dialogues and other aural and visual input and their representation, in writing, in other languages. They have other singularities, which make the language choices from which they result linguistically, pragmatically and socio-culturally distinctive (Guillot 2016a):

- as interlingual representations of dialogues that are themselves intralingual representations of naturally occurring speech, subtitles are make-belief fictions twice over, with linguistic or pragmatic verisimilitude second to narrative efficiency and economy;
- like source dialogues subtitles are subject to the double-layeredness of filmic dialogues, so to tensions between the horizontal diegetic plane of communication between actual film characters and the vertical level of interpersonal communication between film makers and audience recipients (Messerli 2017).

As also so-called constrained modalities, subtitles cannot be literal. Language external medium-related factors like space, time, readability or synchrony and the reduction strategies they impose rule it out, as do linguistic and cultural mismappings across languages in representation (Pérez-González 2014, Díaz Cintaz and Remael 2007 *inter alia*): there is

limited space to play with at the bottom of the screen in mainstream subtitling (normally between 36 and 40 characters including spaces, in one or two lines maximum), for example, and limited time for subtitles to be read and processed, by viewers with variable reading competence and the demands of coping with the complex interplay of text shown sequentially in fragments and other visual and aural input; idioms, extra-linguistic cultural reference, humour, politeness, etc. are just a few of the challenges subtitling has to cope with otherwise, in linguistic and cultural representation (Pedersen 2007, Martínez-Sierra 2006).

Subtitles are not and cannot be verbatim representations, full mirror images of source dialogues, a common implicit assumption in audiences' 'loss' responses. The study is accordingly underpinned by an interest in AVT's distinctiveness as an expressive medium, with a capacity for internal indexing of pragmatic value, or capacity to set conventions of representation from within (Guillot 2016a). Evidence has been building for this idiosyncratic meaning potential, with studies of a range of communicative practices and features, from greetings to pronominal address, telephone exchanges, thanking and orality (see e.g. Guillot 2010, 2016b [French/English] or Bruti 2009 [English/Italian] for subtitling). AVT's specificities are interesting phenomena *per se*, as markers of subtitling and dubbing as language varieties in their own right. They are significant also for developing an understanding of the impact on audiences' responses of cultural a-synchrony (Guillot 2018, Manhard 2000), and so to get a better sense of how audiences respond to the cultural mismatch between the foreign seen on screen and heard residually, and the pragmatic expectations and perceptual frames triggered by text in their own language, and of how this may affect their perceptions of otherness.

With this study, representational potential is approached comparatively and put to the test across different languages, with limited ambitions at this stage: to ascertain whether this could be a legitimate domain of research, and what aspects would warrant focused exploration. Its intentions are thus to make a start on documenting representational strategies in subtitling from English across a subset of Romance and Germanic languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish), from the cross-cultural pragmatics perspective briefly outlined above, with the related intentions flagged in the introduction:

- to take a first step in appraising these languages respective expressive capacities in subtitle representation;

- to further the enquiry into the expressive specificity of AVT modalities as meaning making resources and language varieties in their own right, with particular application to subtitling;
- to feed the theoretical debate about the relationship between meaning and sense-making in the translation/adaptation partnership broached in the course of the discussion.

2.2 Methodology and data for the study

The data for the study are full subtitle transcripts for *Manchester by the Sea* in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish, from a single (2017) DVD. They also comprise the screenplay in English of the film - the story of a broken man, Lee Chandler, returning to the scene, in his (northern US) home town Manchester, of an untold tragedy that caused the breakdown of his marriage (to Randi), and a change in his behaviour from an upbeat and devoted father of three and uncle to Patrick, his close brother Joe's son, to a sullen, uncommunicative near sociopath. Lee's return is prompted by his brother Joe's untimely death, giving him unexpected and reluctant guardianship of Patrick. The behind the scenes reasons and consequences for Lee of the tragedy, a fire that destroyed his home and took the life of his three children, is revealed only gradually in series of flashbacks that intersperse the narrative.

The methodology involves qualitative comparative analysis of the four scenes listed below with a short account of their function in the narrative. There were two main criteria for the choice: the scenes involve different types of interaction (adults/children/family/other; standard/non-standard language, etc.) and so provide scope for diverse types of linguistic and pragmatic observations ; they occur at various points in the film, and so allow for vertical textual development to be observed, if present: first scene post-credits (1), middle (2) and near-end (1), as shown below.

Extract 1 [00:03:48-00:08:37] Lee's interactions as a handyman with tenants of the apartment block that he has been assisting with small plumbing repairs (3 in turn);

Extract 2 [00:59:43-01:03:04] Lee's near monologic account of the fire tragedy to the police;

Extract 3 [01:04:11-01:07:48] Lee, Patrick and (close friend of the family) George's exchange about what to do with Joe's fishing boat (Patrick wants to keep it, Lee is unwilling);

Extract 4 [01:54:56-01:58:36] Lee/Randi exchange in a supermarket where they meet unexpectedly.

