

# How to render multilingualism and linguistic diversity in subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing?

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# DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

- WHO estimated that 466 million people had “a disabling hearing loss”  
= 5% of the world’s population
- By 2050, it is estimated to rise to 630 million
- Hearing loss can be congenital or acquired
- People with hearing loss may or may not:
  - use a hearing aid or have an implant
  - use a sign language
  - be multilingual

# MULTILINGUALISM

- **Individual** – a person's ability to use several languages
- **Social** – co-existence of different language communities in one geographical area

# MULTILINGUALISM IN FILMS

- The employment of at least one **foreign** language in the film
- Third language (L3)
- What is **foreign**?
  - Neither the language of the primary target audience
  - Nor the language of the secondary target audience

# MULTILINGUALISM IN MODERN CINEMA



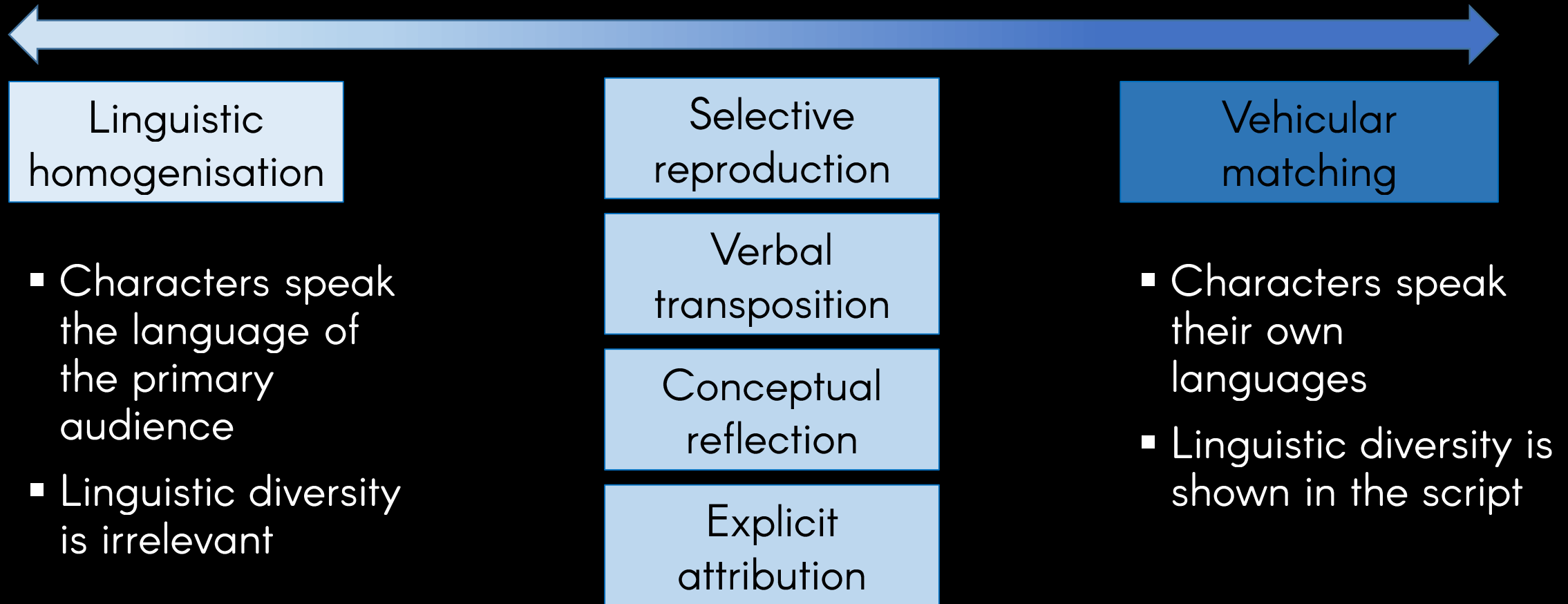
Vicky Cristina Barcelona



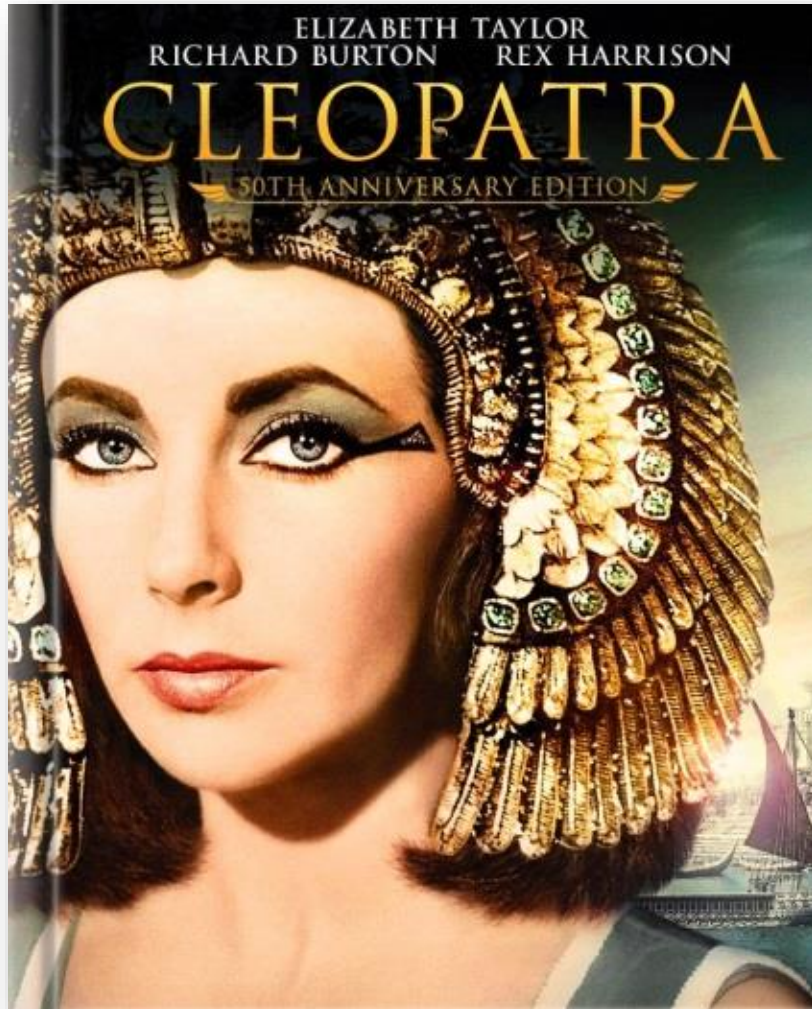
JULIE DELPY ADAM GOLDBERG



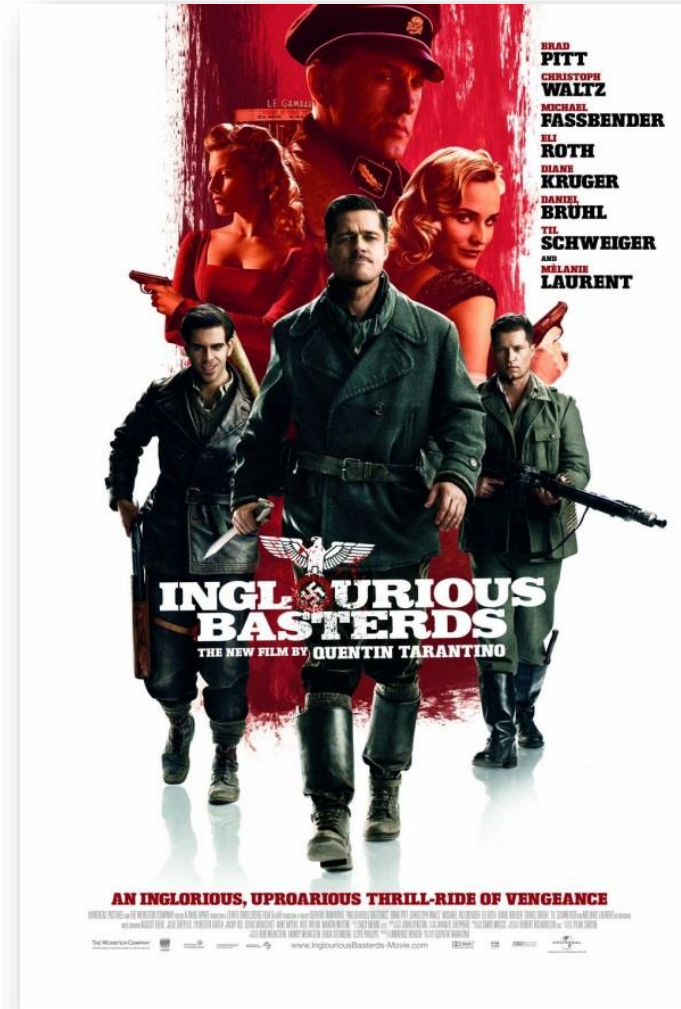
# LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION



# LINGUISTIC HOMOGENISATION



# VEHICULAR MATCHING



# TYPES OF FILM AUDIENCES

## PRIMARY

Viewers in the home country for whom a film is originally intended, e.g.

