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**Translating *Banlieue* Film: An integrated
analysis of subtitled non-standard language**

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**BA in French with Hispanic Studies
MA in Screen Translation**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of PhD**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the subtitling of films depicting the French *banlieue* into English. The *banlieues* are housing estates situated on the outskirts of large towns and cities, and are primarily home to the underprivileged, and immigrants to France or their descendants. The sociolect spoken in the *banlieue* differs from standard French in terms of grammar, lexicon and pronunciation. Three films released between 2000 and the present day are studied; *La squale* (Genestal, 2000), *L'esquive* (Kechiche, 2003) and *Divines* (Benyamina, 2016). A new integrated methodology is developed, which examines the films within their broader contexts of release, and in light of paratextual material contributing to the context of reception, and to the viewer's understanding of the topic at hand. Directors representing the *banlieue* on screen generally do so with a view to provoking thought or public discussion in relation to the *banlieues*.

In addition to macro- and micro-contextual analysis of the films and subtitles, the work is underpinned by an examination of the subtitling situation, encompassing the views and experiences of subtitlers working on *banlieue* film, and technical analysis of the subtitles in terms of readability. Through interviews of professional subtitlers, and close technical analysis of the subtitles, this research is contextualised within the industry, and within current conventions and guidelines. Close analysis of subtitles and the translation solutions they present reveals that some of the socio-political messages presented in the films may not be evident to a non-French speaking viewer of the English-subtitled versions. Although the informal nature of many conversations featuring the *langage de banlieue* is sometimes clear in the subtitled version, the unique sociolect of the characters is not. In two of the case study films, a dialect-for-dialect approach was adopted, where African American vernacular English was used in the subtitles to demonstrate the use of non-standard language. However, it is argued that ultimately, this dialect-for-dialect approach, combined with cultural similarities between the French *banlieue* and American street culture, could lead the British Anglophone viewer to negotiate the *banlieues* and those who live there via their knowledge of American street culture. This could contribute to American cultural hegemony, and does not convey the specificity of France's *banlieues* as cultural melting pots.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Hannah Silvester

List of Abbreviations

CPS: Characters per second

ESIST: European Association for Studies in Screen Translation

FPS: Frames per second

OCR: Optical Character Recognition

SLD: Source language dialogue

ST: Source text

TA: Target audience

TT: Target text

WPM : Words per minute

Introduction

This thesis examines subtitles for films depicting France's working-class and multi-ethnic *banlieues*. Throughout this thesis, the term *banlieue film* is used to refer to films representing the housing estates situated on the outskirts of large towns and cities in France; these are primarily home to the underprivileged, and populations of immigrant heritage.¹ The social make-up of the *banlieues* has led to the development of a subculture and a particular variety of language. This dialect, or sociolect, can prove challenging for subtitlers to translate, since it features a specific vocabulary and pronunciation (among other qualities). This thesis studies subtitled films depicting the *banlieue*, in order to examine how subtitlers approach the translation of the sociolect of the characters, and how this, and the related themes and socio-political messages identified in *banlieue* film are presented to a non-French speaking British audience.

In their comprehensive text *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*, Díaz-Cintas and Remael observe:

Dialects [...] pose a challenge because of the way they are embedded in a region or social group. Ideally, any dialectic occurrence should therefore first be pinpointed within the social and geographical layout of the [...] culture. Then its role in the audiovisual production should be evaluated...²

This highlights the importance of understanding the relevance of the dialect and its significance in the audiovisual content. Thus, this thesis will begin with an examination of the *banlieue* in France, including the linguistic variety spoken by the inhabitants of these areas. It will then go on to examine *banlieue* film, before proposing a new methodology which seeks to combine an understanding of broader, macro-level cultural and political concerns, with a close linguistic analysis of the translation, within the context of the audiovisual products. The purpose of this methodology is to enable an examination of the themes and socio-political messages presented in *banlieue* film, and their presentation in the subtitled versions. Furthermore, it seeks to contextualise subtitle analysis within

¹ Carrie Tarr, *Reframing Difference : Beur and Banlieue Filmmaking in France*, 2005, p. 17.

² Jorge Díaz-Cintas and Aline Remael, *Audiovisual Translation : Subtitling*, Translation Practices Explained, 11 (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2007), p. 191.

the productions in question, and within the cultural contexts of the release of the films.

The multi-ethnic composition of many *banlieues* means that these spaces could be described as cultural melting pots; the *banlieusards* (the residents of the *banlieues*) are exposed to the French language and culture on a daily basis (through the education system, for example), but may also be exposed to the original native language and culture of their parents, grandparents, or other relatives.³ A major component of the *banlieue* youth culture is language: the residents of the *cités* [the low income housing estates in question] use a variety of French that diverges from standard spoken French. It differs from the standard in relation to grammar, pronunciation, and lexicon, and is linked to the social background of its speakers.⁴ It could therefore be referred to as a sociolect, or a variety of French.⁵

These areas of cultural diversity are often negatively portrayed by the media:

During the past several decades, French media reporting on la *banlieue* and its youth populations has repeatedly emphasized themes of violence, societal tensions, unrest, and problems of minority integration into mainstream French society. These highly negative representations call into question the “Frenchness” of *banlieue* behaviors, values, and dwellers...⁶

Television and newspaper reports often focus on crime, unemployment and drug abuse in the *banlieues*, for example, reinforcing the perceived gap between those living there, and the majority of French society. Where media representation of the *banlieues* is concerned, ‘tout est mis en œuvre pour qu’une réalité productive

³ Zsuzsanna Fagyal, *Accents de banlieue : aspects prosodiques du français populaire en contact avec les langues de l’immigration*, *Espaces discursifs* (Paris: Harmattan, 2010), pp. 16–17.

⁴ The differences between the *langage de banlieue* and standard French will be addressed in the next section. It will be referred to as a variety (singular), but it should be noted that just as there are certain lexical and pronunciation differences in the speech of those using standard French according to geographical location, for example, so there are some regional differences within the *langage de banlieue*.

⁵ Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics : An Introduction to Language and Society*, Penguin Books, 3rd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), pp. 23–41.

⁶ Meredith Doran, ‘Alternative French, Alternative Identities: Situating Language in La Banlieue’, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 11.4 (2007), 497–508 (p. 497).

et riche soit perçue comme un lieu d'im-production et d'entropie'.⁷ Thus, French media portrayals of the *banlieues* and their inhabitants focus on aspects of the *banlieue* subculture which tend to give a negative view of these neighbourhoods. Sedel examines the relationship between France's *banlieues* and media. She finds that at the same time as the social conditions in the *banlieues* changed in terms of reduced access to work and public services, 'une représentation alarmiste de cette fraction de la jeunesse populaire s'est imposée dans les médias et dans le champ politique'.⁸ She notes that in the last decade of the 20th century there was a shift in media discourse, and the blame for the 'social problems' was moved from the state to the individuals, 'les « jeunes de banlieues »'.⁹

Films depicting the French *banlieue* can work to counteract negative media representations of the *banlieues* and their inhabitants.¹⁰ In some cases, directors present a world in which the government really has given up on the *banlieusards* (in Pierre Morel's *Banlieue 13*, for example), and in others, they seek to highlight aspects of their social situation (as in Fabrice Genestal's *La squale*). Language is an important aspect of the *banlieue* culture, and of the *banlieusards*' expression of frustration with French society.

The Banlieue

It has been suggested by scholars that an understanding of the culture of the *banlieue* (and how this culture fits into French society) is necessary, in order to understand and explore the dialects spoken there.¹¹ The exposure each person living in the *banlieue* receives to the French language and culture, but also to the language and culture of their families, of their friends, and of the people they go to school with, has resulted in the development of what Montgomery refers to as

⁷ 'Everything is done to ensure that a rich and productive reality is seen as lacking in productivity and order.' [Unless otherwise stated, all translations of secondary sources are my own.] Judith Revel, *Qui a peur de la banlieue?*, Le Temps d'une question (Montrouge: Bayard, 2008), p. 73.

⁸ 'An alarmist representation of this portion of working class youth established itself in the media and in the political sphere.' Julie Sedel, *Les Médias et La Banlieue* (Latresne: Poch'BDL, 2013), p. 288.

⁹ Ibid. p.69

¹⁰ Jonathan Ervine, *Cinema and the Republic: Filming on the Margins in Contemporary France*, French and Franchophone Studies, 2013, p. 137; Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 17.

¹¹ Doran; Nadia Duchêne, 'Langue, immigration, culture : paroles de la banlieue française', *Meta : journal des traducteurs : translators' journal (Canada)*, 47.01 (2002), 30–37 (p. 32).

the *banlieue subculture*.¹² This is composed of various factors including a specific lifestyle, dress code and language which diverge from those of mainstream French society. It has been suggested that when films depicting the French *banlieues* and their inhabitants are subtitled into English, these translated versions do not always represent aspects of this subculture; in particular the linguistic component.¹³ In its most neutral sense, the term *banlieue* is used for what might be called the suburbs in English; that is to say the residential areas surrounding a large town or city. However, the term has come to be associated particularly with the low-income housing estates previously mentioned. The French term is often used in English, as we have no direct cultural equivalent of the *banlieue*.

An examination of the roots of the word demonstrates the evolution of the term '*banlieue*', in addition to providing some insight into the development of the *banlieues* themselves, and their place in French society. There are two roots in the word *banlieue*: *ban* and *lieue*. Thus, the word contains elements of both space, 'la lieue est l'unité de distance' and of *domination* 'le ban désigne la juridiction exercée par le suzerain'.¹⁴ The term has always had a meaning involving geographical position, and the domination of an area which does not define its own rules. In the Middle Ages, *ban* meant exile, and the present-day meaning of the term *banlieue* reflects the history behind the word: 'c'est un espace qui se situe hors centre, à la périphérie, plus loin, mais qui est néanmoins sous la dépendance du pouvoir central'.¹⁵ The roots of the word *banlieue*, therefore, signify exile and separation from the rest of society, whilst the latter still maintains some control over the *banlieue* and the people therein. Scholars highlight the social and economic problems facing the residents of the *banlieues*,

¹² Colleen Montgomery, 'Lost in Translation: Subtitling Banlieue Subculture', *Cinephile - The University of British Columbia's Film Journal*, 4 (2008), 8–12 (p. 8).

¹³ Montgomery; Lena Hamaidia, 'Subtitling Slang and Dialect', in *EU-High-Level Scientific Conference Series*, ed. by Gerhard Budin Heidrun Gerzysmisch-Arbogast (presented at the MuTra 2007 - LSP Translation Scenarios, MuTra, 2007), p. 10
<http://www.euroconferences.info/proceedings/2007_Proceedings/2007_Hamaidia_Lena.pdf> [accessed 17 April 2015].

¹⁴ 'A *lieue* (league) is a unit of distance [the Encyclopaedia Britannica suggests that a league is a distance of roughly 3 miles].' 'The *ban* (*banishment*) indicates the jurisdiction exercised by the overlord.' Véronique Le Goaziou and Charles Rojzman, *Les Banlieues*, Idées Reçues, 5 (Paris: le Cavalier bleu éd., 2001), p. 10.

¹⁵ 'It's a space which is situated outside of the centre, on the outskirts, further away, but which is nevertheless dependant on the central powers.' Le Goaziou and Rojzman, p. 10.

and ‘l’exclusion, la violence et la précarité’ which reign in these areas.¹⁶ These factors have contributed to the development of the aforementioned *langage de banlieue*, and the strong sense of identity exhibited by many of the *banlieusards*.

The *banlieues* have always been on the outskirts, and somewhat excluded. However, they were not always viewed in such a negative light; when the *banlieues* were originally developed, residents were proud to call them home. Some of these residential areas were constructed during France’s thirty prosperous years following the war, to house workers from the surrounding factories.¹⁷ In addition, following decolonisation, they provided housing for the inflow of immigrants to France.¹⁸ Later on, the people for whom there was no place (physical or otherwise) in the city centre also migrated to the *banlieues*, ‘artisans, pauvres, marginaux, immigrants, tous ceux que la nouvelle révolution laisse sur le coté’.¹⁹ This description gives us some idea of the diverse cultures which may be found in the *banlieues*, the kind of characters which may appear in films about the *banlieue*, themes which these films might address (such as poverty, immigration and exclusion), and an understanding of how and why the *langage de banlieue* has developed.

The residents of France’s *banlieues* are affected by a range of issues related to the resources they are able to access, in terms of the education system, training and public transport, for example. When the factories employing the *banlieusards* closed, the government did not provide the training which might have enabled the work force to be redeployed elsewhere.²⁰ The current reality is that some of the youngsters living in the *banlieue* have never seen a member of their family with a steady job.²¹ Public transport facilities, for instance, make travelling between the Parisian *banlieues* and city centre difficult, and the price of tickets may simply mean that some residents of the *banlieues* cannot afford to make the journey.²²

¹⁶ ‘... exclusion, violence and insecurity.’ Le Goaziou and Rojzman, p. 10.

¹⁷ Revel, p. 50.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 68.

¹⁹ ‘Artisans, poor people, outcasts, immigrants, all of those who have been left on one side by the new revolution.’ Le Goaziou and Rojzman, p. 12.

²⁰ Revel, p. 71.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. pp.76-77.

This highlights the disparity between the representation of the *banlieues* in the news, and the reality, when more could be done to assist people living in these underprivileged areas.

As stated above, some *banlieue* films seek to address negative political and media discourses concerning the *banlieues*. *Banlieue 13: Ultimatum* (Alessandrin, 2009) for example, features a scene in which French government officials kill two police officers and place the car (with their bodies inside) in the middle of *la banlieue 13*. They then fire shots at the *banlieusards* in order to provoke them; the *banlieusards* return fire. The scene is filmed, and screened on the news so that it appears that *la banlieue 13* is a very dangerous housing estate, in which merciless killings take place. This causes general outrage, turning the public, and members of the government against the inhabitants of the *banlieue*. This example could be read as a metaphor for the way in which the *banlieues* and the people living there are represented in the French media. As was previously noted, part of the discrepancy between public opinion and the reality of the situation in the *banlieue* could be attributed to the emphasis the French media places on crime and violence within these areas.

One demonstration of the exclusion of the *banlieusards* in France is the way in which society has been conceived over time. The term *fracture sociale* could be given as an example of the perception of the ‘social divide’ in modern French society. The blurb for the *Atlas des nouvelles fractures sociales en France* [Atlas of new social fractures in France] reads ‘«Fracture sociale », « France d’en bas », « quartiers sensibles »... Ces termes renvoient tous aux notions de désintégration sociale et de ségrégation’.²³ These notions of separation and exclusion are referred to by many scholars researching the *banlieue*, as well as the negative public image of the *banlieusards*. Rojzman and Pillods maintain :

²³ “Social Fracture”, “France from the bottom”, “problem areas”... These terms all refer to ideas of social disintegration and segregation.’ Christophe Guilluy, Christophe Noyé, and Dominique Ragu, *Atlas des nouvelles fractures sociales en France : les classes moyennes précarisées et oubliées* (Paris: Autrement, 2004).

Les quartiers populaires [...] semblent [ainsi] constituer la partie malade de la société française, l'endroit où se concentrent toutes les pathologies sociales.²⁴

In other words, the *banlieues* are largely seen as the main problem with modern French society. Mével concurs, stating that '... les *banlieues* semblent représenter à elles seules le malaise social en France'.²⁵ The use of 'représentation' highlights the point already made concerning an inconsistency in perception and reality; the *banlieues* are not the only social problem in France, but they are regularly used to demonstrate issues of unemployment and segregation.

Some directors of *banlieue* film appear to be working to improve this situation, by attempting to demonstrate the value of a strong sense of identity and community often felt by the *banlieusards*. At the beginning of *La haine*, real footage of riots occurring in France is featured; it could be argued that the director is attempting to make the audience aware that the events occurring in the film could be happening in real life.²⁶ A few years later, the 2005 riots began following the death of two *banlieue* youths who were fleeing the police; this was not the first time people from the *banlieue* had been injured or killed in incidents involving law enforcement officers.²⁷ Films addressing such contentious issues will most likely provoke reflection or even debate on the subject of the police, and their handling of juvenile delinquents. In addition, it has been suggested that the film *Banlieue 13* has an interesting prognostic nature - when confronted about his methods for dealing with the *banlieue*, the French president (in the film) calls the people who live there '*racaille*,' meaning 'scum'.²⁸ Austin notes 'The use of the word "racaille" predicts Sarkozy's controversial use of the same term to describe the

²⁴ 'The working-class areas [...] seem to constitute the diseased part of French society, the place where all social disorders are concentrated.' Charles Rojzman and Sophie Pillods, *Savoir Vivre Ensemble: Agir Autrement Contre Le Racisme et La Violence*, La Découverte-Poche (Paris: la Découverte, 2001), p. 270.

