

***Ocean's Eleven* stand-alone Scene 12 with subtitles – a gift for teaching, what lessons for research?**

**ABSTRACT**

This article considers Scene 12 from Soderbergh's 2001 *Ocean's Eleven* from two angles: as a productive scene for teaching fundamentals of audiovisual translation (AVT), and as a cautionary tale for research. Scene 12 is unusual and unrepresentative in its all-in-one illustrative richness, and a comprehensive microcosm that makes it an excellent tool for teaching, and drawing attention to basic and more complex aspects and features of cultural and linguistic transfer in a multimodal context. By the same token, it is an invitation to (re-)appraise on the larger scale of full cinematic contexts the complexity of AVT as cross-cultural mediation and its implications for research. The article is one of several focusing on *Ocean's Eleven* Scene 12 for the Special Issue of *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice* on AVT and Interdisciplinarity of which it is a part. The shared dataset for the scene and rationale for its choice are found in the Introduction to the volume.

**KEYWORDS**

Subtitling, Pedagogical Tool, Research Microcosm, Representational Choice, Cinematic Complexity

**1. Introduction**

Scene 12 from Soderbergh's 2001 *Ocean's Eleven* is a gift for teaching. Generally speaking, extracts with the capacity to illustrate main features of audiovisual translation and related issues compactly and effectively as an all-round introduction to the technical, linguistic and cultural challenges of intra and interlingual transfer for audiovisual translation (AVT) and Translation Studies students are few and far between. The range of features Scene 12 illustrates in one place, unusually, makes it an ideal tool for multi-purpose elicitation, drawing attention to fundamental aspects of audiovisual translation inductively, with also plenty of scope to engage and motivate<sup>1</sup>. Much of the literature on AVT is naturally given over to what Munday describes as 'critical points', or points of (significant and/or overt) decision making (Munday 2018, p. 180), in their application to recurrent or prominent linguistic or cultural mismappings and other representational challenges - humour, cultural reference, orality, sociocultural or socio-pragmatic marking -, perhaps in the process overemphasizing their overall volume and severity. These aspects are all present in Scene 12, expediently, together also with evidence of the impact on representational choices of technical factors that mark out AVT modalities - spatio-temporal and synchrony factors, shift from speech to writing for subtitling, and associated issues as regard representational strategies and choices. Multimodality and the integrated interaction and interdependence of meaning-making resources is another standard focus in AVT study. Its significance is illustrated in full in Scene 12. Access to subtitling or dubbing text in several languages provides further options for analysis, for teaching as for research, with comparative analysis a simple but effective methodological underpinning.

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<sup>1</sup> Other extracts from other films could fulfil similar functions, or differently by integrating other aspects – multilingualism, for example, as in Tarantino's 2009 *Inglorious Basterds*, or a greater range of particular aspects, examples of types of humour in comic films, for instance. Scene 12 is distinctive all the same for the variety of features it gives access to on its own, as a pedagogical platform for triggering understanding of their critical interaction and extending analysis to other datasets.

Research is another matter. Paradoxically, it is perhaps the scene's very virtues as a stand-alone teaching tool that could make it problematic for research, a possible methodological liability as likewise seemingly self-contained. The opportunities for considering matters from alternative angles also present in it give ways out of the impasse, and room to home in on concerns also central in this article: what are basic prerequisites for AVT research, from the cross-cultural pragmatics perspective that broadly informs this article?

This question is returned to in the final part of the article. The opening section provides a pedagogically-driven overview of the extract's in all its didactic richness as data for teaching. The subsequent section offers a closer look at a subset of standard aspects from a non-standard perspective at the interface of pedagogy and research (reduction/omission, orality). It doubles up as the basis for the discussion of research concerns and methodology in the last and concluding part of this discussion of Scene 12 as methodological cogitation.

The article is one of 8 all dealing with Ocean's Eleven Scene 12 from different disciplinary or professional perspectives for this special issue on *AVT and Interdisciplinarity*, as a shared platform to promote dialogue and concerted thinking on the challenges of AVT as a practice and research object. The volume's intentions and choice of data, the shared Scene 12 transcription dataset and the disciplinary allegiances and complementary functions of the different contributions to the volume are discussed in the introduction. The introduction provides the contextualisation for the volume as a whole and for individual articles and is a necessary preamble for all. The Scene 12 sample extract used for analysis is widely available on online platforms like YouTube.