Hollywood productions –  
American hearing viewers

## SECONDARY

Viewers abroad, for whom the language of the film is not their mother tongue, e.g.

Hollywood productions –  
Spanish hearing viewers



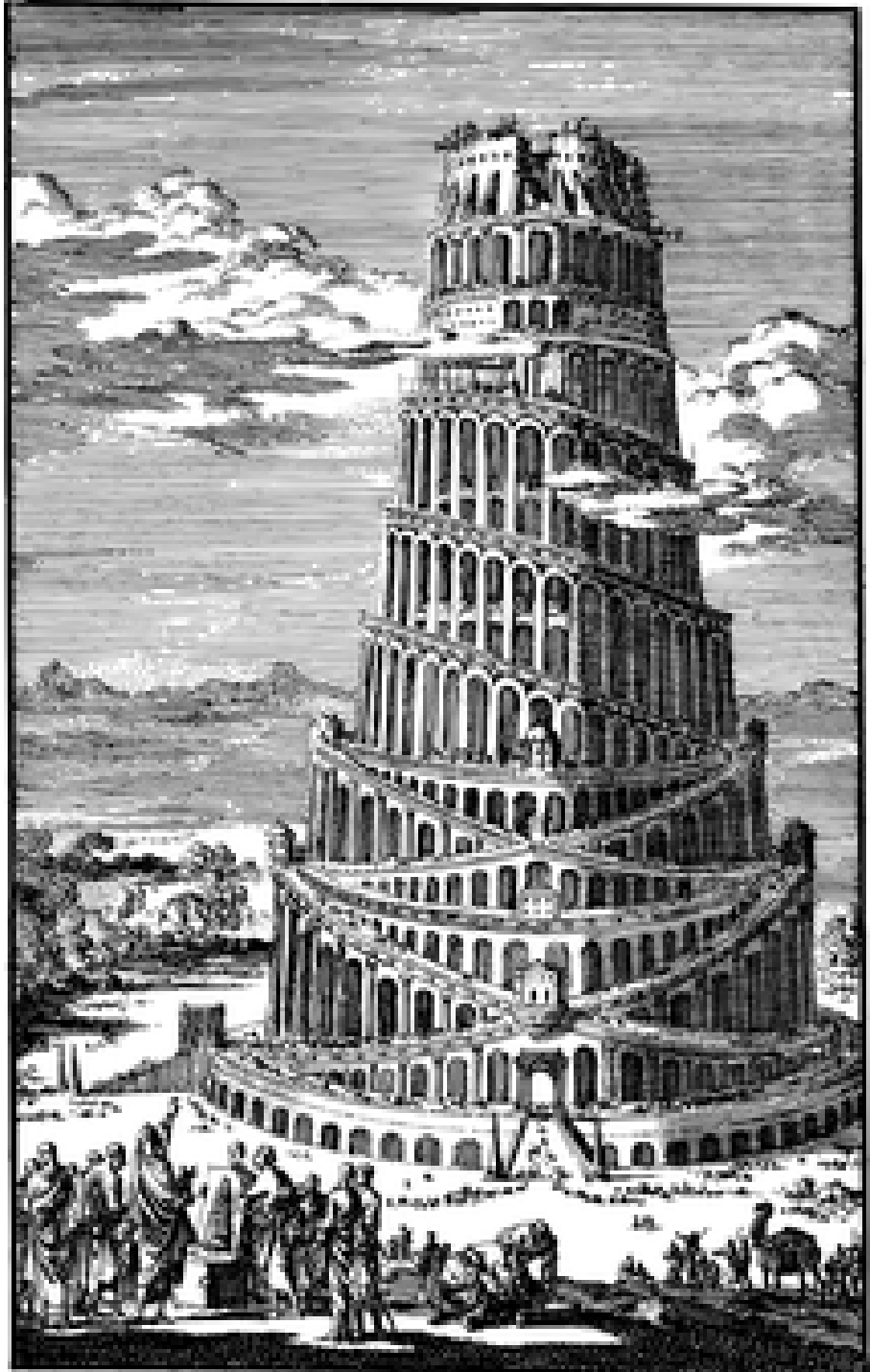
# DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING VIEWERS

## TERTIARY?

Deaf and hard of hearing viewers in a foreign country,  
e.g.