²⁵ 'The *banlieues* seem to represent the entirety of social unease in France.' Pierre-Alexis Mével, 'Traduire La Haine : Banlieues et sous-titrage', *GLOTTOPOLOGIE - Revue de sociolinguistique en ligne*, 12 (2008), 161–81 (p. 163).

²⁶ Mathieu Kassovitz, *La haine*, 1996.

²⁷ Angelique Chrisafis, 'French Police to Stand Trial over Deaths of Two Youths That Sparked 2005 Riots', *The Guardian*, 20 September 2013, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/20/french-police-trial-2005-youth-deaths>> [accessed 21 July 2017].

²⁸ Guy Austin, *Contemporary French Cinema : An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 161.

rioters of autumn 2005'.²⁹ It has also been suggested that the film 'reflects the more general withdrawal of the French state' from the *banlieue*.³⁰ Given the numerous references to current affairs which appear in this genre, and the fact that many of the directors making these films grew up in the *banlieue*, they can be regarded as 'discursive constructs and sites of struggle for meaning'.³¹ Some *banlieue* films, then, have a political facet: they could be intended to provoke discussion of current affairs in French society. Language has already been highlighted as a significant aspect of the *banlieue* subculture, and some suggest it is a form of resistance for those living in the *banlieues*. Language might therefore be described as a key factor in the politicised nature of *banlieue* film.

There has been considerable research into the way in which the *banlieusards* speak. This has been referred to using various terms, including *le français des jeunes de banlieue*, *la tchatche de banlieue* and *le langage téci*, among others.³² On occasion, this variety of French is referred to as *le verlan*; however, this term is inappropriate since *le verlan* (which will be explored in-depth in Chapter One) is a specific type of back slang, and only one of numerous factors which characterise the variety of French spoken in the *banlieue*.³³ Montgomery refers to *langage de banlieue*, and this term will be used in this thesis, as it roots the variety of language in question within the *banlieue*, and this location and context are key to its development and usage.³⁴

La haine *La haine* In an article examining the subtitles for Mathieu Kassovitz's *La haine*, Jäckel notes that the subtitlers working on the film were 'faced not only with an untranslatable *verlan* but also colloquialisms meant to be incomprehensible to the majority of viewers...'³⁵ Given the inherent difficulty of

²⁹ Austin, p. 161.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 18.

³² Doran; Philippe Pierre-Adolphe, Max Mamoud, and Georges-Olivier Tzanos, *Tchatche de banlieue : suivi de, L'argot de la police*, Collection Le rire jaune 2 (Paris: Editions Mille et une nuits, 1998); Montgomery.

³³ Doran, p. 497.

³⁴ Montgomery.

³⁵ Anne Jäckel, 'The Subtitling of *La Haine*: A Case Study', in *(Multi) Media Translation. Concepts, Practices, and Research.*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001), pp. 223–36 (p. 226).

working with the *langage de banlieue*, what challenges do subtitlers face in translating *banlieue* film, and how do they address these challenges? Guillot notes that ‘Loss in AVT is inevitable - being a de facto by-product of technical and multimodal synchrony constraints, and cross-linguistic and cross-cultural difference’.³⁶ The question, therefore, is given the constraints inherent in AVT, and the challenging language in *banlieue* film, what can be achieved in the translation of such films, and what do their subtitled versions convey? This thesis seeks to update research on the subtitling of *banlieue* film, by moving beyond the 1995 film that sparked an article in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* questioning the existence of a *banlieue* film genre, to study films released between the years 2000 and 2016.³⁷ As linguistic varieties are constantly developing, the present study will address a gap in the research through analysis of a further three films covering a period of 16 years.

Scholars have identified political messages in filmic representations of the *banlieue* and its subculture, such as those of resistance and empowerment referred to in Montgomery’s words above. Austin points out

La haine has [thus] been seen as much more than an exhilarating and popular film, but as a yardstick which measures various divisions within French society, from the social schisms perceived in the nineties (see Higbee 2005) to the postcolonial issues of the current decade.³⁸

Reference to issues of social divide within French society can be seen in this and other *banlieue* films such as *Les intouchables*, in which a youth from the *banlieue* is employed as a carer for a wealthy man who, in contrast, lives a luxurious life in the centre of Paris.³⁹ The politicised nature of *banlieue* film will be explored further in Chapter Two, and raises the question of how the politics of *banlieue* cinema is handled in translation for English-speaking audiences.

Existing research into the subtitling of *banlieue* film focuses primarily on *La haine*, and on a more micro-level analysis of the subtitles. In order to examine the

³⁶ Marie-Noëlle Guillot, ‘Cross-Cultural Pragmatics and Audiovisual Translation’, *Target*, 28.2 (2016), 288–301 (p. 296).

³⁷ Thierry Jousse, ‘Le banlieue-film existe-t-il?’, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 1995, 37–39.

³⁸ Austin, p. 226.

³⁹ Éric Toledano and Olivier Nakache, *Intouchables [The Intouchables]* (Victory Productions, 2011).

subtitling of *banlieue* film in relation to perceived socio-political messages, a broader analysis should be undertaken, one which considers the cultural contexts of the films' release, along with the marketing of the films and the directors' explanations of their work. This analysis would highlight key themes in the films, and audience expectations that could shape the way the subtitled films are approached and understood. In addition, existing research does not apply translation studies theory to the subtitles for multiple *banlieue* films together. This thesis presents a new functionalist methodology for the study of subtitled films, which examines the contexts of release and of reception, as well as carrying out close linguistic analysis of the subtitling of features of the *langage de banlieue* within the audiovisual network of images and sound. This methodology will be presented and explained in detail in the second half of Chapter Two.

Skopos Theory

One particularly relevant theoretical framework when considering the subtitling of *banlieue* films in relation to the socio-political messages presented within them is functionalism, the area of Translation Studies theory to which skopos belongs. Functionalism in Translation Studies is concerned with the intended purpose of the Target Text. Hans Vermeer argued that the most important factor in translating a text was that the text work in the intended way, for the intended audience.⁴⁰ The notion of a text functioning in relation to its intended audience is important in a mode of translation (subtitling) which often considers the audience to be the most important factor in a translation. In Fong's discussion of skopos theory and subtitles, he states that the primary aim of all subtitles is that they 'work' for the intended audience; this is the same as Vermeer's suggested goal for translation in general.⁴¹

One theory which might come to mind in a discussion of an approach to translation which focuses on the target text receivers is audience design theory. Audience design theory was originally conceived of by Bell, and posits that 'communicators

⁴⁰ Hans J. Vermeer, 'Skopos and Commission in Translational Action', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, trans. by Chesterman, Andrew, 3rd edn (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 191–202 (p. 193).

⁴¹ Gilbert Fong, 'Let the Words Do the Talking: The Nature and Art of Subtitling', in *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context*, ed. by Kenneth Au and Gilbert Fong (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009), pp. 91–106 (p. 102).

design their style primarily for and in response to their audience. In other words, style itself is what an individual communicator does with language in response to other people.⁴² Mason explains that the audience of a translation is made up of different groups; the addressee or commissioner, auditors, overhearers and eavesdroppers.⁴³ After listing these groups, he notes that they ‘are listed in descending order of potential influence on the text producer’s style: auditors will typically exert less influence than addressees, overhearers less than auditors and eavesdroppers none at all.’⁴⁴ This highlights the significance of the commissioner, as it is here suggested that they are the primary determining factor in stylistic choices. Mason applies audience design theory to translation specifically, and highlights its relevance to skopos theory. Indeed, he notes that skopos theory could be enhanced through audience design, as this recognises that an audience is diverse, and essentially made up of different groups. Audience design can be applied in the process of translating a text (as a way for the translator to focus on the intended receiver of his/her text), or in translation analysis, as a way of considering (retrospectively) who the translator was translating for when working on a text. Given the diverse potential receivers of a subtitled *banlieue* film, this thesis focuses broadly on the context of reception as *British*, without focussing specifically on one aspect of the British market. Indeed, subtitling guidelines are written in this way, and for a film appearing on Netflix, for example, any person with a Netflix subscription in the UK might choose to watch it with subtitles. It is also difficult to say who would watch a film released on DVD. The key focus of this thesis is the genre of *banlieue* film and how the challenges this presents are handled by subtitlers, focussing on those subtitled versions which can be accessed by viewers based in the UK. The information offered by subtitlers in relation to commission or brief, and intended audience, suggest that the use of audience design theory here could prove challenging. However, this issue will be returned to at various points throughout the thesis, in relation to both the commission

⁴² Olga Gartzonika and Adriana Serban, ‘Greek Soldiers on the Screen: Politeness, Fluency and Audience Design in Subtitling’, in *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Jorge Díaz-Cintas, Topics in Translation (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), pp. 239–50 (p. 243).

⁴³ Ian Mason, ‘Audience Design in Translating’, *Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, 6.1 (2000), 1–22 (p. 4).

⁴⁴ Mason, p. 4.

information provided by subtitlers, and further consideration of the context of reception in Chapter Three.

Fong notes that ‘target text transparency’ is a key objective in subtitling, and this is particularly interesting.⁴⁵ Traditional notions in AVT that the primary goal is for the viewer not to realise that they are reading subtitles are also relevant here.⁴⁶ With a recent increase in recognition of, and suggestions for, more ‘creative’ approaches to subtitling, there appears to be a chance this may change.⁴⁷ However, with specific reference to the case of French *banlieue* cinema, it might be suggested that the subtitles should *not* be entirely ‘transparent’ or easily accessible for the TA. Indeed, as Jäckel notes, even native French speakers struggle to understand the dialogue in *La haine*, and Goudaillier notes that one of the primary functions of *verlan* is a cryptic function.⁴⁸ Therefore, if even speakers of French from outside of the *banlieue* subculture do not understand the sociolect featured in the films, one might question whether the subtitles *should* render the dialogues completely accessible to all viewers.

Referring to three *banlieue* films (*Bye Bye* [Dridi, 1995], *La haine* [Kassovitz, 1995] and *Métisse* [Kassovitz, 1993]), Montgomery proposes that ‘The elimination of the *téci* in these subtitled English versions of Dridi and Kassovitz’s work... effectively silences the ‘noise’ of *banlieue* subculture and undermines the film’s underlying political message of resistance and empowerment.’⁴⁹ Here, she highlights the link between the *langage de banlieue* (to which she refers using the term ‘*téci*’- the *verlanised* form of *cit * [housing estate]) and the vibrant *banlieue* subculture. In the above quotation, Montgomery also suggests that the function of such films is to convey ‘political messages’, and that English-subtitled versions of these films

⁴⁵ Fong, p. 102.

⁴⁶ D  az-Cintas and Remael, p. 151.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Rebecca McClarty, ‘Towards a Multidisciplinary Approach in Creative Subtitling’, *MonTI. Monograf  as de Traducci  n e Interpretaci  n*, 0.4 (2012), 133–53; Jorge D  az-Cintas, ‘Back to the Future in Subtitling’ (presented at the MuTra 2005 - Challenges of Multidimensional Translation, EU-High-Level Scientific Conference Series, 2005), pp. 14–15.

⁴⁸ Anne J  ckel, ‘The Subtitling of *La Haine*: A Case Study’, in *(Multi) Media Translation. Concepts, Practices, and Research.*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001), pp. 223–36 (p. 225); Jean-Pierre Goudaillier, *Comment Tu Tchatches! : Dictionnaire Du Fran  ais Contemporain Des Cit  s* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), p. 10; Duch  ne, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Montgomery, p. 8.

should have the same function, though she finds this not to be the case in the films she examines. Considering this in relation to Hans Vermeer's skopos theory, it would appear that Montgomery contends that the skopos of subtitled films should be to convey the political messages presented in the source language dialogues.

Hans Vermeer notes that 'translational action leads to a "target text"'.⁵⁰ In relation to screen translation, this is problematic as the notions of source text and target text are not necessarily as clear as in other modes of translation.⁵¹ Indeed, the 'source text' and 'target text' are not mutually exclusive; the 'target text' is the 'source text' plus subtitles. The subtitles do not constitute a 'target text' in themselves, as they cannot function properly without the other elements of the polysemiotic network. In skopos theory, the key relationships are those between the ST and source culture, and between the TT and target culture. Given the significance of these two relationships, Vermeer notes, then, that 'source and target texts may diverge from each other quite considerably... in the formulation and distribution of the content'.⁵² However, in subtitling, the 'target text' is always bound by the ST, which remains present even in the *translatum*. To diverge too much would be to flout the norms and conventions of subtitling, which are built around the aim for maximum readability, and minimum confusion for the viewer. It might also be suggested that adherence to these norms and conventions would be an implicit part of any subtitling commission, unless it is explicitly stated otherwise. However, given Montgomery's suggestion that the subtitles should convey the 'noise' present in the films, I would suggest that skopos is a useful notion in terms of examining how far the political messages identified in the three case study films are evident in their translated versions. This will be assessed with an examination of language related to the themes identified through analysis of the paratexts and the films themselves, and the rendering of such language in translation. Montgomery's article sparked my own interest in the topic of subtitling *banlieue* film into English. In addition to this article, only a handful of

⁵⁰ Vermeer, p. 191.

⁵¹ See Chapter One for more on the additive nature of subtitling

⁵² Vermeer, p. 193.

other works have studied the subtitling of *banlieue* film into English, and all of those articles examine the subtitles for Mathieu Kassovitz's *La haine*.⁵³

Research Questions

There are a number of research questions which this thesis seeks to address. Based on an understanding of the *langage de banlieue* and its function, the features of this linguistic variety, and the particular challenges faced by the subtitler, this thesis will present case studies of three *banlieue* films. Although *banlieue* film has been described as political cinema in existing case studies of the subtitling of these works, researchers have not looked closely into the link between the films' socio-political messages, language, and subtitling. Can a functionalist approach be developed which analyses the politicised nature of the films in a way that informs linguistic analysis of the subtitles? Furthermore, is it possible to develop a framework for analysis which examines the broader cultural contributions made by the works, as well as a close analysis of the translations presented? How can this close linguistic analysis build on the aforementioned 'macro' analysis, as well as accounting for the polysemiotic nature of audiovisual works? Such a framework could offer a methodological contribution to the field of AVT studies, where many case studies focus on the linguistic aspects of the subtitles, or do not reference the broader context in which the films, or indeed the subtitles, were produced. How do subtitlers working on *banlieue* films approach their work? What sort of brief are they given, and what do they see as the main challenges of working with the *langage de banlieue*? Are they working to very tight deadlines, or do those commissioning the subtitles for such challenging work acknowledge the difficulty of the task to the extent that it is reflected in deadlines and additional support? Could a methodology be developed which would allow for an examination of the context of reception, and an identification of key themes presented in the films? How would a methodology that studies subtitled films on these macro and micro levels work? How far are the key themes identified in macro-level analysis presented through the dialogue, and how are they conveyed to a British English

⁵³ Jäckel; Pierre-Alexis Mével, 'The Translation of Identity: Subtitling the Vernacular of the French Cité', *MHRA Working Papers in the Humanities*, 2 (2007), 49–56; Montgomery; Hamaidia.

audience in the subtitled versions of the films? How do the English subtitles work within the polysemiotic network to convey meaning?

Chapter One of this thesis begins by examining the particularities of subtitling, and how it might differ from other modes of translation. It then homes in on French *banlieue* cinema specifically, exploring the challenges presented by the subtitling of films depicting the French *banlieues*. Chapter Two examines *banlieue* film as politicised cinema, exploring how works, often by directors who grew up in the *banlieue*, can serve to convey messages about the way of life in the *banlieues*, the people who live there, and their sense of exclusion from society. This discussion leads on to the selection of case study films. The second half of Chapter Two explains the need for a new methodology for the study of interlingually subtitled films, contextualising and explaining the new theoretical framework developed and applied in this thesis. In Chapter Three, the subtitling situation is examined through a general technical analysis of the subtitles in terms of reading speeds and character limits, and a consideration of the findings of questionnaires sent to professional subtitlers working with *banlieue* film. Chapter Four considers the macro-context of the subtitled films, including a study of the context of reception, through analysis of the paratexts and plots. This macro-level analysis forms the basis for a more in-depth examination of the subtitled films in Chapter Five. The subtitles will be analysed in relation to the linguistic features of the *langage de banlieue* presented in Chapter One, and the challenges highlighted by subtitlers working with the genre. The subtitles will be studied with the broader contexts of reception and production in mind, and in relation to any technical issues identified, such as high reading speeds, for example. They will also be studied within the audiovisual network in which they appear, in terms of the meaning produced by the sound and visuals in addition to the subtitled dialogue. Analysis will be presented thematically, rather than case-study by case-study. This is to facilitate discussion of challenges and solutions across the three films. Chapter Six considers all of the analysis together, allowing for an examination of the subtitled films in relation to key themes identified in Chapters Two and Four, and a discussion of broader approaches to the subtitling of the *langage de banlieue*.

