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## LINGUISTIC REPLACEMENT IN THE MOVIES<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, I discuss the use of the English language in movie dialogues where, logically, other languages would have been used by the fictional characters. A shared characteristic of many Hollywood movies (as well as countless other fictional narratives, written or performed) is the notion of *linguistic replacement*. Even when the depicted story would realistically have taken place in a different linguistic setting, the language(s) are replaced by the base language of narration; in my case, English. Using a taxonomy of semiotic strategies proposed by Petr Mareš as a point of departure, I discuss examples of linguistic replacement from a corpus of twelve recent, commercially successful Hollywood movies with European and American settings. I argue that even though the different strategies (e.g. the use of L2 accents or the presence of the replaced language in filmed writing) fulfill more complex symbolic functions than that of compensatory realism, there has been a recent shift away from linguistic replacement altogether.

KEYWORDS: multilingualism; movie dialogues; linguistic landscape; language ideology; code-switching.

### 1. Introduction

In this paper, I discuss the use of the English language in movie dialogues where, logically, other languages would have been used by the fictional characters. A shared characteristic of many Hollywood movies (as well as countless other fictional narratives, written or performed) is the notion of *linguistic replacement*. Even when the depicted story would realistically have taken place in a different linguistic setting, the language(s) are replaced by the base language of narration; in my case, English. Thus, German composers, Russian submarine commanders, and Polish pianists speak English, rather than – more logically – German, Russian, or Polish. Throughout the history of artistic representations of language use, audiences and critics have mostly accepted this

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<sup>1</sup> This article is an extended and upgraded version of a paper read at the 38th Poznań Linguistics Meeting. My thanks go to Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak and to two anonymous reviewers, as well as to Anna Ber-nold and Paris De Belder for the Russian and Spanish transcriptions, respectively.

sacrifice of realism for the sake of comprehension. Still, a central task of narration in any texts with linguistic replacement is to prevent the reader or viewer from assuming that in the fictional world of the story or *fabula* (Bordwell 1985), the characters would really have spoken English (or any other base language of narration), especially if mistaken assumptions about the sociolinguistic setting can result in serious misunderstandings of the narrative.

My starting point is a taxonomy proposed by the Czech scholar Petr Mareš, who distinguishes between different linguistic and non-linguistic means to make the process of replacement, as well as the nature of the replaced languages, obvious to the viewer. Mareš's strategies of *elimination*, *signalization*, and *evocation* are characterized by different visual or aural hints both to the process of replacement as such as well as to the nature of the language replaced. The strategies are then illustrated by a small corpus of twelve recent, commercially successful Hollywood movies with European and American settings. My claim is that these strategies, as well as the partial presence of the replaced languages in certain contexts, fulfill more complex symbolic functions than a simple strategy of compensatory realism. Moreover, despite the narrative profit that can be drawn from the strategies, there has been a recent shift away from linguistic replacement altogether, as I argue in my conclusion.

### 1.1. The replacement strategies

Mareš's (2000a, 2000b, 2003) taxonomy of representations of multilingual discourse in fictional texts is based on the notion of a continuum from the complete elimination of languages other than the base language (in my case, English) to their complete presence. The taxonomy focuses on characters' direct speech, since that is the preferred site for other languages to appear. Mareš's central notion is that whenever another language would be used by a character within the reality of the story ("in the fictional world"; Mareš 2000a: 51), the narrator chooses whether to represent the other language faithfully or to replace it, either through complete elimination or one of two intermediate strategies, signalization and evocation. Table 1 gives an overview of Mareš's taxonomy.

In the first strategy, *elimination*, any speech that would have been in another language is completely replaced with an unmarked standard variety of the base language. There, the audience is offered no linguistic means of realizing that the other language is replaced at all, unless they correctly interpret contextual evidence which shows that in reality, it is unlikely or impossible that the characters would really have used the base language. Their task is alleviated in the case of *signalization*, where the replaced language is explicitly named in a metalinguistic comment. The third strategy, *evocation*, is used when characters speak a variety of the base language that is characterized by interference (transfer) from the language they would really be speaking. For instance, a Spanish accent or a number of short code-switches from English into Span-

Table 1. A taxonomy of multilingualism in fictional texts, based on Mareš (2000a, 2000b, 2003).