## **2. Scene 12 as a sampler of challenges an AVT pedagogical tool: from linguistic to cultural representation in a multimodal cinematic context**

The overview of Scene 12's transcription dataset from a pedagogical point of view in this section focuses on subtitling across French and Spanish, with an invitation to readers to extend analysis to the rest of the data provided or to their own transcription for other languages as testing ground<sup>2</sup>. The starting point is the text in English for source dialogues and subtitles, however. It is used here as elicitation device for directing attention to key aspects of AVT, including its multimodal nature and spatio-temporal and synchrony features. The following conventions are used for cross-referencing to the transcripts shown in the data section of the volume: SD for source dialogue, [st+subtitle set number] for subtitles, with differentiation across language shown as stE stF, stS for subtitles in English, French and Spanish respectively. Back (word-for-word) translations are shown between square brackets where appropriate (e.g. [xxxx]).

The bottom-up elicitation work accounted for below has been used routinely and productively with groups of undergraduate students of language and translation studies in a UK context, as an introduction to a subtitling and dubbing module taken as an option for their course, and in AVT introductory workshops for translation studies postgraduate students. It is a two-step activity involving brainstorming responses to textual data in print and out of context first, then viewing of the corresponding extract to supplement observations and sensitize further to the range of aspects of cinematic discourse and AVT that the scene can draw to attention. The level of critical engagement and mode of delivery can be adapted to suit levels – to secondary education groups, for example. Variations can also be introduced to

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<sup>2</sup> The transcription dataset for Scene 12 is shown in the introduction of the volume, with the line or subtitle numbers used for cross-reference in this article.

diversify responses - by not giving all in the group the same data, for example, but sharing it out in subgroups dealing separately with source dialogue text, subtitle text, dubbing text and/or different languages, all the better to promote discussion and pinpoint shared features and differences.

It is near impossible to make sense of Scene 12 on the basis of the transcript of the SD text and/or subtitles in English alone. This is not surprising, the scene is not meant to be just read, but the decontextualized approach is an effective device to drive home from the start the interconnectedness of all meaning-making resources in cinematic discourse. Puzzlement is largely down to the incongruity of a hand-moisturising near monologue ([SD10-16]; [stE 6-12]), in the middle section of a scene involving a second-hand car dealer and a prospective buyer discussing the price of a vehicle. The framing opening and closing dialogue exchanges in the transaction are not fully transparent either ([SD 1-9, 17-30]; [stE1-5,13-21]). There are a few clues about the context (a car dealer's yard, with a reference to vans [SD 3], [stE 3]), how many speaking characters are involved (two) and the nature of the exchange (a transaction - figures are mentioned, and with them implicit reference to money with 'sorry ... best offer that I can make' [SD 1]). As this line indicates, the transaction is not off to a very good start. It is successful in the end [SD 17-30], [stE 14 ... I could drop that down//to seven --], and this suggests that the oddly off-topic middle section of the exchange about hands and moisturizing at ([SD10-16], [stE 6-12]) may have been instrumental in prompting this change in the line of bargaining: it signals that something is amiss, but what exactly cannot be ascertained without reference to the full cinematic context, first-hand evidence of the critical interdependence of semiotic modes within it.

Viewing the extract puts this right. Intermittent close-ups of the increasingly gruelling hand-shaking the car dealer is subjected to after the opening moves visually and entertainingly explicate that successful intimidation is the outcome of thinly veiled threat and

harassment. The bullying is aurally punctuated and dragged out by conspicuously prominent filled pauses in the source dialogue text ('er: er: er: er; er:') [SD 12]) that prolong both the incongruity of the small talk about hands until its function of securing a drop in price becomes clear, and the (mostly off screen) hand agony of the car salesman. Significant information about the sociocultural status of the characters, both males, one black, one white, also gets disclosed overtly, visually, and aurally with phonological features of their respective verbal input that double up as socio-pragmatic markers, and are problematic for written representation in subtitling.

In teaching contexts, considering transcriptions of dialogues and/or their translations on their own first, and then only in their full cinematic context, i.e. in the two-step inductive elicitation process illustrated above, the first step normally produces a multiplicity of responses from group participants as to what may be going on in the extract, and its protagonists. The process thus also highlights the centrality of inference in audiences' responses and what may (be needed to) trigger inference, as well as the individuality of these responses as a function of the unique sociocultural profile, processing capacities and engagement with the film that shape viewing experience for each and every one of us.