The full data are complementarily explored quantitatively, using the text processing software *Wordsmith Tools* for frequency and alphabetical word lists and concordances of terms or word strings. Data for French and English are used as an initial platform, with subsequent cross-referencing to German, Italian and Spanish.

Interim observations corresponding to exploratory phases of the study are summarized below, in broad terms in the limited space available. Communicative practices identified in earlier studies as the locus of internal pragmatic indexing (greetings, use of non-standard language, phonings, pronominal address, modals; Guillot 2010, 2012, 2016b) are referred to in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. The bulk of the findings at this point relates, however, to more covert aspects and features arising from preliminary inductive exploration, also identified as significant in earlier studies, but strikingly conspicuous as regards expressive potential in comparative analysis: stylization and sequential distribution of subtitles. The first main notable finding was the comparatively limited number of so-called 'critical points', discussed below as a preamble for the findings section, and to contextualise them.

3 Critical points, shared covert expressive features, aspects of indexing

3.1 Critical points

'Critical points' are points of conspicuous decision making in target texts, identified by Munday in line with the hypothesis that 'variation is a potential indicator of translation problems' (2018: 180). All points showing variation across the languages of the dataset were identified, however small. Overall there are comparatively and surprisingly few in the four-scene dataset, with variations in renderings also relatively minor in the majority of cases, seemingly, in contrast with unproblematic source text elements that can be, according to Munday, and are in the *MBS* data, translated in the same way across target languages. The screenshot in Table 1 illustrates this relatively low frequency for the opening of the Lee near-monologue scene in Extract 2. Two of the main sites of language-related critical points are in evidence, phraseology and pronominal shifts, here in the French subtitles; they are discussed

in Section 3.3. Other include extralinguistic culture-bound references (ECRs) and idioms, swear words/taboo language, discourse markers, verb tenses and forms (passive, active, reflexive) with few marked variations across the 49 [English]-subtitle sets transcript for Extract 2 [844-892]; see the basic but illustrative list in Table 2). Features like ECRs and non-standard and taboo language have been widely documented in the literature, perhaps giving an exaggerated sense of their frequency in full-film data and the extent and severity of translation challenges, at least for Romance and Germanic languages. In this example at least, a good deal of text is seemingly unproblematic, possibly as a function of the streamlined nature of film dialogues in the first place, and of calquing of the subtitles in English, the likely pivot for the other languages in this dataset. Such calquing endows subtitle text with features which mark it out from other types of text, and this is significant in itself as regards the characterization of subtitling as an idiosyncratic mode of expression, and hybridization (see Pavese 2018 for related observations for dubbing).

While there are overall fewer challenges than our concern for them in research might lead us to expect, apparently small variations can make a crucial difference, on their own or cumulatively, and there are also variations across languages, as illustrated for French in particular in Table 1. These points and their implications are taken up in qualitative analyses in the next sections.

Dialogues	Subtitles English	Subtitles French	Subtitles German	Subtitles Italian	Subtitles Spanish
INT. POLICE STATION -- INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY. SLOW PUSH IN ON LEE at a table, facing a POLICE DETECTIVE, a UNIFORMED POLICEMAN, and the STATE FIRE MARSHALL. LEE You know. We were partyin' pretty hard. (MORE) LEE (CONT'D) Beer, and somebody was passin' around a joint. Somebody else had some cocaine.	844 00:59:43,200 --> 00:59:46,283 We were partying pretty hard.	744 00:59:43,489 --> 00:59:45,575 On faisait sérieusement la fête.*** [INDEF PP] MADE SERIOUSLY THE PARTY	709 00:59:36,740 --> 00:59:40,905 Wir haben gefeiert o , und es gab viel Bier.	753 00:59:43,510 --> 00:59:45,560 Stavamo facendo un gran casino.	770 00:59:44,030 --> 00:59:45,550 Estábamos de fiesta...
	845 00:59:46,360 --> 00:59:48,124 There was beer.	745 00:59:46,325 --> 00:59:47,828 On tournait *** à la bière, [INDEF PP] TURNED IN THE BIER	710 00:59:41,703 --> 00:59:46,164 Und... jemand reichte einen Joint herum, und es gab Kokain.	754 00:59:46,260 --> 00:59:47,610 C'era birra,	771 00:59:46,713 --> 00:59:51,738 Había cerveza, alguien estaba pasando un porro...
	846 00:59:48,200 --> 00:59:52,808 And someone was passing around a joint and there was cocaine.	746 00:59:49,996 --> 00:59:52,792 un joint circulait *** et on avait de la cocaïne. A JOINT WAS GOING ROUND AND [INDEF PP] HAD COCAINE	711 00:59:46,792 --> 00:59:48,658 - Kokain? - Ja.	755 00:59:48,040 --> 00:59:52,660 e qualcuno ha fatto girare uno spinello e c'era della cocaina.	772 00:59:52,102 --> 00:59:53,110 Y había cocaína.
	847 00:59:52,880 --> 00:59:55,531 Cocaine? Yes.	747 00:59:53,291 --> 00:59:54,501 De la cocaïne ?	712 00:59:49,336 --> 00:59:50,747 Okay, weiter.	756 00:59:53,230 --> 00:59:55,380 - Cocaina? - Sì.	773 00:59:53,310 --> 00:59:54,385 ¿Cocaína? 774 00:59:54,733 --> 00:59:55,733 Sí.
848 00:59:55,600 --> 00:59:57,364 Okay, go ahead.	748 00:59:55,793 --> 00:59:57,254 Bien, continue.	757 00:59:55,810 --> 00:59:57,060 Ok, vai avanti.	775 00:59:56,357 --> 00:59:57,357 Bien, continúa.		

