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## **MULTILINGUALISM IN AUDIOVISUAL TEXTS FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING AUDIENCE**

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**Summary.** A great variety of original audiovisual (AV) texts such as films, television series, teletext, videogames, live performances may include more than one language as an outcome of the director's initial intension. The producers of the AV texts tend to portray specific cultural aspects with different linguistic variations, which are also related to particular stylistic, pragmatic or discursive functions. In certain cases, translators of such AV texts face serious challenges. One of the thorny problems arises with the adaptation of the multilingual AV texts to the deaf and hard of hearing audience. Different strategies and methods of employing the multilingual AV texts for the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing audience have been adopted in various countries; however, nowadays Lithuania has only taken its first steps in developing a unified system of working out translating and subtitling strategies of the AV texts in general. This article aims at discovering professional translation and subtitling practices along with the norms, criteria and strategies of this specific translation activity in Lithuania and abroad. Firstly, the existing overseas reality of the translation and subtitling of multilingual AV texts is described and afterwards the tendencies within the Lithuanian adaptations of AV texts are discussed.

**Keywords:** audiovisual text; multilingualism; subtitling; subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing; subtitling strategies in multilingual films.

### **Introduction**

Nowadays AV products, such as teletext, videogames, films, live performances, are closely associated with audiovisual translation (AVT). Alongside dubbing or voice-over, subtitling may be considered as a fairly effective and economically beneficial way to deliver AV texts to the spectator. Technological innovations give rise to new tendencies in providing AV products to the specific audience, who can "watch" the film by reading linguistic, paralinguistic and auditory information encoded in subtitles. The translation practice of the AV material by adapting subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing has been effectively used worldwide. However, in Lithuania the concept of subtitling AV products for the deaf and hard of hearing viewers of providing access to this socio-cultural group to the AV material, thereby diminishing social exclusion has only taken its first steps. As concerns empirical research, there have been but a few scientific studies dealing

with the Lithuanian subtitling practice adapted to the deaf and hard of hearing audience. The greatest contribution to this scientific field has been made by competent lecturers and BA and MA students majoring in Audiovisual Translation at Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty. This article aims to present an overview of professional translation and subtitling practices along with the norms, criteria and strategies of this specific translation activity in Lithuania and abroad. The subject matter of the paper is subtitles in multilingual films adapted to the hearing-impaired audience. The paper reviews AVT and subtitling of multilingual AV texts. Tendencies in Lithuanian adaptations of AV texts, subtitling techniques and potential subtitling versions, as researched by undergraduate students of Audiovisual Translation are herein discussed. For the analysis, seven feature films with multilingual aspects were selected ("Barber of Siberia" (1998), "Two days in Paris" (2007), "Vicky Christina Barcelona" (2008), "The Schindler's List" (1993), "Solino" (2002), "Joyeux Noël" (2005), "Bitter Sweet" (2009)) and different strategies for preparing specialised subtitling and applying effective ways to render the principal idea have been established.

### **Nature of Audiovisual Texts**

In modern science a novel tendency has become apparent in the investigation of the relationship between the sensory capacities of the human body and the modes of social and cultural organization has appeared. According to Cage (1961), vision and hearing are the "public senses" which are most intensely engaged by the mass media. Moreover, the rapidly developing communication technologies and the increasing number of produced films gave rise to the fastest growing tendency of AV text analysis, which encompasses "a verbal-iconic construct that transmits codified information via two channels: acoustic, through sound waves, and visual, through light signals (Varela, 2004, p. 41). Audiovisuality is closely related to cinematography, which may be regarded as a particular bipolar communicative socio-cultural process between spectators and producers. Since the popularity of AV products has lately increased, translation of cinematographic products has become a predominant demand in modern society. As stated by Diaz Cintas, "AVT is innate to humankind in general; people have been translating the audio/visual world which they live in from time immemorial"