Transcriptions of the text across AV modalities and languages bring out a range of basic AVT features of subtitling and dubbing: source dialogue reduction, dictated in mainstream subtitling by spatio-temporal factors and reading speed of text transposed from speech, the iso- or time synchrony that comes with total replacement of the oral text in dubbing, movement synchrony with, for example, the need for pausing and rhythm to match textually the increasingly weightier grip of the buyer figure in the intimidation handshake: the text is visibly shorter in the subtitles sets, around the 50% mark, and of more comparable length in the dubbing sets, as the basic word counts shown in Table 1 below confirm for the data available in relation to source dialogues (364 words/100%): 56.31%, 37.91 %, 51.37%,

50.82 % for English, French, Italia and Spanish subtitles; 67.85% and 61.81 % for German and Italian dubbing. These various features are commonly documented (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007, Chaume 2012 *inter alia*). The challenges that they produce are returned to in the next section, with the function of offsetting standard deficit approaches with more positive outlooks.

**Table 1.** Word and *line* counts across languages in the dataset

	SD & Dubbing	Subtitles					
Language	Words	Words		<i>Subtitle lines</i>	<i>Subtitle sets</i>	<i>One-liners</i>	<i>Two-liners</i>
<b>English</b> [source]	<b>364 (100%)</b>	205 (56.31 %)		<b>40 (100 %)</b>	<i>21 (100 %)</i>	2	19
French	---	138 (37.91 %)		<i>32 (80%)</i>	<i>20 (95.23 %)</i>	8	12
German	247 (67.85%)	---		---	---	---	---
Italian	225 (61.81%)	187 (51.37 %)		<i>39 (97.5%)</i>	<i>21 (100%)</i>	3	19
Spanish (Cast.)	---	185 (50.82 %)		<i>36 (90%)</i>	<i>22 (104.76%)</i>	8	14

Scene 12 also illustrates a helpful range of common and/or recurrent linguistic and cultural critical point types, as shown below with subsequent discussion, further down, of the strategies in evidence in the data for dealing with them:

- culture specific reference, to currency or currency value in this case, for example, implicit in the SD with ‘eighteen five a piece’ [SD 1]);

- intertextual reference, to the Bond films series with ‘Denham / Billy Tim Denham’ [stE 7], for example, echo of the typical ‘Bond / James Bond’ introductory routine;
- humour with the ‘Denham’/’Denim like a jean’ play on word, also phonologically showcasing what Mével (2017) and others identify as the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) invested in by the character to boost the impact of the intimidation;
- language variations/sociocultural markers, arguably also in evidence in some of the black character’s lexical choices and conversational routines and triggered in conjunction with intonation and rhythm (e.g. in ‘man you got some lovely hands here’ [SD10], ‘now my ‘sister’ – with strong emphasis on the first syllable of sister and sing-song intonation [SD 12], ‘plus I get a reaction [...]’ [SD 16]).

The strategies variously opted for across languages to deal with these critical points prompt further and broader questions, for both teaching and research:

- There is explication of the implicit reference to currency as US dollars in the subtitles for English (\$ 18,500 [stE 1]) and Spanish (18.500 \$ [stS1]), with due adjustments to order, graphic representation and decimal separator mark (full stop in Spanish). In French, the reference is kept implicit, as an implicitly large but indeterminate sum, as in the SD (18500 *pièce* [18500 a piece] [stF 1]). So when and why is it worth adapting currencies, measurement etc. to target linguistic and cultural conventions, and when and why is it not?



The foregrounding of ‘Plus,’ as a connective set apart with a comma at the beginning of the line, and marked use of a determinant in ‘I’m not into the traditional remedies’ (vs ‘I’m not into traditional remedies’) may both be seen to activate inferences about the character’s sociocultural background based on his speech characteristics, echoing those aurally perceived in the source dialogues, and flag representation of sorts. In French, there are no overt features of sociocultural markedness in the black character’s monologue. There are possible signs that his speech stands out in some respect and, by visual association, is ethnically marked. This is in evidence in the contrast between the ostentatiousness of what comes across as self-consciously elevated language and the crudity of what is suggested with the reference to his social agenda, and in the invitation to collude with the ‘mais ça nuirait à mes fréquentations, si vous me suivez.’ innuendo in stF 11 (‘but it would jeopardize my frequentations, if you follow me’).