	Most distant from depicted re- ality			Closest to depicted reality
Strategy	Elimination	Signalization	Evocation	Presence
Treatment of other languages	Neither used nor mentioned	Named by the narrator or by characters	Evoked by means of L2 interference phenomena	Used
Audience's awareness of other language(s)	Depends on ability to process extralinguistic hints	Through metalinguistic comments	Depends on correct interpretation of interference phenomena	Full
Audience's comprehension of content	Full	Full	Full, provided the audience is unwilling to listen to "non-native" <sup>2</sup>	None, unless the other language is somehow translated

ish can evoke an utterance that would have been in monolingual Spanish in reality. There, an important side aspect is that evocation is often only used for the speech of certain characters, rather than all who would logically speak the other language (see Lippi-Green 1997: 84; and Grutman 2002: 333). Finally, the other language is no longer replaced at all when the strategy of presence is used. Unless the audience is highly multilingual, comprehension becomes an issue in these cases. In written texts, adding translations potentially results in an interruption of the flow of reading, whereas in movies, comprehension is enhanced by the "multiple, overlapping signifiers" (Kozloff 2000: 223f.; see also Busch 2004: 281f.) of the images that underlie the dialogue, and of course by the option of a written translation in subtitles. Their acceptance and use have certainly increased a great deal since 1970, when Forster (1970: 13) stated that "[l]ess use has been made of this medium than one might think; the convention of live theatre has been too strong". Still, many would agree with what Kellman (2000: 110) considers a piece of "conventional wisdom in Hollywood": that, with very few exceptions, "Americans do not go to movie theatres in order to read". Thus, it seems that the use of replacement strategies in Hollywood movies is strongly bolstered by a preference on the side of filmmakers to adhere to norms and ideologies of monolingualism (see also Bleichenbacher 2007, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to one of the anonymous *PSiCL* reviewers for pointing out to what extent audience reactions to non-standard and non-native varieties differ across cultures. See Lindemann (2005) for an account of folk-linguistic perceptions of "broken English" in the US.

## 1.2. The corpus of replacement movies

Table 2 lists the twelve movies analyzed alphabetically by title, with an indication of their year of release, genre, and the most prominent languages other than English that are replaced (or sometimes used; see section 4 below), in the dialogues:

Table 2: List of movies with replacement of other languages.

Movie	Year	Genre	Major other languages
<i>Amadeus</i>	1984	Historical drama	German, Italian, Latin
<i>Clear and Present Danger</i>	1994	Action thriller (Jack Ryan)	Spanish
<i>GoldenEye</i>	1995	Action thriller (James Bond)	Russian
<i>Hannibal</i>	2001	Action thriller	Italian
<i>The Hunt for Red October</i>	1990	Action thriller (Jack Ryan)	Russian
<i>Licence to Kill</i>	1989	Action thriller (James Bond)	Spanish
<i>The Living Daylights</i>	1987	Action thriller (James Bond)	Slovak, Russian, German, Afghani
<i>The Pianist</i>	2002	Historical drama	Polish, German
<i>Schindler's List</i>	1993	Historical drama	German, Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish
<i>Tomorrow Never Dies</i>	1997	Action thriller (James Bond)	German, Chinese
<i>A View to a Kill</i>	1985	Action thriller (James Bond)	French, German
<i>The World Is Not Enough</i>	1999	Action thriller (James Bond)	Russian

The 12 movies considered are all well-known and commercially successful English-language movies released between 1984 and 2001, set in Europe and America, and with situations of language contact and the use of languages other than English prominently appearing in the story. The prime narrative reasons which bring the characters into contact are international conflicts, terrorism, and cross-border crime. Six of the movies belong to the James Bond series, while two feature the CIA Agent Jack Ryan interacting with members of the Soviet Navy (in *The Hunt for Red October*) and with Colombian drug tycoons (in *Clear and Present Danger*). A further movie with a contemporary setting is *Hannibal*, which is part of a series featuring the psychopathic serial killer Hannibal Lecter, who is shown living under a false identity in Florence (Italy). Finally, three movies fall under the category of historical drama. *Amadeus* depicts the relationship between the Italian composer Antonio Salieri and his Austrian counterpart Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 18th century Vienna. In stark contrast, in *Schindler's List* and *The*

*Pianist* the focus is on the effect of the Shoah (Holocaust) in Nazi-occupied Poland in World War 2. In the following section, I turn to the first two of Mareš's categories.

## 2. Analysis

### 2.1. Elimination and signalization

Elimination is characterized by the complete absence of any linguistic hints as to the nature of the language(s) replaced. Instead, the viewers may be offered relevant extralinguistic information, which enables them to become aware of the replacement. Since languages are typically associated with geographic entities, such as nation-states or well-known cities, geographical setting often permits sociolinguistic inferences (and also the other way round). Some viewers may also watch movies with previous knowledge: they may know that parts of *Hannibal* were filmed on location in Florence, that *Amadeus* is about an Austrian composer, or that Sean Connery was cast as a Soviet submarine commander for *The Hunt for Red October*. These viewers may then be well aware of the fact that some characters in these movies would speak Italian, German, or Russian, even if in the movie they speak English. For other viewers, who lack this previous knowledge, a straightforward technique is to name the geographic location of the scenes. Superimposed titles are one way of doing so, as in the opening scene of *The Pianist*, where "WARSAW 1939" can be read: the viewer knows that the setting is Polish, and an educated guess is that the English spoken replaces the Polish language or, possibly, any other languages spoken in Central and Eastern Europe during the period. Very similarly, superimposed titles at the beginning of *Schindler's List* name "September 1939" as the moment of the Polish army's defeat by the Germans, and of the beginning of the Nazi resettlement of Jews: "More than 10,000 Jews from the countryside arrive in Krakow daily". Shortly afterwards, deported Jews are shown queuing up at registration desks on a railway platform, and a large sign in the background reading "KRAKÓW GŁÓWNY" ('Krakow main [station]') links the superimposed text to the images. Two further examples are the Bond movie *The Living Daylights*, where the title "BRATISLAVA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA" appears right after the opening credits, and *GoldenEye*, where a massive dam (in real life, the Contra dam in Ticino, Switzerland) is glossed over as "ARKANGEL CHEMICAL WEAPONS FACILITY – USSR".

