Translating multilingualism in film: A case study on *Le concert*

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ABSTRACT
The paper sheds some light both on the different ways in which multilingualism may be represented in film and on the difficult task of managing it in translation. A comparative analysis is carried out between the original version of the film *Le concert* (Radu Mihăileanu, 2009) and the dubbed versions for the French, Italian and Spanish markets as well as the subtitled version for the British market. Different ways to deal with multilingualism are identified: on the one hand, dubbing the film entirely into the target languages by resorting (or not) to "would-be" foreign accents to signal the origin of characters; on the other, some more "innovation" in subtitling to verbally reproduce instances of broken language. The analysis of the different solutions adopted in the four countries leads us to consider the opportunities and limitations that dubbing and subtitling multilingual films may afford.

KEYWORDS: conflict, confusion, dubbing, multilingual films, realistic rendering, subtitling

Introduction

The film *Le concert* (France, Italy, Romania, Belgium, Russia, 2009) by the Franco-Romanian director Radu Mihăileanu represents an interesting case to critically reflect not only on the role that multilingualism plays on screen, but also on the challenging task of handling it in translation. *Le concert* is a film in which two different languages (Russian and French) have more or less the same presence on screen. Multilingualism aims at "realism" (Bleichenbacher 2008:26): a more realistic rendering of the situations represented in the film in which each character speaks the language of the country he or she comes from (Russia and France), as a person would do in real life. In other words, the film resorts to what has been defined as *vehicular matching* (see Sternberg 1981; O'Sullivan 2007, 2011), which, along with *homogenisation*, is one of the ways through which different languages may be represented in fictional texts: i.e. presence as opposed to absence (see also Cronin 2009). The languages used in the film correspond exactly to the languages of the real world, in a way which Wahl (2005: 2) would call "naturalistic". The Russian dialogues of the film are subtitled into French in order for the viewers to follow them. This is what O'Sullivan (2007, 2011) calls *part-subtitles*, meaning subtitles which "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." (O'Sullivan 2007:81).

A comparative analysis is carried out between the original (bilingual) version of the film and the dubbed versions for the French, Italian and Spanish markets as well as the subtitled version for the British market. This comparison allows to shed light on the different ways envisaged by audiovisual translation to cope with a complex phenomenon such as multilingualism. The primary interest of this study is to verify how the four countries have managed the multilingual situations represented in the film in terms of their preservation as opposed to their neutralisation in the target language version. Specifically, two main aspects are taken into account. First, if the presence of two different languages is also conveyed to the target audience or not. Second, how instances of broken French and accented French present in the original version are rendered in the target versions of the film.

Multilingualism seems to represent a challenge for dubbing countries: when it comes to dealing with dialogues originally uttered in more languages, dubbing inevitably ends up "clashing" with multilingualism. If compared to subtitling, which is generally considered to be more effective in preserving the lingua-cultural identities on screen (see Cronin 2009; O'Sullivan 2011), dubbing appears to be more oriented towards linguistic flattening and homogenisation. The analysis of the different translational choices made in the four countries not only leads to an in-depth evaluation of such generalisations about the two screen translation modes, but also allows to critically assess the extent to which such considerations may be actually feasible as applied to a multilingual film. Through a multidisciplinary approach which combines audiovisual translation studies with film analysis techniques, the paper sets out to highlight limits and possibilities of both dubbing and subtitling in translating multilingualism on screen.

The paper opens with the presentation of the theoretical framework which is used to interpret the role and the meaning of multilingualism in film. Then it moves on to make some considerations, first, on the relationship between multilingualism and dubbing, and then between multilingualism and subtitling. Subsequently, the paper continues with the detailed analysis of the different solutions adopted in each country for the respective target version. The article concludes with some more general critical observations on the audiovisual

translation of multilingual films, as they originate from, and are suggested by, the findings obtained in the present study.

The role of multilingualism on screen

The term "multilingual" in relation to cinema refers to those films which depict an intercultural encounter, in which at least two different languages are spoken. When we speak of multilingual films (in the plural), we actually refer to a rather diversified set of films whose common feature is that multilingualism itself plays a relevant role in the story and in the discourse[1] (on the concepts of story and discourse, see Chatman 1978). Both comedies and dramas can be multilingual as their plots are often related to immigration processes or to the multicultural aspect of contemporary society (see Wahl 2005, 2008; Berger & Komori 2010). Thrillers, westerns, historical period dramas, action films, adventure films and sci-fi films have occasionally resorted to multilingualism in film history (see Bleichenbacher 2008; Cronin 2009; O'Sullivan 2011; De Bonis 2014a). Thus, the question of whether multilingual films may be ever considered as a cinematic genre on its own immediately arises[2].

Film studies have traditionally categorised films according to a number of genres such as comedy, drama, fantasy, crime film, horror film and so forth (see, for instance, the analysis of American film genres in Campari 1983 and Kaminsky 1985). Multilingualism is actually a phenomenon that has crosscut every and any of the traditional cinematic genres since the advent of the sound cinema (Dwyer 2005; Cronin 2009; O'Sullivan 2011). In other words, multilingual films appear as a "meta-genre": a second-level genre which encompasses and characterises different cinematic genres at the same time. Despite the interesting attempts made to classify European multilingual films (see Wahl 2005, 2008), for the purposes of this study the more flexible notion of multilingual films as a "meta-genre" is adopted. The distinctive feature of multilingual films becomes, hence, the function that multilingualism has in each single film's plot, a function which may vary significantly according to the film considered.