Chapter One: The Challenges of Translating *Banlieue* Film

Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling

The term *Audiovisual translation* covers various translation modes including audio description, voiceover, dubbing and subtitling, among others.⁵⁴ It includes both intralingual subtitling; subtitles usually produced for the deaf and hard of hearing (but also sometimes written for language learners, for example) and interlingual subtitling. Though the discipline of Audiovisual Translation remains relatively young, a great deal of progress has been made over the past 50 years, in terms of research methodologies, visibility and terminology. This chapter will begin by outlining the particularities of subtitling, detailing those factors which might set it apart from other modes of translation. It will then move on to consider French *banlieue* cinema, and the specific translation challenges presented by films depicting the *banlieues*. The *banlieue* will be examined as a cultural phenomenon, and the variety of language spoken by those living there (and therefore represented in *banlieue* film) will be explored.

Highlighting disagreements which have occurred over the terminology one might use to describe subtitling specifically, Gottlieb notes Catford's 1965 assertion that: 'translation between media is impossible (i.e. one cannot 'translate' from the *spoken* to the *written* form of a text or vice-versa).'⁵⁵ However, this depends on the definition offered of translation, and Gottlieb points out that Jakobson overcame this by coining the term 'intersemiotic translation'; defined as 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems'.⁵⁶ Thus, Jakobson's definition of intersemiotic translation encompassed a much broader set of possibilities which involved moving from one system of signs to another, therefore opening up the possibility of translation from, and into, what would not traditionally be considered languages. The notion of 'intersemiotic translation'

⁵⁴ For more on the different modes of Audiovisual Translation, see Luis Pérez González, *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, Methods and Issues* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 15–26.

⁵⁵ J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Book, Whole (London: Oxford university Press, 1965), p. 53. Cited in Henrik Gottlieb, 'Subtitling: Diagonal Translation', *Perspectives*, 2.1 (1994), 101–21 (p. 105).

⁵⁶ Roman Jakobson, 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 3rd edn (London: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2012), pp. 113–18 (p. 114).

highlights the challenges presented by a move between sign systems. Indeed, the move from the oral to the written medium, described by Gottlieb as ‘diagonal translation’ when undertaken interlingually, is considered to be one of the great challenges of subtitling. Scholars have often cited the constraints of subtitling, even referring to subtitling as ‘constrained translation’ in the past, but Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that there was a move away from this term due to its ‘somewhat negative connotations’.⁵⁷ More recently, some have suggested that a focus on the constrained nature of this mode of translation is not helpful to the discipline.⁵⁸ Mével concurs, stating that these constraints do ‘not merely represent a limitation, but also powerful creative stimuli’.⁵⁹ This suggests that there is something positive to be taken from the constrained nature of subtitling. Nevertheless, there is no denying the challenge presented by a translation from the oral to the written mode of communication, and it will be demonstrated that given the variety of language in question, the challenge is compounded in the case of French *banlieue* cinema.

Gottlieb later notes that subtitling might be more accurately described as

intrasemiotic; it operates within the confines of the film and TV media, and stays within the code of verbal language. The subtitler does not even alter the original; he or she adds an element, but does not delete anything from the audiovisual whole.⁶⁰

Hence, subtitling constitutes the addition of a ‘semiotic channel’ to the media, thus providing an additional thread to the string of information available to the viewer. In the case of *banlieue* film, the viewer would still have access to the source language dialogue, and would thus be exposed to certain aspects of intonation and rhythm which will be discussed later in this chapter, and which are specific to the *langage de banlieue*. The source text (ST) and target text (TT) are combined in the translated version of the film. In this thesis, the source language dialogue (SLD) will be referred to, as the linguistic point of departure for the

⁵⁷ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 11.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Nathalie Ramière, ‘Are You “Lost in Translation” (When Watching a Foreign Film)? Towards An Alternative Approach to Judging Audiovisual Translation’, *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 47.1 (2010), 100–115.

⁵⁹ Pierre-Alexis Mével, ‘Can We Do the Right Thing? : Subtitling African American Vernacular English into French’ (University of Nottingham, 2012), p. 220.

⁶⁰ Gottlieb, ‘Subtitling: Diagonal Translation’, p. 105.

translation. The ST is considered to be the unsubtitled film, and the TT that film but with the addition of English-language subtitles. The additive nature of subtitling has been raised by various scholars in the field of Audiovisual Translation since Gottlieb's assertions,⁶¹ and relates to the notion of the polysemiotic network. Bogucki notes Delabastita and Zabalbeascoa's explanations of the 'semiotic channels which make up the filmic message'. They mention 'the visual-nonverbal channel', as the on-screen imagery, the movement of the characters, and the type of camera shots; 'the visual-verbal channel' which consists of any words displayed on screen, be they subtitles added post-production or signs and words within the film; 'the aural-nonverbal channel', which would include music and sound effects, both diegetic and non-diegetic; and finally 'the aural-verbal channel', dialogue.⁶² Indeed, these four channels work together to transmit meaning, and if any one of them is removed, or edited, the meaning of the audiovisual content as a whole is affected. Some have criticised existing research in subtitling for failing to address the polysemiotic nature of the texts they study,⁶³ and the methodology developed in this thesis will seek to undertake a linguistic analysis of the subtitles, whilst studying these within the polysemiotic network of the films studied.⁶⁴

Díaz-Cintas and Remael describe subtitling as 'vulnerable translation', highlighting the danger of scrutiny of the subtitles by an audience which may have some knowledge of the source language spoken in the dialogue.⁶⁵ The vulnerability of the subtitler sets this mode of translation apart from other forms of written

⁶¹ See, for example, Lukasz Bogucki, 'The Constraint of Relevance in Subtitling', *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 2004, 71–88; Elisa Perego, 'The Codification of Nonverbal Information in Subtitled Texts', in *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Jorge Díaz-Cintas, Topics in Translation (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), pp. 58–69 (pp. 59–60).

⁶² Dirk Delabastita, 'Translation and Mass-Communication', *Babel*, 35.4 (1989), 193–218; Patrick Zabalbeascoa, 'The Nature of the Audiovisual Text and Its Parameters', in *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Jorge Daz-Cintas, Benjamins Translation Library (BTL). EST Subseries, Volume 77 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 21–37. Cited in Lukasz Bogucki, *Areas and Methods of Audiovisual Translation Research*, ed. by Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, *Lódz Studies in Language*, Vol 30 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Edition, 2013), p. 40.

⁶³ Gambier notes that although Translation Studies deals with many text types, 'the focus tends to be limited to their linguistic features'. Yves Gambier, 'Multimodality and Audiovisual Translation', in *Audiovisual Translation Scenarios: Conference Proceedings*, 2006, pp. 1–8 (pp. 6–7) <http://www.translationconcepts.org/pdf/2006_Gambier_Yves.pdf> [accessed 7 December 2017].

⁶⁴ See Chapter Two for a discussion of the methodology.

⁶⁵ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 55.

translation, and even from dubbing. The subtitler must not only endeavour to translate the source language dialogue into the target language (TL), rendering a translation which reads smoothly, they must also make allowances for the audience potentially understanding (or believing they understand) elements of the dialogue. This may be an issue where, for example, a ‘false friend’ (a word which sounds like a word in the TL, but in fact has a completely different meaning) may be used in the SLD, or where a negative construction in the source language (SL) would generally become a positive construction in the target language (the viewer may hear - or ‘see’- *no* but the subtitle would read *yes*, should the generally accepted translation for the phrase be used). An example specific to the case of *banlieue* film might be the use of ‘paname’ to refer to Paris.⁶⁶ A viewer might understand some French, but may not be aware that the people living in the *banlieue* sometimes refer to the capital city in this manner. The viewer may believe they heard ‘Panama’, and that the subtitler has made a mistake. Some of these aspects of subtitling can prove challenging for the subtitler, or risk confusion for the viewer.

Despite the above complications, the additive nature of subtitling also has some advantages. Firstly, subtitled films could have a greater educational value than those which have been dubbed, particularly in the case of viewers learning a language; the audience receives greater exposure to the source language of the film, and with the subtitles to aid understanding, could use subtitled films to improve their vocabulary and listening skills.⁶⁷ Furthermore, there are some elements of speech which may cross language barriers. If a character is distressed and therefore screaming, crying, or upset, a viewer who does not understand the source language of the film could still gather information about the character’s emotional state from these features of their voice.

It was mentioned in the introduction that the best subtitles are described by a number of scholars as ‘those that the viewer does not notice’.⁶⁸ Thus, some argue

⁶⁶ Goudaillier, pp. 212–13.

⁶⁷ On the didactic value of subtitles, see e.g. Martine Danan, ‘Captioning and Subtitling: Undervalued Language Learning Strategies’, *Meta : Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators’ Journal*, 49.1 (2004), 67–77; Annamaria Caimi, ‘Audiovisual Translation and Language Learning: The Promotion of Intralingual Subtitles’, *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 2006, 85–98.

⁶⁸ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 40; Derek Bannon, *The Elements of Subtitles : A Practical Guide to the Art of Dialogue, Character, Context, Tone and Style in Subtitling*, 3rd edn (Blackstock, SC:

that the ‘most effective’ subtitles should lead the viewer to ‘forget’ they are reading subtitles - they should not provoke additional thought or viewing effort on the part of the viewer. The ‘invisibility’ of subtitles would appear to go hand-in-hand with the ‘invisibility’ of the subtitler. Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that

... many subtitled programmes do not offer in their credits the name of the subtitler or the subtitling company[...] this forced invisibility tends to have a negative impact on the social recognition of subtitlers which is most patent in the lack of copyright for their work.⁶⁹

Certainly, I have remained in the cinema until the end of the credits of a subtitled film before, only to find the subtitler’s name is not mentioned at all. This is, of course, not always the case, but is frustrating when (just as for literary translators, and the reception of a work in translation) their subtitles can have a huge impact on a film’s reception.⁷⁰ However, professional subtitlers, although often aiming to produce ‘invisible’ subtitles, have tried to increase their visibility - the ATAA in France was involved in a round table event at the 68th *Festival de Cannes* 2015, on the topic of *Que serait le festival de Cannes sans sous-titres?* [What would the Cannes film festival be without subtitles?].⁷¹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael also propose some ways in which the visibility of the subtitler may be improved.⁷² This thesis aims to work towards improving the situation; consulting professional subtitlers will provide some insight into the process of subtitling a *banlieue* film into English. Furthermore, consulting with professional subtitlers seeks to improve their visibility within the field of AVT research. The current professional subtitling industry and work-flows will be investigated in-depth in Chapter Three, both generally, and specifically in relation to the subtitling of

Translation Studies Press, 2013), p. 3; Jorge Díaz Cintas and Pablo Muñoz Sánchez, ‘Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment’, *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 2006, 37–52 (p. 47).

⁶⁹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 40.

⁷⁰ Nornes writes about films’ ‘murder by “incompetent” subtitle’ in Abé Mark Nornes, ‘For an Abusive Subtitling’, *Film Quarterly*, 52.3 (1999), 17–34 (p. 17).

⁷¹ The round table was co-organised by SNAC – *Le Syndicat Nationale des Auteurs et des Compositeurs*, ATAA and ASIF, and took place on Tuesday 19th May 2015. It can be viewed online at ‘Anglo Subtitlers in France – ASIF!’ <<https://anglosubtitlers.wordpress.com/>> [accessed 1 November 2017]. Video shared on 12th October 2016.

⁷² ‘...including the name of the translator in the credits of the programme, including their details in national film databanks, creating an annual prize for the best subtitled and dubbed programmes as is done in the literary world, publishing works with the names of the programmes and the translators, creating websites with this information, etc.’ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 40.

banlieue film, and in light of the subtitlers' responses to a questionnaire about their experiences with the genre.

Of course, it should be recognised that subtitling is not the only AVT method which could be used to make *banlieue* film accessible to an Anglophone audience. An alternative AVT mode might be dubbing. This is a form of interlingual translation where the film's dialogue is translated into the target language, re-recorded by voice actors, and used to replace the source language dialogue in the film's polysemiotic network. Contrary to subtitling, in this translation mode, the target audience does *not* have access to the source language dialogue. Some, therefore, describe dubbing as a domesticating approach:

Undoubtedly, dubbing is a powerful target culture-oriented tool which makes the source text conform as much as possible to standards held by the target culture, which in fact is consistent with Venuti's definition of domestication.⁷³

Thus, in dubbing, the target audience receives little to no exposure to the source language (with the exception of any diegetic signs contributing to the verbal-visual channel, for example). In a case such as *banlieue* film, where subtitling the *langage de banlieue* into English might be described as contributing to cultural hegemony and the erasure of difference, dubbing would go even further, removing the majority of the linguistic evidence that the film is set in a specific location and culture.

Besides the aforementioned ethical or political implications of dubbing, it also has some other disadvantages when compared to subtitling. Firstly, dubbing is five to ten times more expensive than subtitling.⁷⁴ For a film to be dubbed, not only must the source language dialogue be translated (another constrained form of translation in which the translator aims for TL segments of the same duration and mouth patterns as in the SLD), but dubbing voice-actors must be recruited and recorded speaking the new lines. This process can also take a great deal longer than subtitling, as there are various stages and multiple people involved at each

⁷³ Agnieszka Szarkowska, 'The Power of Film Translation', *Translation Journal*, 9.2.32 (2005) <<http://translationjournal.net/journal/32film.htm>> [accessed 22 August 2016].

⁷⁴ Jan-Emil Tveit, 'Dubbing versus Subtitling: Old Battleground Revisited', in *Audiovisual Translation: Language Transfer on Screen*, ed. by Jorge Díaz Cintas and Gunilla Anderman (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), pp. 85–96 (p. 94).

point. Furthermore, additional cost can be incurred where a film features a well-known actor who is usually played by the same voice-over actor in all of her films - failing to use the 'authentic' voice of a certain film star might affect the reception of a film.⁷⁵ Technological developments mean that nowadays, film can be edited up to the last minute, at which point subtitles produced before the end of the editing process could be tweaked, but this would be much more difficult where dubbing is concerned.

The mode of translation chosen for a film can come down to the traditions of the target culture. It has been suggested that this may be due to economic concerns and expected box office figures, as well as dubbing being the preferred method of translation by some dictators who wished to reinforce the importance and domination of their country's native language.⁷⁶ In the UK, there is not much of a tradition of subtitling or dubbing, since the majority of imported cinema comes from Hollywood, and is therefore produced in a language which can be understood by the target audience.

In the case of *banlieue* cinema, films tend to be subtitled rather than dubbed. This is most likely due to financial reasons; as will be seen later in this chapter, and in our later case studies, *banlieue* films tend to be small-budget productions with fairly small audiences - with the notable exception of *La haine* (Kassovitz, 1995) - and thus in most cases dubbing is not a feasible option. This means that the Anglophone target audience of a translated *banlieue* film can hear the specific variety of French featured in the ST, and that, generally, translation strategies adopted cannot be overly domesticating. This has the advantage of exposing the target audience to the SLD, and therefore offers an opportunity for language learning. However, although a dubbing approach might arguably be more domesticating and offer more potential for cultural hegemony, our analysis will reveal that this is still possible when a film is subtitled.

⁷⁵ 'Hollywood Dubbing: The German Bruce Willis and Other Invisible Stars', *BBC News*, 21 February 2013 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21523643>> [accessed 22 August 2016].

⁷⁶ For more on the historical political factors involved in film translation traditions, see, for example: Martine Danan, 'Dubbing as an Expression of Nationalism', *Meta : Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 36.4 (1991), 606–14.

In order to fully understand the technical considerations which must be taken into account by a translator working to subtitle film dialogue interlingually, the constraints by which all subtitlers are governed must be examined. The resulting written text is produced for a very specific purpose, and this means that it must fulfil certain criteria. De Linde and Kay divide the restrictions involved in subtitling into three key areas; those imposed by time, those imposed by space, and those imposed by the need for synchronisation between the dialogue and the appearance (and disappearance) of the subtitle on screen.⁷⁷ The technical considerations related to these restrictions will be explored in Chapter Three, when the subtitles for the case study films will be examined in relation to these requirements.

More recently, Peter Fawcett has highlighted the lack of clarity regarding the origins of these constraints, suggesting they might be better described as norms.⁷⁸ What he means by this, is that these have become the generally accepted terms of subtitling, and thus subtitlers tend to follow this pattern, as that is what is expected of them. Fawcett contends that although most decisions made by subtitlers are usually attributed to their desire to adhere to the aforementioned ‘constraints’, it may be that these decisions are also (perhaps to a greater extent) influenced by other factors affecting the work of any subtitler (or indeed translator). Fawcett cites factors such as the ‘amount of work’ the subtitler imagines should be required of the audience, the translator’s ethical position, and that of the commissioner, their ‘perception of their task as communicator, mediator and author’ and ‘the dominant discourse on film translation’.⁷⁹ Thus, Fawcett highlights many of the factors which could influence the production of the subtitles to be analysed later in this thesis. Indeed, the methodology developed for this study endeavours to consider issues such as the subtitler’s perception of their role as highlighted by Fawcett, through subtitler questionnaire responses.