(Diaz Cintas, 2010, p. 13). However, translation of the AV products seems to be a multi-layered phenomenon. From the semiotic point of view, cinematic language is a complex phenomenon, as it is “not only codified linguistically, but also through numerous codes that contribute to making up the final message. The former consists of linguistic, paralinguistic, musical, special effects and sound arrangement codes, whereas visual codes include iconographic, photographic, graphic, planning, syntactic or montage, and mobility codes” (Varela, 2004, p. 42). Thus, AVT may be regarded as the translation of the synchronized correlation of verbal and non-verbal components of a cinematographic product. To translate the AV text is a big challenge for professionals since they have to work with different types of AV constituents, namely with a verbal text, sound effects, a visual platform, and possibly with a specific atmosphere of the AV text. Gotlieb (1998) highlights the complexity of the text by distinguishing the main channels of information closely related to the AV text translation: *verbal audio channel* (dialogues, off-screen voices, songs); *non-verbal audio channels* (music, sound effects, off-screen sounds); *verbal and visual channel* (subtitles, signs, notes, inscriptions that appear on the screen); *non-verbal visual channel* (picture on the screen). Co-existence of various semantic signs provides transfer from one semiologic complex to another one in AVT and “the equality of the translation as such covers not only equivalence between the linguistic elements in two languages but also an adequate link between verbal and non-verbal structures separately in the original work and its translation” (Matkivska, 2014, p. 39). This leads to the multimodal understanding of the AV texts which may be considered as a particular type of interaction between language and other communication modes within the text.

### **Multilingualism in Audiovisual Communication**

Language diversity is not a surprising phenomenon in today’s globalized world. There has been a rising tendency to describe cultural idiosyncrasy by creating multilingual audiovisual products due to increasing migration, changes in cultural orientation and cultural familiarization. Since modern society is getting “a multicultural and multilingual melting pot, the means of communication are

becoming increasingly multimodal, multidimensional and multilingual" (Diaz Cintas, 2011, p. 215). The researcher rightly points out that:

"Language contacts have become commonplace and multilingualism does not seem to be perceived as an obstacle to communication but as a different way of communicating. And, as a reflection of this reality and an attempt to instil veracity in the stories, the film industry is presenting the viewers with more production where several languages are spoken and different cultures area represented" (Diaz Cintas, 2011, p. 215).

Traditionally, multilingual films may be considered as such in which at least two languages are spoken, by a single character or, more commonly, by several characters and which include intralingual variations such as dialects, sociolects, slang, pidgin and invented languages (Diaz Cintas, 2011; Delabastita, 2005). Multilingualism in films and other AV texts was originally used as a rhetorical device. Though at present, it is a great instrument for the description of both cultural understanding and cultural misunderstanding, for the indication of idiosyncrasy, portrayal of diverse social, cultural and personal aspects of characters. According to Diaz Cintas (2011), multilingual technique in polyglot films can be used to create the sense of differentiation between something that is known and what is alien among the film characters and/or to add certain exotic aspects to the plot. Another function of multilingualism in the film is the effect of humour. In this case, different languages evoke humorous or even anecdotal situations in which characters fail to understand each other, which leads to the comic consequences (Wahl, 2005). In such cases, multilingual films reflect the real life and describe modern society. Different languages, dialects and accents used by characters in multilingual films help to represent the prototypical people existing in reality. Another reason for multilingualism in films is associated with financial factors. Multilingual films are often shot in international co-productions with the financial support lended from international institutions and production companies. In 1991, the Media programme of the EU for the European AV industry set its main objectives "to strive for a stronger European AV sector, reflecting and respecting Europe's cultural identity and heritage" (European Commission, online) and has therefore supported "the distribution of nine out of every ten feature films in Europe distributed outside their country of origin and

lends its support to some 300 new European film projects every year" (Diaz Cintas, 2011, p. 219). Thus, both the financial support and the success of the film are closely related to multilingualism, which gives a great opportunity to reflect the European cultural identity and divergence in the AV production. As regards the functions of different languages in polyglot films, multilingualism may be analyzed from four key perspectives: narrative, aesthetic, stylistic and culture-descriptive.

The problem of multilingual translation has been tackled by a number of scientists. Some theorists hold that from the traditional point of view such translation is invidious and seems unresolved (Derrida, 1985; Lewis, 2003). Lewis argues that "there is no definite procedure for the translation of a continuum, and the translator's focus should be geared towards the situational, social and cultural contexts of the receiver of the translation" (Lewis, 2003, p. 419). Other researchers (Stratford, 2008; Pym, 2004) treat multilingual translation as an increasing phenomenon in the globalized world, where non-standard varieties of languages and situational, socio-cultural contexts reflecting the reality should be taken into account. As Meylaerts (2006, p. 5) observes, translation can no longer be considered as "the *full* transposition of *one* (monolingual) source code into *another* (monolingual) target code for the benefit of a *monolingual* target public". What is more, the determination to translate all the different languages is associated with the value that multilingual aspects have in the film. As Diaz Cintas (2011) points out, the quantitative element (the occurrence and extent to which different languages are used in the film) is substantial. He argues that "if languages recur regularly they should be translated in such a way that the target viewer is aware of the language difference"; however, if the second or third language is spoken only occasionally, "the decision can be taken according to the qualitative importance intended by that language plurality in the film" (2011, p. 220).