Another strategy to indicate geographical locations is to show well-known landmarks or to exploit the conventional meaning of symbols on flags. When the narrative of *Hannibal* moves from the US East Coast to Florence in Northern Italy, we first see a wide shot of the well-known Dome, followed by a short sequence where Dr Lecter's antagonist, the police officer Pazzi, is standing on the famous Piazza della Signoria, with the replica of Michelangelo's Davide statue clearly in sight. Later in the movie, a short scene takes place at a bank in Geneva, and the transaction is conducted in a room adorned by the flags of both Switzerland and the canton of Geneva. In contrast, the

movie *Amadeus* does not make use of any visual hints with regard to its setting. Instead, a dialogue at the beginning of the movie contains the following lines:<sup>3</sup>

**Excerpt 1** (*Amadeus*, 0:06.28 – 0:06.41)

[...]  
 Salieri            How well are you trained in music?  
 Father Vogler    I know a little. I studied it in my youth.  
 Salieri            Where?  
 Father Vogler    Here in Vienna.  
 [...]

By combining the name of the capital city of the Austrian Empire with the deictic adverb *here*, Father Vogler (who acts as the protagonist Salieri's confessor in this scene) clearly states that the movie is set in a German-speaking environment. Still, different languages are used in *Amadeus*: Salieri is obviously of Italian origin; he is addressed in a mixture of Italian and English in the opening scene of the movie, and further Italian characters appear shortly afterwards at the Emperor's Court, as well as in some scenes set on opera stages. Moreover, some religious settings feature the use of Latin. To point to the German language in a more obvious way, the metalinguistic strategy of signalization is used. The following excerpt features the Austrian Emperor Joseph, discussing his plan to commission an opera from Mozart with his political and artistic advisors:

**Excerpt 2** (*Amadeus*, 0:24.05 – 0:25.10)

[...]  
 Joseph            Well then, we should make some effort to acquire him. We could use a good German composer in Vienna, surely? I'm sure he could be tempted with the right offer. Say erm an opera in German for our national theatre.  
 Van Swieten      Excellent sire.  
 Orsini-Rosenberg But not in German, I beg Your Majesty. Italian is the proper language for opera. All educated people agree on that.  
 Joseph            M-hm. What do you think, Chamberlain?  
 Von Strack        In my opinion, Sir, it's time we had a piece in our own language. Plain German for plain people.  
 Joseph            M-hm. **Kapellmeister?**

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<sup>3</sup> Normal print indicates dialogue in English, **bold print** dialogue in another language, and *italic print* comments on the transcribed scene. SMALL CAPS reproduce the original movie subtitles; where these are missing, the speaker turns are followed by translations ('within brackets and single inverted commas').

Bonno                    Majesty, I must agree with **Herr Direttore**. German is, **scusate**  
 [...]                    ['excuse me'], too brute for singing.

Signalization is defined as the literal naming of a language in the text, and in this scene, the naming of the German language serves additional narrative purposes. The viewer's attention is drawn to a language hierarchy, reminiscent of diglossia, which is defended by some characters but contested by others, including (shortly afterwards in the movie) Mozart himself. The reference to Italian as the "right" language for opera motivates and underlines the influential position of the Italian characters – especially Salieri, Mozart's envious opponent – in the story. Moreover, it announces the ensuing conflicts between Mozart, who is many ways a representative of the "plain people", and his more elitist adversaries among the Viennese nobility. Finally, it prepares the Mozart aficionados among the audience for a particularly strict feature of the replacement strategy used in *Amadeus*: the fact that no German is sung on any of the stages. Whereas lyrics are often left in the original language in replacement movies, in *Amadeus* this only applies to Italian. In contrast, the excerpts from *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Magic Flute* – both operas with German libretti – are sung in English, and English is also used in a scene featuring a German-language parody of *Don Giovanni* – one of Mozart's Italian operas – that is staged at a popular theatre. Very consistently, German is not only replaced by English in the characters' conversations, but also as a literary register in the lyrics of vaudevilles and operas. In contrast, Italian is present in *Amadeus* whenever its use within the story appears as realistic.

