An Online Academic Journal of
Interdisciplinary & transcultural topics in Humanities
& social sciences

Designed by Abeer Azmy& Omnia Raafat

# TJHSS

**BUC Press House**

BUC

## Volume 3 Issue (4)
## October 2022

**Transcultural Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences (TJHSS)** is a journal committed to disseminate a new range of interdisciplinary and transcultural topics in Humanities and social sciences. It is an open access, peer reviewed and refereed journal, published by Badr University in Cairo, BUC, to provide original and updated knowledge platform of international scholars interested in multi-inter disciplinary researches in all languages and from the widest range of world cultures. It's an online academic journal that offers print on demand services.

**TJHSS Aims and Objectives:**
To promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences and provide a reliable academically trusted and approved venue of publishing Language and culture research.

## Advisory Board

Prof. **Sun Yixue**
President of The International School of Tongji University
Email: 98078@tongji.edu.cn

**Prof. Wang Genming**
President of the Institute of Arab Studies
Xi'an International Studies University
Email: genmingwang@xisu.cn

**Prof. Zhang hua**
Dean of post graduate institute
Beijing language university
Email: zhanghua@bluc.edu.cn

**Prof. Belal Abdelhadi**
Expert of Arabic Chinese studies
Lebanon university
Email: Babulhadi59@yahoo.fr

**Prof. Jan Ebrahim Badawy**
Professor of Chinese Literature
Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University

Email: janeraon@hotmail.com\

**Professor Ninette Naem Ebrahim**
Professor of Chinese Linguistics
Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University
Email:ninette_b86@yahoo.com

**Prof. Galal Abou Zeid**
Professor of Arabic Literature
Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University
Email: gaalswn@gmail.com

**Prof. Tamer Lokman**
Associate Professor of English
Taibah University, KSA
Email: tamerlokman@gmail.com

**Prof. Hashim Noor**
Professor of Applied Linguistics
Taibah University, KSA
Email: prof.noor@live.com

**Prof Alaa Alghamdi**

Professor of English Literature
Taibah University, KSA
Email: alaaghamdi@yahoo.com

**Prof. Rasha Kamal**
Associate Professor of Chinese Language
Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University. Egypt
Email: rasha.kamal@buc.edu.eg

**Professor M. Safeieddeen Kharbosh**
Professor of Political Science
Dean of the School of Political Science and International Relations
Badr University in Cairo
Email: muhammad.safeieddeen@buc.edu.eg

**Professor Ahmad Zayed**
Professor of Sociology
Dean of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences
Badr University in Cairo
Email: ahmed-abdallah@buc.edu.eg

# Table of Contents

# Allusions in Film Subtitles:
## Interaction Between Verbal and Non-Verbal Contexts

Rania Borham El-Malky
Institute of Applied Linguistics and Translation
Faculty of Arts
Alexandria University-Egypt
Email: amocoutlook@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The intended conversational reference by speakers to entities or linguistic stretches of which knowledge is culturally shared among discourse participants to add an implied simile to entities within their conversation context is a challenge to on-screen film translation, as a multimodal content. Those units of linguistic input are termed as Extra-linguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs). This topic is interdisciplinary involving analysis tools from pragmatics mainly Relevance Theory, which presents a general framework for the description of the communication process, in addition to subjects such as translation strategies classification as well as terminologies from audio-visual cinematographic content annotation conventions. The main purpose for this research is to investigate the application of RT in describing the nature of multimodal (verbal and non-verbal) contextual effects by: a) understanding how the allusive items ECRs are interpreted by the native viewers of films; and b) how the same context can help the subtitlers in approximating the meaning of ECRs to non-native users of subtitles. The corpus for analysis applying RT method constitutes of eight extracts from four screenplays: "Crash" (2004); "Fences" (2016); "Collateral Beauty" (2016); "The Theory of everything" (2014). The terminology for describing the non-verbal context of the screenplay is derived from film making terminologies. Observations therefrom were used to understand the effect of multimodal context in understanding the ECR function and its implications on the translation choice.

**Keywords:** *Allusions; Audio-visual translation; Multimodal; Relevance Theory; Subtitling*

## 1. Introduction

Verbal allusions represent a phenomenon that requires awareness of the relevant cultural background, which reflects on decision-making while translating the text. Examples for allusions are names of celebrities, historical or political events, or quotes from religious or famous literary texts. They maybe modified by the speaker for literary or humorous effect. The phenomenon of allusive reference or ECRs as a cultural problem facing translators was best reviewed and dissected by Ritva Leppihalme (1997). Analysis of such items requires knowledge of two elements: a) the allusive source, which is the original text where they were first used and b) the allusive function inside the text, be it humor, comparison, theme highlight or others.

This research addresses the translation of such items in film subtitles - which is by nature a multimodal type of translation- and how subtitling is affected by the accompanying context, whether verbal or non-verbal. Since the linguistic phenomenon of allusion is tied to the intentionality of the speakers, and is considered as a type of implicature, it lends itself to pragmatic methods of study. Lately, scholars of pragmatics have nearly agreed on Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory (RT) (1986 and 2005) – derived from Grice's conversational maxims theory (1975) - as the best procedure for understanding the involved cognitive / communicative process involved.

*The main objectives of the research are:*
1.                                                                                                                    t

    o describe in suitable cinematographic language all the elements of context (verbal and non-verbal) in the film scenes which contain allusive content.
2.                                                                                                                    t

    o dissect the dynamics of  communicating and understanding this allusive content content ECRs and how all the described contextual elements contribute to this communication process using the RT pragmatic approach.
3.                                                                                                                    t

    o investigate how subtitles can capitalize on such contextual elements to approximate the intended meaning behind the same allusions.