Despite this, the translation of multilingual films is closely associated with the translation mode, i.e. ways of translation differentiated by "the technical means used to perform the linguistic transfer of a text from one language to another" (Bartolomé & Cabrera, 2005). When multilingual films are transferred into another language or languages, three key AVT modes may be used:

- *dubbing*, which may be defined as a certain replacement of “the original track of a film’s (or any audiovisual text’s) source language dialogues with another track on which translated dialogues have been recorded in the target language” (Chaume, 2012, p. 1);

- *subtitling*, which may be treated as “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)” (Diaz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 8);

- *voice-over*: “simultaneous emission of the original soundtrack and the translation track” (Franco, Matamala & Orero, 2010, p. 5).

In addition to the above-mentioned translation modes, in some cases two other translation modes may be applied: *non-translation* (when the dialogue is left untranslated) and *double translation* (when the dialogue or message is translated twice, by combining two of the translation modes) (De Higes-Andino, 2014). The choice of the translation mode typically depends on the specificity of the target audience, the function of different spoken languages within the film and the stylistic colouring in polyglot films.

The translation of AV production is important to the deaf and hard of hearing audience, as it is a rather exclusive category of viewers. Due to their impaired audibility only subtitling is the most appropriate mode enabling to communicate the plot of the film. To avoid inadequacy in translation, Wahl (2005, p. 12) suggests that translators should use subtitles in polyglot films, since the films “are anti-illusionist in the sense that they do not try to hide diversity of human life behind the mask of a universal language”. Thus, comprehension of multimodal films should be made available for this socially excluded group which has its own way of seeing, understanding and expressing the real world.

### **Subtitling as the Mode of Film Comprehension for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Full access to AV media for the deaf and hard of hearing is of great importance. The number of people of this social group is constantly growing. Neves (2005,

p. 79) notes that in 2015 over 90 million adults were affected by a hearing loss in Europe and 13% of all population were affected in the USA. According to the statistical records published by the World Health Organization (2017), at present the data are more staggering. Over 5% worldwide – 360 million people – have a disabling hearing loss, 32 million of them are children; 1.1 billion of young people (aged between 12-35 years) are at risk of a hearing loss. (Approximately one third of people over 65 years of age are affected by this disability.) Therefore, it may be concluded that 1% to 5% of population of any country are deaf or hearing-impaired. The evident statistics “clearly call for a more consistent and systematic approach to making AV production possible for viewers with sensory impairment to gain access to television and other media” (Diaz Cintas, 2009, p. 5). Originally, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (sometimes called as (closed) captioning) was used to gain access only to the main AV programs, to provide them with essential information. Nowadays deaf and hard of hearing people are involved in the AV landscape in order to ensure greater understanding of everything that is produced on the screen. Subtitles are said to be effective when they do not disturb the viewers. For this to be achieved, subtitles need to reach a high level of readability and employ the technical, spatial, temporal and presentational constraints.

### ***Technical Constraints of Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH)***

Irrespective of the technical requirements for subtitles used for the hearing viewer, certain spatial constraints should be adapted for SDH. Firstly, a limited number of lines allowed for a subtitle leaves no space for long explanations. Typically, two lines of the text are used and the number of characters per line can vary depending on the number of factors such as the format of the video, the size of the video subject, subtitling workstation, requirements set by film production or broadcasting companies. For instance, following BBC requirements, in the broadcast platform 37 characters and less with a coloured text (in the subtitles) should be used; in PAL video no more than 34 characters per line should be employed while in NTSC video between 40 and 45 characters may be used. To achieve a high level of readability, an ideal subtitle is one sentence long, with its clause placed on separate lines (Diaz Cintas & Remeal, 2007, pp. 172–180).