⁷⁷ Zoé De Linde and Neil Kay, *The Semiotics of Subtitling* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999), pp. 6–7.

⁷⁸ Peter Fawcett, ‘The Manipulation of Language and Culture in Film Translation’, in *Apropos of Ideology: Translation Studies on Ideology - Ideologies in Translation Studies*, ed. by Mara Calzada Prez (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2003), pp. 145–63 (p. 146).

⁷⁹ Fawcett, pp. 145–46.

Scholars such as McClarty propose a deviation from existing subtitling conventions, or norms, suggesting that they are unnecessarily restrictive.⁸⁰ Indeed, as technology develops some have suggested that the viewer may be growing more comfortable with reading text on screen, ‘with young audiences being increasingly used to fast-edited movies and messages flashing on and off screens, it is little wonder that commercial TV and Hollywood-commissioned DVD productions have accelerated home audience reading speeds...’⁸¹ Some of the key sets of guidelines to which subtitlers refer have not been updated in a few years. The Code of Good Subtitling Practice, for example, which is endorsed by ESIST (The European Association for Studies in Screen Translation) is dated October 1998. 88% of 25 - 34 year olds surveyed by Ofcom in 2015 used a smartphone, and this figure has increased yearly since 2010, so it could be suggested that people are more accustomed to reading on-screen text now than in 1998 when the Code was written.⁸² Guillot notes that ‘with their ever-increasing exposure to new technologies and new media, viewers are now able to manage complex text-image relations.’⁸³ McClarty advocates for a more creative approach. Her proposals include the use of colour to designate speakers, or capital letters to indicate when a speaker is shouting.⁸⁴ I would argue that this approach could prove more useful in subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH), where the audience may not be exposed to the source language dialogue. However, more creative approaches to subtitling are being adopted in some cases, and scholars suggest that the profession may be able to learn something from ‘non-professional’ subtitlers, such as fansubbers.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ McClarty.

⁸¹ Henrik Gottlieb, ‘Subtitling Against the Current: Danish Concepts, English Minds’, in *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Jorge Díaz Cintas, Topics in Translation (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), pp. 21–43 (p. 42).

⁸² Ofcom, *Adults’ Media Use and Attitudes Report 2015*, May 2015, p. 28
 <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/82112/2015_adults_media_use_and_attitudes_report.pdf> [accessed 14 September 2017].

⁸³ Marie-Noëlle Guillot, ‘Stylisation and Representation in Subtitles: Can Less Be More?’, *Perspectives*, 20.4 (2012), 479–94 (p. 490).

⁸⁴ McClarty.

⁸⁵ ‘... what professional subtitlers discard a priori as a textual and graphic violation, may end up constituting a new experimental field in translation. This is fansubbing’s major contribution to translation studies.’ Serenella Massidda, *Audiovisual Translation in the Digital Age: The Italian Fansubbing Phenomenon*, Palgrave Pivot (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 59.

The field of AVT is still developing today, and given the recent surge in subtitling that we have seen on Facebook videos, for example, I would suggest that interest in the topic will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. The norms and conventions of subtitling are relevant to any work on subtitling, but the genre of *banlieue* film presents additional challenges to the translator, related to the variety of language represented in the films. There is a body of work which focuses on the subtitling of *banlieue* film, and this sits within a larger body on the subtitling of non-standard language or dialects. In the first instance, I will consider existing research into French *banlieue* cinema, and the subtitling of *banlieue* cinema into English, and examine how this thesis will build on that scholarly work.

French *Banlieue* Cinema

A primary text concerned with French *banlieue* film is Carrie Tarr's work *Reframing Difference: Beur and Banlieue filmmaking in France*.⁸⁶ Tarr's text was published in 2005, and as such focuses on many films which were released pre-2000, and are therefore outside of the date range of the films to be studied in-depth in this thesis. Nevertheless, the text provides a good insight into the origins of the *banlieue* film. Tarr's evaluation of pre-1995 *beur*-authored cinema, *beur* films which represent the role of women, and the work of Algerian directors filming in France, provides an insight into the representation of identity and its evolution within the genre.

Tarr studies a range of films within the *beur* and *banlieue* film genres, focussing primarily on how difference and identity are presented within them in terms of characterisation and location, and how traditional notions of *Frenchness* may be challenged within the films. Tarr proposes that a link can be identified between the filmmakers' origins, and the ways in which they present questions of difference and identity through their cinematic works. Indeed, she argues that:

... It is clear that *beur*-authored *banlieue* films set out to provide a different construction of the *banlieue* from white-authored films, placing less emphasis on drugs and violence, more on the *banlieue* as a multi-layered site of social relations.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*.

⁸⁷ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 212.

Thus, she suggests that films which are produced by white directors (for example, *La haine*) provide a more violent representation of the *banlieue* and the lifestyle of those who live there; whereas the cinematic works of *beur* directors investigate the relationships between families and people living in the *cit * more closely. It could be argued, then, that a director's experiences have an impact on the kind of film they may produce, suggesting that the viewer might learn about different aspects of life in the *banlieue* according to the film they are watching and the origins of the director. This might have implications where subtitling is concerned; where a director chooses to emphasise relationships between characters, any elements of these relationships which are conveyed linguistically could be significant, and should arguably be represented within the English language subtitles. Concerning *beur* and *banlieue* cinema, Naficy notes that one recurring theme is 'the shared experiences of unemployment and cohabitation by disadvantaged populations of *beur* and poor whites and the concomitant shared anomie, alienation, and anger'.⁸⁸ These themes can be linked to the *banlieue* subculture; questions of exclusion and group identity arise regularly in discussions concerning the *banlieue*. Furthermore, this supports Montgomery's claims that *banlieue* film is political, and given researchers' findings on the *langage de banlieue* as a form of rebellion against mainstream society, it reinforces the idea that the subtitling of these films could have an impact on the reception of political messages presented within them.

Tarr's definition of *banlieue* film as '[...] the work of directors aiming to represent life in the *banlieue*' has been used to determine the criteria for selection of the *banlieue* films to be analysed in case studies.⁸⁹ It should be noted that the notions of *beur* and *banlieue* filmmaking are rather flexible - the two genres overlap with one another, as well as with other genres. Indeed, many films which could be classed as *beur* or *banlieue* films might also be described as comedy or action.⁹⁰ Since the main concern in this thesis is the question of translating the *langage de*

⁸⁸ Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 99.

⁸⁹ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 3.

⁹⁰ For instance, Gabriel Julien-Laferr re, *Neuilly sa m re! [Neuilly Yo Mama!]* (TF1 Vid o, 2009); Franck Gastambide, *Les Ka ra [Porn in the Hood]* (Gaumont Distribution, 2012) could be described as comedy, whilst Pierre Morel, *Banlieue 13 [District 13]* (O1 Distribution, 2004); Ariel Zeitoun and Julien Seri, *Yamakasi: les samoura s des temps modernes [Yamakasi]* (Europa, 2001). might be classified as action films.

banlieue, the presence of this linguistic variety will be a primary factor in the selection of films for analysis. However, Tarr writes of *keur* and *banlieue* film making in France: ‘What the majority of these two permeable and overlapping sets of films have in common, however, is a concern with the place and identity of the marginal and excluded in France’.⁹¹ This highlights the difficulty in drawing a line between the two genres; there are films which could be described as both *keur* and *banlieue* cinema, such as *Samia* (Faucon, 2000). Both sets of films appear to deal with similar themes; place could suggest not only geographical location (in the *banlieues*, on the outskirts of towns and cities), but also place within society, or social status. Both sets of films appear to be raising the issue of non-integration into mainstream society, and perhaps, therefore, subcultures that may have developed around the ‘marginal and excluded’. The films studied, then, should be set within the French *banlieues*, but should also address the theme of exclusion. The explanation of the selection criteria which features later in this section will provide a clearer definition of which films are to be considered as *banlieue* films, and therefore of value in this thesis.

Rather than focusing specifically on French *banlieue* cinema, Naficy studies what he calls ‘Accented Cinema’, or ‘exilic and diasporic filmmaking’.⁹² For Naficy, there is much to be gained from studying the work of directors from a range of countries, but who all have a similar status in the country in which they make their films. Naficy’s choice of terminology to refer to these films is particularly interesting where the subtitling of *banlieue* cinema is concerned, when we consider the significance of the manner of speaking of the characters in *banlieue* films. On accents, Naficy states:

People make use of accents to judge not only the social standing of the speakers but also their personality. Depending on their accents, some speakers may be considered regional, local yokel, vulgar, ugly, or comic, whereas others may be thought of as educated, upper-class, sophisticated, beautiful, and proper. As a result, accent is one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality.⁹³

⁹¹ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 3.

⁹² Naficy, p. 10.

⁹³ Naficy, p. 23.

Hence, accents can indicate the social status of the person and their personal choices in terms of the image they wish to project of themselves, or the manner in which they wish to communicate with their listener. People may be judged in a 'positive' or 'negative' light (depending on the listener, among other factors). That is to say that a listener may make certain assumptions about a speaker's social status or educational background, and this could affect the way in which they interact with that person. The accents of characters in *banlieue* films, therefore, could convey a great deal of information in terms of characterisation; about a character's personality and the way they see themselves, and about their community and their choice to represent themselves as belonging to a certain group of people. Certainly, Fagyal's study found that the accents of those living in the *banlieue* were affected by the heritage of those belonging to the *banlieue* community. If these accents are not represented in the subtitles, non-French speaking audiences for *banlieue* films may miss important information about a character's personal choices and identity, both collective and personal. Considering Naficy's assertion here that accent is such a significant identity marker, it seems reasonable to suggest that the manner of speaking of characters in these films is of paramount importance in terms of the representation of *banlieue* inhabitants on screen. The characters' manner of speaking was not found to be accurately conveyed in the subtitled versions of *La haine*, *Bye Bye* and *Métisse*; will these aspects of characterisation be evident in the subtitled case study films?

Jonathan Ervine studies films representing marginalised members of French society.⁹⁴ Ervine refers to this as 'contemporary French political cinema;' suggesting that there is indeed a strong political element to this genre. This view is corroborated by Naficy, who states:

... the accented style continually grapples with the politicized immediacy of the films and with their collective enunciation and reception - that is, with the manner in which politics infuses all aspects of their existence.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ervine.

⁹⁵ Naficy, p. 6.

The ‘politicised immediacy’ referred to here by Naficy is extremely relevant in this thesis; *banlieue* films engage with the political contexts in which they are released. It is for this reason, along with the constant development of the *langage de banlieue*, that films selected for case study analysis should be released between 2000 and 2016. This date range will allow for in depth analysis of a smaller number of case studies and their political context, whilst also providing a good range of material within the genre. Furthermore, the context of release both for the French film, and the English-subtitled version will be analysed in order to ascertain the relevance of contemporary social and political events to the films’ reception in translation. Ervine’s work encompasses ‘films that address four specific politically resonant issues that concern how these often marginalised groups interact with the state and the media in France’.⁹⁶ These include ‘... the status of *sans-papiers* (undocumented migrants) in France’, ‘attempts to defend foreign nationals subjected to the *double peine* (double penalty) law’, ‘relations between young people and the police in France’s *banlieues*’, and ‘representations of communal activities and daily life in France’s *banlieues*’.⁹⁷

On-screen representations of these interactions between the *banlieusards* and the authorities could be considered political, as they raise awareness of the difficulties faced by those living in the *banlieue* where the law, documentation and media representations are concerned. These themes recur in *banlieue* films, and can be linked to the discussion of language in Chapter One. Indeed, loanwords, non-standard grammar, and pronunciation can all reveal information about a person’s cultural origins or how much time they have spent in France. Relationships between young people and the police were a very important theme in *La haine* (Kassovitz, 1995), and have been represented on screen in a number of *banlieue* films since then.⁹⁸ The ‘cryptic’ function of the *langage de banlieue* has been partly attributed to youths’ desire not to be understood by adults, including the police, and this desire to communicate in secret reveals the high number of interactions the *banlieusards* have with the police, as well as their

⁹⁶ Ervine, p. 2.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ E.g. Abdellatif Kechiche, *L’esquive [Games of Love and Chance]* (Aventi, 2003); Morel; Julien Abraham, *La cité rose* (TF1 Video, 2012); Abd al Malik, *Qu’Allah Bénisse La France! [May Allah Bless France!]* (Strand Releasing, 2014).

attitude towards them.⁹⁹ Finally, communal activities and daily life in the *banlieues* are represented in Goudaillier's semantic fields, or themes around which the *langage de banlieue* is particularly rich in vocabulary.¹⁰⁰

O'Shaughnessy also argues for the 'political productiveness of some of the typical generic motifs of the *banlieue* films as deployed in specific cases (including *La haine*)'.¹⁰¹ There is debate over the political effectiveness of certain contemporary French films that may be included within our definition of *banlieue* cinema as determined above, but Ervine maintains that *banlieue* films can work to counteract less favourable perceptions of these areas and the people who live there.¹⁰² Indeed, O'Shaughnessy suggests that the films '[...] find their ideal public when, as now not infrequently happens on the French arts circuit and in the burgeoning number of festivals, they are used as a stimulus for public debate'.¹⁰³ O'Shaughnessy is suggesting, then, that although *banlieue* films are not only made for political reasons, their optimal audience would be one that could engage with the political messages that are sometimes presented within the films. One could suggest, therefore, that care should be taken to ensure that the socio-political messages presented within the films are also conveyed within the English subtitled versions.

Another aspect to consider is the financial context of these films. *Banlieue* films are often small-budget films; this means that they may not be subjected to the kind of constraints (political or otherwise) associated with large funding grants from organisations such as the CNC.¹⁰⁴ However, this could also result in a small budget for translation. Ervine states that these films tend to be screened at independent cinemas in France, and the directors of these films sometimes attend showings that are held by campaigners who are trying to raise awareness of the

⁹⁹ David Lepoutre, *Coeur de Banlieue : Codes, Rites et Langages*, Poches Odile Jacob (Paris: O. Jacob, 2001), p. 156.

¹⁰⁰ Goudaillier, pp. 16–17.

¹⁰¹ Martin O'Shaughnessy, *The New Face of Political Cinema : Commitment in French Film since 1995* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), p. 31.

¹⁰² Ervine, p. 139.

¹⁰³ O'Shaughnessy, p. 182.

¹⁰⁴ Centre National de la Cinématographie, which provides the *avance sur recettes*, described as 'one of the key sources of funding for French cinema', which is generally offered for first films. Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 11.

political issues represented within the films.¹⁰⁵ This does have its drawbacks, though, as Ervine indicates:

Although such an approach is understandable, it risks drawing attention to the political subject matter of films rather than their intrinsic value as films (that is, as artistic creations). Thus it has the potential to create a situation whereby the directors preach to the converted and one that restricts the political impact of their films.¹⁰⁶

It seems that the translator of *banlieue* film should not overlook the entertainment value of the films (their worth as ‘artistic creations’), but equally, should take care not to further reduce the ‘political impact’ of the films through failure to convey the socio-political messages in the originals.

It has been established *banlieue* cinema presents a commentary on the exclusion of certain members of French society, and their socio-political status, and often works to counteract negative media discourses on the *banlieues*. These films can be made to encourage debate and provoke thought about the current socio-political situation in France. Since these functions are closely linked to language use in the films, the question emerges: how far do the subtitled films succeed in conveying the socio-political specificity of the French *banlieues*, and the exclusion of their residents from mainstream society? It might be suggested that subtitled versions of these films could encourage a wider understanding of the French *banlieue* internationally, and the socio-political issues surrounding the situation of the residents of the *banlieue*.

Where the above-discussed themes of exclusion, immigration, daily life, and the interaction of youths with the police coincide with a *banlieue* setting, these films will be described as *banlieue* cinema, and will be considered for study within this thesis. The significance of immigration, exclusion, youth and a sense of community as recurring issues within the French *banlieues* has already been established. The language used within the *banlieue* is shaped by these social realities. Since this language and social situation are intrinsically linked to the specifically French

¹⁰⁵ Ervine, p. 22.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

phenomenon of the *banlieue*, the translator may encounter difficulties when rendering the *langage de banlieue* in English.

In terms of potential viewers of French *banlieue* cinema in the UK, research into foreign films, art-house films and French films in the UK allows us to build a picture. Firstly, subtitled films, or films produced in languages other than English are usually screened in art-house or independent UK cinemas. These films also play a relatively small part in national box office revenue. In a survey cited by Jones, of those who regularly watch foreign-language films ‘a higher proportion than average were aged 25 to 44. Full-time students... and those who lived in urban areas were also over-represented, as were people with a degree or above.’¹⁰⁷ Mazdon and Wheatley have studied French cinema in Britain and note that it ‘has an enduring appeal for middle-class audiences...’¹⁰⁸ Thus, it appears that the audience for *banlieue* film in UK cinemas is disproportionately made up of middle-class viewers between the ages of 25 to 44, and students or those who have studied in higher education. Given that these films are normally screened at art-house cinemas, those viewers watching *banlieue* film are likely to be accustomed to viewing subtitled films, and well-educated with some knowledge of what is happening in the world around them. However, this does not mean that they would necessarily understand French or the particular social context of the French *banlieues*. There will be a significant gap to bridge in terms of contextual knowledge between the target audience for *banlieue* film in France and the UK. This could have an impact in relation to the transmission of socio-political messages to British viewers.