Table 1 Salient critical points in context, starred for French; from Extract 2 [00:59:43-01:03:04] [first 5/49 subtitles for English]

Critical points, in relation to subtitles for English	English	French	German	Italian	Spanish
(register)	kids	<i>gosses</i>	<i>kinder</i>	<i>bambini</i>	<i>niñas</i>
Non-stand/taboo lexis/locution	fucking freezing	<i>froid de loup</i>	<i>total kalt</i>	<i>freddo cane</i>	<i>muy fría</i>
Pronominal form	I can't use [the central heating]	<i>on met pas</i>		<i>non possiamo</i>	
Idiomatic phrase/tense	I'm still jumping like a jackrabbit	<i>Je suis encore totalement speed./je redescends pas</i>	<i>I war immer noch total aufgekrazt</i>	<i>Mi sentivo ancora sveglio come una lepre.</i>	<i>Y todavía como una liebre</i>
Extra cultural ref.	mini-mart	<i>supérette</i>	<i>Minimarkt</i>	<i>minimarket</i>	<i>tienda</i>
Idiomatic phrase	I'm too wasted	<i>Je suis trop bourré</i>	<i>Wart ich too dicht</i>	<i>Ero troppo sconvolto</i>	

Table 2 Other salient/types critical points in *MBS*, from the first 25 subtitle sets for English in Extract 2 (out of 49), in order of their occurrence.

3.2 Modality-specific expressive potential: shared covert features

A second conspicuous outcome of the study at this stage highlights the expressive potential of features which are not *language* specific, but *modality* specific, with perhaps more covert but significant form-related features, here linguistic stylization and the sequential distribution of subtitles. Like language-related practices, these play a significant role in setting conventions of representation and so pragmatic value from within (Guillot 2016a). They are further evidence of the distinctiveness as a meaning-making resource that subtitling derives from space and time constraints and sequential presentation, with text in short stand-alone units of meaning to promote readability in line with standard guidelines (e.g. Díaz Cintaz & Remael 2007). How these features interact with language in generating meaning is illustrated below by reference to occurrences of taboo language, with observations that also provide a platform for comments on indexing in the next section. Use of taboo language in *MBS* is largely confined in both the English subtitles and screenplay to F-word expletives and just a few scenes. Examples discussed below come from the first in which they occur and are shown in landscape Table 3, in a parallel presentation across the languages of the dataset that peculiarly highlights contrasts.

The scene is from Extract 1 and involves Lee and a female character, the last of the three tenants he has assisted with repairs, in an exchange about her leaking shower that escalates into Lee's use of *fuck* and *fucking*, once each in the English subtitles (*I don't give a fuck what you do, Mrs Olsen* [98]; *I'm just trying to fix the fucking leak* [99]); each is then

echoed twice by the female character, in the same injunction (*Get the fuck out of my fucking house* [102; 103]).

Lee's use of the expletive at this point is, significantly, its first occurrence in the film, and comes after a series of sullen, distant, controlled, purely functional utterances from which it stands out. It is important for characterization: it flags Lee's latent capacity for verbal violence under a veneer of disabused indifference, matched shortly after in the next scene by physical violence, and with it some as yet undisclosed inner trouble, ready to explode aggressively at the first opportunity. His demeanour in the scene contrasts sharply with the convivial bantering with his small nephew Patrick on a fishing boat outing with his brother Joe of the immediately preceding opening credits, relating, as becomes clear later, to an earlier (happier) period in his life. This contrast is also reflected in the form of subtitles, as will be noted below.

Representation across the different languages takes different forms. There is seemingly a toning down in French, with its recourse to the familiar but not taboo *je m'en tape pas mal* [I really don't give a toss] and just one represented occurrence for Lee's two expletives in English. There is no such softening for the other languages. Expressions shown for German, Italian and Spanish are as offensive as in English, albeit with variations that are a by-product of their respective lexical expressive means. The F-word in English is typically multifunctional, a fly-off-the-tongue one-size-fits-all expletive. This is reflected in its frequency and ranking in the word list for the English subtitle data: 'fucking' is the first content type in the list and 'fuck' the second, with 46 and 31 tokens respectively. The list of swear/taboo and colloquial types (e.g. bullshit or assholes, cops) is overall comparatively limited, to 18 in all as against 75 for French (excluding inflected variations), for example. This is also evidence of the greater lexical range observed across all types for the languages other than English, typically. In a lexical sense at least, the languages deploy different lexical resources. That is not the whole story, however, and the contrast between French and the other languages is revealing in this respect, of the other types of resource also harnessed concurrently for expressive purposes.