Signalization appears as a straightforward and useful technique, but it requires the viewer to be attentive at the very moment when the name of the language is uttered. Furthermore, a recurrent use of signalization in the same text is likely to appear as oddly redundant, unless there is a strong narrative motivation for such metalinguistic comments. Apart from *Amadeus*, the only movie in the corpus with obvious signalization is *Hannibal*, where the Italian language is mentioned in the context of Italian Renaissance literature. This might explain why in Mareš's approach, signalization is only used with reference to written texts, but not cinematic ones. For the latter, evocation appears as a more sensible strategy, because it permits the viewer to keep the replaced language in mind throughout the movie.

## 2.2. Evocation

Evocation is defined as the use of a marked variety of English (the base language), characterized by interference from the replaced language. Although it is a very common strategy, its main shortcoming lies in the fact that an L2 variety (such as English with a Spanish accent) is used to replace what in reality would be an L1 variety of Spanish (or any other language). This paradox can cause a number of problems. Firstly, it can fuel

language ideologies according to which anybody who is not an L1 speaker of English is somewhat linguistically challenged. Secondly, there is the challenge of distinguishing instances of evocation from conversations where the (same) characters are indeed speaking English, as L2 users with the same accents or other interference phenomena. Moreover, a very ignorant viewer might even be tricked into the belief that English is the only language spoken around the world – “natively” by its L1 speakers, and with funny accents by everyone else. Finally, an overall use of L2 accents by every character runs counter to an important narrative convention: the use of non-standard language for contrastive characterization only. It is probably this last feature which explains why the extent to which evocation characterizes the speech of different characters varies greatly in many movies.

### 2.2.1. Accents and code-switching

In theory, evocation could appear on any level of linguistic analysis, but phonology (L2 accents) and lexis (code-switches into the other language for certain words or phrases) are clearly its preferred sites. Instances of morphosyntactic interference used for evocation are practically inexistent (see Herbst 1994: 126), precisely because they would point to an L2 variety in an all too confusing manner. From the point of view of acting, lexis is certainly a more convenient method, in that anybody can utter words or longer utterances in unknown languages, whereas not all actors are equally gifted at imitating certain accents (see Lippi-Green 1997: 84). One solution to this problem is to cast L1 speakers of the replaced language(s) as actors, given that they should have no problem performing the requested accents. This clashes, however, with Hollywood’s preference for stars whose first language is English to play the main characters. In some cases, actors with a non-English L1 are cast in minor roles, where they speak English with marked L2 accents; a pattern which occurs in several of the movies analyzed, for instance in *Schindler’s List* and *The Pianist*. Moreover, the English-speaking stars who impersonate the leading characters may contrive an L2 accent as well (this strategy is generally employed in *Schindler’s List*) – or indeed abstain from doing so altogether. The replacement of German in *Amadeus* is the most extreme example of the latter strategy, where evocation is used by a single character and in a single scene only. The scene is set in a barber shop, where Mozart has come to find a suitable wig for his impending audience at the Emperor’s Court:

#### **Excerpt 3** (*Amadeus*, 0:26.12 – 0:26.46)

Barber	<b>Ei ei ei</b> this is a beautiful wig for you. <b>Es</b> looks so marvellous and I love it.
Mozart	The other one.
Barber	Here is the other one. I think you will love it.

Barber	Here is the third one. <b>So.</b> Here we go. How do you like it?
Mozart	They're all so beautiful. Why don't I have three heads? ( <i>laughs</i> )
Barber	This is funny! ( <i>laughs and applauds</i> ) Three heads! Ha!

The barber has a marked German accent, and switches into German for three short utterances: the interjection *ei ei ei* (used to indicate surprise or similar emotions), the personal pronoun *es* 'it', and the discourse marker *so* 'so'. As further features that are potentially indicative of interlanguage, one can mention the reliance on repetitions (*love it; Here is the...*), the odd coordination in *It looks so marvellous and I love it*, and the slight redundancy of the observation *This is funny*. The barber's overall linguistic clumsiness is contrasted by Mozart's concise order (*The other one*), as well as by his imaginative joke about the three heads; needless to say, the composer's accent is not German, but American. As a whole, the scene provides light amusement at the expense of German speakers: the only character with a German accent in *Amadeus* is indeed an effeminate, slightly ridiculous, and comical character. Moreover, what seems odd from the point of view of realism is that Mozart's and the barber's linguistic skills appear to be very different, whereas in reality, they would have been largely identical.