*The main research questions are:*
1.                                                                                                                    H

    ow can multimodal (verbal and non-verbal) cinematographic contextual effects be exploited and used as agents while designing subtitles that would help the TT audience recognize the meaning behind allusions in film dialogue?
2. How can the subtitler select the optimal problem-solving strategies to communicate the implied meaning behind allusions?
3. Which of the two main sources of allusions (nouns and key phrases) are more flexible to be rendered through subtitling strategies, and which presents the greater challenge?

4.                                                                                                                    E

    xamples for analysis are extracted from the following list of screenplays: Crash 2004; Fences 2016; Collateral Beauty 2016; The Theory of everything 2014. The choice of films was delimited temporally to post 2000 productions, and genre-wise selecting social drama movies.

## 2. Theoretical Setting

### The nature of allusions: linguistic positioning

Why are allusions a pragmatic issue? Such reference to assumedly recognized items would involve a speaker's intentionality to pass an indirect meaning and a receiver's assumption of implied relevance.  Ritva Leppihalme (1997) owns the term" culture bumps" which was coined to describe allusion's challenge to translation and used as the title for her book. She's also the first to classify its types into NPs and KPs, and to model the analysis procedure into knowledge of source and function.

**There are also other bases for classifying allusions:** 1) Allusions as stylistic devices yielding intended effect. This type is ether used overtly, with the source being stated in various degrees of clarity; or is used covertly, with the source being left to the listeners' knowledge or lack of. The user of such allusions may choose to make slight alterations to the phrasing of the NP (as in puns) or to the KP for humor or comparison case; ex: "to flee or not to flee".

2) Allusion types could also be seen according to their source, be they holy books, historical/ political speechesor  literary/ artistic dialogues.

3) Translation-oriented classifications of allusive content are viewed according to the semantic unit which the translation needs to convey. Pedersen (2005, 2017) set out a

model for assessing the quality of translation from a pragmatic perspective using Searl's speech act theory (1997) where the translation unit is the illocutionary point behind the implied meaning. Pedersen asserts that all contextual input including the non-verbal elements play a role in approximating the implied meaning as in using canned laughs sound in sitcoms.

### *Subtitling as a discipline*

As a branch of AVT subtitling studies have inherited the interdisciplinary nature of translation even before the systematic study of this field eventually started to take shape. The first salient trend in AVT is the linguistic approach, taking one of three main research lines, either the norms approach or the pragmatic approach or the empirical cultural and socio-cultural methodologies. The normative approach has sometimes taken a pedagogical trend, providing practical guidelines for teaching AVT such as Bannon's work entitled: *The Elements of Subtitles* (2010).

On another level of progress, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) approaches and tools have been developed and innovated for the digital management of subtitles such as special purpose database compilation. A good example is the Folri corpus of screen translation (the Forlixt 1) which has been in process of compilation by the University of Bologna since 2008 which shall have great input in the process of subtitlers' training. Also sub-corpora within the Corpus of Contemporary American English COCA pertain to subtitles. This is in addition to multimodal corpus annotation software (ELAN) and the multimodal video analysis software (O'Halloran and Lim, 2014; O'Halloran, Tan, 2015). The availability of user friendly online programs for placing captions on screen has even promoted a parallel field to the formal approaches as in fan-subs.

Although purely linguistic approaches have never missed to touch upon what they refer to as "medium specific constrains", the development of inter-semiotic approaches to subtitles has crystallized and taken shape through the work of scholars of social semiotics, especially the Newtown circle during the 1990s.

A lately encouraged approach is the integration of both pragmatic and multimodal frameworks for studying subtitles, especially drawing upon relevance theory in a multimodal pragmatic approach MPA as in Mubenga's study: *Towards a multimodal pragmatic analysis of film discourse in audiovisual translation* (2009).

A variety of scholarly approaches to subtitling strategies-classification are summarized in the following lines.

**Subtitling strategies** from a general perspective: In 1992, Henrick Gottlieb published an article about subtitles as a new discipline. In this paper he attempted to classify screen translation strategies in a general approach. This map for the possible translation strategies was criticized for lacking definite borders between the proposed types. It is also not geared towards a certain linguistic study point.

| Transfer | A faithful transmission of the whole form and also message from SL (source language) into acceptable TL (target language) equivalent. Every single piece of the original SL aspects, both form and message, are transmitted to and emanated by the TL accurately. |
|---|---|
| Imitation | Preservation of the original SL forms in the TL. This is in line with Larson's (1984) *loan word* to refer to the process of adopting a foreign expression in the translation, which the target audience are not familiar with. |
| Transcription | Preservation of irregularities, atypicalities, and peculiarities of SL elements in the TL. |
| Expansion | Providing supplementary information in the translation due to the formal differences between two languages, in order to render the translation more comprehensible and acceptable in the target language. |
| Paraphrase | Alteration of SL message into TL in order to provide an acceptable as well as TL form. |
| Dislocation | Facilitating the change of a particular SL message into acceptable TL expression so that the translation will produce the same effect on the target audience. |
| Condensation | Reduction of the SL message without reducing its meaningful content. However, all of the original message content is not lost. |
| Deletion | Deliberate exclusion of part of the whole SL message, especially less important aspects, such as those having no verbal content, leaving the most important message to be expressed intact. |
| Decimation | Extensive reduction of message which is followed by the reduction of its important expression and parts. |
| Resignation | Zero translation as a result of the inability to translate the message at all. |

Fig. 1 Gottlieb's subtitling strategies (1992)

**Strategies centered around allusions:** Although not based on AVT, the classification of problem-solving strategies for translating allusions set out by Leppihalme has the privilege of distinguishing between strategies fit for proper nouns and those fit for key phrase (1997, Ch. 4). The following is a summary:

**Firstly**: strategies fit for PNs and their subcategories:

1-Retention: using the name as it is;

1 .a. using the name, while adding some guidance;

1. b. using the name, while adding an explanation, (footnote, parenthetical…etc).