It must also be noted that *banlieue* films are usually first screened at film festivals, and this is often the point at which English subtitles are commissioned. Thus, although the subtitles to be studied will be on DVDs and online streaming platforms, they may have been written with a film festival audience in mind. This is an aspect of subtitling *banlieue* film which makes discussions of audience design difficult. This issue will be returned to in Chapter Three, as part of a discussion of

¹⁰⁷ Huw D Jones, ‘The Market for Foreign Language Films in the UK’, in *Paper Presented at the Migrating Texts Colloquium* (presented at the Migrating Texts Colloquium, University College London), p. 8 <<http://mecetes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Jones-Market-for-Foreign-Language-Films-in-UK.pdf>> [accessed 7 December 2017].

¹⁰⁸ Lucy Mazdon and Catherine Wheatley, *French Film in Britain: Sex, Art and Cinephilia*, Berghahn on Film (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2013), p. 214.

the professional environment in which the subtitling was undertaken. Although these films are being studied from the perspective of the context of reception based on the current subtitle format, this possible factor in their production should be borne in mind. It is also possible that the subtitlers wrote their translations for a film festival, and the subtitles they produced were edited for DVD/Netflix release. Once again, this highlights the possible collaborative nature of many translations, and of those to be examined in this thesis.

Research into the Subtitling of *Banlieue* Film

No discussion of *banlieue* film would be complete without a mention of Mathieu Kassovitz's *La haine* (1995). The film won best director at Cannes, and earned \$20,128 in its first three days of release in America. It has been noted that Kassovitz decided to make the film following the death of Makomé M'Bowole, a 16-year-old from Zaire who died after being shot by a police officer.¹⁰⁹ There is, therefore, an undeniable political facet to the film, which opens with genuine footage from riots in Paris. In this way, it might be suggested that the line between reality and fiction is blurred in the film, which has a gritty black and white, almost documentary-like tone.¹¹⁰ The film shows a day in the life of a *black-blanc-beur* trio as they loiter in their *cité*,¹¹¹ dealing drugs, struggling to entertain themselves, and discussing the gun which Vinz (one of the main characters) has found, and with which he threatens to kill a police officer if their friend Abdel dies from the injuries he has acquired in police custody.

Given the film's success in France and abroad, and its status as one of the best-known examples of *banlieue* cinema,¹¹² it is not surprising that scholars have chosen to study the English language subtitles for the film; the dialogue of which features a great deal of non-standard language. The case studies by Jäckel, Mével, Montgomery and Hamaidia are of great value in the subtitling of non-standard language, and in this thesis in particular; they study the language and culture of

¹⁰⁹ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 67.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 68.

¹¹¹ For a full description of the plot, and more information on *La haine*, see: Ginette Vincendeau, *La haine* (London: I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2009).

¹¹² One might suggest that the release of *La haine* provoked Jousse's 1995 assessment of the emerging genre. Jousse.

the *banlieue*, and investigate the success of existing strategies in conveying the specific language used in the film.¹¹³ However, *La haine* was released in 1995, and although it still proved popular when re-released in 2005 for its 10th anniversary (with a new set of subtitles), this thesis aims to consider more recent examples of *banlieue* language in a range of contemporary *banlieue* films, in order to renew and refresh this area of study.

The above-mentioned case studies of existing English subtitles for French *banlieue* film were carried out between 2001 and 2008. *La haine* was clearly a landmark film in the genre of *banlieue* cinema, and the dialogues in the film presented a particularly interesting case study for scholars in the field of AVT. However, it is unclear why there have been no further case studies of subtitles for *banlieue* film published since 2008. Indeed, the genre does not seem to have diminished in popularity, with recent success stories including *Bande de Filles* [Girlhood] (Sciamma, 2014), for example, which was hailed as one of the best films from 2015 in the Guardian.¹¹⁴

Given the dynamic nature of the *langage de banlieue*, and the fact that its speakers are constantly reinventing the codes they use, this field of research could benefit from case studies of more recent *banlieue* films.¹¹⁵ These would serve to demonstrate the development of the *langage de banlieue* and recent political events in these areas, which may have had an impact on the themes and socio-political messages presented in *banlieue* filmmakers' productions. An in-depth discussion of the case studies which have been undertaken by other scholars will serve to identify recurring linguistic and cultural issues in the subtitling of French *Banlieue* film. Chapters Three to Six of this thesis consist of the analysis of new case studies of contemporary *banlieue* films undertaken for this research project. These new case studies will investigate how those translation difficulties identified by earlier scholars have been addressed in more recent examples of *banlieue* film. They will also consider the socio-political messages which may be

¹¹³ Jäckel; Mével, 'The Translation of Identity'; Mével, 'Traduire La Haine'; Montgomery; Hamaidia.

¹¹⁴ Mark Kermode, 'Mark Kermode: The Best Films of 2015', *The Guardian*, 13 December 2015 <<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/dec/13/mark-kermode-best-films-2015-girl-walks-home-inside-out-carol-the-falling-brooklyn>> [accessed 14 September 2017].

¹¹⁵ Doran, p. 500.

identified in the original French films, and how these may (or may not) be conveyed in the English subtitled versions of the films.

French *banlieue* film conveys socio-political messages in relation to integration and immigration in France.¹¹⁶ The ‘loss’ of these messages is an element of this debate which concerns scholars in the field.¹¹⁷ Montgomery refers to Nornes, who describes subtitling as

[...] a practice of translation that smoothes over its textual violence and domesticates all otherness while it pretends to bring the audience to an experience of the foreign.¹¹⁸

Subtitling has already been discussed in relation to domestication and foreignisation, but Nornes’ description of subtitling as an abusive activity could certainly be applied to some examples of English subtitles for *banlieue* films. Montgomery argues that the English subtitles of the films she analyses could be understood as an example of ‘textual violence’ which ‘depoliticizes the films’ representation of *banlieue* subculture’.¹¹⁹ She suggests that given the politically rebellious nature of the *langage de banlieue*, and of *le verlan* in particular, a failure to adequately convey this in the subtitles could result in a reduced understanding of the *banlieue* subculture (and the *banlieusards*’ sense of exclusion and rebellion) for non-French speaking viewers. Mével agrees with Montgomery and suggests that *banlieue* films can work to demonstrate the sense of exclusion experienced by those in the *banlieues*,¹²⁰ which may serve to counteract the negative media discourses concerning the *cités* discussed in the Introduction.¹²¹

Language is intrinsically linked to the political messages in *banlieue* film, Mével states ‘it can even be argued that such a use of language constitutes a political message in itself’; thus language is of great significance in terms of the political

¹¹⁶ O’Shaughnessy, p. 78; Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 15.

¹¹⁷ Montgomery, p. 8; Hamaidia, p. 10.

¹¹⁸ Nornes, p. 18.

¹¹⁹ Montgomery analyses the subtitles for Karim Dridi, *Bye-Bye* (Editions Montparnasse, 1995); Mathieu Kassovitz, *Métisse [Café Au Lait]* (arte video, 1993); Mathieu Kassovitz, *La Haine* (Les Productions Lazennec, 1995). Montgomery, p. 9.

¹²⁰ Mével, ‘Traduire La Haine’, p. 164.

¹²¹ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 17.

nature of the films, and the script choices made arguably have an effect on the reception of the films' socio-political messages by the target audience.¹²² The political nature of the lexical choices in the *langage de banlieue* will be discussed in greater depth in the next section. Nonetheless, Kozloff has noted a general tendency to focus on the visual nature of films and a belief that 'dialogue... Is just something we have to put up with', suggesting that importance was not given to dialogues in films, and therefore, one might suggest, to translations of the dialogues.¹²³ Having indicated that dialogue does not have the same importance in all instances, she nevertheless argues that it is, in fact, 'the most important aspect of film sound'.¹²⁴ Indeed, over the last decade (Kozloff's work was written in 2000), there seems to have been a shift in this general belief; Spike Jonze's 2014 film *Her*, in which a man falls in love with his computer's operating system, saw Scarlett Johansson win multiple awards for her (voice) interpretation of Samantha - the operating system.¹²⁵ This move to award Scarlett Johansson for her voice acting demonstrates the value attributed to sound and dialogue in the film, and suggests a move within popular culture to acknowledge the effect verbal communication has on film audiences; this is also reflected in a renewed emphasis on multimodality in translation.¹²⁶ Montgomery suggests that the English subtitles for the *banlieue* films investigated do not convey the films' political messages to the fullest extent, and that language usage (and therefore dialogue) plays a significant role in the portrayal of those political messages.¹²⁷

¹²² Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 51.

¹²³ Sarah Kozloff, *Overhearing Film Dialogue* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000), p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 6.

¹²⁵ Including a Special Honorary Award from the Austin Film Critics Association for 'For her outstanding voice performance in *Her*' in 2013. 'IMDb - Movies, TV and Celebrities', *IMDb - Internet Movie Database* <<http://www.imdb.com/>> [accessed 17 September 2018].

¹²⁶ Reflected, for example, in the forthcoming special issue of *Linguistica Antverpiensia* on 'Methods for the Study of Multimodality in Translation', edited by Catalina Jiménez-Hurtado, Anne Ketola and Tiina Tuominen.

¹²⁷ Montgomery, p. 12.

The Langage de Banlieue

In the Introduction, it was noted that the United Kingdom does not have a cultural equivalent of France's *banlieues*. This means that when attempting to translate the terms *banlieue* or *cité*, there is no exact English equivalent. The *banlieues* have been referred to both as *ghettos* by some researchers in Film Studies¹²⁸ and as *projects* by some in Translation Studies/AVT.¹²⁹ However, the extent to which these translations communicate the linguistic and cultural implications of this uniquely French phenomenon is questionable. In this thesis, the French term *banlieue* has been retained, in the absence of an exact cultural equivalent.¹³⁰

The discussion of the *langage de banlieue* which follows incorporates studies on the language, and case studies of *banlieue* films in subtitled translation. It is recognised that the language seen in *banlieue* film is a replication of the language spoken by youths living in the *banlieues*, and not an authentic example of real-life language use in the *cités*. However, the language used in the films is an attempt at replicating the *langage de banlieue*, therefore a discussion of the significance of this variety of language is considered relevant. Indeed, Goudaillier analysed four *banlieue* films in order to generate vocabulary for his comprehensive *Dictionnaire du français contemporain des cités*, which also includes an informative and thorough scholarly introduction explaining the *langage de banlieue* and the development of its features.¹³¹ This suggests that scholars of linguistics have found some value in the language found in *banlieue* films as a resource for the analysis and study of the language spoken by youths living in the *banlieues*. Mével's analysis of *La haine* led him to conclude that the language therein lies somewhere on a scale between standard French and the *langage de banlieue*, and according to Montgomery and Hamaidia, the English translations of

¹²⁸ Austin, p. 224.

¹²⁹ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 49.

¹³⁰ See the Introduction for a more detailed discussion of this point.

¹³¹ The films analysed were specifically Kassovitz, *La Haine*; Thomas Gilou, *Raï* (Vertigo Productions, 1995); Jean-François Richet, *Ma 6-T va Crack-Er*, 1997; Djamel Bensalah, *Le ciel, les oiseaux et ... ta mère [Boys on the Beach]* (TF1 Video, 1999). In Goudaillier.

banlieue films they analysed do not convey the extent to which the language in the films deviates from standard French.¹³² Díaz-Cintas and Remael note:

...linguistic choices are never random in film... Since linguistic variants are rooted in the communities that produce them, they are often used as a kind of typology in film, carrying a connotative meaning over and above their denotative functions.¹³³

Not only does this imply that linguistic varieties are used in film for specific purposes, it also highlights the significance of language use within the semiotic system of film. Important elements of the characters' identities (such as their social status, or the area in which they grew up) are conveyed through their use of language, but in addition, this use of language transmits certain information about the community as a whole and how it is represented. It might also be suggested, given the above statement, that the use of specific social and regional varieties of language in film can allow for some categorisation; indeed, the presence of the *langage de banlieue* often coincides with the presentation of certain themes (such as exclusion and immigration), which, alongside the specific *banlieue* setting allows us to make the assertion that the film in question may be identified as belonging to the genre of *banlieue* film. It could also be suggested that films set in the *banlieue* with no representation of the *langage de banlieue* whatsoever are relatively rare. Finally, there is an implication here that dialogue in films featuring noteworthy linguistic choices conveys a great deal of information through form rather than content. This raises a question; in circumstances where both the form and content of the SL dialogue cannot be rendered in the English language subtitle, which strategies does the translator employ? This is one of the primary concerns of the case studies - how do subtitlers deal with the challenges presented by the language in *banlieue* film?

Mével, Hamaidia and Montgomery all discuss the *langage de banlieue* and the significance of its use in their case studies. In Jäckel's discussion of the subtitles for *La haine*, she points out that 'Bad grammar, misuse of words, local colloquialisms, and slang all appear in the film. Such verbal usage reflects

¹³² Mével, 'Traduire La Haine', p. 173; Hamaidia, p. 11; Montgomery, p. 9..

¹³³ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 185.

different value systems'.¹³⁴ Thus, along with certain prosodic features, these linguistic elements are markers of identity; they convey information about the characters' beliefs and convictions, and could therefore be of great importance in characterisation. In a case study of the subtitling of two films featuring Scottish dialects, *Danny Boyle's Trainspotting* and Ken Loach's *The Angels' Share*, Ellender notes 'given the importance of language in contributing to the protagonists' characterization and the films' narratives, it is clearly important to attempt to preserve, as far as possible, the essence of this language in the TL subtitles'.¹³⁵ However, each of the individual features of the *langage de banlieue* presents its own translation difficulties; due to space limitations, a subtitler may have to decide whether to prioritise form or content where a character's utterance includes a great deal of slang. The use of slang may present certain information about the character, but the translator may struggle to render the utterance in slang form in an English translation, and the content of the utterance may be of consequence in terms of the plot. In addition to demonstrating where a speaker is from, Jäckel also suggests (above) that these linguistic elements may indicate a person's moral code. That is to say, their choice to speak in a certain manner might convey the beliefs - in terms of behaviour which may be considered 'right or wrong' - of the community with which they identify.

In her work, *Accents de Banlieue*, Fagyal carried out a study on students in *La Courneuve*, comparing the accents of pupils classed in two groups: FM (français d'origine maghrébine) [French of North African origin] and FE (français d'origine européenne) [French of European origin].¹³⁶ Fagyal notes that attitudes towards *banlieue* French have varied over time, from curiosity, to discourses concerning its perceived negative impact on the French language. She notes that *Le Monde* featured an article stating that it was

¹³⁴ Jäckel, p. 226.

¹³⁵ Claire Ellender, *Dealing with Difference in Audiovisual Translation : Subtitling Linguistic Variation in Films* (Oxford ; New York: Peter Lang, 2015), p. 51.

¹³⁶ Fagyal, p. 76.

Inventée par des jeunes qui cherchent à se fabriquer un lexique incompréhensible à tous, étrangers à leur groupe (parents, police, bourgeois).¹³⁷

This reinforces the notion that the *langage de banlieue* constitutes a code, which is supposed to exclude those who do not belong to the community, a point which is corroborated by other scholars such as Goudaillier and Duchêne, who note the ‘cryptic’ function of this linguistic variety.¹³⁸ However, this would appear to be an element of which the speakers of the *langage de banlieue* are aware. Concerning one pupil of particular interest in her study, Fagyal states ‘il changeait de styles et de types de prononciation rapidement, et il ne se trompait jamais de destinataire.’¹³⁹ This implies that the *banlieusards* are aware of their language use and change it as and when required. This is an aspect of the language which is most evident in *banlieue* film through register shifts. The significance of register shifts and their translation in *banlieue* film will be examined in Chapter Six. Azouz Begag remarks that there is a certain stigma surrounding the variety of French spoken in the *banlieues*; he suggests that the speakers of the *langage de banlieue* should be aware of the consequences of choosing to express themselves in such a manner, which can affect a listener’s perceptions.¹⁴⁰ The *banlieusards*, then, are arguably aware that certain people might not understand the way they speak, or may be prejudiced because of their sociolect. This is reflected in *banlieue* film, when characters travel into central Paris, for example.¹⁴¹ Halliday’s register analysis is a useful tool with which register is analysed in the case study films, and will be revisited in Chapters Two and Six. Halliday suggests that a change in participants, topic, or mode (i.e. face-to-face vs telephone conversation) can affect the register of a conversation. It therefore follows that the register used by characters in a certain scene can convey useful information about how comfortable they are with a topic, or the relationship between them. The subtitling of such conversations, then, can have an impact on the audiences’

¹³⁷ ‘Invented by youths looking to create a lexicon which would be incomprehensible to all outside of their group (parents, police, the middle-class).’ *Le Monde*, 22.1.1999, cited in Fagyal, p. 31.