These few examples alone, of types of AVT linguistic and cultural challenges, strategies for dealing with them and attendant broader questions, are enough to demonstrate the pedagogical effectiveness of Ocean’s Eleven Scene 12 as an all-round sampler in these regards. The phenomena they illustrate (i.e., wordplays, intertextual references, culture bound references and linguistic variation) feature prominently in the literature on AVT training, with specific sections dedicated to each (e.g. Diaz-Cintas and Remael’s 2007 coursebook and its anticipated 2021 update; see also Pérez-González 2014 and 2019).

Responses to reduction, arguably one of the most pervasive features of all for subtitling in terms of impact, offer additional opportunities for critical discussion, as do, too, line segmentation and distribution and use of typographical conventions across languages. These are inescapable givens of subtitling. How they are dealt with in the languages shown in the dataset provides further material not only to document these key aspects of this AVT

mode with students, but also to scratch beyond the surface of literal representation and expectations of literal representation in our responses to what can be observed in the data. They are discussed below as a preamble and platform for shifting to research concerns in the last section, with analyses at the interface of teaching and research.

### **3. Form as an expressive resource and analytical challenge: reduction, punctuation, segmentation in Scene 12**

Reduction is manifest across languages in the data for subtitles, as a subtitling convention, but also as a pragmatic resource, in the different forms glossed below, from omission to condensation and reformulation. This dual function extends to subtitle segmentation, distribution across frames and the use of punctuation, also discussed in turn below from the viewpoint of their expressivity. All point to various forms of indexing as a fundamental yet still often unrecognised expressive core for subtitling, and make room for counter or at least complementary arguments to deficit approaches privileging loss as their main analytical theme and drive. Their review below will serve as a stepping stone for reappraising questions of choice in subtitling and their ramifications for audiences responses from the point of research in the final section.

#### ***3.1 Reduction strategies***

There is recurrent evidence in Scene 12 of omission, condensation and reformulation in various forms, the main strategies in the toolkit to implement reduction in subtitling, with the function of either doing away with what is not relevant for comprehending messages or reformulating what is relevant concisely (Pérez-González, 2014; also Diaz Cintas & Remael, 2007).

- Omission of orality features, the most conspicuous of all, e.g. of filled and unfilled pauses, the strategic function of which in the source dialogues is manifest in the pointed use of lengthened filled pauses to drag out the handshaking intimidation sequence ([...] she uses er: er: er: er: er: aloea vera [SD 12]).
- Omission of (some) pragmatic markers and devices, likewise recurrent, e.g. ‘well’, ‘oh’, ‘yeah’, ‘you know’, ‘you know what I mean’, ‘I see’. Such markers are used in naturally occurring speech with a range of interpersonal functions in verbal negotiation. They have additional narrative functions in fiction as extra-diegetic cues for characters’ emotional or other responses in source dialogues, and ‘sociopragmatic reflection of forces at play’ (Bruti 2019: 197). This is typically illustrated in Scene 12 with the flagging, via pragmatic markers, of the tension between the buyer’s manipulative behaviour and the increasingly unsettled, puzzled and then submissive demeanour of the salesman. The buyer’s ‘well’ and ‘yeah’ work as devices to suspend speech and generate unease, albeit with the overt function of smoothing over exchange and negotiation [SD 2] (well / I understand/) [retained in stE 5], or express disingenuous expectancy [SD 18] (yeah /) (with rising intonation of enquiry during the pricing down negotiation), for example. They contrast with Denham’s nervous ‘well’s (SD 1, 7), ‘ah’s and ‘oh’s of incredulous acknowledgement tokens during the hand-moisturizing speech episode (SD 13, 15), and then his ‘I know / I see / yeah / let me tell you something /’ of nervous capitulation (SD 17), all punctuated aurally by shifts in intonation and voice quality and visually by physical responses to off-screen handgrip tightening, with close-ups of Denham’s face contracting and eyebrow raising.