2- Replacement

2. a. replacing the name by another SL name;

2. b. replacing the name by a TL name.

3-Omission

3. a. omitting the name but transferring the sense by other means (ex: a common noun);

3. b. omitting both the name and the allusion.

**Secondly**: Strategies fit for KPs:

1- Using standard translation; with minimum change through a literal translation, without regard to conotative or contextual meaning. Here, no change would aim at the transfer of connotations;

2- Extra allusive guidance added in the text, according to the translator assessment of the needs of TT readers by adding information (on sources etc.) which the author, did not think necessary; such as using typographical means to signal that the material is performed;

3- Using footnotes, endnotes, translator's prefaces annexed to the text as additional information.

4- Simulating internal marking through the addition of allusion-signaling features (marked wording or syntax) departing from the text style, which signals the presence of borrowed words;

5- Replacement by a similar performed TL item;

6- Reducing the allusive item to its meaning dispensing with the allusive KP itself;

7- Recreating the item, using a mixture of techniques. Constructing text that hints at the connotations of the allusion or adding special effects created by it;

8- Omitting the allusive phrase.

As could be noticed, some of such techniques are simply not suitable for the on-screen translation mode, such as the buse of footnotes or annexed material. Also excessive

| Official Equivalence | Retention | Direct translation |
|---|---|---|

**Minimum Change**

ECR Transfer Strategies — Omission

**Intervention**
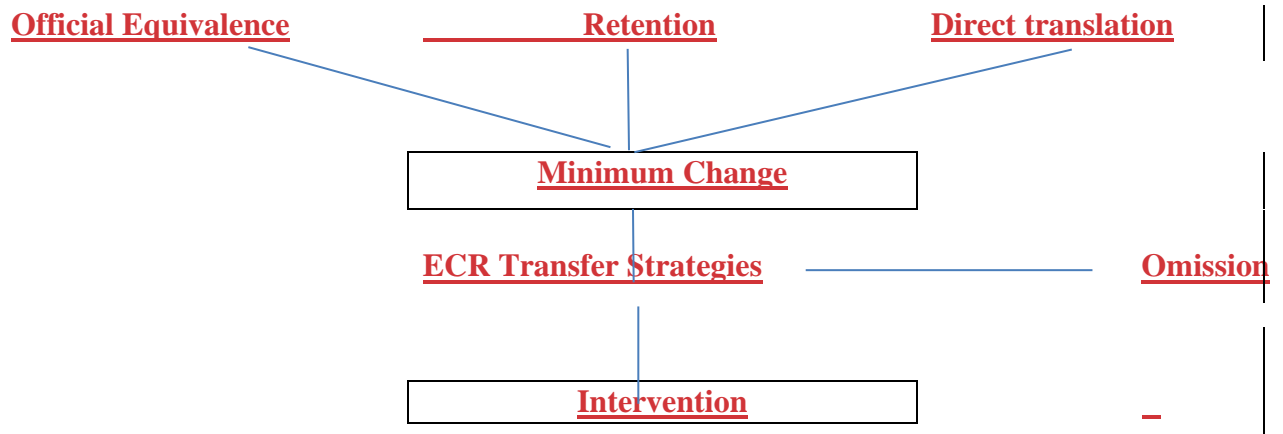
paraphrasing departs from the prerequisite of economy and self-containment of the message to suit limited screen space.

**Finally, Pedersen's strategies taxonomy** for subtitles of ECRs (2008): seeking the privilege of being mainly devised for AVT. It combines both merits of Gottlieb's and Leppihalme's classifications.

|  | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Specification** | **Generalization** | **Substitution** |

**Addition**  **Completion**    **Hyponymy**    **Paraphrase**    **Cultural**    **Situational**
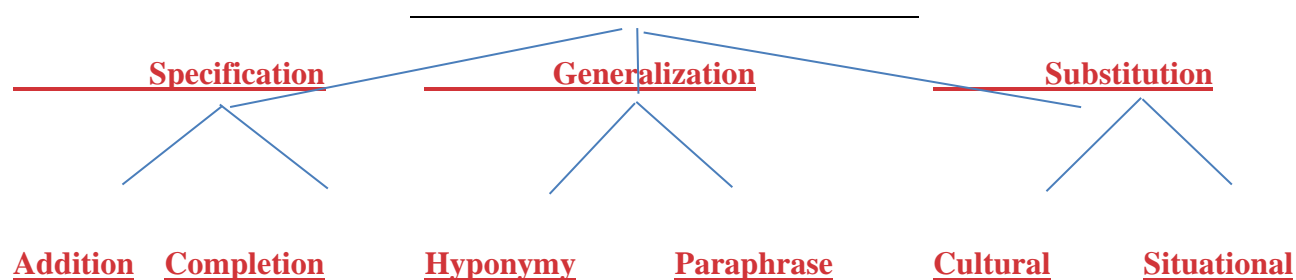
Fig. 2. Pedersen's taxonomy of ECR translation strategies in AVT (2008)

**As for techniques of subtitles in market practice**: from a practical yet professional view, we can distinguish two types of subtitles namely the interlingual and the intralingual. The first type refers to translation into a different language than that of the original screenplay. The second type refers to text appearing on the screen transcribing the verbal audio into same language captions. This helps the hard-of-hearing with understanding video contents and also serves pedagogical purposes for foreign language learners. It is now an existing option in internet video applications such as youtube to turn-on the captions button and get an on-screen transcript of what is being said in the video.