¹³⁸ Goudaillier, p. 10; Duchêne, p. 35.

¹³⁹ ‘He changed style and type of pronunciation quickly, and he always knew his audience.’ Fagyal, p. 174.

¹⁴⁰ Azouz Begag, ‘Trafic de mots en banlieue : du “nique ta mère” au “plaît-il”?’ , *Migrants-Formation*, 1997, 30–37 (p. 36).

¹⁴¹ See Chapter Six for a discussion of register shifts, in which it is established that the characters in *La squale* adjust their register when speaking to a shop assistant in central Paris.

perception of these factors, and so their understanding of, for example, the relationship between the *banlieusards* and the police.

Fagyal also notes the significance of the speed at which some *banlieusards* speak. She refers to Lepoutre's ethnographic study, in which he remarks

Pour se faire entendre dans les groupes de pairs, il faut non seulement parler fort, il faut aussi parler vite.¹⁴²

Fagyal also found this to be true in her study. The ability to master the *langage de banlieue* and to speak at high speed is required for an elevated status among peer groups. This is reflected in some scenes in *banlieue* cinema, where there are groups of youths all speaking at the same time, vying for the group's attention.¹⁴³ These scenes can prove challenging for the subtitler for a number of reasons. Firstly, when there are a few people speaking together, the subtitler must decide whose speech will be subtitled; with a recommendation of two speaker turns per subtitle (which can, on occasion be pushed to three, flouting conventions). This limits the amount of speech that can be subtitled, given the additional factors of reading speed. It can also be challenging for the subtitler to understand everything that is being said, in order to decide whose speech to subtitle. Finally, rapid speech results in the need for further condensation of the dialogue for the subtitles. In a study by De Linde and Kay, it was noted that on average, the subtitles consisted of 43% less text than the corresponding speech.¹⁴⁴ Where characters are speaking quickly there will arguably be a need for even greater condensation. Scenes in which characters are speaking quickly can also lead to a situation where the viewer feels they are missing out, if they can clearly tell that the character is speaking quickly, but wonder how all of their speech could be included in the subtitles.

Montgomery notes that the *langage de banlieue* is also identifiable through its 'violation of standard French grammar and syntax'.¹⁴⁵ The ethnic diversity of the *banlieues* means that films set in these locations often have characters for whom

¹⁴² Fagyal, p. 172; Lepoutre, p. 167.

¹⁴³ For instance, in the opening scenes of *L'esquive*, when Krimeo and his friends are discussing seeking revenge.

¹⁴⁴ De Linde and Kay, pp. 50–51.

¹⁴⁵ Montgomery, p. 9.

French is not the first language; the use of what may be seen as ‘incorrect’ grammar (often coupled with a strong non-metropolitan-French accent) by a character may serve to demonstrate that they have not been in France for long, or at least that their family has recently immigrated. One example of this is the character Wei, a Chinese student in *Entre les Murs* (Cantet, 2008). Wei’s speech in the film demonstrates that he is a non-native speaker of French, and this forms part of his characterisation. His use of non-standard grammar demonstrates that he did not grow up in France, and shows his clear connection to other languages and cultures.

One particularly informative text in terms of the lexical features of the *langage de banlieue* is Goudaillier’s book, *Comment tu tchatches!*. This is not only a dictionary of the *langage de banlieue*, but also includes a critical introduction detailing the lexicon encountered in the *banlieue*, and explaining each variation with numerous examples. This text is invaluable to scholars working with the *langage de banlieue* within and outside of Translation Studies, and will be referred to throughout this thesis. Goudaillier’s text complements Fagyal’s study of the prosodic features of the *langage de banlieue*; together, the two provide a comprehensive study of the features differentiating the *langage de banlieue* from the variety of French spoken by mainstream society. A discussion of the lexical features of the *langage de banlieue* follows, covering the swearing, argot and *verlan* which are features of the sociolect.

David Lepoutre spent two years living in the French *banlieue* of Quatre-Milles, La Courneuve on the outskirts of Paris and ten years teaching in a school near there. During this time, he carried out an ethnographic study of life in the *banlieues*, including the language spoken by the youths living there. He noted that a regular staffroom discussion would be the obscene language employed by students, but also that such language seemed to be a common feature of ‘street culture’ in general.¹⁴⁶ This linguistic usage is reflected in *banlieue* cinema with many of them featuring swearing or vulgar language. In terms of subtitling *banlieue* film, this presents multiple challenges.

¹⁴⁶ Lepoutre, pp. 158–59.

Firstly, translating swearwords between any languages can be complicated, as different cultures have different swearing traditions, and it may be that swearing in certain environments is more acceptable in one culture than another. There is therefore a difficulty in selecting the appropriate swearword for a given context. In terms of translation between French and English specifically, there is a huge amount of variation and imagination in French swearing, which is not easily reflected in English swearwords. In a study of the subtitling of African American Vernacular English into French, Mével writes of the word ‘fuck’ that: ‘there is no word in French that offers such combinational flexibility or grammatical versatility’.¹⁴⁷ Thus, where the word ‘fuck’ can be employed in a variety of different contexts in English, there is no one translation which demonstrates the same flexibility in French. This is also evident working the other way, from French into English. In a case study of the English subtitles for *La haine*, Jäckel notes:

... rude words, less used in their written forms, have more impact when shown as subtitles (one four-letter word appears 83 times in some 1,500 subtitles).¹⁴⁸

She therefore suggests that swearwords are ‘stronger’ when written down than spoken, and scholars such as Roffe tend to agree with her.¹⁴⁹ Jäckel also seems to suggest that the word ‘fuck’ appears too many times in the subtitles for *La haine*. It has been noted that swearing is often ‘toned down’ in subtitles, due either to the above-mentioned suggestion that these words are stronger in writing, or due to constraints of time and space, it might also be suggested that the repetitive nature of swearing in English contributes to its reduction in the subtitles.¹⁵⁰ However, despite the general consensus that swearwords are stronger in writing and that their omission from the subtitles is perhaps better for the viewer, in Minna Hjort’s study on swearwords in subtitles, she found that 66.2% of viewers felt that in the subtitles, ‘swearwords should be equal in strength’ to the SLD.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Mével, ‘Can We Do the Right Thing? : Subtitling African American Vernacular English into French’, p. 171..

¹⁴⁸ Jäckel, p. 229.

¹⁴⁹ Ian Roffe, ‘Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies for Interlingual Subtitling’, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 16.3 (1995), 215–25 (p. 221).

¹⁵⁰ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 195; Mével, ‘Can We Do the Right Thing? : Subtitling African American Vernacular English into French’, p. 170.

¹⁵¹ Minna Hjort, ‘Swearwords in Subtitles: A Balancing Act’, *InTRAlinea Online Translation Journal*, 2009, p. 205.

This suggests that the subtitler and the viewer may not necessarily be on the same page where the subtitling of swearwords is concerned.

Arguably, one of the most significant ways in which the lexicon of the *langage de banlieue* differs from standard French is through the presence of *verlan*. *Verlan* is a type of French back slang in which the syllables of a word are reversed.¹⁵² The name itself came about through the reversal (or *verlanisation*) of *l'envers* (meaning backwards):

L'envers > *len-vers* > *vers-lan* > *verlan*¹⁵³

Some other common examples include *téma*, which is the *verlan* of *mater* (slang for 'look at') and *keuf*, which is the *verlan* of *flic* (meaning 'cop').¹⁵⁴

Verlan is one distinguishing feature of the *langage de banlieue* that may be considered particularly problematic for the translator. All languages feature some slang, though the socio-cultural context in which the *langage de banlieue* has developed is unique to France.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the morphological phenomenon of *verlanisation* does not appear to have emerged in English.¹⁵⁶

The *langage de banlieue*, and *le verlan* have multiple functions, though there is some disagreement over which is the 'primary' function. Goudaillier compares the functions of this *argot sociologique* with those of the trade jargons which preceded it. He notes that contrary to trade jargon, the primary function of the *argot sociologique* in question is the expression of identity, followed by a cryptic

¹⁵² Doran, p. 500.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ *Keuf* features in many *banlieue* films, including *L'esquive*; Jérôme Enrico, *Paulette* (Gaumont Distribution, 2012); Hervé Mimran and Géraldine Nakache, *Tout ce qui brille [All That Glitters]* (Pathé, 2010). *Téma* is also a common term in *banlieue* films, and can be heard in Céline Sciamma, *Bande de filles [Girlhood]* (StudioCanal, 2014); Djamel Bensalah, *Le raid [The Race]* (Gaumont, 2002).

¹⁵⁵ Goudaillier, p. 11.

¹⁵⁶ Fagyal notes that *verlan* dates back to Voltaire's time. She states that his pseudonym came about through the reversal of the syllables in the name of the town where his grandfather lived: Airvault > Air vault > Vault air > Voltaire. Fagyal, p. 35; Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', pp. 50–51.

function and then a playful function.¹⁵⁷ Not all scholars agree on this point. Duchêne, for example, states that:

... nous pourrions certainement affirmer que l'une de ses fonctions principales demeure la fonction cryptique ou peut-être même ésotérique. Il s'agit bel et bien d'une langue que les jeunes de la *banlieue* veulent secrète, qui ne doit pas être comprise au-delà de la cité.¹⁵⁸

She suggests that this language has developed *primarily* as a code for members of a certain community; it is designed to exclude others from the conversations. Jäckel describes *verlan* as 'untranslatable'.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the presence of *verlan* does appear to be one of the most problematic elements of the language used in *banlieue* film, not only where subtitling is concerned, but also in terms of viewers' understanding. At the Cannes screening of *La haine* in 1995, 'a substantial number of French people said they were glad for the subtitles. The subtitles helped them understand the language spoken by the characters in the film!'¹⁶⁰ This further highlights the complexity of the *langage de banlieue* - even native French-speakers struggle to understand this language. Therefore, translators' misunderstanding of, or difficulty in understanding the source language dialogue is an issue which presents itself in the subtitling into English of French *banlieue* film.¹⁶¹ Given the close link between the language used by the characters, and their identities and relationships with one another, a misunderstanding, or incorrect translation of the slang could have serious consequences for the viewer in terms of their comprehension of the plot development and the relationships between the characters in *banlieue* films. Returning to the functions of the *langage de banlieue*, many have suggested that it functions as a form of rebellion against mainstream French society. Begag notes that among peer groups, choosing not to express oneself in the *langage de banlieue* can be taken as 'un signe de soumission à la société aliénante'.¹⁶² One could therefore suggest that if this

¹⁵⁷ Goudaillier, p. 14.

¹⁵⁸ 'We could certainly maintain that one of its primary functions remains its cryptic, or even esoteric function. Indeed, this is a language which the youths of the *banlieue* wish to keep secret; which should not be understood outside of the *cit *.' Duch ne, p. 35.

¹⁵⁹ J ckel, p. 226.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 225.

¹⁶¹ Hamaidia, pp. 6–7. also notes this difficulty.

¹⁶² Begag, p. 34.

'*Wesh*', meaning 'What's up', or 'Toubib', an Arabic word for Doctor.¹⁶⁹ In *Comme un Aimant* (Akhenaton, 2000), for example, when Fouad's mother dies, there is a collection to pay for the cost of burying her in Algeria, they refer this as burying her 'au bled'. *Bled* is from the Arabic meaning 'terrain, ville, pays', and is often used to refer to one's country of origin.¹⁷⁰

Given the borrowings from American English in the *langage de banlieue*, lexical links can be identified between the *banlieue* subculture and American street culture. In addition to these lexical links, scholars have also drawn cultural parallels between the two, and these will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. The adoption of borrowings from other languages is significant; it demonstrates that the speakers of the *langage de banlieue* often feel strong connections to languages and cultures other than the dominant French. Along with *le verlan*, these loanwords could also be considered as a form of rebellion, which may contribute to the aforementioned socio-political messages presented within the films. Doran notes:

The use of terms from family minority language represents an obvious assertion of youths' connection to multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the face of a homogenizing cultural discourse.¹⁷¹

The choice to continue to express their linguistic and cultural backgrounds through their manner of speaking is a way for the youths of the *banlieue* to demonstrate their sense of non-belonging to mainstream society, and also the strength of their community within the *banlieue*. Doran suggests that this use of language to demonstrate a multicultural background might work against dominant discourses which could be seen as attempting to eliminate cultural difference. This reinforces the notion that the linguistic choices of the *banlieusards*, and of the characters in *banlieue* film (and thus the linguistic decisions made by the scriptwriters and directors) have a political facet, and constitute an act of rebellion in themselves. I would argue that an English translation which does not render the characters'

¹⁶⁹ See for example, Rabah Ameer-Zaïmeche, *Wesh wesh, qu'est-ce qui se passe?* (Arte France Développement, 2001).

¹⁷⁰ 'Land/territory, town, country'. Goudaillier, p. 67. In Philippe Faucon, *Samia* (Editions Montparnasse, 2000). the protagonist's brother tells her 'Quand tu rentres à la maison, t'es au bled', 'when you come home, you're [*au bled*]'. He is suggesting that Samia must behave in her home as if she were in Algeria.

¹⁷¹ Doran, p. 501.

speech as different from that of mainstream society might contribute to the homogenizing cultural discourse mentioned by Doran, in that it would not present the cultural diversity which can be seen in contemporary French society.

Doran notes that the inhabitants of the *banlieue* can sometimes struggle with their individual identities; in particular, immigrants can find themselves somewhere between two nationalities ('French' and 'immigrant').¹⁷² In her work on the *langage de banlieue*, Fagyal reinforces the notion that the prosodic features of the language have developed due to the various languages in contact in the *banlieue*. Although French does eventually become the main language of children of immigrants, it is not the only language used in the home, and their parents speak their own native language (such as Arabic, for instance) daily.¹⁷³ Despite the fact that a vast number of people living in the French *banlieues* are regularly exposed to multiple languages and cultures, Doran notes that in standard French there is a 'lack of adequate labels for self-designation,' such as 'Franco-Marocain,' [French-Moroccan] for example.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, Doran considers the *langage de banlieue* to be an important means of expressing identity for those who speak it, particularly in terms of their sense of being 'between' nationalities. She notes that this language

may represent a valuable alternative to mainstream French precisely as a tool for forging, negotiating, and expressing identities which stand outside the binary categories of mainstream discourse, allowing youths to define and express themselves through a linguistic bricolage that mirrors their sense of identity as mixed, evolving, and drawing from multiple cultural and linguistic sources.¹⁷⁵

The notion that the *langage de banlieue* is an alternative to mainstream French echoes the suggestion that these linguistic choices represent a form of rebellion; Doran is intimating that youths decide to use either this variety of French, or the standard, mainstream variety. This also links to the sense of 'otherness' experienced by the *banlieusards*; this otherness is not only social and geographic, but also linguistic. Moreover, this variety of language allows those who speak it to

¹⁷² Doran, p. 499.

¹⁷³ Fagyal, p. 22.

¹⁷⁴ Doran, p. 499.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 499-500

express their own reality, but also to construct that reality. Speakers of the *langage de banlieue* have the necessary vocabulary to discuss their cultural origins and are thus aware of the many combinations of cultures and origins experienced by other members of their community. Finally, the idea of ‘linguistic bricolage’ implies that the speakers of this variety of French are able to craft their language. The *langage de banlieue* is flexible; just as the identities of those who speak it are made up of ‘building blocks’ from different cultures and countries, so they can express that through their own idiolect, combining terms and adjusting them until they find something they believe to reflect their identity and its multicultural nature.

In practice, this results in multiple references to cultural origins, apparent in the previously cited example of reverlanisation (*rebeu*) and other terms which appear in *banlieue* language and *banlieue* film, such as *feuj* (the *verlan* of *juif*).¹⁷⁶ Where translation is concerned, I would suggest that it would be particularly challenging for the subtitler to identify English-language words with similar connotations for a broad enough audience. Terms such as *feuj* and *rebeu* in the *langage de banlieue* have been coined by people who feel that these are the best terms to express their identity, or at least they have been adopted by people who consider them to be appropriate for this use; in a sense, they ‘belong’ to the speakers of the *langage de banlieue* in a way that non-standard identity terms in English do not generally ‘belong’ to people with those cultural experiences. An example of this is apparent in *La haine*, and has been discussed by Hamaidia.¹⁷⁷ She notes the scene in which Vinz is about to cut Saïd’s hair. Vinz asks Saïd if he wants to be the next Arab (*rebeu*) to be shot in a police station, to which he replies no. Vinz then says that he does not want to be either. In the subtitles studied by Hamaidia, Saïd’s response: ‘Tu ne veux pas être le prochain rebeu à te faire fumer dans un commissariat?’ is translated as follows:

Do you fancy being the next victim?