An altogether different pattern of phonological evocation appear in *The Hunt for Red October*, where English replaces Russian in a number of scenes set in and around two Soviet submarines. In the use of L2 accents by the Russian characters, three categories can be distinguished in terms of military hierarchy and narrative importance: the protagonist and his main opponent, a number of secondary characters with medium importance, and minor characters such as seamen or officers with only one or few speaker turns in the movie. The latter characters, who also occupy the lowest position in the military hierarchy within the story, have mostly Russian accents, and some of them are also impersonated by Eastern European actors. The more important characters are played mostly by British actors, who use standard British accents, irrespectively of whether they are good guys, such as the protagonists' loyal supporter, Captain 2nd Rank Borodin, or more negative characters, such as Political Officer Putin, or the annoyingly doctrinaire ship's doctor Petrov. A Russian accent is not even used by the deceitful Russian ambassador Lysenko, even though this character's use of English is logically plausible, and not part of a replacement strategy. Then, there are the protagonist Captain Ramius and his antagonist, Captain Tupolev, who use different varieties of English again. For Ramius, the actor Sean Connery's idiosyncratic Scottish accent distinguishes the character from the RP speakers among the Soviets, which adds credibility to the portrayal of Ramius as of Lithuanian (as opposed to Russian) origin. Likewise, Tupolev is played by the Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgård, whose English also features a different accent from those of the other Russian characters. While this pattern may appear fairly complex, it has one major advantage: no American accents are used for any replacement of Russian, which prevents any confusion that could arise, due to frequent changes of setting, between the Soviet and US characters. Here and elsewhere, the

filmmakers exploit the fact that the English language is known in two distinct and, broadly speaking, equally prestigious standard accents.

### 2.2.2. Other forms of evocation

So far, the discussion of evocation has mainly focused on accents and the use of short code-switched words from the other language, such as the German *ei* and *ja* in the examples quoted above, or, as another example, in the Italian *pronto* ('ready'; the usual turn to answer a phone call) in *Hannibal*. A further strategy is the use of words or expressions from the replaced language which, due to their high cultural specificity, index a different language and are hard to render in English anyway. A first case in point are given names: characters in replacement movies typically bear names that are obviously non-English, and their effect can be reinforced when culture-specific naming patterns are depicted. These include Russian names, where the first name is usually followed by a patronym, as in *GoldenEye*, where General Ourumov is addressed as Arkadij Grigorovich<sup>4</sup> in one scene. Another example are hypocorisms (nicknames based on personal names) derived via language-specific word formation processes. In *Amadeus*, the German hypocorisms for Wolfgang and Constanze, *Wolfie* and *Stanzi*, can pass as German as well as American English – however, the latter hearing is encouraged by Constanze's pronunciation of the first vowel in *Wolfie* as ['vʊlfi] rather than German ['vɔlfi]. In contrast, a clearly non-English abbreviation of a first name is used in *The Pianist*. The protagonist's first name, Wladyslaw, is replaced by *Wladek* by his family members and his close friends, such as Dorota in this excerpt:

#### Excerpt 4 (*The Pianist*, 0:09.45 – 0:09.52)

[...]

<b>Dorota</b>	Oh Mr Szpilman, you are quite quite wonderful.
<b>Szpilman</b>	Call me Wladek please.

The word formation process which renders *Wladyslaw* as *Wladek*, back-clipping and adding of a diminutive velar suffix, is typical for Polish (and other Slavonic languages). Polish titles are not used in *The Pianist*, though: Dorota addresses Wladek as *Mr*, not *Pan Szpilman*. In contrast, titles in the replaced language are extensively used in *Amadeus*; examples include German *Herr* 'Mister', *Frau* 'Mrs', or *Fräulein* 'Miss', as well as Italian *Signore* 'Mister'. The titles *Court Composer* and *Emperor* are given in Eng-

<sup>4</sup> I reproduce all names of characters as they appear in the movie credits, with no attempt to supply missing diacritics, "correct" anglicized spellings, or harmonize different transliterations of identical syllables across different movies.

lish, while the Italian Bonno is called *Kapellmeister* ‘Chief Conductor’. In *Schindler’s List*, the protagonist is addressed as *Herr Direktor*, and military titles of the SS such as *Scharführer*, *Hauptscharführer* and *Untersturmführer* are inserted into English utterances. A further sub-strategy exploits the different language versions of place names: whereas the English equivalents of foreign place names are often used when they exist (as in excerpt 1 above), the Italian place name *Firenze* is used in *Hannibal* instead of *Florence*.

Two further categories of culture-specific expressions are greetings and terms of mild or strong abuse. In the movies analyzed, non-English greetings only appear in *Hannibal* (It. *buon giorno* ‘good day’ and *buona sera* ‘good evening’), and in the special case of Goeth’s *Heil Hitler*, which constitute the last spoken words in the movie, in a brief sequence showing the brutal camp commander’s execution. Conversely, there is a more even distribution of terms of abuse: the Russian word *svin’ja* ‘pig’ occurs in *GoldenEye*, while the Spanish *gringo* and *cojones* are uttered in *The Living Daylights*. As a rare and inventive example of a crosslinguistic calque, a Russian IT nerd in *GoldenEye* teases his colleague by calling her *boršč-for-brains* after the well-known Russian vegetable soup.

In the next section, I move from the aural evocation of other languages to their partial presence, in the use of filmed writing as well as after unrealistic code-switches.