In technical practice, one can classify subtitling types from more than one perspective. From the product users view point, there are open –versus- closed subs. Open types are those which cannot be turned on and off. While the closed type can be manipulated by turning them on only if needed.

**Considering a purpose-based** typology, we can differentiate between the professional commercial type and the fansubs which are the product of amateur endeavours.

The classification for subtitling strategies followed in the research is that of Pedersen's. The reasons for that are 1) its special attention to subtitling as a genre and 2) its being centred around ECRs.

*Describing the non-verbal context (annotation)*

The *Handbook of multimodal analysis* (2009) was published by Routledge, and followed by many series and journals on the same topic. Long before the field has gained such status, scholars such as Firth (1957) -Halliday's predecessor in the systemic functional linguistic approach (SFL) listed the contextual categories contributing to resolving indirect meaning: (1) The relevant features of the participants, including (i) the verbal action of the participants and (ii) the non-verbal action; (2) The relevant objects and (3) The effects of the verbal action (cited in Lenon, P. 2004, p. 26).

When worked-with as a separate discipline, multimodal studies are described as a relatively new field that has roots from three focal traditions:  1) Hallidayan Systemic functional Grammar SFG; 2) Social semiotics; and 3) Conversational analysis (Jewitt, 2016). In multimodal discourse analysis MDA, most research studies construct their models by following the procedure grounded on SFG  derived by the Newtown circle of

semiotics especially Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996), relying on the distribution of meaning making semiotic resources on a matrix of social functions (ideational, interpersonal and textual) that are read both paradigmatically and syntagmatically. Kress and van Leeuwen's work was the main inspiration for the most referred-to work in multimodal transcription by Anthony Baldry and Paul J Thibault (2006) namely *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*: *A multimodal toolkit and course book.*

The basic reason for this turn towards multimodality was the realization that language as a meaning-making semiotic source is not enough to account for communication means in the analysis of discourse. The second basic concept behind this development is the need to assert the role of *agency* behind using all sorts of signs or in other words the concept of *motivated sign* in discourse.

However, as important as they are to reviewing the literature of studying the role of multimodal contextual elements, the heavily terminologically loaded frameworks for describing such meaning units are not recommendable when the focal study point is not centred around the knowhow of transcription itself as advised by Forceville (2007). More specialized and to-the-point methods such as Bordwell and Thomson's *Film Art* (2016).

**Transcription (annotation) as a tool-kit:** Two sharply defined procedures for multimodal analysis are discussed by Desilla (2009 and 2012, pp. 36-38); firstly: the discursive method, by describing all the roles of meaning making resources in running essay form. Secondly: the tabular method, which is the most widely used one devised by Baldry and Thibault (2006) again influenced by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). In her empirical study on the comprehension of implicit film dialogue across cultures, which focuses on cultural allusions, Desilla chooses to concentrate on the descriptive analysis of the allusive dialogue (2014. p. 195). A presentation of the elements of analysis is always laid-out in a table including screenshots for the subject scenes and the basic needed information in the following analysis. Chuang (2006) uses a more subtitle-focused method of representation which also combines both the tabular method (juxtaposing screen shots to their relevant subtitles) and a discursive review.

| Frame no. | Time (hh:mm:ss) | Frame | Visual Image | Kinesic Action | Soundtrack |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 00:01:03 | | CP: stationary D: MCS VC: coffee bar VF: Pam looks at Bridget, Bridget's gaze is disengaged, Colin looks towards the counter | [Colin turns towards the bar, Pam turns to Bridget] | FIELD SI chatter, ☼ coffee bar noise |
| | | | | | FIGURE Pam: *Ridiculous! Your motto must be: "Don't let him pop it in... "* f, smooth, tense, high pitch |
| 2 | 00:01:06 | | CP: zooming in D: MCS VC: as above VF: Pam looks at her finger, Bridget's gaze is disengaged | [Pam makes as if she puts a ring on her finger, Bridget presses her lips tight together] | FIELD SI chatter, ☼ coffee bar noise |
| | | | | | FIGURE Pam: *... until he's popped it on"*. n, smooth, tense, high pitch, unwavering, M |

Fig. 3. Example for Baldry and Thibault's (2006) tabular representation used by Desilla



| Subtitles | Moving images |
|---|---|
| 1948: EVE OF THE NATIONALIST EVACUATION OF TAIWAN.<br><br>THE COMMUNISTS HAVE SURROUNDED THE CITY. | 1948: THE EVE OF THE NATIONALIST EVACUATION TO TAIWAN·<br>滇池人围困大国民党军队·王太四一 |

Fig. 4.  Example from Chuang's (2006) transcription of multimodal elements in film

The terms "transcription", "representation" and "annotation" are sometimes used interchangeably to denote the process of laying-out the no-verbal contextual elements. However, the term "representation" has a certain technical significance assigned to it in RT.  It is always mentioned in the context of discussing a person's internal "representation" of cognitive experience. As for the term "transcription" it is also very much attached to the approach of Baldry and Thibault (2006). For both considerations, in this research, the analysis uses the term "annotation".