In French the locutions corresponding to 'fuck' forms in the English subtitles, i.e. *je m'en tape pas mal* as above, and the female character's twice repeated *Foutez le camp* [get out of here] [94, 95], are not *in themselves* as offensive as the 'fuck' forms. They are not as offensive as the locutions used in the other languages either (e.g. *mir is scheißegal* [I don't give a shit] [85], *verdammte Leck* [damned leak] [85], *Verpissen sie sich* [fuck off] [88, 89] for German). They are marked however, and take on in context a similarly distinctive value

by virtue of the integrated interplay of other types of features and the resulting sharpening of contrasts:

- streamlining and stylization to bare linguistic minimum, still within the bounds of near-literal translation: in the French subtitles Lee's utterances are one-liner basic factual statements in unmarked lexis. They feature no discourse markers (DM) flagging interpersonal exchange and no intra-sentential commas/pauses, in contrast with the English subtitles and their most literal representation in Spanish, as in the example below, with DMs shown in bold in English and Spanish:

French	Ø	<i>C'est peut-être que ça.</i> [it may be just that.] [Fr 84]
vs. English	Well,	<i>it might just be that. /Okay</i> [91]
Spanish	Entonces,	<i>quizás sea eso.</i> [So, maybe it is that] [93]..

In these as in other examples the DMs overtly signpost interaction, and so does, in the English subtitle, the occurrence on the same frame of second-pair part 'Okay'. Significantly, there is a notable contrast between the bare single-liner form of Lee's syntactically simple utterances throughout this second scene and the form of his speech in the opening-credit bantering with his nephew: his utterances at this early pre-tragedy point are characterised by hypotactic/multiclausal syntax, diverse use of punctuation and evaluative lexis across all languages, arguably reflecting his different frame of mind at the time. This is heightened in the case of French by the greater down-to-bare minimum streamlining observed for all features.

- sequential distribution across frames: the parallel presentation of the data highlights the impact, on patterns of interaction and perception, of the sequential presentation of subtitles on the same vs. different frames: there is greater distance when adjacency pairs like question/answer or other two-part exchanges are not shown together, for example, or conversely less when they are integrated within the same frame. The representation of English subtitle sequence [94-95] in German [82-83] is conspicuous in this respect. It integrates as a second pair part, in [82] - *Wir machen die Dusche an und prüfen es./- Ich soll duschen?*, the ostensibly outraged question 'Oh, you want me to take a shower now?' [94]; the question is shown on its own in a different frame in English, where it stands out, as it does too in the other languages.

For French second pair parts are often just omitted, as are ‘Okay.’ and ‘No’ from English subtitles [91] and [95], for example. These sequential arrangements and form-related features here mirror Lee’s distance and disengagement in his exchanges in these scenes, to a greater or lesser extent across the different languages depending on the strategies deployed, evidence of which is also present in Extract 2 (see subtitles for German and Spanish).

These features are significant signifying codes, and meaning-making options in themselves. They are not language specific, but correspond to strategies available across languages, at least in this dataset, and used differentially, for reasons that there is cause for research to establish. These sources of expressive distinctiveness relating to form mark out the medium and modality of subtitling. Their impact is compounded by linguistic choices which likewise take on a strategic function, whether they are dictated by linguistic specificity or not. The example of greater/lesser distance and how it is achieved is a case in point here.

Distance in the subtitles in French is heightened by the prominence of third person impersonal forms in the context leading up to the F-word expletive, for example, as against first and second person plural interpersonal modes of address in the other languages:

(1) French

[85] *Comment le savoir?*

how it to know

‘how to know it’

[86] *En faisant couler la douche.*

by making run the shower

‘by running the shower’

vs.

English

[92] And how are you planning to find that out?

[93] Well, we could run the shower

and see if it drips downstairs.

English finds a parallel in German with comparable pronoun uses (*Sie* [you] and *Wir* [we]), and in Spanish and Italian with verbal inflexions (e.g. *¿y cómo piensas averiguarlo?* [94] [and how do you think ...], *podemos* [95] [we can] for Spanish; (e.g. *E come pensa di scoprirlo?* [85] [and how do you think ...], *apriamo* [86] [we open] for Italian).