### 3. Partial presence

#### 3.1. Linguistic landscape

Replacing other languages in writing can be considered a very marked strategy because it results in a visual, rather than just aural, falsification of the depicted reality. While viewers can put up with English-speaking characters in 1940 Warsaw, an English billboard in their background would certainly be met with puzzled reactions. Therefore, the linguistic landscape of the movies, which includes public signs as well as filmed documents, are usually left in the original language. While exceptions to this pattern exist (typically in historical movies, such as *The First Knight*, 1995 or *The Three Musketeers*, 1993) there was no clear-cut instances of English writing replacing other languages in the corpus. One borderline case, which occurs in *GoldenEye*, depicts an online exchange of instant messages between two Russian scientists in St. Petersburg – all of which are in English. It is rather unlikely, but not completely impossible, that the two characters (who both know English) would have used this language (rather than Russian, even in Latin script). For the viewer however, it is obviously more convenient to read this text in English, rather than to be confronted with subtitles accompanying the writing on the screen. In turn, the excerpt conveys the notion that the Russian language may not be quite as suitable for electronic communication as English.

In other spy thrillers, bilingual signs in English and the replaced language function as a semiotic way of having one's cake and eating it, too. In a scene in *The Hunt for Red October*, a Russian map of the Atlantic Ocean features the names for some subaqueous landmarks in Cyrillic script as well as accompanied by their English equivalents. For the viewer, the impression of realism is combined with the possibility to read the place names, and especially to recognize a location which had previously been mentioned in an English dialogue. A similar example occurs in *The World Is Not Enough*, where James Bond assumes the false identity of a Russian scientist to get access to a nuclear site in Kazakhstan. Bond is almost exposed when he fails to observe a standard procedure upon entering the site – collecting a radiation tag – and his attention is promptly directed to a large warning sign, which reads *WARNING – RETURN ALL RADIATION TAGS TO THIS CHECK POINT WHEN LEAVING*, followed by a Russian translation. The character of James Bond would have known enough Russian to understand a monolingual sign with no English translation, but for the viewer, the interaction would have remained opaque. At the same time, the presence of the English language on the sign is perfectly plausible since the nuclear site is portrayed as an area of Russian and US cooperation, and Bond's interlocutor, Dr Christmas Jones, is American herself.

In many cases, however, the exact content of the writing is less relevant. In a shot of a Viennese alley in *Amadeus*, the shop sign *Friseur und Perückenmacher* 'barber shop and wig maker' is visible, but since the scene occurs much later than Mozart's actual visit to the barber shop (see Excerpt 3 above), there is no special need for the viewer to read and comprehend the sign at this stage; its function is one of mere realism. Likewise, the final scene of *The Pianist* shows an army camp where the victorious Red Army has assembled German prisoners. A banner in the background reads *ВПЕРЕД НА БЕРЛИН!*, and while the Cyrillic writing itself simply underlines the fact that the soldiers are indeed Russian, the exact meaning (*vpered na Berlin*; 'onwards to Berlin') adds a sense of historical accuracy, again without carrying any strict narrative relevance.

A different case occurs earlier in *The Pianist*, during a conversation between Szpilman and his gentile friend Dorota. The two are walking through the streets of Warsaw shortly after the German invasion, and as Szpilman intends to invite her to a café, they become aware of a sign on the door that had not been there previously. The sign *ŻYDOM WSTĘP WZBRONIONY*, which is shown in close-up, is both highly relevant for the narrative: it upsets both characters and is a first and, at least in comparison, relatively harmless announcement of the occupiers' genocidal policy. At the same time, the sign is incomprehensible; even the word *Żydom* (Polish 'for Jews') is far too remote a cognate for most viewers to recognize. Of the two most obvious strategies, a character reading the sign in English or a subtitle being added, the latter is chosen: "NO ENTRY FOR JEWS" (*The Pianist*, 0:08.43).

Much like many instances of multilingualism in fiction, sociolinguistic realism in the depiction of multilingual landscapes is also invested with symbolic functions. As already mentioned, the beginning of *Schindler's List* contains a scene at a railway station, with the Krakow main station's Polish name visible above the platform. Later in the

movie, when the Nazi occupation is firmly established, the Polish sign is replaced by a German one: “KRAKAU Hbf.”. While there is nothing unusual about the monolingualism of the original sign, the Nazi’s decision not to include the Polish language in their revision of the linguistic landscape serves as one further indicator of their brutality and ruthlessness. Interestingly however, a different signing policy is depicted towards the end of the movie, when Schindler has managed to guarantee his workers a safe passage from Poland to Moravia. The railway station of Schindler’s home town is marked in two languages, Czech and German: “BRNĚNEC-BRÜNNLITZ”. This difference in signing policy may be due to historical circumstances with little relevance for an appreciation of *Schindler’s List*. However, on a symbolic level, it mirrors the extent to which Brännlitz is a safe haven for Schindler’s workers. Although they are still clearly within Nazi territory, they no longer fear deportation, and Schindler even manages to keep the German soldiers at bay. A comparable instance of bilingual symbolism occurs in the very last scene of *Schindler’s List*. The surviving Schindler Jews are shown paying tribute at Schindler’s tombstone, on which a Hebrew and German text appear side by side, as if to suggest the possibility of a reconciliation between Germans and survivors of the Shoah.