- Omission of full lines: ‘I’m sorry’ in SD 11 and stE 7 is absent in the French and Spanish subtitles, where it is left to visual markers of the salesman incredulity to convey his puzzlement at the onset of the hand-moisturizing speech episode; the line ‘let me tell you something.’ at the point of the salesman capitulation [SD 17, stE13] is omitted in Spanish, but not in French (*Je vais vous dire.* [stF 14] [I will you tell]). Two-liner exchanges or adjacency pairs like ‘no / yes sir’ [SD 20, 21] and ‘you’d do that / oh yes sir’ [SD22, 23]) are kept literally in the English and Spanish subtitles ([stE 16, 17], [stS 17, 18]), but omitted and reduced to one pair part respectively in French (‘Vous feriez ça?’ [You would do that?] [st F 17]), so leaving it to visual clues to fill in the narrative. Turn-taking is affected, but redressed by means of punctuation, as shown in the next section.
- Condensation by reformulation, as in Example (2), from source dialogues to subtitles in English and French:

(2) [SD 14] [...] / but I found out that er / it would be a little interference in my:: /  
social agenda / you know what I mean /’

[stE 11] ... but I found there was interference / with my social agenda, you know.

[stF 11] *mais ça nuirait à mes fréquentations,/ si vous me suivez*

[but it would jeopardize my frequentations,/ if you follow me].

There is attendant toning down of covertly threatening small talk, and reliance instead on equally ominous more formal register introduced in French in the previous line with ‘*Vous avez des mains soignées*’ [‘You have hands well cared for’ stF 6], and also in evidence in ‘*ça nuirait*’ and ‘*fréquentations*’ ([stF 11] and above).

- Lexical reduction, e.g. to ‘vans’ in the French subtitles: the literal translation in French of ‘vans’ (SD 3) would be *camionettes* [little lorries] or *fourgonnettes* [little *camionettes*], for which Spanish has the term ‘*furgonetas*’, shown in the Spanish subtitle: ‘- *Son unas furgonetas estupendas.*’ [stS3] (32 characters) [- They are some vans stupendous]; French uses a shorter option, with the term ‘*vans*’ borrowed from American English (‘- *Vous avez des vans formidables.*’ [stF3], also 32 characters [- You have some vans fantastic]. While keeping length in check, the choice in French creates a link with the US context, and a degree of interactive complicity with an audience trusted to appreciate the connection. It is by the same token textually reminded of the cultural distance and a-synchrony in-built in AVT-mediated viewing experience.
- reformulation, as in Example (3) from English to French:

(3) [SD 10] [stE 6]	Do you moisturize?
to [stF 6]	<i>Crème hydratante?</i> [Hydrating cream?]

Both lines are 16 characters each, but the shift from verb to noun in French makes room for reduction in the next subtitle ‘*J’en ai essayé plein*’ by pronominal substitution with ‘*en*’ (for ‘*Crème hydratante*’) [stF 7] (I [it] tried many), and further signposts the verticality of choices returned to further below. Spanish also shifts, to a verb+noun phrase ‘*¿Usa crema hidratante?*’, but with no subsequent space-saving pronominal substitution.

There is thus more evidence, in this last example, of the stylization manifest throughout in the subtitles for the scene in French, in contrast with Spanish and English, i.e. with ‘Crème hydratante?’ vs. ‘Do you moisturize?’ for English. The elision of the verb form in French and implicit assumption that the interlocutor will be able to recover the locutionary intent of the question all the same projects an assumption of complicity and closeness between the characters that is belied elsewhere and is part and parcel of the build-up of the intimidation.

The extent of stylization in French, including with the omission of dialogues lines drawn to attention above, is reflected in the word and subtitle counts in Table 1, noticeably lower for French, with 138 words and 32 subtitles respectively, by comparison with English (205 and 40) and Spanish (185 and 36). While stylization is a by-product of reduction, the contrast between the two relatively close Romance languages French and Spanish suggests a degree of discretionary choice, with tangible impact: less text means greater inferencing effort, but greater scope for interactive engagement with other visual and aural resources, as commonly advocated, and also overall, with more involved narrative co-construction.

Other types of examples or features, like the ‘*Crème hydratante?*’ instance and stylization overall, are an invitation to consider the text of subtitles not for what it does not feature, because omitted, condensed, reformulated. etc., but for its potential for meaning-making, and the options for sense-making afforded audiences. Similar observations extend to punctuation.

### ***3.2 Punctuation***

There is telling evidence in Scene 12 of the expressive potential of punctuation in the idiosyncratic textual context of subtitling, along with or flouting set conventions for the modality. In English, ellipsis or suspension points are thus used as a standard convention for

indicating that a subtitle carries over across frames (Diaz Cintaz & Remael, 2007), as in Example (4) below

- (4) [stE 8] I even went fragrance free / for a year. Now my sister ...  
[stE 9] ... she uses aloa vera / with a little sunscreen in it.  
(see also between stE 10 and 11, and 13 and 14).

