

Dealing with Difference in Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling Linguistic Variation in Films

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Subtitling films into another language becomes especially complex when the original language deviates from its standard form. Films which feature non-standard pronunciation, dialects or other varieties of language, particularly when juxtaposed with more standard uses, are said to display 'linguistic variation'. As language use is central to characters' identities and to a film's plot, it is essential to retain the source language (SL) specificity as fully as possible in the target language (TL) subtitles so that the target audience can experience the film as authentically as possible. Given its considerable difficulty, subtitling in this manner is often advised against, avoided or, when attempted, subjected to considerable criticism.

My second monograph, *Dealing with Difference in Audiovisual Translation* (2015, Peter Lang), focuses on a collection of British and French films selected for the range of approaches which they adopt in portraying linguistic variation. Each chapter explores the challenges posed by the subtitling of such linguistic difference in the given film and the corresponding solutions offered by their subtitlers. This seminar paper firstly introduces some of the key ideas which underpin my book. It then presents an extract from Dany Boon's 2008 film, *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis*, and examines how this scene has been subtitled into English. It thereby demonstrates that, with insight and skill, linguistic variation can be preserved in film subtitles.