**Nonverbal cues to meaning from film language: Light, framing and duration** of a shot.
The three main factors which deliver the message in this edited movement are: 1) photographic aspects of the shot; 2) framing; and 3) duration. This section is a summary of the meanings and functions of such cinematographic elements from Bordwell & Thompson (2016:, pp. 162-210).

**Firstly, photographic** aspects of a shot: These mainly concern the use of light - hence the prefix photo. Light manipulation involves choices related to alterations in the image tone; colours; textures and exposure. These are always affected by a) speed of frames movement (measured in "frames per second"); b) perspective and c) focal length.

**Secondly, framing** decides how objects are defined for us as viewers, through **a)** camera position (centred horizontally, oblique or from an elevated or low angle); **b)** the distance at which the object is framed which defines how the object or character is given importance over other elements and **c)** mobility of the camera . Framing isolates a narratively important detail in the scene. A frame is also used to delimit the character's range of knowledge.

Each element of the three framing parameters adds up to the exposed vision of the cinematographer. **Position** is the angle from which we are made to view objects. The number of angles is infinite, but they are mostly described as perpendicular straight-on or oblique high / low. A perpendicular view is more direct and highlights the rather still situation. An oblique position results into a dynamic composition, showing more motion. A high position gives the viewer a vantage place higher than the object / person in the frame. Whereas a point-of-view position (POV) is use for putting the camera in place of the actor's own eye, as if we are looking with them, this unites the viewers with the characters making them share feelings. By reproducing an object inside the frame from a unique strange angle, the cinematographer forces the spectator to take a keener interest in it.

**Distance** represents how far the camera is from the objects.  Long versus short shots present key signals to whether the object or body language is foregrounded and emphasized or downplayed in a certain frame. An extreme long shot (ELS) provides a bird's eye view to the setting from afar. In a long shot (LS), we get to see the whole figure of the characters, but the background is more prominent. Longer shots against a rather empty background could depict a character's looming power. The medium long shot (MLS) gets us closer to the human figure nearly from the knees upwards. The medium shot (MS) is a view of the characters upper half of the body, whether in an oblique or perpendicular angle. This is the level where the human body language and mood starts to be foregrounded and focused upon. A medium close up (MCU) adds on

focus towards the part above the shoulders. A close up (CU) is a frame with only the face inside it, paying more attention to facial expressions and feelings. An extreme close up (ECU) is a zoom-in towards one facial feature.

The mobility of the camera in the shot is what sets out the additional communicative dimension for video and cinema as opposed to photography. A sudden shift of distance or angle can signal a major turning point in the perspective. A sudden penetration by zooming-in could signal a penetration of a new fact. Types of camera movement in the shot are pan /tilt /track and crane motion.

The third element in the cinematographic language is the image **duration**. The technical name of the shot from time perspective is "take". A shot is a long /short take. These are usually confused with "long/short shot", which refer to physical distance and not time.

**The alluding agent's (film makers') intended meaning:** Pragmatic approaches in general are always concerned with the participants' mutual intention, (the cooperative principle). In multimodal communication as in filmed material, the addresser (film maker), ostensively controls all elements of conducting the message on all contextual givens; both the visual and the verbal.

In an article entitled *Relevance theory and media discourse: a verbal-visual VV model of communication*, Ramos (1998) presented an insightful account about deeper layers of the involvement of the addressers' intention in the VV context as compared to face-to-face communication; a point which he thinks reveals some shortfalls in RT (*Journal of Poetics* 25, 293-309, 1998). In Ramos' account, two points are important to the analysis in the model. The first is the identification of different lines of communication in the VV mode. Ramos identifies the author/spectator communication versus the character/character communication line (1998, p.296, par.1). In this research, we pay attention also to the subtitler/non-native-user line of communication being the subject of the research questions.

The second relevant point put forward by Ramos, is the exceptionally important role of the combination of contextual information including non-verbal behavior (p.299, par4) to bridge the gap in the semantic continuum of multiple meaning-layers. Both valid points are being considered in the analysis.

Different forms of such non-verbal contextual information in cinematographic language could be summarized under mise-en-scene and editing.

**Mise-en-scene; the theatrical set-up** is the way film makers use theatrical tools to express their intended meaning(s). Such tools include positioning and setting the different cinematographic elements inside the frame such as the manipulation of lighting style, staging of the actors, their movement, body language, facial expressions, space relations and performance technique. Triggering attention towards certain objects in the frame and their relationship with the intended meaning is an immense help. It is the director's choice - in RT terms the addresser's intention- to decide what to show us; whether to highlight or lowlight it; at which time; and consequently how to converse with our expectations. When we look at an image, we look purposefully. What we notice is guided by our **expectations** about what might be significant (Bordwell & Thosmpson, 2016, p.142, emphasis added). This explanation of the communication between the film makers and the spectators is best proof that RT is a valid tool towards the analysis

In modern social drama, mainstream directors believe highly in the power of the actors facial expressions, especially the eyes and gaze. That is why the most intense

shots which contain deeper levels of meaning are mainly close-ups. As we move backwards in time with older movies, body language has been an actor's best friend.

As subtle a key as it could be for the average viewer' perception of cinema, manipulation of lighting source is another tool for supporting the intended focus of attention. This shall be seen in the analysis of one of the examples from *Fences*, where the main source of light is the sky or heaven. This is an extra contextual guidance which relates the visual context to the intended information given in the verbal content.