[1] According to Chatman (1978), the concept of *story* is meant as the narrative material of a novel or book, i.e. the content of a narrative (the *what*), whereas *discourse* constitutes the way in which this content is expressed through a text (the *how*), i.e. the expression of the story.
[2] Scholars such as Dwyer (2005) and Wahl (2005, 2008), for example, consider multilingual films as a cinematic genre on its own: *the polyglot genre*.

Broadly speaking, multilingualism appears to have three main functions in film: realistic rendering of the linguistic situations represented, creating conflict, and causing confusion. With regard to realistic rendering, multilingualism seems to be a means to enhance viewers' perception of the reality depicted on screen: linguistic diversity is a vehicle for the audience to experience the globalisation of our world against which the plots of multilingual films are essentially based. On the one hand, a film may present different lingua-cultural identities in different scenes without necessarily representing a cross-language interaction, as it happens in some moments of films such as *Gran Torino* (Clint Eastwood, 2008), *Hereafter* (Clint Eastwood, 2010), *Incendies* (Denis Villeneuve, 2010) and the anthology film *Tickets* (Ermanno Olmi, Abbas Kiarostami, Ken Loach, 2005).

On the other hand, a film may present one or more "secondary languages" which always remain in the background throughout the film, as opposed to the "primary language", the main language of communication in the film (Heiss 2004). These secondary languages generally remain untranslated and operate as a semiotic device, a sound effect which contributes to increasing viewers' perception of the reality depicted on screen, along with other visual elements of the film set such as the decor, the costumes and the accessories. Examples are films such as *Empire of the Sun* (Steven Spielberg, 1987), *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996), *Kingdom of Heaven* (Ridley Scott, 2005) and the four films in the Indiana Jones saga all directed by Steven Spielberg: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) and *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008).

Conversely, when an intercultural encounter is portrayed on screen, that is when two or more different languages interact one another within the same scene, multilingualism may express either conflict or confusion. The former is a recurrent aspect of drama films in which lingua-cultural identities are sharply depicted and strongly maintained on screen. Multilingualism, thus, functions as a means for the characters to emphasise their cultural and linguistic diversity, giving rise to communicative problems which generally become hard to solve. The plots are mainly related to war or immigration/integration processes as is the case of films such as *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002), *Lebanon* (Samuel Maoz, 2009), *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009), *Gegen die Wand* (Fatih Akin, 2004), *It's a Free World* (Ken Loach, 2007) and *Welcome* (Philippe Lioret, 2009).

Confusion is a feature commonly found in comedies dealing with the multicultural aspect of contemporary society. Multilingualism quite often produces a humorous effect, as lingua-cultural identities appear to be mixed up on screen in a somewhat disorderly fashion. Examples are *L'auberge espagnole* (Cédric Klapisch, 2002), *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Joel Zwick, 2002), *Mambo italiano* (Émile Gaudreault, 2003), *Spanglish* (James L. Brooks, 2004), *Les poupées russes* (Cédric Klapisch, 2005), *Everything is Illuminated* (Liev Schreiber, 2005) and *Almanya - Willkommen in Deutschland* (Yasemin Samdereli, 2011).

Both conflict and confusion operate on two different levels: in interaction between the film's characters (i.e. the diegetic level) and on viewers' perception of the reality depicted on screen (i.e. the extra-diegetic level). In other words, they function both on the horizontal and on the vertical level of communication (Vanoye 1985; Sanz Ortega 2011; see also Kozloff 2000; Bubel 2008; O'Sullivan 2011). Since multilingualism generally serves as an important means of characterisation (Wahl 2005, 2008; Bleichenbacher 2008; Sanz Ortega 2011), it goes without saying that employing different languages on screen always aims at a more realistic rendering of linguistic diversity, even on those occasions in which multilingualism works as a vehicle for either conflict or confusion. The concept of realistic rendering is introduced in order to interpret those films in which different languages are spoken in different moments of the story, with no interaction between these languages.

Multilingualism and dubbing

According to Heiss (2004), dubbing multilingual films represents a "new" challenge for audiovisual translators. Since the number of multilingual productions has considerably increased from the 1990s onwards (see also Dwyer 2005; Wahl 2005, 2008; O'Sullivan 2007, 2011; Bleichenbacher 2008; Berger & Komori 2010; Sanz Ortega 2011), dubbing professionals have inevitably found themselves dealing with multilingualism on screen in a more systematic fashion (O'Sullivan 2011; de Higes Andino 2014a; Heiss 2014; Meylaerts & Şerban 2014). Considering that the main purpose of dubbing is "to make the target dialogues look as if they are being uttered by the original actors" (Chiaro 2009:144), a crucial question arises: how can dialogues originally uttered in more languages be reproduced also in the target version?

To a first approximation, a general standard of prevalence may be observed in dubbing countries such as France, Italy and Spain when it comes to dealing with multilingualism on screen. It goes without saying that such a standard may vary considerably according to the film and to the national dubbing industry involved in the translation process[3]. Dubbing professionals tend to translate only the language (or languages) that is (or are) quantitatively significant in terms of its or their presence throughout the film. From a narrative perspective, this so-called "primary language" turns out to be the film's main language of communication (Heiss 2004), meaning that most of the dialogues are uttered in this language. Conversely, dubbing practitioners opt for other screen translation modalities, namely subtitling or no translation at all, to handle the other languages present in the film. These so-called "secondary languages" are those languages which are less present throughout the film in both quantitative (i.e. textual) and qualitative terms (i.e. narrative).