Hollywood productions – Spanish deaf viewers

HOW IS  
MULTILINGUALISM  
REPRESENTED  
IN SUBTITLING  
FOR THE DEAF AND  
HARD OF HEARING?





Description of foreign  
language spoken

→ [speaks French]

Description of foreign  
language spoken



[CARDINAL SPEAKING IN LATIN]

# SHOULD WE TRANSLATE THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN SDH?

What was done for the primary audience?

## PRE-SUBTITLING

- Envisaged by film creators at the time of film production
- Films with pre-subtitles have no 'original' subtitled version
- If there's no pre-subtitling: foreign utterances are to remain indeterminate for the audience

## POST-SUBTITLING

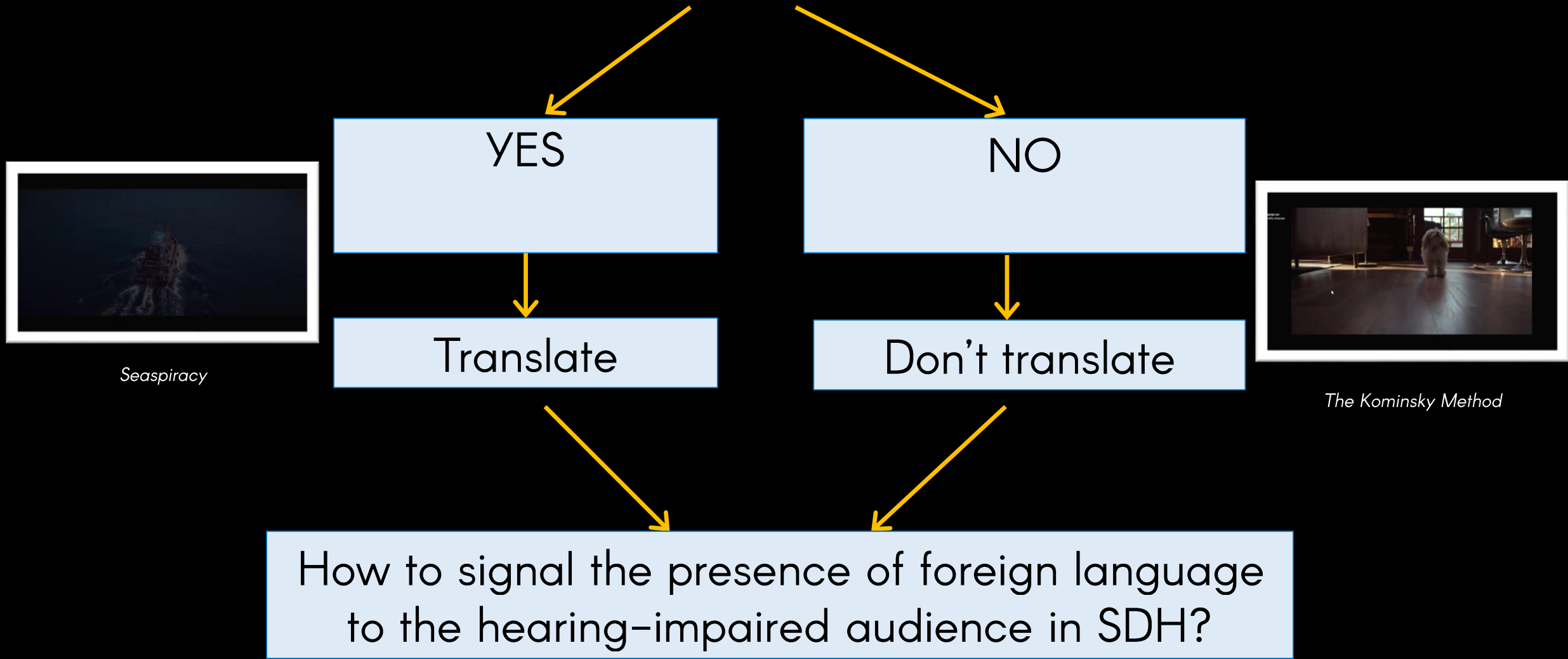
- Translation for the **secondary target audience**
- When exporting a film to another language market

# DIEGETIC INTERPRETER



Quechua –  
the language  
of the ancient Incas

# WAS FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATED FOR THE HEARING AUDIENCE?





# WHEN THE FOREIGN DIALOGUE WAS TRANSLATED FOR PRIMARY AUDIENCE

## ■ EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION + TRANSLATION

– Indicating to the audience that a foreign language is spoken and translating it

## ■ COLOUR CODING

– Providing the hearing-impaired viewers with a translation marked in a different colour

## ■ LINGUISTIC HOMOGENISATION

– Providing the hearing-impaired audience with a translation, but not signalling that a foreign language is spoken

# EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION + TRANSLATION

Indicating to the audience  
that a foreign language  
is spoken and translating it

[IN FRENCH]  
Good morning.

# EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION + TRANSLATION



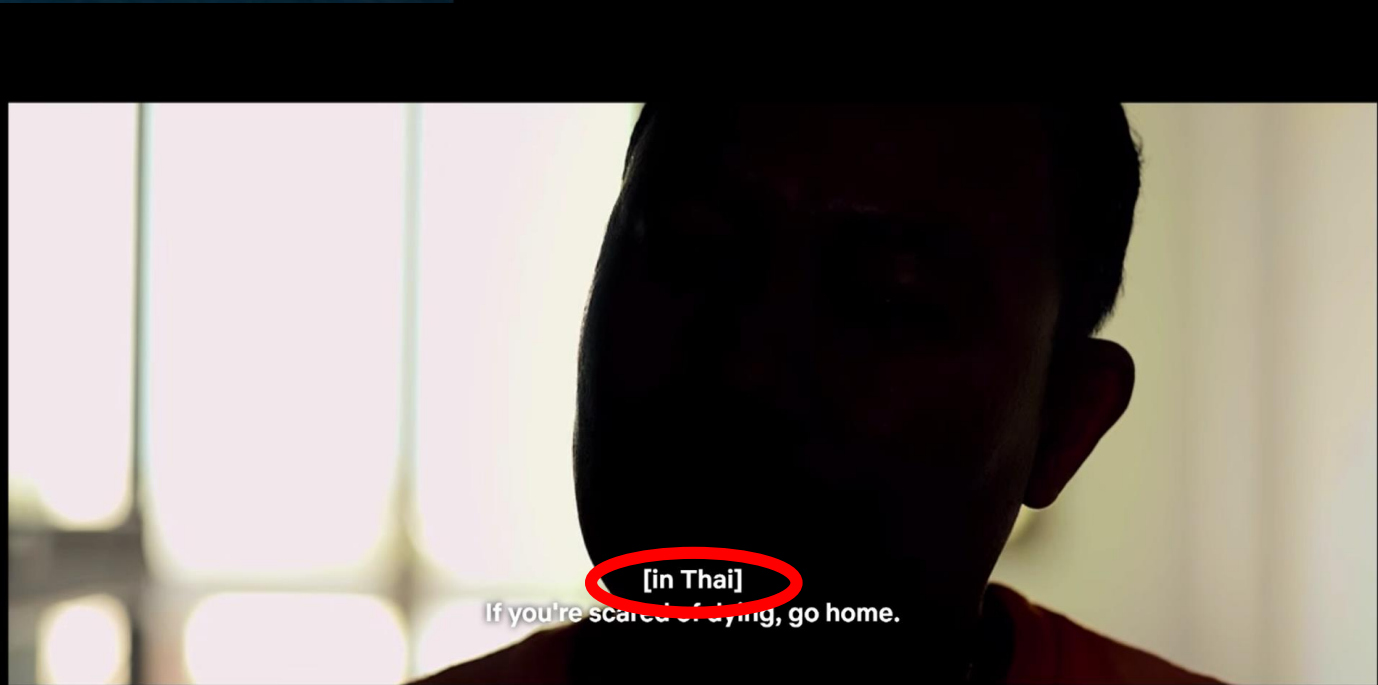
[IN RUSSIAN]

TRANSLATION  
OF DIALOGUE

[PO ROSYJSKU]  
Piłsudski i jego Polacy



[man in Thai] When ships are  
in the middle of the ocean...



[in Thai]  
If you're scared of dying, go home.

# LINGUISTIC HOMOGENISATION

Not marking the foreign  
language in SDH at all:

Good morning.

# COLOUR- CODING

Different colours are used  
for different languages:

Good morning.



Trudno musi być cały czas  
funkcjonować w dwóch językach.

SPEAKING THE MAIN LANGUAGE  
OF THE FILM (ENGLISH)



Dobrze.  
Nie ma problemu.