Ellipsis is present as a convention with the same function in Spanish, between stS 8 and 9 and 10, then 11 and 12, and 14, 15 and 16. This is not the case in French where it is freed to take on other functions, here suspense by textual suspension, i.e. by suspending utterance to the next subtitle line and triggering perception of a long pause. Suspense is present in the English and Spanish subtitles by virtue of the sequential presentation and processing of subtitles. It is drawn to explicit attention in the English subtitles at stE 14 with a conspicuous substitution of two dashes for the suspension points ('... I could drop that/down to seven - -'). The sense of suspense is heightened in French, however, by the singularity of the function that ellipsis is locally assigned. Elsewhere punctuation activates frames for interpretation that again locally endow them with particular expressive value, as Example (5) below of subtitles for English:

- (5) [stE 3] - Yes, sir, top of the line.  
[stE 16, 17] - Yes, sir. (vs. Yes sir.)

Here the commas between 'yes' and 'sir' and their conspicuous setting apart of 'yes' and 'sir' cue in a near military deference to greater authority with its aural echo of the recruit-to-superior systematic form of two-part acknowledgement familiar from war films. In this they heighten Denham's sense of powerlessness and servile surrender to the show of force

exercised on him. There are other examples in the extract of how punctuation can affect meaning-making, as in Examples (6) and (7) below:

- (6) [stF 18] *Splendide. Ils ont bien fait/de m'envoyer chez vous.*  
[Splendid. They did well/ to send me to you]
- vs. [stS 19] *Fantástico, por algo / me recomendaron que viniera.*  
[Fantastic, for something / to me they suggested that I come]
- (7) [stF 16] 16 000 pièce? [16,000 a piece?] [car salesman]  
[stF17] Vous feriez ça? [You would do that?] [buyer]
- vs [stE 15] Sixteen each.  
[stE 16] - no?  
- yes, sir.  
[stE 17] - You'd do that?  
[...]

In (6) the full stop vs. comma mid-line in the French subtitle makes the difference between a full pause giving the '*splendide*' qualifier greater prominence, including in its slightly elevated register, and an on-the-go small talk-like shorter pause. In (7) the question mark at the end of the price-down offer subtitle for French, as against full stops in corresponding text in English (and in Spanish), anticipates deletion of the ([stE 16] '- no? / - yes, sir.')

two-line exchange. It pre-empts it with its interactive pragmatic function inviting positive endorsement, the function fulfilled for Spanish and English by the subsequent no/yes exchange, albeit temporarily.

The differences and singularities observed in the dataset may seem slight on their own. They are cumulatively significant, and an invitation to reflect on the often overlooked narrative and pragmatic value of punctuation in subtitling, on its own or with other features, like line segmentation and distribution.

### 3.3 Subtitle segmentation and distribution

Subtitle segmentation and distribution across frames is the final example to be covered here of expressiveness conveyed through form and highlighted by tell-tale differences across languages, independently or in the interplay with scaled down turn-taking, stylization and punctuation noted in previous sections. Variations are reflected in Table 2 with the example of lines 12 and/or 13 shown in parallel for English, Spanish and French to highlight contrasts.

As shown in the line count in Table 1, French stands out overall, with one less set of subtitles – 20 as against 21 for English and Italian and 22 for Spanish, and 8 single-liners as against 2 for English, 3 for Italian, 8 for Spanish, and so no direct match in terms of distribution. In some cases this is the consequence of reduction (by line omission), but in others of text being assigned to different frames, resulting in different textual associations, and effect.

**Table 2.** Distribution of subtitles across frames for English, Spanish and French, sets 12-13

English	Spanish	French
12 Plus, I react to the camphor. So I'm not into the traditional remedies.	13 <i>Soy alérgico al alcanfor, no me sirven los remedios tradicionales.</i>	12 <i>Et je suis allergique au camphre</i>
	-----	13 <i>Les remèdes traditionnels, très peu pour moi.</i>
	BT I am allergic to camphor, me not serve	BT And I am allergic to camphor