In the case of European multilingual films[4] the primary language is generally the language of the country in which the film is produced/shot, language which, in turn, is the one spoken in the place where the film's events occur. An exception is, for instance, the French film *Va, vis et diviens* (Radu Mihăileanu, 2005), entirely set in Israel, in which Hebrew along with French are the film's main languages of communication. In the Italian and Spanish versions of this film both languages have been dubbed into the respective target language. In the case of American films, as English usually remains the main language of communication, even when the story is mainly or totally set in another country (see Bleichenbacher 2008; Shochat & Stam 1985), the application of the standard of prevalence is the rule. See, for instance: *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Anthony Minghella, 1999), *Under the Tuscan Sun* (Audrey Wells, 2003), *Miracle at St. Anna* (Spike Lee, 2008) and *Letters to Juliet* (Gary Winick, 2010) all set in Italy; *Everything is Illuminated*, set in Ukraine; *Charlie Wilson's War* (Mike Nichols, 2007) partially set in Afghanistan and *A Body of Lies* (Ridley Scott, 2008) mainly set in Iraq. An exception is the American film *The Kite Runner* (Marc Forster, 2007), mainly set in Afghanistan, in which Dari (the Afghan variety of Persian) is the primary language, whereas

[3] The author of this paper knows in more detail the situation of Italian dubbing (see De Bonis 2014b, 2014c). For French dubbing see Mingant 2010; Labate 2013, 2014; Brisset 2014; Pettit 2014. For Spanish dubbing see Corrius & Zabalbeascoa 2011; Zabalbeascoa & Corrius 2012; de Higes Andino 2014a. 2014b. For a comparative analysis of different dubbing traditions see Valdeón 2005, Voellmer & Zabalbeascoa 2014, Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer 2014.

[4] European films, be they monolingual or multilingual, are mostly co-productions among several countries (see in particular Wahl 2005, 2008; Berger & Komori 2010).

English becomes a "co-primary" language in the film. The Italian and Spanish versions have dubbed both languages into the respective target language[5].

Still, there may be cases in which a standard of prevalence may not be easily applicable to a multilingual film. There may be films in which different languages may be so inextricably interwoven to make it almost impossible for audiovisual translators to combine dubbing with other screen translation modes such as subtitling. This is the case of two Israeli films such as *The Syrian Bride* (Eran Riklis, 2004)[6] and *Free Zone* (Amos Gitai, 2006), in which several languages are so interwoven that the Italian distributor opted to subtitle them, which represents an unusual choice for a dubbing country like Italy. On the contrary, in France the film *Free Zone* has been entirely dubbed into French[7]. These two Israeli films prove to be particularly difficult for film translation as they both feature polyglot characters who frequently code-switch from one language to another. Occurrences of code-mixing and code-switching, made by a character within the same scene or from one scene to another as the story unfolds, pose a challenge to screen translation, especially to dubbing (see Monti 2009, 2014; Minutella 2012; Vermeulen 2012; Pettit 2014).

In other cases, a film may not contain a main language alone, in the sense that different languages may have the same qualitative and quantitative relevance in the overall narrative design. That is the case of two German films such as *Gegen die Wand* (2004) and *Auf der anderen Seite* (2006), both directed by Fatih Akin, in which all the languages used in the film[8] not only have more or less the same presence on screen, but also play the same crucial role in the plot. The French, Italian and Spanish versions of *Auf der anderen Seite* have dubbed all the dialogues of the film into their own languages. On the contrary, in the case of *Gegen die Wand*, while the Italian and Spanish versions have entirely dubbed the film, the French version has dubbed only the German dialogues and subtitled the Turkish ones. In a nutshell, the combination of both dubbing and subtitling is not always feasible in translating multilingual films, but it rather depends both on the role played by multilingualism and on the

[5] All the observations on the French and Spanish dubbed versions of the films mentioned in the paper are made first-hand by the author who had the opportunity to watch them.
[6] The languages in the film are Arabic, English, Hebrew, French and Russian.
[7] The languages in the film *Free Zone* are English, Hebrew, Arabic and Spanish. The decision of neutralising the different languages present in the film has sometimes led the French dubbed dialogues to sound redundant, implausible and bizarre. This may seriously compromise the suspension of disbelief, upon which dubbing is built as a screen translation mode.
[8] The languages used in *Auf der anderen Seite* are German, Turkish and English. The languages of *Gegen die Wand* are German and Turkish.

number of multilingual situations represented in the film. As a result, nowadays dubbing still appears as the prevalent screen translation modality adopted by dubbing countries in most cases.