For the deaf and hard of hearing audience it is highly recommended to convert the oral content of the actors' dialogues into written speech by using subtitles of up to three, or occasionally four, lines. The text typically includes different colours to mark either a person who is talking or the emphasis given to certain words within the same subtitle (Diaz Cintas, 2010, p. 347). (See Figure 1, left panel) Besides, in the dialogue subtitles should incorporate all paralinguistic information that "contributes to the development of the plot or to the creation of atmosphere, which a deaf person cannot access from the soundtrack, e.g. telephone ringing, laughter, applause, a knock on the door, etc." (Diaz Cintas, 2009, p. 5) (See Figure 1, right panel).



**Fig. 1. An excerpt from films "Barber of Siberia" (left panel) and "Joyeux Noël" (right panel): subtitles prepared by K. Meilūnaitė and G. Pliatkutė.**

Considering *the temporal constraints*, the length of a subtitle is directly related to its on-air time. Accurate in and out timing<sup>14</sup> is worth its weight in gold, and the text in the subtitles should be in balance with the appropriate reading time setting. It is very important that viewers are always given enough time to read subtitles. As the deaf and hard of hearing viewers' reading rate is different a lower word per minute or a character per minute setting is applied.

*Presentational constraints* are related to the positioning of subtitles on the screen. Normally, subtitles have to take approximately 20% of the screen space.

<sup>14</sup> *In /Out Timing* (also *spotting*) is the process of defining the duration (in and out times) of individual subtitles.

“The main factors for their legibility are the size of characters, their position on screen, as well as the technology used for the projection of subtitles in the cinema, TV broadcast, DVD emulation, etc., as it affects their definition. These technical constraints determine subtitlers’ work practice and their linguistic choices” (Georgakopoulou, 2009, p. 22). Considering the position of the subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing people, traditionally subtitles are displayed at the bottom of the screen; although they can be exposed at the top of the screen if there is a text at the bottom.

### ***Aspects of Multilingual Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing***

In subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing viewers, language transfer encompasses two modes: from speech to writing and from the soundtrack and portrayed aural plot of the film to the written subtitles. On the one hand, as Neves (2009) points out, interlingual subtitles as traditional subtitles present translation between two different languages; though, on the other hand, they adapt and turn multiple aural messages such as speech, sounds, music, etc. into a visual (most often verbal) substitution for the information that cannot be perceived by people with hearing impairment. In this case, subtitles function as a particular translation conception which presents the ideas the filmmaker has in mind and are tailored to the needs of the special audience via adequate contextual effects. Gutt (1991, p. 377) considers “if we ask how translation should be expressed, the answer is: it should be expressed in such a manner that it yields the intended interpretation without putting the audience to unnecessary processing effort”. In contrast to the hearing audience, interlingual subtitles for the deaf viewers should not only expose translation of the SL but also narrate the cultural context of the original AV text. In other words, interlingual subtitles should be nearly similar to the intralingual subtitles which give additional information about various aural aspects, paralinguistic features, music effects, etc. Apart from traditionally used subtitles for cinema and television multilingual subtitles, in which the translated text appears in more than one language, Ivarsson (1992, p. 35) identifies multilingual subtitles as a special filmmaker’s undertaking used for film viewers or a special request to present the multimodal subtitles for the hard of hearing or deaf audience. In the process of subtitling

multilingual films for the hearing-impaired audience Szarkowska, Żbikowska and Krejtz (2013) made an attempt to theorize the process of producing specialized subtitles for multilingual production and proposed a set of strategies which could tackle multilingualism in subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) in the most effective way. The authors recommended employing five key strategies for preparing specialized subtitling and applying efficient ways to render the idea of the film:

- *Vehicular matching.* The strategy of subtitling when the transcribed version of a foreign language spoken in the film (without any translation and identification) is shown; e.g. *Guten Tag; Bonjour.*
- *Translation together with explicit attribution.* In this case, the dialogue of a foreign language is translated, and a foreign language is indicated, e.g. *[IN GERMAN] Good morning;*
- *Translation and colour-coding.* In the subtitles the translated message is performed, and the text is colour-coded, e.g. *Good morning;*
- *Explicit attribution.* It is indicated that a foreign language is spoken, e.g. *[IN GERMAN];*
- *Linguistic homogenization.* It is the case when the marking of a foreign language in the dialogue is avoided at all, e.g. *Good morning.*

Usually, the translator is unable to stick to a single strategy throughout the film, since films are dynamic in nature, and anything too static would rob the author as well as the audience of the artistic load of the film. Such complexity of the multilingual world of the film, especially within the framework of specialized translation, is the platform for researchers to come up with different solutions.