	the traditional remedies.  (traditional remedies do not agree with me)	The traditional remedies,  not for me. [very little for me]
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In Table 2, there is sequential display over two frames, for French, of text shown on just one for English and Spanish, and the text is distributed over three lines as against two for English and Spanish. The text in French stands out in its form: it shows as stand-alone paratactic units, so with sharper syntactic contour, and produce a *de facto* pausing in text processing that is part and parcel of the build-up of carefully managed suspense and covert intimidation. For English, the tension is there too, but conveyed by different means, including the marked positioning of the coordinating conjunction ‘So’ at the end of the first subtitle line. The resulting syntactic break has the effect of postponing anticipated explanation, in a monologue in which incongruity and defiance of expectations have set the tone and cued ominousness in its oddity. As two separate independent sentences, the text is still paratactic in feel, a typical feature of speech that is here, as it is for French, a trigger of orality. Spanish combines the two independent sentences into one with a comma, and is visually and experientially more akin to writing, but produces tension all the same with the verb/complement split over two lines (... *no me sirven/los remedios* ...).

In short, form matters, on its own and in combination with other features. There can be different means to achieve the same ends, same ends for different means, different means for different ends. as shown in the examples discussed. The singularities identified make a difference, on their own and together, whether consciously perceived or not, and are recurrently observed in data for other films (Guillot, 2019). They are integral to subtitles’ expressiveness and subtitling’s expressive potential.

What audiences make of them, their sense-making, is another question. It is bound to be infinitely unique, a function of individuals’ sociocultural and educational profiles and

experience (of life, language, viewing, etc.), and a function, too, of the very peculiar culturally a-synchronic conditions that characterize viewing films mediated via AVT – all central questions for AVT research.

#### **4. Scene 12 and AVT research - microcosm for a larger picture**

From a pedagogical perspective, Ocean's Eleven Scene 12 and its representations in different modalities and languages draw attention to key aspects of AVT, and with each also to fundamental issues for research, directly or indirectly: choice, for one thing, not just as a strategy but in its broader linguistic, cultural and contextual repercussions, the intricate and situated interdependence of meaning-making resources in cinematic contexts, the elusiveness and unquantifiability of the quality of audience response processes. The processes involved in all are very complex, more complex than we are able to account for fully, or perhaps ever will, as Scene 12 fully demonstrates. There are nonetheless compelling reasons to at least document this complexity, in all its fluidity and variations, as foregoing analyses of Scene 12 data also suggests.

The challenges for research can perhaps for now be encapsulated into two main closely interconnected points, in some respects almost self-evident, but often unheeded in the end, with manifold ramifications:

- i) Audio-visual translation is not (merely) a matter of local and localised choices, whether lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, form-related or other. More perhaps than any other form of translation as one of the partners in a multimodal enterprise, it is about relationships between choices, and the contrasts, connections and internal conversations they produce

and build on as narratives proceed, endophorically within text itself, and in partnership with other meaning-making resources.

This is in evidence within Scene 12, but goes far beyond. Scene 12 is a microcosm, self-contained, yet dependent on what has come before, and laying the ground in turn for what will come after, part of a whole greater than the sum of its parts, as is also in evidence in all the other contributions to the special issue volume. There is a risk in dealing with decontextualized AVT data that these relationships, these connections, these conversations within text may go unnoticed and be missed out on in their critical impact on choices further down the line. Typically opening sequences in films and their dialogues establish narratives and characterization, and are heavy on contextualising clues, from then on integrated as baseline of shared knowledge. The same arguably extends to AV translation and AV text, with early set up of representational conventions from within. Once a representational value has been set for text, changes themselves become integrated as expressive, and integral to the set of resources relied on, to construct what Remael and Reviere, following Tseng (2013), describe as the cohesive chains that guide narrative interpretation in cinematic products (2019, p. 262).

Dealing with Scene 12 out of its full cinematic *and* textual context, or any other scene or even smaller unit makes analysis vulnerable, as is shown, within Scene 12 itself, with the intricate vertical interdependence not just of semiotic modes, but of all the text-related features discussed and the internal indexing of their value. This is not new. It is demonstrated in early studies from a pragmatics perspective like Remael 2003 or Pérez-González 2007, for example. In these studies, of sequential structure and interactive build up in dialogue and appraisal of dubbed conversation respectively, verticality is critical for textual analysis and cannot be disregarded, as it is still too frequently in research. The

practical and research challenges of tracing textual internal indexing qualitatively in full film contexts makes the approach onerous to emulate, and there are few examples. Scene 12 peculiarly highlights a key characteristic of AV fictional text generally, and AVT text specifically, and is a reminder on a small scale of its significance for research. AVT text cannot be taken literally at face value in discrete decontextualized language segments without missing out on significant features of its expressive potential and narrative impact, and on the bigger picture that underpins the viewing experience for audiences, and the job of translation for professionals. Vandaele (2019) drives this observation home from a broader narratology perspective, with an admonition that AV translation should be grounded in an understanding of narrative configuration, of its mechanism and devices in the interplay of clarity and opacity and careful crafting of suspense, surprise and character-oriented focalisation in film. All of them are for him at risk of being jeopardised in text-segment-by-text segment translation practices or analyses. This extends as a consequence to internally set systems of representation.