Multilingualism and subtitling

If dubbing multilingual films undoubtedly represents a challenge, subtitling them may be equally problematic. As Cronin points out: "Subtitles [...] maintain the linguistic alterity of what is on the screen, the soundtrack of language matching the identity of the image." (2009:106). As opposed to dubbing, subtitling appears to be more effective in maintaining the lingua-cultural diversities on a diegetic level, because whatever happens on screen is comprehensible only to the film's audience. For instance, in this regard the English subtitled version of *Le concert* does not provide the audience with a visible trace of the two languages spoken in the dialogues of the film (for instance, a different font): viewers can only rely on the acoustic code and the overall context to grasp the code-switching between Russian and French occurring in the film (unless they can speak or understand either or both of these languages). Therefore, one might wonder whether viewers of a subtitled version are always able to recognise the different languages represented on screen. This may depend on how familiar they are with those particular languages. British viewers might be quite able to distinguish French from Russian, due to the closeness that they share with France in both geographical and historical terms.

Yet, it is questionable if this is also the case for those languages with which viewers are less familiar, because they come from a different geographic area. In the film *The Syrian Bride*, for instance, Arabic is often contrasted with Hebrew, two languages with which mainland European viewers may not be so familiar: watching a subtitled version of the film might take longer for the audience to become aware of the differences between these two Semitic languages[9]. As Heiss appropriately remarks: "One should not underestimate the risk that people will simply overlook cultural differences when being presented with nothing but single-language subtitles" (2004:215). If subtitles do better preserve the lingua-cultural identities at the level of the soundtrack (i.e. acoustically), this does not necessarily imply that

[9] Something similar may also happen in the case of films whose dialogues are in languages which the audience might find more "exotic", even if they are actually spoken in areas of the same continent viewers are from. For example, in *Black Cat, White Cat* (Emir Kusturica, 1998) the main characters continuously code-switch from Serbian to Romany language, making it really difficult for Western European viewers to distinguish the two languages as they watch the subtitled version of the film.

they achieve the same result also at the level of the verbal code. As Cronin (2009:106) points out: "Reading the subtitles, the spectator vicariously translates the linguistic multiplicity of the planet into a familiar idiom". This "familiar idiom" is obviously the viewer's own mother tongue. As a result, "[v]ehicular matching in subtitles, where the subtitles may code-switch alongside the dialogue, is extremely rare." (O'Sullivan 2011:190).

As suggested by O'Sullivan (2011:192), the use of different fonts (bold, italics) or different colours in subtitles, an already fairly common practice in TV accessibility with teletext subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (see Neves 2005), may be a feasible way of signalling the different lingua-cultural identities present on screen. In this regard, the Italian theatrical version of the film *Biutiful* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2010) has followed the same strategy of the original Spanish version (de Higes 2014a:131) by employing different colour subtitles for each of the secondary languages present in the film, namely cyan for Chinese and yellow for Wolof. Nonetheless, this choice has been made only for the big screen version, as the Italian DVD, similar to the Spanish one, has no trace left of coloured subtitles.

Comparative analysis of the different versions of *Le concert*

As mentioned in the introduction, *Le concert* is a bilingual film. The first part of the story takes place in Moscow: Russian is the main language of the dialogues, while French is used only by one Russian character, Ivan Gabrilov (the would-be Bolshoï orchestra manager) as he talks on the phone to people from the Châtelet Theatre and in a few scenes that are set in Paris. By contrast, in the second part of the film, in which the Bolshoï orchestra flies to Paris to perform the concert to which the title refers, the balance between the two languages is inverted: French becomes more present on screen, as most of the Russian characters often speak French as a second language (L2), characterised by grammar mistakes. Russian, however, still has a certain role in the private conversations between Russian characters. In this second part multilingualism is often a resource to create humorous or comic situations[10].

A comparative analysis has been carried out between the original version of *Le Concert* and the dubbed versions for the French, Italian, and Spanish markets. So-called FIGS countries

[10] Despite the overall cheerful atmosphere that is typical of comedy, *Le concert* not only addresses a serious topic (the persecution of Jews in Communist Russia), but also contains some dramatic moments within its plot (see example 2). The Internet Movie Data Base (IMDb) defines this film both as a comedy and as a drama. Similarly, the DVD cover for the British market quotes the online magazine *Love Film* reviewing *The Concert* as follows: "A mixture of *heart* and *humour*, it strikes a sweet sounding high note" (emphasis added).

(France, Italy, Germany and Spain) are traditionally dubbing countries[11] (see Chaume 2007, 2012; Chiaro 2009). The study has also considered the subtitled version for the British market. The investigation has been deliberately extended to a country, the UK, which certainly has a longer tradition in subtitling than France, Italy or Spain, as to verify how consolidated expertise in subtitling, an alternative screen translation mode to dubbing, has coped with the multilingual situations present in the film. The versions of the film which have been examined are a total of five. They are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: different versions of the film analysed.

Market / Country	**Title**	**Version analysed**
France	*Le concert* *Le concert*	Original version (bilingual film) French dubbed version (monolingual film)
Italy	*Il concerto*	Italian dubbed version
Spain	*El concierto*	Spanish dubbed version
UK	*The Concert*	English subtitled version

The primary concern of the study is to verify:

- first, if the opposition between the two languages spoken in the film (Russian and French) is maintained or conveyed in translation (in particular, if dubbing countries have mirrored the original version by dubbing only one of two languages and subtitling the other into the target language or if they have opted for dubbing the whole film);
- second, if and how instances of broken French and accented French are rendered in translation.