In Hamaidia’s analysis, there is no mention of the dialogue preceding this line; it is significant that Vinz is the first of the two to refer to himself as *rebeu*, whether

¹⁷⁶ Kassovitz, *La Haine*.

¹⁷⁷ Hamaidia, p. 8.

or not this was intentional - he is not Arab. It could be argued that Hamaidia's suggestion that Saïd is referring to Vinz as 'an honorary inner city Arab as it is the Arabs who are normally beaten up by the police,' is not entirely valid under these circumstances. It may be proposed that this was merely an engineered 'slip-up', in order to authenticate the film dialogue, as neither one of the characters expressly refers to Vinz as *rebeu*. Hamaidia suggests that this reference to race should be included in the subtitle:

As the use of a slang word for Arab for example, camel jockey, could introduce inappropriate racist connotations into the dialog, the use of the literal translation Arab would avoid this problem.¹⁷⁸

I would agree with Hamaidia that the connotations of this slang word for Arab would add an element of discrimination which is not necessary, and on most occasions, it could be suggested that the significance of race within the *banlieue* subculture, and the fact that it is not considered taboo, is an important piece of information to be conveyed to viewers of *banlieue* film. Hamaidia notes that the use of 'Arab' would not convey the 'oral flavour' of the source language dialogue, and although it would avoid racist connotations, it could be argued that this would not be a suitable solution.¹⁷⁹ It may cause confusion for the viewer, as in standard British English we do not refer to nationality as regularly as in the *langage de banlieue*; indeed, it could be argued that race is generally considered to be a taboo subject in the UK.¹⁸⁰ Since the *banlieusards* often refer to one another using these reappropriated references to race and religion, this is arguably a challenge that will arise frequently in the genre and it will be interesting to see how this challenge has been dealt with by subtitlers. Indeed, these references serve to signpost aspects of the characters' identities for the viewer, and are therefore an important aspect of the films.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 8-9.

¹⁷⁹ Hamaidia does not explain what she means by flavour, but it could be defined as 'piquancy, zest' 'Oxford English Dictionary Online' <<http://www.oed.com/>> [accessed 20 July 2016]., so it may be suggested that she is referring to those features which separate the *langage de banlieue* from standard French, such as lexicon, grammar and pronunciation.

¹⁸⁰ Michael Olyedemi, 'Towards a Psychology of Mixed-Race Identity Development in the United Kingdom' (Brunel University London, 2013), p. ii <<http://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/7728/3/FulltextThesis.pdf>>.

Language and Identity

Mével is concerned with the impact of the English subtitles on identity in *La haine*. Through consideration of the location of the film, and analysis of the language used by the characters, he debates the choice made by the translators to use what he refers to as ‘African American Vernacular English’ as a translation for the *langage de banlieue*. Mével draws parallels between French and American street culture, pointing out that the former has been greatly influenced by the latter. Jäckel also draws some comparisons;

[...] American culture undeniably influences Europeans [...] In the French *banlieues* video stores stock an abundance of Stallone, Murphy and Schwarzenegger posters. With young *beurs* and blacks wearing *Malcolm X* T-shirts, baseball caps, and trainers, the male-dominated suburban environment of many French suburbs does not seem to differ much from the African-American ghettos of America’s large cities.¹⁸¹

The *banlieue* subculture has many American influences, including dress and even some elements of language (as was discussed in the above section on loanwords), although these influences have been adapted as they have become integrated into the *banlieue* subculture. These cultural influences are also demonstrated in *La haine*; Kassovitz includes various references to American cultural artefacts, and these are highlighted in Mével’s paper.¹⁸² However, perhaps the most obvious reference one might cite would be the episode in which Vinz acts out a scene from *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976), where he looks at himself in the mirror, and asks ‘You talkin’ to me?’ This scene is subtitled using the famous line from the original *Taxi Driver* film; arguably, such a strong reference needed to be translated using that cult phrase:

¹⁸¹ Jäckel, p. 228.

¹⁸² Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 52.



Figure has been removed due to
Copyright restrictions

Figure 1 - *La haine* 00:09:35 ¹⁸³

Another example Mével gives of references to American culture is Hubert's bedroom, the walls of which feature images of Muhammad Ali. Although these are cultural rather than linguistic examples, the two are arguably closely linked. The close relationship between culture and language can be exposed when considering Goudaillier's list of themes in the *langage de banlieue*; he notes that certain key themes have a great number of expressions and synonyms surrounding them in the *langage de banlieue*:

L'argent, les affaires illicites, le sexe, la femme, la police, l'alcool, la drogue, la délinquance (vol), la défense de ses intérêts (par la force), les arnaques en tout genre [...] la famille, la cellule familiale, le chômage, les problèmes rencontrés (y compris celui posé par le



¹⁸³ Kassovitz, *La Haine*.

sida), la dénomination des *diverses communautés*, les bandes de *copains*.¹⁸⁴

These themes also emerge in *banlieue* films. For example, *La squale* (2000, Genestal) features all of the above-mentioned themes: drug-dealing (money, illegal affairs, drugs); a set-up in which the group of dealers kill Toussaint, the gang leader, because they think he has set them up and stolen the drugs (the police, delinquency, defending personal interests, a hoax, gangs of friends); a teenage romance which ends in an unplanned pregnancy (sex, women, problems encountered); a young woman's search for her father (family, the family unit) and fears for the future (unemployment).¹⁸⁵ Thus, the culture and daily life of the *banlieusards* is represented through their linguistic choices, and the translation of dialogue in *banlieue* films could therefore have a big impact on how the *banlieue* and the political nature of *banlieue* film is presented to a non-French speaking audience.

Dialect-for-dialect Replacement

Considering the use of American slang in the English subtitles for *La haine*, and the subtitlers' choice to transpose some cultural references, Mével states

This translation strategy can be seen to displace the identity of the characters, since the language used for the subtitles is evocative of American street culture, and puts the viewer under the impression that the action has been relocated.¹⁸⁶

Displacement of the identity of the characters is problematic considering the aforementioned importance of identity to those living in the *banlieues*. In film, it might influence characterisation, which in turn, depending on the film, could potentially have an impact on the plot. The *langage de banlieue* brings the *banlieue* to mind for those who are aware of it, and the result of replacing this with a variety of language which evokes an alternative socio-geographic situation

¹⁸⁴ 'Money, illicit business, sex, women, the police, alcohol, drugs, delinquency (theft), the defence of personal interests (by force), all manner of hoaxes[...] family, the family unit, unemployment, problems faced (including those posed by AIDS), the names of different communities, gangs of friends.' Goudaillier, p. 17.

¹⁸⁵ Fabrice Genestal, *La squale* (Europa Corp, 2000). Is one of the case study films and will be examined in-depth in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six.

¹⁸⁶ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 53.

could affect an audience's reception of a film; particularly where a film may address certain issues (e.g. exclusion) and how characters experience those issues within a specific cultural context. Arguably, this geographical displacement is one of the main issues with using a 'dialect-for-dialect approach' in the subtitling of *banlieue* film.¹⁸⁷ It could lead to confusion for the viewer and endanger the transmission of the socio-political messages which can be identified in *banlieue* film. This would, in turn, affect the viewers' perceptions of the *banlieue* subculture, and could even override the presence of the subculture completely. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this discussion is centred around the conveyance of socio-political messages presented in *banlieue* film, and subtitlers working with *banlieue* film are not necessarily all given the same brief. In addition, the conditions under which subtitlers work in the professional environment (particularly in terms of pay and time frame) should also be considered. This is one of the aims of this thesis, to examine translations with some knowledge of the context in which they are produced. Indeed, Kristiina Abdallah has carried out extensive work on translators in production networks, and advocates for an inclusion of the translators' working conditions in the study of translation quality. She notes that '...the outermost, invisible third dimension called social quality affects process quality, which in turn affects product quality.'¹⁸⁸ Thus, an understanding of the context in which the translations were written could reveal the reasons behind certain decisions, or at least how far the translator may have had an input into those decisions. It could also be suggested that an approach which seeks to incorporate this information into the analysis works to counteract the invisibility of the translator, which is arguably reinforced by suggestions that subtitles should be 'invisible'. Who translates *banlieue* film, and in what conditions, using which tools? These aspects of the process will be examined in Chapter Three.

Scholars do not necessarily agree on the appropriateness of the strategies used in the subtitling of the *banlieue* films previously studied, particularly where the

¹⁸⁷ This approach is discussed by Mével, 'The Translation of Identity'.

¹⁸⁸ Kristiina Abdallah, *Translators in Production Networks Reflections on Agency, Quality and Ethics*, Publications of the University of Eastern Finland. Dissertations in Education, Humanities, and Theology (University of Eastern Finland, 2012), p. 45
<http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-61-0609-0/index_en.html> [accessed 21 September 2017].

dialect-for-dialect approach is concerned. The use of this approach seems to be one of the great recurring debates where the subtitling of French *banlieue* film is concerned. Scholars studying *La haine* agree that a dialect-for-dialect approach was used in the translation of the *langage de banlieue* into English, and that the dialect used in the subtitles was an American one. It is described by Mével as 'African American Vernacular English' or 'AAVE'.¹⁸⁹ However, scholars do not appear to arrive at the same conclusion regarding the appropriateness of this strategy.

Jäckel acknowledges the parallels between the two cultural contexts, but notes that the dialect-for-dialect approach is not without its issues.¹⁹⁰ She cites reduced characterization, a reduction in the playful nature of the language, and questions whether simplification of the language in the film could reinforce clichés about youths and minority groups.¹⁹¹ Nevertheless, she concludes that given Kassovitz's 'assumptions about young French audiences and their familiarity with popular American youth culture, one can easily justify the subtitlers' choice of American slang'.¹⁹² However, in an article for the *New York Times*, Alan Riding wrote:

Mr. Kassovitz had only one request. His first movie, "Métisse," which was released as "Café au Lait" in the United States, was subtitled with words taken straight from the language spoken in American inner cities. This time, he said, he did not want ghetto slang to be used, because he felt that it had alienated audiences.¹⁹³

Thus, the director had actually requested *less* American slang. The subtitles are certainly more American English than they are British English, and though Mével highlights the similarities between the two cultures in question, he also suggests that the transposition of cultural references to brands of beer and well-known cartoon characters (which would appear to go hand-in-hand with a dialect-for-dialect approach), results in a translation which displaces the action. I would disagree with suggestions that the cultural similarities between the two contexts

¹⁸⁹ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 50.

¹⁹⁰ Jäckel, p. 228.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 228-29.

¹⁹² Ibid. p. 234.

¹⁹³ Alan Riding, 'A Raw French Film Survives Translation', *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., 1996), Late (East Coast) edition <<http://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/04/movies/a-raw-french-film-survives-translation.html>> [accessed 27 October 2017].

mean that the dialect-for-dialect approach is a suitable translation strategy. Given the status of the *langage de banlieue* as a sociolect, rooted in a unique geographic and social context, there is no dialectal ‘equivalent’. Furthermore, as Mével notes,

... translation - and particularly the translation of a specific vernacular - is but one way of trying to apprehend the Other. This is particularly apparent when using a dialect-for-dialect approach, in the attempt to make this ‘Otherness’ - that which is foreign or merely different - resemble something known.¹⁹⁴

Mével’s comment might be linked to the notion of domestication, where a text is brought nearer to the target culture in translation (through transposition of cultural references, for example).¹⁹⁵ It could be said that subtitling rather than dubbing is one way of working to counteract this domestication of the text, as the audience can still hear the SLD.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Jäckel suggests that the English subtitles for *La haine* ‘...reinforce a notion of American hegemony’, and in light of Mével’s findings regarding a displacement of the action, it would seem that this is the case where the subtitled version of *La haine* is concerned.¹⁹⁷ Given that the directors’ work is intended to counteract dominant negative discourses around the *banlieue*, highlighting the cultural specificity of the situation and foregrounding notions of rebellion against mainstream society (often conveyed through language use), the subtitles could be said to work against the intention of the language use which was developed, according to Doran, in the face of a ‘homogenising cultural discourse’.¹⁹⁸ This is a very important consideration given the political nature of *banlieue* cinema and will be a key debate in this thesis. Scholars are all in agreement concerning the importance of language in the films studied, and the difficulties faced by subtitlers trying to translate this marked use of language into English. The issues identified by these scholars will therefore be closely examined in three case study films in order to study a broader range of works within the

¹⁹⁴ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 56.

¹⁹⁵ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 18–19.

¹⁹⁶ Szarkowska.

¹⁹⁷ Jäckel, p. 229.

¹⁹⁸ Doran, p. 501.

genre and ascertain how subtitlers deal with the challenges presented within them.

Conclusions

Scholars' existing work on the subtitling of French *banlieue* cinema, though largely focussed on *La haine*, suggests certain translation challenges presented by the subtitling of films depicting the *banlieue* subculture. These translation challenges will shape the case studies to be undertaken of three more contemporary *banlieue* films.

There seems to be a risk of reduced characterisation in subtitled French *banlieue* film; this was identified as an issue by Hamaidia, as well as Jäckel.¹⁹⁹ Given the close link between idiolect and identity, when a character has an idiolect which is as marked as those found in *banlieue* film, a strategy which does not convey those elements of identity (such as social class, geographical origin, and relationship with the other speakers in scene), can lead to shifts in characterisation. The translation of register shifts and references to race and religion can contribute to these translation shifts, and these aspects of the translations will therefore be explored in the three case study films.

These shifts have all been noted in some way by scholars who have studied the English subtitles for a limited number of *banlieue* films, in a limited time frame. It remains to be seen whether similar strategies have been employed by subtitlers working on more contemporary films from across the genre. These shifts will be considered in the three new case studies to be undertaken, in order to ascertain whether they are representative of general strategies for subtitling *banlieue* films into English. The new case studies will also endeavour to highlight any other shifts which recur in the diagonal translation in question, and assess subtitling strategies implemented in a range of films and across a broader time frame.

This diagonal translation is particularly relevant, and was not necessarily foregrounded in previous case studies. The methodology developed for case study analysis should seek to address the specific nature of audiovisual texts, and the

¹⁹⁹ Hamaidia, p. 10.

additive nature of subtitling. Although linguistic analysis of the subtitles has clearly been fruitful in previous case studies, they do not examine the subtitles within the context of the whole film (as with the earlier example from *Hamaidia*), or within the context of the surrounding audiovisual content, such as the soundtrack and imagery. Furthermore, the case studies are primarily focussed on the subtitles for *La haine*, with only one article examining the subtitling of three films all released between 1993 and 1995.²⁰⁰ Since the release of *La haine* in 1995, there have been a number of films addressing the marginalisation of *banlieue* communities, and inspired by socio-political events.²⁰¹ Given the inventive nature of the *langage de banlieue*, a study examining the subtitles for films released over a broader time period will give an indication of the strategies employed by subtitlers in dealing with the specificities of the *langage de banlieue* as an ever-developing sociolect, and when presented with a variety of themes.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Montgomery.

²⁰¹ For instance, Houda Benyamina, *Divines* (Diaphana, 2016). was made in response to the 2005 riots in the *banlieue*.

²⁰² The selection of case study films revealed a variety of thematic categories within the genre. These will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: Case Study Selection and Methodology for Analysis

Following on from the discussion of existing research into English subtitles for French *banlieue* films, this chapter will present the methodology designed for this research project. In the first instance, the selection of appropriate films for study as cases will be explained, followed by a presentation of the theoretical framework for case study analysis. This framework is designed to allow for a holistic approach to the study of subtitled films, which examines the cultural contexts of release, in order to hypothesize a context of reception for subtitled *banlieue* film, along with a study of subtitles as belonging to a network of audiovisual content.

Case Study Film Selection

The features and topics encountered in *banlieue* cinema, discussed above, provide a common set of characteristics that are frequently found in this body of cinematic works. These can be used to provide a framework for the selection of films for case study analysis in this research. By selecting texts within the categories established, a more representational sample of the *banlieue* film genre can be identified and studied. Firstly, geographical location is evidently of great importance; the films for study are set in the French *banlieues*, and the majority of the action unfolds within the *banlieue*. The linguistic choices of the *banlieusards* can vary according to their environment; Begag highlights the potentially ‘negative’ consequences of using the *langage de banlieue* outside of the *cit *, and the impact this can have on peoples’ reception of people employing these non-standard varieties of French.²⁰³

Secondly, the films chosen have been released after the year 2000. This criterion has multiple purposes; firstly, it aims to encourage a selection of films which are more contemporary, in order to bridge a gap between existing research into the English subtitles of *banlieue* film and the present day. In addition, the inconstant nature of the varieties of French in question means that analysis of contemporary language should prove more useful for practical purposes in the near future; it is

²⁰³ Begag, p. 31.

hoped that this research may inform the practice of subtitling *banlieue* film, and possibly other instances of non-standard language in film. Finally, this time frame falls after the advent of the DVD, when much more material became readily accessible with subtitles. Films released after 2016 were not necessarily available on DVD within the time frame of case study film selection, but may still be referred to in the discussion.