### 3.2. Unrealistic code-switching

To round off this discussion of partial presence, it is useful to describe a specific narrative strategy which poignantly highlights the difference between replacement and presence by juxtaposing them within the same conversational interaction. The first example is from the Jack Ryan thriller *Clear and Present Danger*, which starts with a sequence where US Coast Guards find the murdered family of an American businessman in a yacht which had been captured by South American killers off the coast of Florida. The CIA analyst Jack Ryan soon suspects that the killing is somehow related to Colombian drug cartels, and shortly afterwards, the narrative moves to an impressive Colombian hacienda. There, the entrepreneur Ernesto Escobedo is shown practising baseball, when he is addressed by Felix Cortez, his inscrutable security advisor:

#### **Excerpt 5** (*Clear and Present Danger*, 0:09.39 – 0:10.32)

[...]

Cortez

**Tu sabes lo qué has hecho, no?**

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU’VE DONE?

Escobedo

**Maté a un ladrón. Maté a un ladrón que me estaba robando. A mí!**

I KILLED A THIEF. I KILLED A THIEF WHO WAS STEALING... FROM ME!

- Cortez           **Y a su mujer, y a su hijo, y a su hija, aparentemente sin pensar en las consecuencias.**  
AND HIS WIFE, SON AND DAUGHTER, WITH NO THOUGHT OF THE CONSEQUENCES.
- Escobedo       **Oh, sí señor. Para que sus hijos venguen la muerte de su padre cuando menos lo espero.**  
SO HIS KIDS SHOULD GROW UP TO REVENGE THEIR FATHER'S DEATH – WHEN I LEAST EXPECT IT ...?
- Cortez           **Ese tío era un gran amigo y un aliado político del presidente de los Estados Unidos.**  
HE WAS A GOOD FRIEND AND POLITICAL ALLY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.
- Escobedo       That doesn't surprise me.
- Cortez           It should at the very least concern you.
- Escobedo       What are they going to do. Come after me? Arrest me? You're scaring me.
- [...]

The subtitled Spanish dialogue at the beginning of the scene informs the viewer that Escobedo gave the order to kill the American – apparently a dishonest business partner – and his family without having asked for Cortez's advice. Cortez is visibly irritated, but initially, Escobedo does not appear to take him seriously, and continues hitting the balls while talking back to Cortez. Cortez then explains his disapproval: he fears retaliatory action from the American government, because the murdered businessman was a close friend of the US President. At this precise moment, Escobedo is surprised and distracted from batting; he misses the next ball, which is shown rolling away in a brief instance of slow motion. When Escobedo answers Cortez, he is suddenly speaking English, which remains the language of conversational interaction among Spanish speakers in all further scenes of *Clear and Present Danger*. The characters on screen have changed from Spanish to English although within the reality of the story, it is clear that they would not have done so.

This strategy can be named *unrealistic code-switching* because it operates exclusively on the level of narration, and not within the story. Unrealistic code-switches are highly marked phenomena, in that they expose the semiotic absurdity of replacement by contrasting it with the more realistic presence. The fact that they qualify as ruptures of the narrative process explains the use of slow motion in the scene quoted above. However, as the last Spanish expression in the interaction, the words “Estados Unidos” (‘United States’) appear as a likely trigger for a switch from Spanish into English. Thus, while the unrealistic nature of the code-switch is foregrounded by the cinematographic technique, the linguistic context is skilfully adapted to embed the code-switch in the conversation and even lend it some pragmatic likelihood.

A second example appears in *The Hunt for Red October*. Most scenes at the beginning of the movie are among English L1 speakers only, apart from the very first one, where two Russian characters (the protagonist Captain Marko Ramius and his closest ally, Captain 2nd Rank Borodin) exchange four short and subtitled turns in Russian on the cold weather at the home base of the eponymous submarine. Shortly after the *Red October* has left the base westwards for the Atlantic, Ramius surprises Political Officer Putin perusing Ramius's books in the Captain's cabin:

**Excerpt 6** (*The Hunt for Red October*, 0:14.00 – 0:15.06)

[...]	
Ramius	<b>Što ty delaesh'?</b> WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
Putin	<b>V moi objazannosti vxodit nabljudenie nad povedeniem členov ékipaža, tovarišč kapitan.</b> OVERSEEING THE STABILITY OF THE CREW.
Ramius	<b>Perexodiš' granicy.</b> BY INVADING MY PRIVACY?
Putin	<b>V SSSR, tovarišč, ličnyx del byt' ne možet. Takoe ponjatie protivorečit obščestvennomu delu.</b> PRIVACY IS NOT A MAJOR CONCERN IN THE SOVIET UNION. IT IS OFTEN CONTRARY TO THE COLLECTIVE GOOD.
Putin	<i>(reading)</i> <b>Se, idu kak tat': Blažen bodrstvujuščij i xranjaščij odeždu svoju. I on sobral ix na mesto, nazываемoe po-evrejski "Armageddon".</b> And the seventh Angel poured forth his bowl into the air and a voice cried out from heaven, saying "it is done". A man with your responsibilities reading about the end of the world, ha. And what's this? "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds". "BEHOLD, I AM COMING AS A THIEF. AND THEY GATHERED THEM TOGETHER IN PLACE CALLED ARMAGEDDON".
Ramius	It is an ancient Hindu text, quoted by an American.
[...]	