**Relations between shots (editing):** Editing is the putting-together of shots and transitions between them. Transition types from shot-to-shot range from the most common and abrupt, which is the "cut" to the most gradual which is the "fade-in/out" passing by the "dissolve" and the "wipe". Transitions help shape how shots relate to each other. It helps "accent" a certain element in the shot by using attention grabbing transition technique or an alternating occurrence of two consecutive shots. The viewer/subtitles user expect relevance and coherence of ideas throughout the film's verbal script and visual content. Hence, the repeated occurrence of an implied element of meaning backs this expectation and supports the inference process. Similarly, intended discontinuity might also be a tool for cutting across time boarders or implying paradoxical relations.

*Relevance Theory: the pragmatic tool for analysis*

As an evolution to the cooperative principle of Grice, relevance theory (RT) derived by Sperber and Wilson reduces the four conversational maxims into only the relevance maxim fulfilling all the requirements of the other three (quantity, quality and manner). The existence of a receiver's assumption of ostensive intention of relevance on part of the speaker is the key to mutual understanding of implied meaning. This intentionality behind using allusions as a type of implicature has two aims: 1) an informative aim and a 2) communicative aim, the process of interpreting such implied meaning depends on two principles.

a) The cognitive principle: maximizing relevance to minimize the needed cognitive effort involved to interpret the input

b) the communicative principle: optimizing relevance through meeting the receiver's expectations of ostensive intentionality behind the input.

In this process, a role is assigned to each of the speaker (which in our case the film maker as a first-hand speaker together with the character as a second hand speaker); the translator and the audience / subtitles users. Where the word "input" means all components of context both verbal and non-verbal which are assumed by the receiver / subtitles-user to be intentionally positioned by the film makers, and that such order of positioning is relevant to the message of the discourse.

## 3. Methodology of analysis

The analysis stages include the following steps:
1) Corpus description and data collection;
2) Tabular annotation of video extracts;
3) Defining ECR source and function;

4) Explaining the interaction of verbal /non-verbal input in terms of RT;
5) Discussing the addressee's role in the cognitive process;
6) Investigating the translation strategy choice.

*Corpus description and data collection.*

The corpus consists mainly of extracts of verbal dialogues/ monologues from original filmscripts which include allusive content. Two extracts from every film are analyzed demonstrating a variety of allusive sources (cultural, political/historical, Biblical and literary). They also represent various subtitling strategies. Each video extract extends over an average of 30-90 seconds. Arabic-subtitled shots from those videos were organized into soft files through digital editing techniques (Jing, FastStone and others). Therefrom, the researcher could keep defining the frames which include the visual input containing significant contribution to the communication process. Every film is introduced in a separate section, preceded by an introductory description for the controlling theme.

Such films belong to the genre of socio- political drama. The reasons being: 1) it is the variety which most demonstrates the effect of culture on language , and 2) it heavily employs socio-political allusive implied meanings, especially pop-cultural terms.

The corpus was also temporally delimited to post-2000 productions, so that the type of subtitles used in the analysis is the version formally commissioned by the producers. Fan-subs and amateur translations are excluded for consistency. The reason for this is that RT requires consideration of the element of intentionality. Hence, for committing to a single standard of judgement that assumes expected intentions by the agent in the communication process, which in that case would be an assigned translator that is hired to do an audited job, rather than an amateur whose intentions in engaging in this project could simply be presence on social media or other unpredicted intentions.

The date of production for the relvant films has a special importance, since it confirms how the allusions relate to their ECR sources, being by necessity a date that follows its occurrence or the time when it became popular. If this temporal precedence does not exist, then the allusive relation is nullified.

*Tabular annotation of video extracts.*

A general introduction to the film context and message is followed by the five-column tabular annotation A list of the involved symbols and abbreviations is annexed to the analysis.

*The first and second columns* show the lead-in time and duration of the video shot and the selected still visual frames cut out therefrom. Sequences of frames from the shot are not necessarily contiguous (Desilla, 2012, p. 36). Both the duration and framing of the shot are essential for describing the visual aspect of the shot where the allusion and its subtitles occur (Bordwell & Thomson 2016, p.162). The still frames also demonstrate the Arabic subtitles as they show on the screen.

*The third column* is a representation for the soundtrack. It may include as well any diegetic / non-diegetic sound effects that serve to add to contextual signals and meaning.

*The fourth and fifth columns* display the visual effects and kinesics that contribute to the allusive meaning interpretation. These are divided in into: a) The cinematographic elements such as camera position, light, distance and other elements and b) the mise-en-scene set of features such as body language, gaze, proxemics and any used props.

| The Shot lead-in time /Frame | | Sound track | Visual & kinesic effects | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time | Frame(s) | Sync script line | Cinematography | Mise-en-scene |
| in: 57: 09 |  | John: "I just wanted to say, good luck and it was good ridin' with you." | – Camera angle: HP<br>– D: MS | John extends his hand towards Tom in a patronizing way, pretending to be friendly. |

Fig. 5. Example for the tabular annotation arrangement

### Defining the ECR source and function.

This stage covers the discursive representation of the transcribed verbal and nonverbal features in the extract, and their reflection as pragmatic implications of relevance. It is divided into three sections: 1) mapping out the ECRs source and function; 2) discussion of the pragmatic interaction between the verbal and non-verbal contextual input. The pragmatic analysis in that stage casts the spot light on the process of interaction in light of the shared manifestness required to construe the allusive context or the subtitling strategies.

*The source* of allusion is first determined, being either a proper noun PN or a key phrase KP. The researcher also thinks that a third type which is reference to culture-specific significant dates can be a source of ECRs, especially if connected to famous or important events in or outside the context of the work. It is also pointed out if the ECR has been manipulated in any way, especially in the phrasal type.