Similar phenomena are in evidence in the Extract 2 example in Table 1, with different interplays of third person impersonal and indefinite subject pronouns in French [745-746] vs. the other languages [845-846 for English]. There is thus a similar distantiation effect with *un joint circulait* [a joint was going round] [746] vs. *someone was passing around a joint* in English [846], German [710], Italian [755] and Spanish [772]. The pronouns *someone/jemand/quelqu'un/qualcuno* are indefinite, but refer to a person, and anchor the preceding and subsequent third person forms *there was/es gab/c'era/había* into human agency in a way French does not, in a recollection from which Lee is estranging himself, arguably to a greater extent in French with the sustained indeterminacy it introduces with its indefinite pronoun *on*.

The absence in French of the interactive DMs present in English and, to a greater or lesser extent, in the other languages also intensifies distance. It affects punctuation, and contrasts in form. With no post-DMs punctuation and no attendant pausing, the unmitigated nature of Lee's uncompromising utterances is magnified, as noted above. With less punctuation, there is also scope for more salient contrasts between interactive and non-interactive punctuation marks (question and exclamation marks vs. full stops), also a significant expressive resource here, as it has been shown to be in other data (Guillot 2008).

3.3 Internal indexing, and questions arising

In subtitling, perhaps more than in most other forms of mediation, translation is not (just) about localised lexical or other choices, but about relationships between choices, and the contrasts or correspondences they produce, within and across scenes. The examples and features discussed above are evidence of this interplay, and of the collective impact achieved: conventions of representation for language use are set from within, and meaning is generated from the interaction of cues provided, some linguistic, some not, in line with Fowler's theory of mode accounting for multimodality in text (Fowler 2000). They are examples of the kind of internal pragmatic indexing signposted in earlier sections, and more prominently displayed in this case in the data for French, as it is for other features, like greeting terms in the *MBS* data, for example.

There are two greeting terms for French in all, *bonjour* [good day] and *salut* [hi], in the typically few scenes in which greetings are narratively significant and so do occur, with *bonjour* mostly indexing greater distance and impersonal exchanges like phone interactions and *salut* indexing closer relationship, predominantly with children. *Salut* is salient in a scene featuring six of its twelve occurrences in the film and showcasing Lee pre-tragedy coming back home and light-heartedly greeting his wife and children, and so here again the contrast with his post-tragedy self. This indexing is in evidence in the other languages but is less clear-cut, either because more terms are used across scenes (*hiya, hello, hi, hey* in English, *hi, hallo, he, morgen* (x1)), or fewer (*ciao* in Italian, *hola, hey* (x1) in Spanish), blurring differentiation, and reflecting linguistic specificity.

All the same, the example corroborates that internal setting of pragmatic value does occur, as documented in other data for subtitling (for greetings or other features like thanking or indirectness in subtitles into English for the French films *Hidden* (Haneke 2005), *Paris* (Klapish 2008), and *Read my Lips* (Audiard 2001) and the Spanish film *Volver* (Aldomovar 2006), for example; Guillot 2010, 2012, 2016a), as it is also for dubbing, for demonstratives and deixis, for example (Pavesi 2013, 2018). The choice of greeting (or other) terms is language specific, but assigning them a particular pragmatic value in subtitling (or dubbing) can be made use of across languages: the process of pragmatic indexing is not language specific. Like stylization and sequential distribution, it is a generic strategy, observed to different extents in the languages represented in the dataset. Implementing it is in part contingent on linguistic specificity, as this example of greetings is enough to suggest. One of the questions that arises, however, in view also of the relatively limited volume of critical points noted earlier and about other expressive resources, is to what extent, how and to what effect.

Analyses of (im)politeness in AVT in this volume are an index of the complexity of what is involved in dealing with communicative practices/conversational routines, and of their topicality for AVT as cross-cultural mediation. There is no space here to deal with them across languages beyond the limited example of expletives discussed qualitatively above and a cursory quantitative picture of greeting terms. The research agenda is building up all the same, with observations and questions that situate current emergent concerns in a broader context and takes it one step beyond:

- Subtitling has expressive means and can avail itself of strategies that transcend linguistic difference. They are integral to the characterisation of the modality as an expressive medium, and of its distinctive attributes.
- These means and strategies are used differentially across the languages represented in the *MBS* dataset. French in *MBS* subtitles displays a propensity to streamline text and form and to draw on resulting stylized contrasts as a powerful expressive tool, in a kind of ‘less is more’ mode observed elsewhere (Guillot 2012). Spanish in contrast is closely calqued on English subtitles in their most literal representation, with German and Italian on a cline between these poles. Are these distinct approaches observed beyond these data? If they are, what can they be traced to? Historical AVT reasons as may be the case for Spanish? Cinematographic traditions? (see O’Sullivan and Cornu 2018 for a history of AVT and leads for these questions). Linguistic underpinnings, as regards features but also orientations – greater/lesser tolerance to implicitness/elliptical expression, for example? Orientations to translation and its perceived responsibilities? ...
- There are comparatively few, and few serious, critical points in the dataset, and a notable level of literal representation across the languages. This relative uniformity may result from English serving as a pivot for the other languages. Whatever the cause, this uniformization above and beyond difference is a feature of subtitling and makes it distinctive. What is then the relationship between linguistic levelling and linguistic specificity, in terms of meaning potential and translation strategy, and between them and hybridization? ... (see Pavesi and Formentelli in this volume for a discussion of these questions for dubbing)
- Stylization is fertile ground for deficit approaches but over-literal readings of subtitles are deceptive: seemingly immaterial features, including punctuation for example, or the deletion of DMs often denounced as ‘loss’ of orality in the literature, syntactic or pragmatic reduction and other such covert expressive feature can be observed to fulfil functions, on their own or cumulatively, which are highly effective in achieving expressive objectives.
- Little goes a long way. In terms of analysis and description, the nuances and differentiations it produces require fine native or native-like linguistic and pragmatic sensitivity, and so active research collaborations, as does the scope and size of the comparative project, not least in view of the ultimate question - audience response.