Ramius's turns are very short and to the point, but Putin's language is of a very different style. His arrogant superiority and orthodox adherence to Soviet communism is reflected in his preference for indirect phrasing, his repeated use of the term *tovarišč* 'comrade', and the way in which his utterances sound as if they were memorized from manuals of doctrine. As a communist, Putin cannot hide his unpleasant surprise, but also amusement at Ramius's literary predilections. While Putin is reading from the *Book of Revelation* (16: 15–17) in Ramius's copy of the Bible, an unrealistic code-switch takes place. Again, there is a cinematographic correlate: while Putin reads, the camera zooms rapidly onto his mouth, stopping precisely when he utters the word *Armageddon*,

and then zooms back until he stops quoting from the Bible (... *it is done*). There is also a linguistic motivation for the switch: the place name *Armageddon* appears as a convenient place to switch, since it is neither English nor Russian. In Putin's utterance (though not in the subtitles) it is even preceded by a metalinguistic comment: "nazyvaemoe po-evrejski": '[which is] called in Hebrew'.

One major advantage of unrealistic code-switches is to indicate the replaced language in a clear-cut way, and to foreground the stylistic choice of replacement by performing the transition on screen, with cinematographic highlighting to boot. In a way, unrealistic code-switches can be considered a more "honest" strategy than continuous replacement from the beginning. However, they do not solve the dilemma of a potential misinterpretation: viewers can still be tricked into believing that the characters would *really* have code-switched into English, especially since the unrealistic code-switches occur in a pragmalinguistic environment favourable to code-switching, as in both examples quoted above. If this is the case, the impression one might get is that conversations may well begin in other languages, but should be carried on in English thereafter.

#### 4. Conclusions

My analysis has shown the advantages and dangers of different strategies available to filmmakers who decide to have their characters speak in English, even if in reality they would have used other languages. Since replacement flouts elementary principles of realistic representation, it is not surprising that pure elimination is rare. Instead, the strategies of signalization, evocation, and partial presence predominate, and are used to fulfil various narrative and symbolic functions. While elimination and signalization are less obtrusive than evocation, they are also more likely to lead to misinterpretations of the depicted reality. Evocation points to the replaced language in a more obvious or even "honest" manner, but it carries the risk of creating an association of second language use with specific and potentially unfavourable aims of characterization. In sum, Mareš's taxonomy has proven to be eminently useful for the analysis, if one bears in mind his observation (Mareš 2000b: 250) that the strategies often coexist within the same texts.

Clearly, these results need to be checked against further evidence from cinematic texts outside the Hollywood mainstream, from different linguistic settings, and also from the dubbed versions of Hollywood movies. The latter analysis would have to discuss, for instance, the extent to which in some dubbed versions, the amount of dialogue in other languages is even smaller than in the English original. For instance, in the Czech version of *The Hunt for Red October*, there is no unrealistic switch from Russian into Czech (see excerpt 6 above) because the Russian characters speak Czech from the beginning. A similar case are the two movies *The Peacemaker* (1997) and *Traffic* (2000), which feature no replacement in the original, but a large amount of non-English

dialogue instead. In the French dubbed versions of the two movies, however, this dialogue disappears, and the characters use foreign-accented French.

Still, there has been a clear trend away from the replacement of other languages towards the strategy of presenting them whenever their use would seem plausible, especially in movies where the English language is also used realistically. Both in the series of James Bond and Jack Ryan movies, all instances of replacement predate the new millennium, and the strategy of presence (however limited) has been used throughout the three most recent movies, *The Sum of All Fears* (2002), *Die Another Day* (2002) and *Casino Royale* (2006). Likewise, the two most recent movies directed by Mel Gibson constitute the first cases of successful mainstream movies not only without any English dialogue whatsoever, but with subtitled dialogue in languages unknown to a much larger part of the audience than in the case of French, Spanish, or the other languages treated in this study. The first movie is *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) with dialogue in Aramaic and (to a smaller extent) Latin and Hebrew, and the second is *Apocalypto* (2006), set in pre-Columbian Central America with dialogue exclusively in Mayan. Gibson's example shows that while the way is certainly paved for more cinematic multilingualism, the ideologies associated with the movies in question do not necessarily coincide with those of many liberally-minded cinemagoers. Moreover, it is fair to assume that Gibson's patterns of linguistic representation remain, at least for the time being, an idiosyncratic choice.

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