The *ECR function* is next defined. Examples for functions are foregrounding a repeated thematic point; characterization through comparison, or relaying a humorous effect by comparison. Some functions are interpersonal as in allusions to previously shared jokes that are attached to the source of reference or showing-off unexpected access to private information.

### Explaining the interaction of manifest verbal and non-verbal input

Here, the research attempts to account for the various elements of meaning that are manifest to the audience which harp on the same intended effect behind the allusion, and a pragmatic analysis of the cognitive role played by the contextual input and its subtitles.

In this section, the analysis highlights the role of all the verbal, visual, auditory or kinesic language keys and all other cinematographic contextual manifest input which are transcribed in the tabular representation and which help approximate and foreground the intended allusion for the audience.

*Discussing the addressee's role in cognitive process*

The analysis attempts at relating the manifest input to the needed processing effort or what RT considers as the addressees' work, which is inversely proportional to the strength/ weakness of the cognitive effects obtained. This work requires tasks such as recovering of explicatures through enrichment and disambiguation, thus working out inferences resulting from assumptions of relevance. Thereupon, implicated conclusions are drawn by addressees, and the ECR is deciphered a) by the source audience, and sometimes b) by the target language audience depending on whether the cognitive effects are supported by extra allusive guidance on part of the translator or are left to the addressee's effort, providing less than optimal relevance.

*Investigation of the choice of the translation strategy*

The choice of the subtitlers' strategy decides the power of the target input and whether the target language audience realize its existence or miss the flavor of intended implicitness. The taxonomy used for describing the strategies which is suggested by Pederson, is designed around subtitling choices, especially for ECRs.

As mentioned in the review of RT, the translator's main job as far as implicit meaning is concerned, is to achieve optimal relevance. This leaves the translator with two choices; either a) to delete the cultural elements in the allusions and only express its meaning in translation to decrease the effort needed by the target audience; while offering poor contextual effects, and hurting the work of the alluding agent, which is the script writer or b) to preserve the cultural elements by using a direct or cultural equivalent and thereby producing rich contextual effects, which requires more processing effort. Both poles of the optimal relevance scale (cognitive effects and processing effort) are weighed against each other. However, there is a third area in between those poles where the translator could make reference to the same allusive item, and add extra verbal allusive guidance within the translation. This is what the analysis seeks to muster out of the discussed examples where the ECR is not omitted.

## 4. Conclusion

*Findings addressing the research questions*

**Firstly**, **observations concerning the first research question:** How can multimodal cinematographic contextual effects be exploited and used as agents while designing subtitles?

From the analysis, it was observed that the controlling theme(s) of the film reflect(s) on all elements of the cinematographic language including lighting, mis-en-scene, body language and shooting angles. The more such elements comply with them, the more cognitive effects there are and the less the cognitive effort required.

It was also observed from the analysis that the least effective element in conveying the effect of the theme are editing and lighting. Next in strength of cognitive effect is the shooting angle through which different degrees of focus are offered to certain elements of the frame. The strongest of all are body language and the spacial relations and positioning of frame components.

**Secondly**, **observations concerning the second research question**: How can the subtitler select the optimal problem-solving strategies to communicate the implied meaning behind allusions?

Some observation regarding the viability of subtitling strategies are:

- Recurrent use of the direct translation strategy in cases where the allusive content is rather longish as in key phrases from biblical texts and poetry verses.
- Copying literally the same word in cases of a) allusions tied to a culturally common concepts and those of which the function is to trigger attention.
- The strategy of intervention by introducing change is used in cases where the allusion involves inappropriate breaking religious or doctrinal taboos.
- Generalization strategy is used for the specialized terminologies that have not yet been widely familiarized to the layman. A strategy that is not very effective in triggering the needed attention.
- Omission strategy was used in the case of a very culture-specific term. It doubtlessly deprives the subtitles user of the flavor in the text and of the very awareness that there is an allusive content.
- Using the official equivalent was noticed to be the only option with names that are common to both source and target languages.

Such strategies lead to four different levels of allusive content communication:

1) Total knowledge of the source and understanding of its relevance to the intended thematic meaning.
2) Signaling an indirectly communicated meaning without verbal guidance in the subtitles to recognition of the exact source.
3) Communication of a functional meaning without fully relating it to the general theme or source.
4) Totally missing out on both the existence of an allusion and its implied thematic meaning.

**Thirdly**, **observations concerning the third research question:** Which of the two main sources of allusions (nouns and key phrases) are more flexible to be rendered?

Allusive content in the form of NPs was found to be much easier to interpret than KPs, especially those which are familiar to both cultures. It was also noticed that the length of the allusive stretch stands in the way of adding verbal allusive guidance due to the limited screen space.

*Limitations of the study*

In the course of collecting data for analysis, there have been some sources of difficulty in presenting the material. In the age of online streaming and blu-ray technology, which is the third generation in media display facilities, it has become very difficult to locate, let alone use an *original* version of a specific movie production that is handy to extract from. Most available versions are either soft downloads, youtube versions or blu-rays playable only on PS4 or PS5 devices. The researcher has still refrained from using any subtitles versions except the ones issued by the producers of the screenplay, even if other versions where more accurate and easily accessible. That is an excessively time consuming mission.

Another source of difficulty in searching for examples to reflect the research topic is that the research limits its source texts to films produced after the start of the millennium. As complains an Egyptian distributing agent for two major American producers (Warner

Brothers & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox), films -starting that period- are no longer received on 35ml tapes. Before this era, subtitles were prepared by local translators and laboratories in a separate file. Such translation files were usually submitted to the Egyptian censorship, and then captioned-onto the film. This whole process has disappeared, and films are now received in DCP form (digital cinema package), with their subs and dubbed voice into multiple languages readily provided by producers through add-on electronic files. The digital files containing the subtitles are always encrypted to avoid any unauthorized use or copyright infringement. No record for any original written subtitles could be obtained except by manually inscribing the subs which appear on screen.