Specialists also noted that the hard of hearing viewers prefer having more, rather than less, information about a foreign dialogue in multilingual films, and translation together with explicit attribution and vehicular matching are preferred strategies. According to the professionals, such dominant strategies could help the hearing-impaired viewers follow dialogues and comprehend the plot of the film.

## **Tendencies in Multilingual Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Lithuania**

Although subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing has become a common practice throughout the Western countries, Lithuania has only taken its first steps towards theorizing and using this subtitling technique in television broadcasting and cinema. The inclusion process is rather slow and complex. However, the first studies within the research field are being performed. Since the material of Lithuanian subtitles is still insufficient for the substantial scientific analysis and comparison, undergraduate students of Audiovisual Translation at Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty collected the most ambiguous cases of a number of multilingual films and made an attempt to prepare specialized subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing audience by applying five techniques presented in Szarkowska's article (2013). The practical study has uncovered a number of situations where the complexity of the AV text calls for the modification of the strategies by mixing or transforming them. Also, the students identified certain limitations of each of the strategy. The samples were extracted from the following multilingual films: "Barber of Siberia" (1998), "Two days in Paris" (2007), "Vicky Christina Barcelona" (2008), "The Schindler's List" (1993), "Solino" (2002), "Joyeux Noël" (2005) and "Bitter Sweet" (2009).

Multilingualism in SDH is most commonly represented by applying *the strategy of explicit attribution*, which consists of explicitly telling the viewers that a character speaks another language, as in [speaks Lithuanian] and (IN LITHUANIAN). It is usually employed when the film director's intention is to give a very strong alienation feeling to the viewers, when the meaning of utterance is not essential (or decoded through extra-linguistic information or context). Here the audible experience of a foreign language, the gestures and sounds which accompany the sound play a more important role. For the deaf viewers, this strategy is unfortunate since they cannot hear the utterance; they are only presented with the fact as to which language is used at the moment of speaking. Usually, in such events the script is not informative for the SDH translator, since it does not include the transcription of what is being said in a foreign language. Therefore, a translator may have alternative solutions: s/he can either be confident of his or her own linguistic competence in that foreign language and

produce translation/ transcription of the utterance, or follow the official script of the film and only provide the indication of the language of the utterance. In this case, a subtitler might include a portion of additional information on the tone of the voice, the “feel” of the utterance, etc. In the subtitles presented below, the expressions and songs in foreign languages are not translated; and the strategy of explicit attribution is used to indicate the fact that the man speaks in French (left panel) and the woman is singing in Thai (right panel).



[He is speaking in French]



[She is singing in Thai]

**Fig. 2. An excerpt from films “Barber of Siberia” and “Bitter Sweet”  
(prepared by I. Višinskaitė and G. Grunda)**

In Lithuanian subtitles as well as in foreign ones *the vehicular matching strategy* has been employed when introducing common foreign phrases, such as “Hello” or “Thank you” with an aim to educate the viewers. There are some cases when it is used to pay attention to the film director’s ambition to give the film the effect of alienation, foreignness. O’Sullivan (2011, p. 25), however, points out the main shortage of the strategy, basically because it “puts considerable processing strain on the viewer”. However, the hearing audience may experience a similar strain by hearing words that do not mean more to them than a meaningless audible utterance. This brings us to the conclusion that viewers, either hearing or deaf, should be given the possibility to experience the “strain” intended by the director, though achieved through different mediums. In such events the translator-subtitler must be certain that the alienating foreign utterance will give the artistic value to the film or that it can be decoded either with the help of extra-linguistic context, i.e. facial expressions, movements, or by the information uttered later in

the scene. In the latter case, the translator can be certain to include a subtitle in a foreign language being aware that the viewers will not be robbed of the information; on the contrary, they may even be given the opportunity to learn a word in a foreign language. The case is presented in Figure 3, where a man asks in English (the main language of the film) the meaning of a French word "lapin" (left panel), then another French speaking character imitates a bunny and later on translates the word into English. Thus, the subtitles may include the foreign word, since the meaning of this word is expressed both verbally and visually.



What is this *lapin*?