In order to achieve the first goal, the analysis has taken into account all the scenes of the film whose dialogues are uttered in Russian (mainly the first part set in Moscow), which have been later compared with the different target versions in order to define the overall strategy adopted (preservation vs. neutralisation). In order to accomplish the second aim, the investigation has focused on those parts of the film in which an intercultural encounter is portrayed on screen. A total of 30 scenes have been isolated, in which Russian characters interact with French characters and thus speak broken French. Subsequently, these 30 scenes have been compared with the different target versions of the film. Although all the three dubbing countries have

[11] "[A]lthough traditional dubbing strongholds stand firm, there too subtitling markets are in rapid expansion: DVD technology, satellite and cable TV channels and digital television have produced the need for vast numbers of screen translations." (Chiaro 2009:143).

opted for dubbing the entire film with linguistic flattening as a result, they have adopted different solutions.

For the French-speaking countries, besides the original version of the film (in which Russian is translated into French via inter-lingual subtitles, while broken French is supported by intra-lingual subtitles), there is also a version whose dialogues are exclusively uttered in French. In this version, Russian is dubbed into French, whereas the French spoken by Russian actors in the second part of the film is revoiced by the dubbing actors in order to harmonise the voices, but with no alteration of the original dialogues (some of them speak broken French which is maintained as it was in the original version). So quite paradoxically and "confusingly" Russian characters manage to use French like native speakers when they are in Moscow, while, as soon as they move to Paris, their French suddenly becomes broken (see examples 1a and 2a). One might wonder whether this solution would not confuse viewers' perception of linguistic identities represented in the film. See in example 1 what happens when the French violinist Anne-Marie Jacquet first meets the Russian cellist Sacha at the Châtelet Theatre in Paris (instances of broken language are underlined):

EXAMPLE 1[12]	
Example 1a[13] Original version / French dubbed version (Russian in italics)	Back translation
Anne-Marie: N'arrêtez pas! C'est magnifique! Quel est votre nom, Monsieur? Sacha: Alexandre Abramovitch Grossman. Avoir pardon. C'est très beaucoup compliment pour moi! Pas bravo! C'est formidable difficile pour moi. Moi le plus pas bon de orchestre. Anne-Marie: Vous plaisantez? Sacha: Non, c'est vrai. Maestro me dit: "Répète, répète! Sacha, mauvais!" Les autres ne répètent jamais. Moi *da*! Moi... besoin répète beaucoup pour... bon le niveau.	Don't stop! That was wonderful! What's your name, sir? Alexandr Abramovitch Grossman. Have forgiveness. It's a lot compliment for me! Not good! It's a lot difficult for me. Me the most not good in orchestra. Are you kidding? No, it's true! Maestro tells me: "Rehearse, rehearse! Sacha, incorrect!" The others never rehearse. Me da! (yes). Me... need much rehearse to... good the level.
Example 1b Spanish dubbed version (Russian and French in italics)	Back translation
Anne-Marie: No. ¡ No se detenga! *C'est magnifique!* ¿Como se llama, señor?	No! Don't stop! *C'est magnifique!* (That is wonderful!) What's your name, sir?

[12] The original and French dubbed dialogues are extracted from the DVD *Le concert* (France Télévisions Distribution, 2009). The Spanish dubbed dialogues are extracted from the DVD *El concierto* (Savor Ediciones, 2010). The Italian dubbed dialogues are extracted from the DVD *Il concerto* (BIM, 2010). The English subtitles are extracted from the DVD *The Concert* (Optimum Realising, 2009).

[13] In examples 1 and 2 the original dialogues and the French dubbed dialogues coincide.

Sacha: Alexandre Abramovitch Grossman. *(Speaks Russian)* Lo siento mucho. Es un gran complido para mi! No bravo. *(Speaks Russian)* Es realmente dificil para mi. Yo no soy el más bueno de la orquesta Anne-Marie: ¿Está bromeando? Sacha: No, es cierto. El meastro me dice: "¡Ensaya, ensaya, Sacha! ¡Mal!" Los otros no esnayan nunca. ¡Yo sì! Yo necesito ensayar mucho para mejorar el nivel.	Alexandr Abramovitch Grossman. *(Speaks Russian)* I am so sorry. It's a very great compliment for me! I'm not good! It's very difficult for me. I am not the best in the orchestra. Are you kidding? No, it's true! Maestro tells me: "Rehearse, rehearse, Sacha! Bad!" The others never rehearse. I do! I need to rehearse a lot to improve my level.
Example 1c Italian dubbed version (Russian in italics)	Back translation
Anne-Marie: No, non smetta! E' molto bella! Quale è il suo nome, signore? Sacha: Alexandre Abramovitch Grossman. Perdo chiedo... Chiedo perdono. Molto complimento bello per me! Io no brava, cattiva! E' molto formidabile difficile per me. Io è il più meno bravo di orchestra. Anne-Marie: Scherza? Sacha: No, è veramente. Maestro me dice: "Prova, prova! Sacha, brutto!" Altri no prova mai. Io *da*! Io... bisogno prova molto per... per più migliore livella.	No, don't stop! It's wonderful! What's your name, sir? Alexandr Abramovitch Grossman. Pardon I beg... I beg your pardon. Very compliment beautiful for me! Me no good, bad! It's very incredible difficult for me. Me is the most least good of orchestra. Are you kidding? No, it's truly. Maestro tells to me: "Rehearse, rehearse! Sacha, bad!" Others no rehearse never. Me *da*! Me... need much rehearse for... for more better level.
Example 1d English subtitled version (each subtitle separated by a slash)	
Don't stop. That was wonderful. / What's your name? / Alexandr Abramovitch Grossman. Have forgiveness. / It's a lot compliment for me. / Not wonderful. / It's a lot difficult for me. / I'm the most not good in orchestra. / - Are you kidding? - No, it's true. / Maestro tell me, / "Rehearse. Rehearse, Sacha! No good." / Others never rehearse. / Me do. Me... / need much rehearse... / to good the level.	