- What is the impact on audiences of the interplay of covert and overt expressive features, brought into sharper relief here by comparative analysis, in their shared and differentiating attributes across languages?

4 Conclusion and way forward - text meaning-making, audience sense-making

This discussion of means and strategies of linguistic and cultural representation across languages and their expressive features in *MBS* has been a preview. While it cannot on its own do justice to the breadth and complexity of the insights that the study has been generating, nor on its own to the breadth and complexity of cross-linguistic comparison for subtitling, it has highlighted the value of the approach for AVT research, for appraising representational options and their distinctiveness, and mapping them out in all their expressive minutiae.

Whether they are form or language-related, the features identified emerge for most from close analysis and would for most, and for most viewers, remain below consciousness, including by dint of the sequential nature of the viewing and subtitling reading experience, let alone the cognitive demands of multimodal engagement. But whether analyses offered here are endorsed or not, they do draw attention to difference, to different expressive options and choices accruing textual pictures held in mind and activated by undocumented processes, so cannot but raise the question of audience perceptions and responses, and of the link between subtitling as cross-cultural mediation and intercultural literacy.

The argument with this shifts to a different level, and sets the scene for a theoretical debate about the relationship between subtitle text in its multisemiotic context and what audiences make of it, from their immensely variable perspectives: what is the relationship between the meaning-making of internally multimodal AV texts in their broader intersemiotic context and the sense-making of audiences engagement with, and responses to, mediated audiovisual products?

Linguistic and cultural representation and cross-cultural mediation, backbones of this study and volume, have been instrumental for recognizing in AVT modalities the capacity to index linguistic and pragmatic value internally reviewed here for subtitling, with conventions of representation set from within, in keeping with medium specificities. The onus of responding to indexing triggers is on audiences. That is sense making. Subtitling produces situated conventions of representations at the level of text, of the *signified*, but, in a contract with audiences and with input from the broader semiotic context produces *signifiers*, flexible

and reassignable as signified, in keeping with audiences variable profiles, and with what Scott describes as sense's intrinsic qualities in the 2018 review of translation and adaptation from which the notion is borrowed: sense for him is constantly in the making, it is elusive, it multiplies, diversifies, is an integral part of source texts' progress in time and space, with emphasis on readerly experience, and phenomenology rather hermeneutics. Viewers' sense-making is unique, a function of what they see, hear and read in the subtitle text and uniquely harness to their own infinitely flexible and self-renewing processing capacities. Scott's and this perspective find echoes in pragmatics, with notions of co-construction, for example. It is consonant with developments emerging from research into the pragmatics of fiction, with calls for a reconceptualization of subtitling with a theory of subtitles as communicative agents within the participation structure of film reception, advocated by Messerli in this volume.

With this kind of conjunctural convergence, there is scope for interdisciplinary dialogue, and for AVT reception studies to integrate, along with their prevailing preoccupation with psycholinguistic processes accounting for the mechanics of information processing, greater concern for perceptual response. That too is a main variable for developing our understanding of AVT as cross-cultural mediation, and its relationship with intercultural literacy. The job of description itself is still huge.

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Filmography

Caché / Hidden 2005 Dir. Michael Haneke, Screenplay by Michael Haneke. Les Films du Losange.

Manchester by the Sea 2016 Dir. Kenneth Lonnergan. Screenplay by Kenneth Lonnergan. K films Manchester LLC.

Paris 2008 Dir. Cédric Klapish. Screenplay by Cédric Klapish. Ce qui me meut StudioCanal and StudioCanal Image France 2 Cinéma

Volver 2006 Dir. Pedro Aldomovar. Screenplay by Pedro Almodóvar. Almodóvar and Garcia.