SPEAKING ANOTHER LANGUAGE  
(SPANISH)

# LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN *ROMA*: SQUARE BRACKETS FOR MIXTEC





# WHEN A FILM WAS NOT TRANSLATED FOR THE PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCE

## ■ EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION

– Indicating to the audience that a foreign language is spoken, without translating it

## ■ VEHICULAR MATCHING (TRANSCRIPTION)

– Transcribing whatever was said in the foreign language into subtitles

# EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION

Indicating to the audience  
that a foreign language  
is spoken  
without translating it

[IN FRENCH]

# EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE



[speaks French]



[CARDINAL SPEAKING IN LATIN]

# EXPLICIT ATTRIBUTION OF ACCENT



*MAN ON TV: (FRENCH ACCENT)  
Although each of the world's countries*

# WHAT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LANGUAGE IS SPOKEN?



(Converse in native language)

# WATCH OUT FOR SPOILERS!



# VEHICULAR MATCHING (TRANSCRIPTION)

Transcribing  
the foreign language  
in SDH

Bonjour.

# VEHICULAR MATCHING



Alles herhörn,  
ich sage das nur einmal.



# VEHICULAR MATCHING

## PROS

- Allows deaf and hard of hearing viewers to become immersed in the multilingual landscape of the film by seeing what the other viewers can hear
- Puts viewers on an equal footing with the hearing → experiencing the foreign language even without comprehension