The Spanish version has opted for the neutralisation of any linguistic difference by dubbing all the dialogues into standard Spanish (see examples 1b and 2b). Consequently, the Russians show no trace of foreign accent. Despite the general homogenised atmosphere, from time to time the film's characters resort to a few Russian or French words of immediate comprehension, such as terms of address (*Madame*, *Monsieur*), expressions of gratitude (*Merci*, *S'il vous plait*, *Spasiba*, *Puzhalsta*) and greetings (*Bonjour*, *Au revoir*), to simply hint

at linguistic diversity. This strategy has been defined as *evocation* (Bleichenbacher 2008:59-69) of foreign languages in film: it appears as a quite common feature of American multilingual films and can be easily applied also to the dubbed version of a multilingual film, as suggested by Labate (2013). This type of strategy represents a clear attempt at giving the audience a flavour of lingua-cultural otherness. As a consequence of the overall linguistic flattening, all the instances of broken language are erased in the Spanish version. For the scenes in which broken French is employed for humorous purposes, the Spanish dubbing tends to emphasise the comic aspect of the situation mainly through the dubbing actor's performance rather than through the language used in the dialogue (see example 1b).

The Italian version has taken a step further: it tries to combine a homogenising pressure (towards linguistic flattening) with a compensating attitude (towards lingua-cultural diversification). More precisely, all the Russian characters speak Italian with a broad would-be Russian accent throughout the film. The final result of this translational choice is that the delicate balance between humour and drama and between confusion and conflict, this film's distinctive feature, is altered, upset, lost in translation. Consequently, a comic or humorous effect is also extended to the most dramatic moments of the film, an effect which is not intended in the original version. This happens, for instance, when Sacha desperately tries to convince Anne-Marie not to cancel the scheduled concert (see example 2; instances of broken language are underlined).

EXAMPLE 2	
Example 2a Original version / French dubbed version (Russian in italics)	Back translation
Sacha: Il trop bu. Il ivre, raconter bêtises. Beaucoup émotion pour vous. Pas faire ça, pas annuler! S'il te plait! Concert le plus important pour lui. Si pas concert, mourir. Tuer lui. [...] Andrei le plus bon au monde. Brejnev... [...] Toute carrière à lui fini. Honneur fini. (*Speaks Russian*: C'est homme est un génie.) Mmm, un génie. Eux transformer lui en raté, en ivro... ivro..	He too much drunk. He drunk, talk nonsense. Too much emotion for you. No do this, no cancel! Please! Concert the most important for him. If no concert, die. Kill him. [...] Andrei, the most good in the world. Brezhnev... [...] His career over. His honour over. That man is a genius. Mmm, a genius! Them turn him into loser, into alco... alco...
Anne-Marie: Ivrogne.	Alcoholic.
Sacha: Ivrogne! Moi juif, comme...	Alcoholic! Me Jewish, like...
Anne-Marie: Lea et Yitzhak Strum. Je sais.	Lea and Yitzhak Strum, I know.
Sacha: Pas demander vous aimer Andrei. Just jouer violon. *Puzhalsta!* (S'il vous plait!) Venir jouer concert.	No ask you like Andrei. Just play violin. Please! Come play concert

Example 2b Spanish dubbed version (Russian and French in italics)	Back translation
Sacha: Él bebió demasiado. Contó muchas tonterías. Muchas emociones para usted. No haga eso. No lo anule. ¡Por favor! El concierto es lo más importante para él. Si no hay concierto, morirá. Se matará. [...] Andrei es el más bueno del mundo. Brezhnev... [...] Toda su carrera acabó. Su honor acabado. Ese hombre es un artista, un genio. Ellos lo convirtieron en un fracasado. En un... En un bor... bor...	He drank too much. He talked a lot of nonsense. Too many emotions for you. Don't do this. Don't cancel it! Please! This concert is the most important thing for him. If there is no concert, he will die. He will kill himself. [...] Andrei is the best man in the world. Brezhnev... [...] His career is over. His honour is over. That man is a real artist, a genius. They turned him into a loser, into a... into an alco... alco...
Anne-Marie: Borracho. En un borracho.	Alcoholic. Into an alcoholic.
Sacha: Sí, en un borracho. Yo soy judío como...	Yes, into an alcoholic. I'm Jewish like...
Anne-Marie: Lea e Yitzhak Strum. Lo sé.	Lea and Yitzhak Strum, I know.
Sacha: No le pido que ame a Andrei. Solo que toque el violín. *Puzhalsta!* Venga a tocar al concierto.	I don't ask you to like Andrei. I ask you to come and play the violin. Please! Come and play the concert
Example 2c Italian dubbed version (Russian in italics)	Back translation
Sacha: Lui troppo bere. Ubriaco. Dire stupidezze. Molto emozionato per te. Ma non fa. Non annula. Prego te! Concerto il più importante per lui. Non fa concerto, morire. Lei uccide lui. [...] Andrei più buono uomo di mondo. Brezhnev... [...] Carriera finita. Onore finito. Lui direttore più grande. Lui.. genio. Loro trasformato lui in fallito. Lui... aa.. acoli... alcoli..	He too much drink. Drunk. Talk nonsense. Too touched for you. But do not do. No cancel! I plead you! Concert the most important for him. No he play concert, die. You kill him. [...] Andrei most good man of the world. Brezhnev... [...] Career over. Honour over. He best conductor. He... genius. They turn him into loser, into alco... alco...
Anne-Marie: Alcolizzato. Alcolizzato.	Alcoholic. Alcoholic.
Sacha: Alcolizzato. Me ebreo come...	Alcoholic. Me Jewish, like...
Anne-Marie: Lea e Yitzhak Strum. Lo so.	Lea and Yitzhak Strum, I know.
Sacha: Io non chiedo lei ama Andrei. Solo suona violino. Per favore! Venire suonare concerto.	No ask you like Andrei. Just play violin. Please! Come play concert
Example 2d English subtitled version (each subtitle separated by a slash)	
He talk lot of nonsense. Too much emotion for you. / Don't do this! Don't cancel! Please! Very important concert for him. / If no concert, he die. Kill him. / [...] Andrei, the most good in the world. / - Brezhnev... [...] His career over. His honor over. / He is a genius! / A genius! / They turn him into loser, / into alco... / Alcoholic. / - Me Jewish like... - Lea /	