Methodological framework article 2 Subtitling's cross-cultural expressivity put to the test: A cross-sectional study of linguistic and cultural representation across Latinate and Anglo-Saxon languages	
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Focus	Representational strategies in subtitling from English across Romance and Germanic languages.
Underpinning theory	Cross-cultural pragmatics, audiovisual translation as cross-cultural mediation.
Research questions/ underlying assumptions	Comparison of expressive means in subtitling across the languages considered, with two objectives: 1) to appraise their respective potential for representation; 2) to test further assumptions about AVT modalities' distinctive meaning potential and expressive capacity.
Languages	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish.
Type of study	Case study of communicative practices in their representation via subtitling across the languages represented in the dataset.
Methodology	Qualitative and (<i>WordsmithTools</i>) quantitative analyses of subtitle data for the same film across 5 languages.
Data	Lonnergan's 2016 <i>Manchester by the Sea</i> screenplay in English, subtitles in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish.
Experimental procedure/Research instruments	Inductive qualitative analyses of four full scenes from the beginning, middle and end of the film; complementary quantitative analysis of the full data.
Data elicited/main results	The focus of the research is ultimately communicative practices identified in earlier studies as the locus of internal pragmatic indexing: greetings, taboo language, pronominal address, modals. The bulk of the findings at this point relates to more covert aspects and features arising from preliminary inductive exploration, and conspicuous as regards expressive potential: stylization and sequential distribution of subtitles; another early notable finding is the comparatively limited number of critical points showing significant variations.
Conclusions (main)	Subtitling has expressive means and can avail itself of strategies that transcend linguistic difference. They are integral to the characterisation of the modality as an expressive medium, and of its distinctive attributes. These means and strategies are used differentially across the languages represented in the <i>MBS</i> dataset. To what extent, how and to what effect requires further exploration, but hybridizing uniformisation is also a significant feature.
Acknowledged limitations	The study is a pilot for a large and complex research endeavour, and is little more than a preview. The impact on audiences of features identified as representationally expressive and significant, the sense-making capacity of subtitling and audiences' awareness of the mediating role of subtitling need investigating through reception research.
Implications/uses	The study challenges deficit approaches and recognizes in subtitling a capacity for sense-making central for reconceptualizations of AVT modalities as communicative agents within the participation structure of reception, in line with calls from pragmatics.