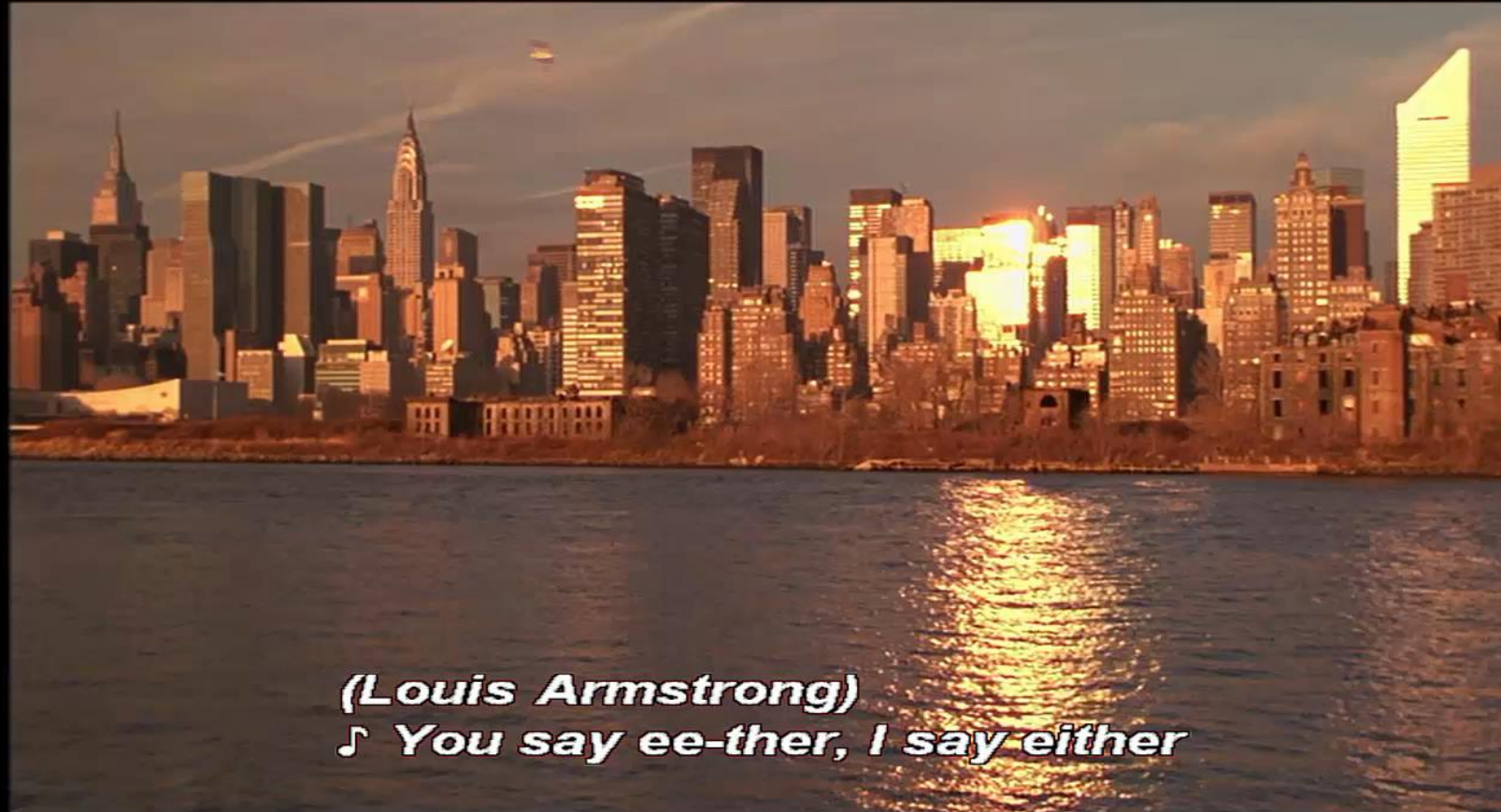
## CONS

- More demanding for the subtitler
  - Research-wise
  - Technology-wise (other alphabets?)
- More cognitively demanding for the viewers

# VEHICULAR MATCHING: TRANSCRIBING THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE



# MARKING BRITISH VS. AMERICAN ENGLISH IN INTRALINGUAL SDH



# SCOTTISH ACCENT IN INTRALINGUAL SDH



# WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS IN SDH?





- Africa
- Americas
- Asia-Pacific
- Europe
- Middle East
- South Asia
- UK
- Business
- Health
- Science & Environment
- Technology
- Entertainment**
- Arts & Culture
- Also in the news

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## Subtitle decision 'puzzles' Scots

The decision to subtitle a BBC One show on heavily-accented North Sea fishermen has "puzzled" people in north-east Scotland, a politician has said.

The stars of Trawlermen had already toned down their language to make them more understandable, said Stewart Stevenson, MSP for Banff and Buchan.

He suggested Cockney soap EastEnders also carry subtitles so the BBC was "consistent" on regional dialects.



Between four and five million viewers have watched each edition

# When does subtitling risk becoming racially offensive?

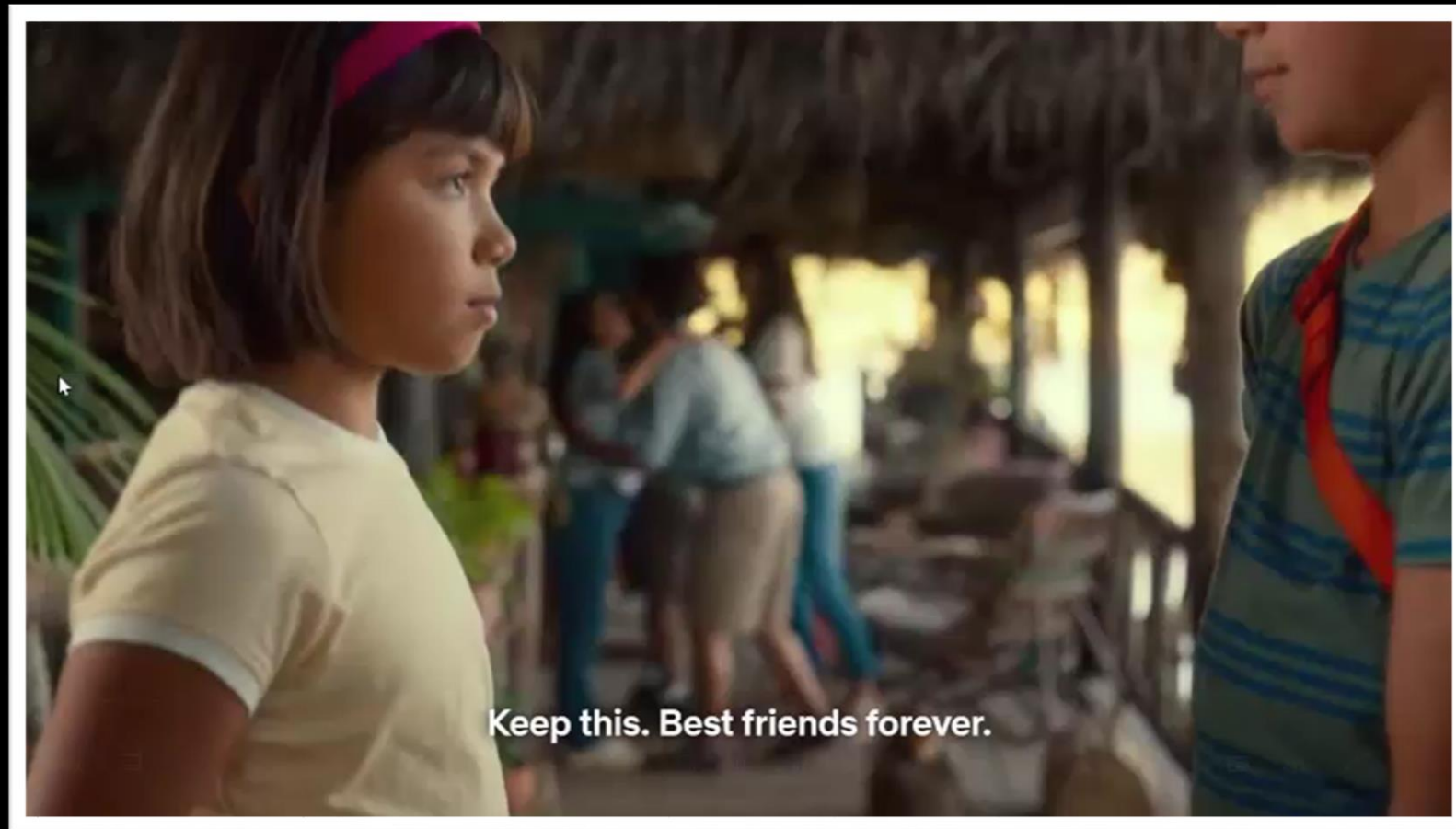
The decisions of editors, made in the name of clarity, can sometimes lead to uncomfortable viewing