A rabbit

**Fig. 3. An excerpt from the film "Two days in Paris" (subtitles prepared by V. Lideikytė)**

Since the audible utterances do not contribute anything to a deaf person's experience of the film, a subtitler should consider the possibilities of employing different stylistic devices to *colour* the utterances (e.g. uncovering the dialect, way of speaking, play on words). When the hearing audience have two different languages interplaying through different channels, the deaf viewers should be given the chance to "experience" both languages in the form of subtitles. For instance, Figure 4 presents a situation when a French speaking man stutters when communicating in English and is unable to pronounce the expression "white wine". Instead, he mixes the French expression "vin blanc" with the English one. Therefore, the translator is given the chance to play with language and in this way to transmit the miscommunication happening in the film.



Sauce? Blan wine... Blanc wine.



White wine? Vin blanc. No, wine white?

**Fig. 4. An excerpt from the film "Two days in Paris"  
(subtitles prepared by V. Lideikytė)**

In Figure 5 the situation is slightly different, since the sentence uttered in Spanish is quite long and complicated for a person who does not speak Spanish. However, the script does not include any explanations. The woman (left panel) tries to speak Spanish, though struggling. In the following scene (right panel) the man explains that his dad refused to speak any other language. This effect of alienation is transmitted through subtitles and contributes to the overall experience of the situation through the woman's character.



Buenos días. Qué casa tan bonita.



He refuses to speak any other language.  
That's an important point with my father,  
actually.

**Fig. 5. An excerpt from the film "Vicky Cristina Barcelona"  
(subtitles prepared by V. Vaitkūnaitė)**

Figure 6 represents a scene where a broader context is presented to the deaf audience. The subtitles indicate that a priest can be heard praying in the background. Since the prayer is produced in the original Latin language, the

viewers are informed about that in brackets and presented with the original text heard in the church.



(the priest is praying in Latin):

**Fig. 6. An excerpt from the film "The Schindler's List" (subtitles prepared by R. Kudirka)**

Another of the most commonly applied strategies in the practice of subtitling multilingual films used with the Lithuanian audience with special needs is *Translation together with explicit attribution*. Translators decide to take up this strategy after considering the script of the film or checking whether the original DVD of the film includes burnt-in subtitles for film excerpts where characters speak another language. If this happens to be the case, the idea of the film is to showcase the multilingualism by including utterances in a foreign language; however, the additional aspects of meaning of the utterance are missed out. Therefore, all viewers are granted with subtitles in the original language of the film. In this case, a producer of SDH is given a hint as to what strategy to employ. The deaf and hard of hearing viewers are deprived of hearing the soundtrack of a film; however, they are informed when the language changes and would be able to follow the storyline without any obstacles. A subtitler might also include the script of a foreign language utterance in the subtitles; however, this strategy may only be employed if the formal constraints of a subtitle allow this possibility.

The example in Figure 7 presents a scene in a film where an utterance is produced in French though the film's language is English. Since the script of the film includes this text, the translator decided to give the viewers a translation of the utterance and to inform them of the language switch. As the utterance does

not include any play on words and is of no particular importance, transcription is not employed.



[FRENCH] Careful, it's steaming hot.

*Fig. 7. An excerpt from the film "Two days in Paris" (subtitles prepared by V. Lideikytė)*

Sometimes multilingual films include multiple languages with one predominant language. Therefore, the subtitler faces another challenge associated with the fact of the so called "visual noise", which may occur while indicating different languages (in addition to the language of the film) in one subtitle. This case is presented in Figure 8, where a man (left panel) switches languages in one utterance, i.e., in one subtitle. Indication of the languages overloads the subtitle; though it is questionable whether it would be reasonable to.



Bravo. [English] Congratulations. [French] Las Vegas. A brave move.

To the airport.  
[English] Where?

*Fig. 8. An excerpt from the film "Two days in Paris" (subtitles prepared by V. Lideikytė)*

The strategy *Translation and colour-coding* is a rather complicated solution for preparing SDH, since sometimes the connection between the language and the colour attributed to it may not be clearly understood, and there is always a problem for viewers to remember which colour is associated with a certain language. What is more, here the sense of foreignness may be lost because every pronounced word or phrase sounds the same. Under such circumstances may the viewers be robbed of puns, play on words, miscommunications, etc. Moreover, if a subtitler decides to mark characters by using colour, the strategy will lose its value. On the other hand, colour-coding saves space and more information may be transmitted through a single subtitle. If the colours are clearly presented at the beginning of the film, this strategy might be quite economical. (see Figure 8).



Sir, I don't speak English.

Alright? Double. And a Max fries, and Pepsi.