A third source of difficulty is that the available transcripts for some of the films, which are retrievable from the websites of the producer companies included sometimes text that is different from the final commercial film. This is possibly due to changes effected by censorship, or the existence of more than one script version for the same work. Therefore, a thorough comparison between the actual dialogue and the written script was a must.

The incorporation of non-verbal elements of meaning in the analysis of the communication process on all levels (film-maker-to-viewer / character-to-character / subtitler-to-viewer) has been a challenge since it requires a lot of investigation about how film makers employ visual tools and performance manipulation techniques to convey meaning.

### *Recommendations*

Since the scene as a unit of cinematographic language, cannot be cut-off the rest of the screenplay. The viewer/ subtitler / researcher are all in need to connect pieces of the script in order to make necessary inferences. This includes relationships between characters, symbols to values and meanings beyond the direct expression and different pointers to the themes. The matter being as such, a thorough understanding of the films in question had to be undertaken, in order for the analysis to stand upon solid grounds and also upon a coherent comprehension of the filmed content, as well as the intentions of its makers.

# List of figures

# References

Baldry, A., Thibault, P. J., (2006). *Multimodal transcription and text analysis: a multimedia toolkit and course book*. London/Oakville, Equinox.

Bannon, D. (2010). *The elements of subtitles: a practical guide to the art of dialogue, character, context, tone and style in subtitling*. USA. Lexington, KY.

Bateman, J. and Schmidt, K. H. (2012). *Multimodal film analysis*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Bordwell, D. and Thompson, K. (2016). *Film art: An introduction*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Cintas, D. and Ramael, A. (2014). *Audiovisual translation: subtitling*. Routledge London & Newyork.

Chuang, Y.T. (2006). Studying subtitle translation from a multi-modal approach.

url: https://academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/frames/subtitling/Chuang.2006.pdf

Desilla, L. (2009). *Towards a methodology for the study of implicatures in subtitled films: Multimodal construal and reception of pragmatic meaning across cultures*, PhD Thesis, University of Manchester.

---. (2012) *Implicatures in Film: Construal and Functions in Bridget Jones Romantic Comedies. Villy, R., Andreas H. J. Current Issues in Relevance Theory* (Eds.) The Journal of Pragmatics 44, 30–53.

---. (2014). *Reading between the lines, seeing beyond the images:an empirical study on the comprehension of implicit film dialogue meaning across cultures*. Semantic Scholar: The Translator, 20(2), 194-214. doi: 0.1080/13556509.2014.967476


Forceville, Ch. (2007). *Review of Anthony Baldry & Paul J. Thibault, Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis Toolkit and Course book*. The Journal of Pragmatics 39(6), 1235-1238.

Heiss, Christine and Sffritti, Marcello. (since 2008- ongoing). Forlixt 1 – *The Forlì Corpus of Screen Translation: Exploring microstructures,* Alma mater studiorum University of Bologna at Forlì, Italy.

Juan, L., Huijuan, J. (2014). *The study of non-verbal allusion translation in film subtitle: based on relevance theory*. The Journal of Language Theory and Research. 5.(6), pp. 1381-1386.

Chaume, Fredric. (1997) *Nonverbal Communication and Translation: New perspectives and challenges in literature, interpretation and the media*. Poyatos, F. (Ed.) Benjamins Translation Library, 315

Gonzalis, P. L. (2014) – *Audiovisual translation theories, methods and issues*. Routledge: Taylor and Francis, P: 99-102.

Gottlieb, H. (1992). *Subtitling: A new university discipline*. In C. Dollerup, et al. (Eds.), Teaching translation and interpreting (pp. 161- 70). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

---. ( 2004). *Language-political implications of subtitling*. Orero, P. (Ed.), Topics in Audiovisual Translation, John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 83-100.

Grudy, P. & Archer, D. (2011). *The Pragmatics reader*. Routledge. Horn, L. & Ward, G. (2006). The handbook of pragmatics. Wiley Blackwell.

Jewitt, C. (2014). *Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. Routledge: Taylor and Francis.

---. Bezemer, J. and O'Halloran, K. - (2016) *Introducing Multimodality*. Routledge: Taylor and Francis.

Kenny, D. (2001) *Lexis and creativity in translation: A corpus-based study*, Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Kress, G., van-Leeuwen, Th. (2006). *The grammar of visual design.* Routledge.

Lenon, P. (2004). *Allusions in the press: An applied linguistics study.* Mouton de Gruyter. Berlin. New York.

Leppihalme, R. (1997). *Culture bumps: An empirical approach to the translation of allusions*. Multi Lingual Matters Ltd.

Mubenga, K. S. (2009). Towards a Multimodal Pragmatic Analysis of Film Discourse in Audiovisual. *Erduit. 54*(3), 466–484 doi:

https://doi.org/10.7202/038309ar

Pedersen, J., (2005). *How is Culture Rendered in Subtitles.* H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast, S. Nauert (Eds.), Challenges of Multidimensional Translation, Proceedings of the MuTra Conference in Saarbrücken, Germany, 2–6 May 2005 (2005), pp. 113-129.

---. (2011). *Subtitling Norms for Television.* John Benjamins Publishing company.

Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance, communication and cognition.* Oxford.

---. (1995). Relevance, communication and cognition. Willey Blackwell.