▲ Gold standard ... Usain Bolt in the documentary *Fastest Man Alive*.

In the 2011 World Championships, Usain Bolt suffered a bewildering false start and so did [this week's documentary](#) about him. [Usain Bolt: The Fastest Man Alive](#) (BBC1, Monday) began with a sequence featuring the runner's disqualification from that event, during which the speech of both the sprinter and his relatives was sub-titled. A subsequent interview with Bolt's coach also gave Jamaican-accented English the on-screen translation normally reserved for foreign languages.

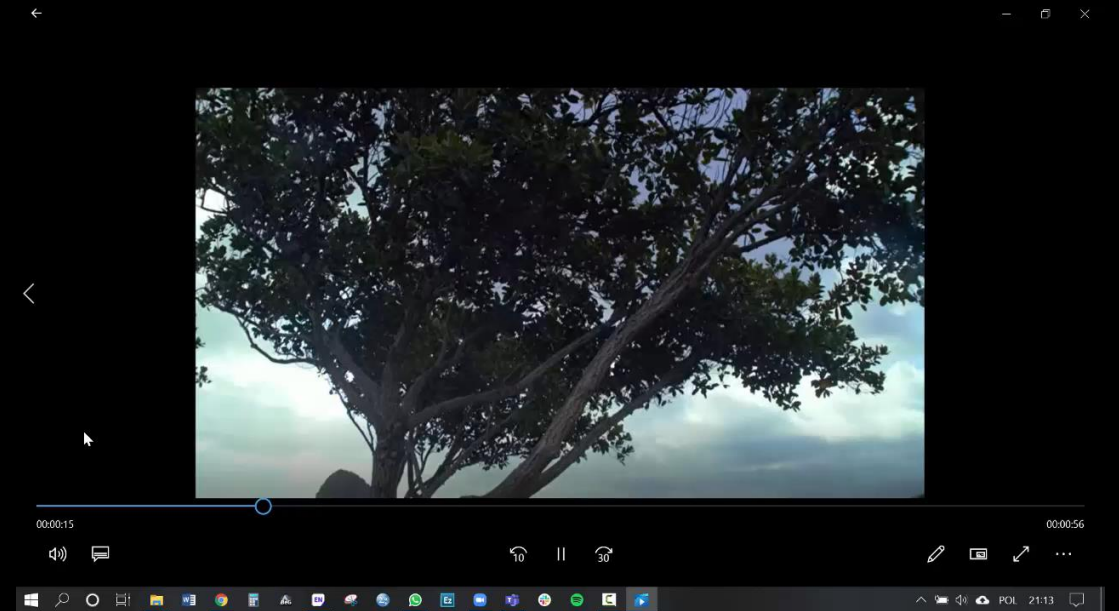
# MIXING STRATEGIES



# LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: VEHICULAR MATCHING

INTRALINGUAL SDH

INTERLINGUAL SDH





# WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER IN ENGLISH SDH HERE?



LET'S MAKE SURE  
THAT DEAF AND HARD OF  
HEARING VIEWERS  
DON'T MISS OUT ON  
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF CINEMA