**Fig.9. An excerpt from the film "Two days in Paris"  
(subtitles prepared by E. Jonaitytė)**

Here the man (left panel) speaks English, while the woman (right panel) does not understand English, she can only speak in French. Since the utterances do not mingle, the colour-coding is of great use.

The study has shown that in cases when in his speech the character decides to mix languages, translation and colour-coding seems questionable since it is complicated for the hearing-impaired people to remember which colour denotes a particular language throughout the film. Also, such colouring of subtitles gives "visual noise" rather than maintains clear readability for viewers. The example of such case is presented in Figure 10, where the man's (left panel) utterance is half English, half Russian, or half German, half Italian (right panel).

In this case colour coding does not contribute to the information about switching languages or multilingualism, in general. In this particular case, the translator's comment explaining the switch in brackets might be regarded to be a solution.

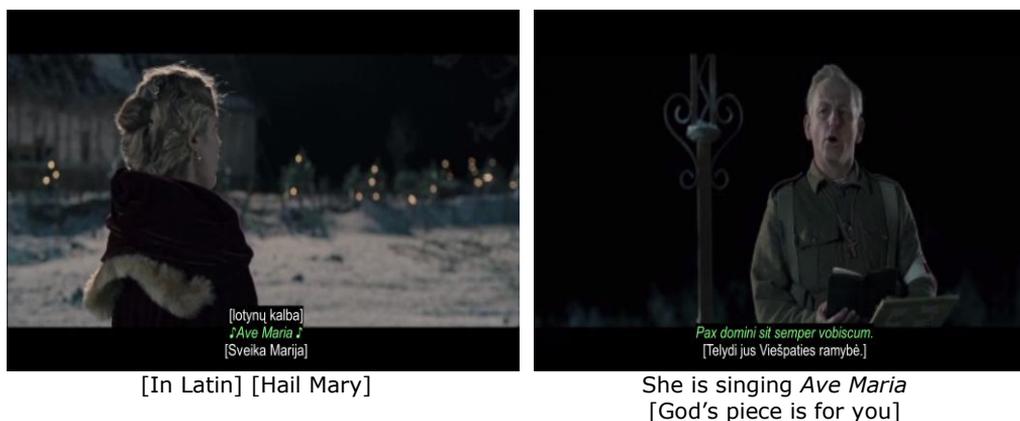


[he is shouting] Take him out

Son, you have got secondary education.

**Fig. 10. An excerpt from films "The Barber of Siberia" and "Solino":  
(subtitles prepared by A. Paulauskaitė and I. Višinskaitė)**

Apart from the employed subtitling strategies to illustrate the multilingual effect in subtitles for the hearing-impaired people as well as ensuring the comprehensive understanding of the plot of the film, the students applied mixed subtitling strategies, such as vehicular matching and translation with explicit attribution, or translation with colour-coding. Some examples are presented below.



[In Latin] [Hail Mary]

She is singing *Ave Maria*  
[God's piece is for you]

**Fig.11. An excerpt from the film "Joyeux Noël"  
(subtitles prepared by G. Pliatkutė)**

In the analysis of subtitling strategies of multilingual films employed for the deaf and hard of hearing viewers, one predominant tendency has been established. The subtitling strategy of *linguistic homogenization* has been avoided because the film may be at risk of losing its verisimilitude and “hide the diversity of human life behind the mask of a universal language” (Wahl, 2005, p. 2). The strategy provides the hearing-impaired viewers with a translation; however, subtitles do not signal that a foreign language is spoken. If no switch of language is marked, a deaf person is deprived of the very essence of a multilingual film, i.e. of linguistic variety. Moreover, the strategy does not challenge the translator, and hence, does not provide any material for the research.

### **Conclusions**

In the recent centuries multilingualism as a phenomenon has flashed across the cultures and impacted them greatly on all possible levels. Including the AV production in the study of translation of multilingual films in SDH has translators and subtitlers to search for novel ways to adapt the AV material for the hearing-impaired viewers with a minimum deprivation to uncover various encoded aspects. Specialized subtitling, as a mode of AVT, is a most effective way to portray foreign multilingual films for the deaf and hard of hearing people and is extensively employed worldwide. In Lithuania the hearing-impaired people are still not adequately involved in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the country. Therefore, subtitles would be the recourse for the hearing-impaired people so that they would have access to information, follow dialogues, be familiar with different cultural aspects, and broaden their minds.

