Multilingualism in *Monsoon Wedding*:
how language variation and cultural references were transferred to
*La boda del monzón*

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The number of films requiring the audience to deal with communication in more than one language has increased since the 1980’s and 1990’s.
(Heiss, 2004)
English-language films with other languages

- **French**
  - Lawrence Kasdan, 1997

- **Hindi, Punjabi**
  - Mira Nair, 2001

- **Spanish**
  - Ken Loach 1995
Third language (L3):

The third language is neither the main language used in the source text (ST), nor the main language used in the target text (TT), but a secondary language existing in the ST, which is also embodied in the process of translating.
Bollywood cinema & *Monsoon Wedding*
## The third language in *Monsoon Wedding*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monsoon Wedding</th>
<th>La boda del monzón</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1</strong></td>
<td><strong>L1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (with an accent)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L3</strong>&lt;sub&gt;ST&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td><strong>L3</strong>&lt;sub&gt;TT&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3a - Hindi</td>
<td>L3a - Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3b - Punjabi</td>
<td>L3b - Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Otherness after translation

- Image
- Music
- Cultural referents
Otherness on images – marigolds

- Understandable
Otherness on images - marigolds

- Unbelievable
Otherness and music
Two worlds

■ Values

– Dubey's mother uses her cell phone to make him sell their shares while she tries to convince his son to marry.

– The media present the controversy between the old and the new India.
Cultural referents – more effort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Dubbed version</th>
<th>Subtitled version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>white color</td>
<td>¿una carpa blanca?</td>
<td>¿una carpa blanca?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sangeet</td>
<td>fiesta</td>
<td>sangeet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partition</td>
<td>Partición</td>
<td>Partición</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimbu pani</td>
<td>limonada</td>
<td>limonada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt lassi</td>
<td>te</td>
<td>salt lassi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samosa</td>
<td>samosa</td>
<td>dulce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chuski</td>
<td>helado</td>
<td>polo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whisky</td>
<td>whisky</td>
<td>whiskey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pakoras</td>
<td>Pokoras (sic)</td>
<td>pakoras</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Otherness on words

Like music and costumes, language is also something we play with very much in India. It’s very common and totally natural to speak mixing two or three languages: Hindi, English and Punjabi in this case. [In Monsoon Wedding ] we just went with the absolute honest flow of exactly how we would do it in life... to celebrate being from India rather than look upon the west as anything as closest to happiness in any way.

(Mira Nair)
Representation of L3 in MW

- Continuum: from complete elimination to full presence of L3.


- Do these apply in MW, in the midst between Hollywood and Bollywood films?
Modes of representation of L3 as a continuum

From complete elimination to full presence (Bleichenbacher 2008)

- **Elimination** (no presence of L3)
- **Signalization** (L3 explicitly named in film)
- **Evocation** (L3 interference, especially in lexis and phonetics)
- **Partial presence** («linguistic landscapes» – written signs / unrealistic code-switching)
- **Full presence** (L3 as main language(s) of the film; e.g. Mayan in Apocalypto, 2006)
L3 explicitly named in film. 
Its overall impact in film reception depends on audience attentiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindi mentioned in TV program</th>
<th>ORIGINAL</th>
<th>SPANISH SUBTITLES</th>
<th>SPANISH DUBBING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You think just because you wear <strong>handloom</strong> and <strong>speak in Hindi</strong>...that you represent the common man?</td>
<td>¿Vd. ¿Qué cree? ¿Piensa que Porque habla hindi Representa al hombre de la calle?</td>
<td>¿Qué se cree usted? Que porque lleva un <strong>sari</strong> y habla hindi representa la mayoría de la población?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
¿Qué cree? ¿Piensa que porque habla hindi representa al hombre de la calle?
Evocation

(L3 “interference”, especially in lexis and phonetics)

- Most common strategy in MW
- **Code-mixing**: insertion of Indian/Hindi/Punjabi words in a sentence (in the semantic fields of food, traditions, terms of address and conversational routines).
  - **ORIGINAL** nimbu pani
  - **SPANISH SUBTITLES** nimbu pani
  - **SPANISH DUBBING** Una limonada
Evocation

Frie las "pakoras".
¡Té para el amo! ¡Rápido!
Evocation

- **Bhai-sahib/beta/bhai** (in English and, sometimes, Spanish dubbing, not in subtitles, repeated throughout the film; cf. Bonsignori & Bruti, 2014).
- **Namaste** (in English; not in Spanish dubbing or subtitling)
Partial presence

- Translating mise-en-scène (L3 + non-verbal audiovisual signs; foreign language as sound).
Partial presence

- **Accented films** (different to e.g. *Memoirs of a Geisha*, 2005, Japanese presented as accented English).
  - In MW, different accents of English among resident and non-resident Indians.

- **Partial subtitling** (subtitling L3 occurrences);
  - **Code switching** (Hindi/Punjabi/English).
  - More presence of English in code switching than in other Bollywood films (Si, 2011).
  - Hindi/Punjabi subtitled in English.
  - In Spanish subtitling, L3 in italics (Spanish audiences cannot distinguish between Hindi and Punjabi... and they may not even notice italics signalling L3).
  - In Spanish dubbing, code switching is not represented (similar to Italian dubbing of MW, cf Bonsignori & Bruti, 2014).
Final remarks

- L3 is used to recreate a specific world.
- When L3 is not rendered in translation, what remains is image and music.
- Distinguishing L3 representation can be a challenge for target audiences.
- The use of L3, together with some other cultural elements, enable Nair to show the essence of the Indian spirit: unique traditions of the past combined with modern touches.
THANK YOU

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