Dialogues	Subtitles in English	Subtitles in French	Subtitles in German	Subtitles in Spanish	Subtitles in Italian
[...] INT. MRS OLSEN'S BATHROOM. DAY. Lee is down on his hand and knees. MRS OLSEN, 40s, in a bathrobe, is very good-looking but bad-tempered and nervous.	30 [...] 91 00:07:54.920 → 00:07:56.520 Well, it might just be that. Okay.	27 84 00:07:54.774 → 00:07:56.443 C'est peut-être que ça.	26 80 00:07:48.218 → 00:07:49.880 - Wiedlich! Was ist das? - Okay.	30 93 00:07:55.565 → 00:07:56.565 Es parece que sí, sea eso.	85 00:07:54.820 → 00:07:56.380 - Disobbie essere questo - Bene. L'è come questo o scopoliolo?
[...] Lee looks at the bathtub.	92 00:07:56.640 → 00:07:58.529 And how are you planning to find that out?	85 00:07:56.568 → 00:07:58.445 Comment le savoir ?	81 00:07:50.095 → 00:07:51.836 Und wie finden ? Sie das was?	94 00:07:56.633 → 00:07:58.412 Buena. ¿Y cómo descubres descubriéndolo?	86 00:07:58.500 → 00:08:01.020 Scopoliolo la descubri e scopoliolo . È l'acqua senza scopoli .
LEE It might just be the caulking. This whole tub needs to be re-caulked. Did you take a bath or shower in the last couple of hours?	93 00:07:58.600 → 00:08:01.121 Well, we could run the shower and see if it drips downstairs.	86 00:07:58.861 → 00:08:01.032 En faisant couler la douche.	82 00:07:52.389 → 00:07:56.429 - ¿El caobato de Ducha en und quitas es - Ich weiß schon ?	95 00:07:59.202 → 00:08:01.832 Buena. ¿Descubres abrir el agua . ¿Ver si cae agua abajo ?	87 00:08:01.140 → 00:08:03.590 Maie che mi scopoli una doccia abbasso ?
MRS OLSEN Yes...	94 00:08:01.240 → 00:08:03.083 Oh, you want me to take a shower now?	87 00:08:01.323 → 00:08:02.992 Vous voulez que je me douche ?	83 00:07:57.060 → 00:07:59.622 - Nein. - Und Sie schönen mit dabei waschen ?	96 00:08:02.037 → 00:08:03.358 ¿Dici . ¿Quieres que me duche . ¿Abajo?	88 00:08:03.720 → 00:08:04.420 No.
LEE Well, it could possibly just be that.	95 00:08:03.160 → 00:08:04.521 No.	88 00:08:04.617 → 00:08:06.786 Je me douche et vous regardez.	84 00:07:59.854 → 00:08:02.813 Um ja schon . Ja die Friedrichs Wasser ablassen ?	97 00:08:04.188 → 00:08:04.837 No...	89 00:08:04.540 → 00:08:07.180 Vorrebbe farmi fare una doccia ossente es se ne sta a guardare .
MRS OLSEN You want me to take a shower now?	96 00:08:04.640 → 00:08:06.616 You want me to take a shower right now while you stand there	89 00:08:06.911 → 00:08:09.372 ¿Está ver si ca agua ¿Está en Friedrich?	85 00:08:10.067 → 00:08:08.432 ¿Mit qui schon ? was Sie tun . Ich will ger das verdammt schon schon .	98 00:08:05.123 → 00:08:07.610 ¿Quieres que me duche . ¿Quieres estár ahí abajo ?	90 00:08:07.300 → 00:08:09.440 È come acqua del gioco scopoliolo È scopoliolo ?
LEE No...	97 00:08:10.760 → 00:08:12.022 I don't give a fuck what you do, Mrs. Olsen.	90 00:08:10.665 → 00:08:12.754 Je me range pas mal . Mme Olsen .	99 00:08:07.810 → 00:08:10.211 ¿Para ver si se fiere agua È scopoliolo de los scopoliolo ?	99 00:08:07.300 → 00:08:09.440 È come acqua del gioco scopoliolo È scopoliolo ?	92 00:08:12.900 → 00:08:15.850 Cosco solo di scopoliolo scopoliolo questa cosa di scopoliolo .
MRS OLSEN I don't really give a fuck what you do, Mrs. Olsen. I just want to find the leak.	98 00:08:13.000 → 00:08:15.128 I'm just trying to fix the fucking leak.	91 00:08:12.879 → 00:08:15.007 J'essaie de réparer la fuite.	100 00:08:10.962 → 00:08:13.340 Me arregno una manera la que lejos. Mrs. Olsen...	93 00:08:21.690 → 00:08:23.640 Non... mi è scopoliolo abbasso .	91 00:08:10.490 → 00:08:12.780 Non mi regga un scopoliolo di que che fa, signora Olsen .
MRS OLSEN No, you can get out of my apartment and don't ever come back.	99 00:08:15.000 → 00:08:15.128 I'm just trying to fix the fucking leak.	92 00:08:15.120 → 00:08:16.002 Das war nicht schon nett.	101 00:08:13.352 → 00:08:15.585 Yo solo quiero reparar la caña fucking .	94 00:08:24.980 → 00:08:27.430 Cosco si permette di scopoliolo in quel modo?	92 00:08:21.690 → 00:08:23.640 Non... mi è scopoliolo abbasso .
MRS OLSEN (CONT'D) OK. How dare you fucking talk to me like that?	100 00:08:21.840 → 00:08:24.081 I... I didn't like that.	93 00:08:25.057 → 00:08:27.227 Comment vous me parlez ?	102 00:08:22.892 → 00:08:23.989 È no me ha quitate ...	94 00:08:24.980 → 00:08:27.430 Cosco si permette di scopoliolo in quel modo?	93 00:08:21.690 → 00:08:23.640 Non... mi è scopoliolo abbasso .
LEE You're bloody the doorway.	101 00:08:25.080 → 00:08:27.401 How dare you talk to me like that?	94 00:08:25.057 → 00:08:27.227 Comment vous me parlez ?	103 00:08:25.689 → 00:08:27.225 ¿Cómo te atrevés a hablarme así ?	94 00:08:24.980 → 00:08:27.430 Cosco si permette di scopoliolo in quel modo?	94 00:08:24.980 → 00:08:27.430 Cosco si permette di scopoliolo in quel modo?
MRS OLSEN (CONT'D) OK. How dare you fucking talk to me like that?	102 00:08:27.480 → 00:08:29.528 Get the fuck out of my fucking house.	95 00:08:27.602 → 00:08:29.479 Forster le camp de citer moi !	104 00:08:28.120 → 00:08:29.936 È de mi casa .	95 00:08:27.550 → 00:08:29.410 Vada fuori dell'acqua .	95 00:08:27.550 → 00:08:29.410 Vada fuori dell'acqua .
LEE How dare you fucking talk to me like that?	103 00:08:29.640 → 00:08:30.325 Okay. Get the fuck out of my fucking house.	96 00:08:30.356 → 00:08:34.275 Forster le camp d'ici avant que j'appelle la police .	105 00:08:30.136 → 00:08:30.831 ¿Bueno...	96 00:08:29.540 → 00:08:32.180 Se ne vada subito da questo scopoliolo di casa .	96 00:08:29.540 → 00:08:32.180 Se ne vada subito da questo scopoliolo di casa .
MRS OLSEN Okay. Get the fuck out of my apartment and don't ever come back.	104 00:08:32.400 → 00:08:34.442 before I call the police.	97 00:08:25.755 → 00:08:27.838 Sport avec de la police .	106 00:08:31.031 → 00:08:34.323 È de mi casa che antes de que llamo a la police !	97 00:08:32.300 → 00:08:34.150 prima che chiam la police .	97 00:08:32.300 → 00:08:34.150 prima che chiam la police .

Table 3 **Swear word explicitness** and **colloquialism** in the last part of **Extract 1** [00:03:48-00:08:37]