Accordingly, the subtitling technique for the deaf and hard of hearing is a pioneering way to render the text in multilingual films. The strategies, as proposed by Sharkowska et al. (2013), have been applied when preparing Lithuanian subtitles by the undergraduate students of Audiovisual Translation for different multilingual films in order to test the flexibility and constraints of the strategies used in the case of subtitling multilingual films for the deaf and hard of hearing audience. The study has shown that most of subtitling strategies tend to reveal the multicultural aspects explicitly to a certain extent. However, the strategy "Linguistic homogenization" is hardly applicable, since it wipes out all the

traits of multilingualism in a film and robs the viewers of the central feature of a film.

A number of students have used two or more strategies in subtitles, since different films call for different creative approaches. The most common ways to combine the strategies were to incorporate colour-coding together with explicit attribution, or vehicular matching and translation with explicit attribution, as it was deduced that colour-coding alone may be misleading and in some cases insufficient. One more way of blending the strategies was to interchange vehicular matching and explicit attribution because in certain cases the director's option might be to leave out some of the utterances and to translate the chosen ones in the same film. Therefore, as directors do not follow a precise system in their choices, a translator should also be able to respond to the director's wish and to modify strategies by employing the most effective alternations.

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**DAUGIAKALBIŠKUMAS KURTIESIEMS IR NEPRIGIRDINTIESIEMS  
SKIRTUOSE AUDIOVIZUALINIUOSE TEKSTUOSE**

**Santrauka.** Vis dažniau susiduriama su audiovizualiniais tekstais, kurie yra kuriami pagal režisieriaus sumanymą: su filmais, televizijos serialais, tiesioginėmis laidomis ar pasirodymais, kuriuose be pagrindinės užsienio kalbos veikėjai į savo dialogus įtraukia ir pavienių žodžių, frazių ar tekstų fragmentų iš kitų kalbų. Taip audiovizualinių tekstų kūrėjai bando atskleisti kultūrų skirtumus, įvairius kalbinius aspektus, susijusius su tam tikromis stilistinėmis, pragmatinėmis ar diskurso subtilybėmis. Tokiais atvejais audiovizualinių tekstų vertimas tampa tikru iššūkiu ne tik vertėjams, bet ir žiūrovams. Ypač sudėtinga tokius daugiakalbius audiovizualinius tekstus adaptuoti klausos negalią turintiems žmonėms. Nors įvairios pasaulio šalys, siekdamos visapusiškai integruoti šią socialiai jautrią visuomenės dalį, savo praktikoje taiko įvairius audiovizualinio teksto adaptavimo mechanizmus, atlieka tyrimus, susijusius su daugiakalbių audiovizualinių tekstų pritaikymo strategijų kokybiniais rodikliais, Lietuvoje kol kas tokie bandymai – tik pirmieji žingsniai kurčiųjų ir neprigirdinčiųjų visapusiškos adaptacijos link. Audiovizualiniai tekstai dažniausiai skiriami girdinčiajai auditorijai, tad klausos negalią turintiems žmonėms dar nėra sukurta viena aiški sistema, kaip pateikti išverstą ir subtitruotą audiovizualinę medžiagą. Ypač sudėtinga yra situacija, susijusi su daugiakalbių filmų vertimu ir subtitravimu Lietuvos kurtiesiems ir neprigirdintiesiems. Šiame straipsnyje siekiama pristatyti daugiakalbių filmų vertimo ir subtitravimo – kaip pagrindinio kurtiesiems ir neprigirdintiesiems audiovizualinio teksto adaptavimo būdo – užsienio šalių praktiką, bandomą pritaikyti lietuviškai verstuose filmuose. Iš pradžių straipsnyje trumpai aptariami daugiakalbiams audiovizualiniams tekstams būdingi bruožai, pristatomi subtitravimo – kaip klausos negalią turinčiai auditorijai pagrindinio užsienio filmų pristatymo būdo – kūrimo kriterijai ir strategijos, vėliau – pristatomi kurtiesiems ir neprigirdintiesiems adaptuotų daugiakalbių filmų praktiniai subtitravimo atvejai, pastebėtos tendencijos ir iššylantys sunkumai.

**Pagrindinės sąvokos:** audiovizualinis tekstas; daugiakalbiškumas; subtitravimas; subtitravimas kurtiesiems ir neprigirdintiesiems; subtitravimo strategijos daugiakalbiuose filmuose.