ii) Audiences' experience is normally predicated on full-length film viewing and is normally holistic, and individual: what viewers make of what they see, hear and/or read is dependent on what is to be seen, heard and/or read, of course. It is also entirely their own: it is a 'sense-making' that builds uniquely on the meaning-making of AVT in full cinematic context, and is cross-culturally modulated by its idiosyncrasies as a cross-cultural experience - in dealing with intertextual reference, for example, as discussed in Section 2 with related questions of cultural distance, and more fully in Desilla's 2014 so far unique study of the comprehension of implicit meaning across languages in AVT, and her contribution to this special issue.

Analyses of Scene 12 in this article bear the indebted imprint of past research - the painstaking and necessary taking stock and typologizing of AVT issues and strategies driven by practical needs to account for professional practice, and inform training (extralinguistic culture-bound reference [ECR]<sup>3</sup> with Pedersen (2007), humour with Zabalbeascoa (2005) and others, for example, and the many others documented in benchmark syntheses, from Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) to Pérez-González (2014, 2019), for example).

Spectatorial experience requires a broader and more integrated conceptualization of descriptive accounts, taking in the relationship between the options AVT makes available for interpretation in its broader cinematic context and viewers' individual response. Viewers' perspectives represented above with Remael and Reviere or Vandaele make this clear. It is also highlighted in pragmatics-driven approaches to AVT as intercultural mediation (e.g. the 2019 Special Issue of *Multilingua* on the topic)<sup>4</sup>, with their focus on representation and attendant questions of linguistic and cultural a-synchrony, the by-product of tension between pragmatic expectations and perceptual frames activated by subtitle text in audiences' own local language and the foreign seen on screen. How viewers respond to these unique processing conditions and to the interplay of internal indexing and interpretative triggers that makes AVT so distinctive as a medium of expression is a topical question. In a world in which AVT-mediated media is omnipresent, the related question of how it may affect intercultural literacy is equally pressing. What is at stake for research is the relationship between the AV text we see, in the fullness of its multifarious capacities to create meaning, flagged here with Scene 12, in its own right and in its full cinematic embedding, and what we make of it as individual viewers, likewise infinitely variable as a function of our diverse linguistic and sociocultural profiles and life experience. Subtitling is 'a modality that

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<sup>3</sup> ECRs are 'expressions that refer to entities outside language, such as names of people, places, institutions, food, customs etc., which a person may not know, even if s/he knows the language (Pedersen 2007, p. 30)

<sup>4</sup> Guest Editors Guillot, Pavesi & Desilla, with contributions by, in alphabetical order, Desilla, Ghia, Author, Messerli, Pavesi and Formentelli, Ranzato, Kirsch.

produces situated conventions of representations at the level of text, of the *signified*, but which, in a contract with audiences and with input from the broader semiotic context produces *signifiers*, flexible and reassignable as signified, in keeping with audiences' variable profiles' (Author 2019, p. 524-5; see also Scott *fc.* with reference to adaptation). There are in other words no one-size fits all translation options, and no one-size fits all types of response, but constantly re-negotiated paradigms, of what in pragmatics would be accounted for as co-construction, with calls to recast AV modalities as communicative agents within the participation structure of film reception (see Messerli, 2019 and in this volume). Achieving the more integrated conceptualization of our understanding of AVT necessary to account for spectatorial experience in all its potential diversity is a considerable challenge. It is a critical step for AVT research.

## **5. In conclusion**

Ocean's Eleven Scene 12 with its interlingual representations is rich self-contained data, for teaching and for research. Its stand-alone richness should not make us lose sight of the bigger picture. Beyond the series of pedagogically useful aspects and features of AVT that it illustrates, not exhaustively, but comprehensively enough to give a robust sense of what they are, how they interact and how fundamental this interaction is for AVT, it also points to just how big that picture is, how intricate, and to the scope there is for research to be informed by interdisciplinary input and complementary approaches. That is also the overall message for this special issue volume.

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