and Yitzhak Strum, I know. / I don't ask you like Andrei. / Just play violin. / Please. / Come play concert.

In the examples 1c and 2c Sacha's broken Italian, which closely mirrors the original broken French, is accompanied by a strong Russian intonation which sounds definitely overplayed by the dubbing actor. Compared to the French and Spanish versions, the Italian version has widely exploited the potential of resorting to accented Italian to mark the Russian identity, i.e. the "represented nationality" (Voellmer & Zabalbeascoa 2014:244). When dealing with foreign characters speaking the film's primary language, it is a fairly common practice for dubbing to reproduce a sort of "typical" or stereotypical accent that foreigners are presumed to have if trying to speak viewers' mother tongue (see De Bonis 2014c). This strategy is mainly adopted in the case of multilingual comedy with the aim of maintaining, or even increasing, the humorous effect present in the original version. The rationale behind this "creative" attitude lies in the fact that "[c]ertain genres, such as comedies, for example, are in a certain sense perceived as being detached from reality and therefore offer more room for 'unorthodox' solutions in film translation." (Heiss 2004:211).

What appears problematic in the Italian solution is that Russian characters end up speaking Italian with a broad would-be Russian accent throughout the film, even when they are in Russia and thus (supposedly) speaking their own mother tongue. In this case employing a stereotypical accent for the represented language proves to be an aspect which has been broadly overloaded, making the Italian dubbing made clearly visible to its viewers. As "viewers are creatures of habit" (Ivarsson 1992:66), dubbing normally tends to get unnoticed in dubbing countries. Viewers usually take this screen translation modality for granted, in the sense that they are willing to easily accept the "trick" through which the characters of a foreign film turn out to speak the audience's mother tongue instead of their own language. Upon the release of *Il concerto* into the Italian cinemas, harsh comments immediately proliferated on many web pages, social networks and blogs with their users complaining about the debatable choice made by the Italian dubbing, often defined as a bad solution, mediocre, inadequate, or even irritating.

Finally, the English subtitled version explores the more "creative" possibilities of subtitling by reproducing not only some aspects of oral speech, such as hesitations, repetitions, false

starts, verbal tics, that are generally erased in subtitling, but even some syntactic and semantic mistakes made by Russian characters speaking broken French (see examples 1d and 2d above). The original broken French is, thus, recreated in the English subtitles. These are certainly interesting innovations, if one thinks of the code of good practice generally associated with subtitling (see Ivarsson & Carrol 1998; Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007). Nonetheless, the English version by no means differentiates between the two languages of the film; nor does it graphically signal the instances of broken English which appear in the subtitles as any other occurrence of standard English.

Critical observations on translating multilingualism on screen

As the examples have shown, dubbing a multilingual film entirely into one single language inevitably leads to homogenisation, in the sense that the different cultural identities present on screen turn out to be deprived of their linguistic component. As a result, in the dubbed version anything that happens on screen is immediately comprehensible both to characters and to the film's audience. Neutralising the different languages present in the original version of a film necessarily implies the partial rewriting and/or adaptation of the dialogues in those scenes in which the film portrays communicative problems due to linguistic incomprehension (see for instance the case of broken language translated into standard Spanish in example 1b). This may lead the dubbed dialogues to suffer from linguistic inconsistency, narrative implausibility and any sort of oddity (see for instance the French dubbed dialogue in examples 1a and 2a).

Bilingual films such as *Le concert* undoubtedly represent a challenging material for dubbing, especially when both languages share the same qualitative and quantitative presence on screen. With regard to *Le concert*, a combination of both dubbing and subtitling might have been a preferable strategy to follow as an alternative way to manage the bilingual dimension that characterises the film. This way, the translated version might have mirrored the original version of the film more closely. Despite being a European coproduction, the film can easily be considered a French film. Therefore, a standard of prevalence could have been applied, thus subtitling Russian (which is prevalent in the first part of the film) and dubbing French (which becomes more present in the second part) into the target language.

However, this immediately turns out to be a possible solution only theoretically speaking, since dubbing has to face a technical constraint: the problem of harmonising the voices, the

voice of the original actor with that of the dubbing actor. If a dubbing actor had revoiced a Russian character as he or she speaks French in the second part of the film, viewers would have immediately noticed the inevitable difference between the voice that character had before in the first part while speaking Russian (subtitled into Italian or Spanish) and the one he or she has now[14]. The risk is that the suspension of the disbelief, upon which dubbing is built as a screen translation modality, could be compromised, leading to viewers' confusion and producing what Chiaro (2008:9; 2009:156), using the supply of energy as a metaphor, would call a "lingua-cultural drop in translation voltage" on what they are watching on screen. This way dubbing's artifice ends up being inexorably revealed.

In order to avoid such a risk a theoretical solution would be to have the Russian dialogues revoiced by dubbing actors and simultaneously subtitled into the target language. To the author's knowledge, the only multilingual film in which Russian is partially revoiced by Italian dubbing actors is the dubbed version of the American film *Defiance* (Edward Zwick, 2008), in which Russian, however, remains a secondary language and thus has a reduced presence on screen as opposed to English, the film's primary language. Not only does revoicing a more "exotic" language necessarily mean casting dubbing actors able to speak or at least to acoustically reproduce or imitate the language at issue, but it also entails a huge problem of cost effectiveness, which is an essential concern in the dubbing industry nowadays (see Paolinelli & Di Fortunato 2005). Moreover, revoicing some non-Western European languages may become a difficult task, simply because there may be no bilingual actor available to do so. Nonetheless, this appears a new feasible solution for dubbing multilingual films[15]. The production, the distribution and the consequent translation of multilingual films is increasing: it appears necessary to carefully observe and study the future solutions the dubbing industry can provide to cope with multilingualism on screen in order to verify if such a new way will be followed in a more systematic fashion.

[14] This is what happens, for instance, in the Italian version of *The Great Dictator* (1940) by Charlie Chaplin: while English is dubbed into Italian, the great dictator's imaginary language – acoustically similar to German –is maintained in its original version, inevitably producing a perceptible gap between the two voices.
[15] To the author's knowledge, the only case in which a non-Western European language, namely Romanian, is considerably revoiced again by Italian dubbing actors is the film *The Human Resources Manager* (Eran Riklis, 2010): Hebrew, the main language, is dubbed into Italian, while English and Romanian, the secondary languages, are revoiced again by the Italian dubbing actors, when spoken by the same characters who also speak Hebrew, and then subtitled into Italian.

Conclusion

This study has explored the different ways devised by audiovisual translators to deal with the multilingual situations present in the film *Le concert*, with a specific focus on the different solutions adopted in the dubbed versions produced for French, Italian and Spanish markets. The comparative analysis has, thus, revealed several factors involved in the overall homogenising attitude which seems to characterise all the dubbed versions: textual elements (bilingual characters, use of broken French for humorous purposes), technical constraints (casting dubbing actors able to revoice Russian), economic factors (cost-effectiveness in revoicing secondary languages plus subtitling them). Another crucial element might be represented by an ideological stance taken by each national dubbing industry not only to overtly censor the linguistic diversity of the planet, but also (and foremost) to protect its core business from the aggression of a new competitor in the field, subtitling agencies.

The latter consideration brings to light an important point up for discussion: the paramount role of external factors that may influence, and sometimes even "force", the audiovisual translation process, namely the distributor of the film[16]. This is an aspect that has not been considered very much until now in audiovisual translation studies (exceptions are Romero Fresco 2013 and de Higes 2014a), but that certainly deserves more attention as it may shed more light on how contextual elements may considerably affect the decisions taken by dubbing professionals. Multilingual films, in this respect, represent an illuminating material to analyse as the decision to entirely dub a multilingual film generally do not depend on the translator and/or dubbing director alone, but rather on the distributor of the film in each country, a distributor who may know nothing about the complex audiovisual translation process and the delicate questions that multilingualism raises on screen.

To conclude, although combining dubbing with other screen translation modalities, namely subtitling, would undoubtedly demand greater economic efforts by each national audiovisual translation industry as well as new synergies between different agents working in the field, "[a] version which had subtitles and dubbing built into it would place greater demands on the

[16] According to both Alessandro Rossi, the director of the Italian dubbing, and Marcello De Bellis, the responsible for the Italian version at BIM Distribuzione (the distribution company), the stratagem of resorting to accented Italian for Russian characters throughout the film was used with the approval of Mihăileanu himself who, according to them, even encouraged it. Their statements (in Italian) can be read on the online magazine *aSinc* (<http://www.asinc.it>), which deals with criticism of the art of dubbing. In particular at the following web page in which the Italian dubbing of *Le concert* has been harshly reviewed: [http://www.asinc.it/rec_dtt_00.asp?Id=261] (accessed 18 December 2014).

audience but would correspond more closely to the cultural diversity presented in the film" (Heiss 2004:215-216) and eventually it would avoid some exaggerated alterations of a multilingual film as it happened with both the Italian and the French dubbed versions of *Le concert.* At the same time, when it comes to subtitling a multilingual film, some much more innovative solutions seem to be advisable than the ones adopted so far, such as the use of different colours and/or fonts to match the presence of different languages.

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