The third criterion addresses thematic aspects of the films for selection. The political nature of the genre has been discussed at length, and underpins the aims of this research project. *Banlieue* films regularly raise issues of exclusion and immigration which arise within the French *banlieue*; therefore, the films selected for case study analysis address and engage with these issues. There are some *banlieue* films which may be described as such because they feature characters from the *banlieue*, or are set in the *banlieue*, but do not fully engage with the issues faced by those living on the margins of French society.²⁰⁴ The films with which this thesis is most concerned are those which address these issues, and which may be perceived to convey socio-political messages surrounding the *banlieue* inhabitants and their sense of exclusion.

Finally, the characters portrayed in the selection of films are youths from the *banlieue* who use the *langage de banlieue* when communicating with one another. Fagyal and Doran (among others) both note that these varieties of French belong to youth language, and Lepoutre has highlighted that it would not have been appropriate for him to adopt their manner of speaking when living and working in the *banlieue*.²⁰⁵ Thus, films in which young people from the *banlieue* use this language arguably provide a more accurate and representative replication of *banlieue* language.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ For example, Christophe Honoré, *Homme Au Bain [Man at Bath]* (Le Pacte, 2010). is set in the French *banlieue*, and features characters who live there. However, it arguably does not fully engage with the sense of exclusion and identity battles that could be faced by the characters, who are in multiracial homosexual relationships within the French *banlieue*, and could therefore be experiencing a sense of exclusion on multiple levels.

²⁰⁵ Fagyal, p. 28; Doran, p. 497; Lepoutre, p. 157.

²⁰⁶ *Paulette* is an interesting film in this respect ; a granny begins to adopt words and phrases used by the youths in her *cité* – her friends are confused, as her speech is unusual for a woman of her age. Some of the comedy within the film hinges on the viewer understanding that a woman of her age would not use the *verlan* term for the police [*keufs*], for example.

These criteria do not attempt to define the genre of French *banlieue* cinema; rather, they have been used to ascertain which films should be studied in this thesis, to examine the subtitling of French *banlieue* cinema into English. The films that are analysed have been chosen on the basis that they provide a sample of material that presents significant challenges for a translator working with French *banlieue* film. Other films that do not meet the case study criteria are referred to where relevant, to provide additional examples or context. For instance, Eric Toledano and Olivier Nakache's 2011 film *Intouchables* may not be an ideal case study. Although one of the main characters of the film is from the *banlieue*, the majority of the film is set in central Paris, and populated by rich or upper-class Parisians who do not use the *langage de banlieue* to communicate. This means that where the translation of the *banlieue* sociolect is concerned, this film does not present a great deal of material for study. However, there are certain themes presented in the film that may prove useful in this thesis, so it may be referred to briefly where appropriate.

Following consultation of key *banlieue* film texts such as Carrie Tarr's work *Reframing difference: Beur and Banlieue filmmaking in France*, and watching a large selection of films, an initial list of *banlieue* films was compiled. There are certain films released prior to the year 2000 that are worth noting; *La haine* has already been signalled as being of significant importance in this discussion due to its popularity both in France and abroad. *Le Thé au Harem d'Archimède* (Charef, 1985) has been described as the first *Banlieue* film.²⁰⁷ It has also been noted that there is some overlap between the *banlieue* and *beur* film genres; indeed some of the films included in the initial list would arguably be better described as *beur* films rather than *banlieue* films. For instance, *La Faute à Voltaire* (Kechiche, 2001) is set in the Parisian *banlieue* and although it deals with issues of exclusion and immigration, it lacks some of the key features highlighted as necessary for the film to be used as a case study. The characters are not youths, and, as previously noted, the *langage de banlieue* is primarily a youth language. In addition to this, there is not a great deal of slang used in the film; hence it would not provide enough *banlieue* language material for a fruitful case study. Finally, the majority of the action does not occur in the *cités*, or at least, the location is

²⁰⁷ Mével, 'Traduire La Haine', p. 171.

not integral to the plot or a significant part of the film. It would therefore not be classed as suitable for a case study, as per the aforementioned selection criteria.

Following compilation of the initial list (to which new releases were then added over time), research was carried out to ascertain the availability of the films; those films of which a copy with English subtitles was not readily accessible were considered unsuitable for a case study.²⁰⁸ This was a recurring issue in the selection process, as many of the films initially noted as being potential *banlieue* films were not readily available on DVD or via online streaming devices with English subtitles. Only official DVD or online streaming platform subtitles will be used, in order to assure credibility and consistency through the study, although non-official English subtitle files can be downloaded online for many films. In addition to a lack of English DVD/streaming subtitles, some of the films mentioned were not available on DVD or via streaming at all.²⁰⁹

The above considerations taken into account, there remained a list of roughly 30 films that could be used in the case studies. Within the range of *banlieue* films shortlisted, certain themes could be noted. It was discussed previously that questions of identity and exclusion recur in *banlieue* film; these topics could be described as central to the genre. However, other motifs emerging allow for a sort of thematic classification of the films in question:

- Authority and Power

The films in this category deal with institutions and figures of authority and power; this may be the government, the police, or other institutions. These films often have a plot which is centred around one of these representatives of authority.²¹⁰

- Women in the *banlieue*

Tarr notes that *banlieue* cinema is ‘primarily concerned with articulating the crisis in young beur, black and/or white underclass masculinities’.²¹¹ So

²⁰⁸ Online searches were carried out on Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.fr, Ebay.co.uk, Ebay.fr and fnac.com.

²⁰⁹ For instance: Franck Llopis, *Fracassés* (Pangea, 2008).

²¹⁰ E.g. *Banlieue 13*, or *Yamakasi – Les Samouraïs des temps modernes*.

²¹¹ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 111.

although the genre is concerned with those members of French society who have been marginalised, women do not frequently appear. She notes that it is rare that women occupy primary roles in *banlieue* films. However, there may be a change in this trend with two of the most recent films considered featuring prominent female characters; *Bande de filles* (Sciamma, 2014) and *Divines* (Benyamina, 2016). In most cases, the main protagonists of films in this category are all female. However, this thematic group is not only identifiable due to the gender of the primary characters. In addition, there are certain questions surrounding the life of women in the *banlieue* that are raised in these films.

- Race and Religion

Although the themes of race and religion are raised in most *banlieue* films, the films placed in this thematic category are those in which race and religion are of great significance in the plot. These issues are highlighted through relationships between characters and story lines that drive the plot.²¹²

- Educational Issues

Perhaps the most obvious feature of the films in this thematic category is that they are set in *banlieue* schools. Many *banlieue* films include scenes in schools (school playground/classroom scenes feature in films such as *La squale* and *La Cité Rose*), but those in the ‘Educational Issues’ category have been placed there as they engage with key issues arising in *banlieue* schools. Including, for example, the difficulties teachers face due to a lack of resources and dealing with students from a wide range of backgrounds, with varying levels of linguistic competency in French.²¹³

- Monotony of Daily Life/Inescapable Cycle

The final thematic category consists of films which demonstrate the tedium of the day-to-day routine in the *banlieue*, and the daily struggle faced by people who live there to break what might be described as the ‘inescapable

²¹² E.g. Julien-Laferrrière; Laurent Cantet, *Entre les murs [The Class]* (Artificial Eye, 2008). *Neuilly sa mere*.

²¹³ E.g. *Entre les murs*.

cycle'. In these films, the boredom of characters is emphasised; the lack of employment in the *banlieues*, the lack of activities for youths living there. In some of these films, the characters do manage to break the cycle, but this is usually through leaving the *banlieue*.²¹⁴

Given the above selection criteria, the shortlist was reduced based on the themes presented within the films and the amount of *langage de banlieue* within them. Furthermore, it was decided that the films should have been released across the date range selected, and that they should not have been directed or subtitled by the same people. Three case studies were selected, in order to allow for a thorough analysis of the films within the scope of this thesis. Given the growing popularity of online streaming platforms such as Netflix, it was decided that one film would be viewable online rather than on DVD. Although an analysis of three films will not allow for hard conclusions about the evolution of the subtitling of the genre, or differences between DVD and Netflix subtitling, this analysis may lead to some tentative suggestions concerning the subtitling of the *langage de banlieue*, and allow for certain areas of interest to be highlighted for future study.

With this in mind, the films chosen include *La squale*, a 2000 film directed by Fabrice Genestal. This film is available on DVD with English subtitles. It presents themes of rape and the treatment of women, which will be more closely examined in Chapter Four. The second film for case study analysis is *L'esquive*, directed by Abdellatif Kechiche and released in 2003. This film is particularly interesting because of the juxtaposition of the *langage de banlieue* with traditional *Marivaux* French; this presents interesting material for analysis in terms of register shifts and characterisation. This film deals explicitly with questions of identity and performance. The third and final film to be studied is *Divines*. This film was released in 2016 by a female director, Houda Benyamina and is available on Netflix in every country in which Netflix can be accessed. This film deals with religion, but also overlaps with the 'inescapable cycle', since Dounia almost escapes but does not quite make it, and certainly can be linked to the theme of women in the *banlieue*. The contexts of release and themes presented in all three films will be examined in depth in Chapter Four as part of the analysis. However, given that only three could be selected from among five thematic categories, the three

²¹⁴ *La haine* would fit into this category, as well as *Paulette*, for example.

present a cross-section of the genre which can be related to all of the categories highlighted above, if not directly placed within all five of them.

A selection of three films allows for an in-depth analysis of each film which can take the context of release and the context of reception into account for each film. Furthermore, selecting three films allows for an analysis of subtitles chosen after examining each film from beginning to end, rather than the study of two or three isolated sample scenes. Although every single subtitle will not be analysed in-depth in this thesis, they will all be considered for analysis. This means that the subtitles will not only be studied within the cultural context of the film's release, and the context of the polysemiotic network, they will also be examined in light of previous subtitles. This will allow for the identification of repeated strategies employed throughout the films, as well as observations concerning characterisation. The development of a new theoretical framework is necessary to allow for a thorough and systematic analysis of the three case study films.

A New Framework for Case Study Analysis

The present framework has been developed in response to a perceived gap in the research. Although many case studies of interlingual subtitles have been carried out before, many of them appear to be at one end or the other of a linguistic analysis - multimodal analysis spectrum. Some case studies rely heavily on linguistic analysis with little recourse to the audiovisual content accompanying isolated examples, such as the case studies by Jäckel and Hamaidia referred to in Chapter One, for example.²¹⁵ Other models, such as Taylor's multimodal transcription, tend towards a thorough analysis of the visual imagery and accompanying soundtrack, where there is potential for a much more in-depth analysis of the translation solutions presented on a linguistic level.²¹⁶ Of course, in an article, it is not possible to study every aspect of a work, and although both

²¹⁵ It is also noted that much research into subtitling focuses primarily on '... linguistic and cultural matters' Yves Gambier, 'Challenges in Research on Audiovisual Translation', in *Translation Research Projects 2*, ed. by Anthony Pym and Alexander Perekrstenko (Intercultural Studies Group, 2007), pp. 24–33 (p. 17)

<http://www.intercultural.urv.cat/media/upload/domain_317/arxiu/TP2/TRP_2_may_3.pdf> [accessed 7 July 2017].

²¹⁶ '... approaches to multimodality and translation are being criticised for privileging certain text types or certain aspects of multimodal texts at the expense of others.' Sari Kokkola, 'The Role of Sound in Film Translation: Subtitling Embodied Aural Experience in Aki Kaurismäki's Lights in the Dusk', *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 27.2 (2014), 17–47 (p. 22).

kinds of approaches (and indeed those in between) have their merits, they also have their disadvantages. As Gottlieb states, ‘Severed from the audiovisual context, neither subtitles nor dialog will render the full meaning of the film’. This suggests that considering either the subtitles or the SL dialogue without taking into account the sound and imagery of the film will not provide a complete idea of the meaning of any given section or speech act within a film. Gottlieb’s words also suggest that it is not possible to determine the function of an element when isolated from its context. Furthermore, as highlighted by Kokkola and Ketola, the meaning of a painting can change according to the title with which it is viewed, thus suggesting that studying an audiovisual text without including the accompanying subtitles in the analysis could result in a reading which is not shaped by the subtitles.²¹⁷ Thus, this methodology aims to draw on a variety of approaches in order to analyse the subtitling of French *banlieue* cinema in a way that highlights the specificity of the medium. This analysis will not attempt to taxonomise strategies for translating the *langage de banlieue*. Indeed, Ramière attempted such an exercise whilst focusing on culture-specific references in film translation. She found that ‘Taxonomies, by nature, decontextualise,’ and the methodology used in this thesis has been developed as a means of countering such an approach.²¹⁸ There is a tendency in studies of interlingual subtitles to adopt a more linguistic approach which does not consider the broader context. I aim to take a more holistic approach to the study of dialect in translation, as the source culture, target culture, and the perceived ‘cultural distance’ between them are of great importance in understanding translation solutions and how they present socio-political messages and linguistic markers of identity. I aim to achieve this through the application of Gambier’s proposal for a macro and micro contextual analysis of subtitling to the specific case of *banlieue* cinema.²¹⁹ In addition, an understanding of the subtitling process, and the degree of influence of other stakeholders over the final subtitled feature, will perhaps offer avenues for

²¹⁷ Sari Kokkola and Anne Ketola, ‘Thinking Outside the “Methods Box”: New Avenues for Research in Multimodal Translation’, in *Rajojen Dynamiikkaa, Gränsernas Dynamik, Borders under Negotiation, Grenzen Und Ihre Dynamik* (presented at the VAKKI-symposiumi XXXV 12.–13.2.2015., Vaasa, 2015), pp. 219–28 (p. 220) <http://www.vakki.net/publications/2015/VAKKI2015_Kokkola&Ketola.pdf> [accessed 7 July 2017].

²¹⁸ Nathalie Ramière, ‘Reaching a Foreign Audience: Cultural Transfers in Audiovisual Translation’, *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 2006, 152–66 (p. 160).

²¹⁹ Gambier, ‘Challenges in Research on Audiovisual Translation’.

further research in terms of investigating proposals which might improve the process and/or the product. It is recognised that audience reception studies could be a useful tool for examining the subtitling of *banlieue* film and the transmission of themes related to their directors' intentions in translation. However, that kind of empirical study is not within the scope of this thesis, which instead takes a semiotic approach to analysis of the subtitled films, within an understanding of the contexts of reception.

The semiotic channels in film (discussed at the beginning of Chapter One) are referred to as 'the polysemiotic network'.²²⁰ These four channels work together to transmit meaning, and if any one of them is removed, or edited, the meaning of the audiovisual content as a whole is affected.

Gambier asserts that research in AVT is 'too often limited to case studies on the linguistic side only'.²²¹ Although case studies are a helpful way of moving away from the previously criticised prescriptive nature of research in AVT, it seems that the case study approach could be improved through the development of a more holistic methodology.²²² Indeed, in addition to the aforementioned importance of the polysemiotic network, scholars have also highlighted the importance of what is referred to here as the context of reception in AVT research.²²³ Approaches which are primarily linguistic can take into account elements specific to the translation mode of subtitling, such as the change from the oral to the written medium, or the constraints of time and space, but there are certain repercussions of an approach to evaluating subtitles that does not include the visual media in its assessment. Certainly, in Taylor's article on multimodal transcription, he demonstrates that language used to verbalise a character's emotional state, for example, may be eliminated in the subtitles where the aforementioned emotional

²²⁰ Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb, 'Multimedia, Multilingua: Multiple Challenges', in *(Multi) Media Translation: Concepts, Practices, and Research*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb, Benjamins Translation Library, 34 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001), pp. viii–xx (p. viii).

²²¹ Gambier, 'Multimodality and Audiovisual Translation', p. 2.

²²² Mével argues for a move away from 'prescribed limitations'. Pierre-Alexis Mével, *Subtitling African American English into French: Can We Do the Right Thing?*, *New Trends in Translation Studies*, 22 (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2017), p. 220.

²²³ Leticia Santamaría Ciordia, 'When Speech Becomes a Hallmark: The Translation of Almodóvar's Films into Polish', in *New Points of View on Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility*, ed. by Anna Jankowska and Agnieszka Szarkowska, *New Trends in Translation Studies* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 31–46 (pp. 35–36).

state is clear through the facial expressions and body language of the character in question. This could be a useful strategy, especially considering the condensation that is often required in subtitling. However, one might question how far the viewer is able to glean all of this information from the on-screen action, whilst also reading the subtitles as they appear and disappear. It seems likely that there would be a reduced absorption of on-screen detail among viewers who are watching a film with subtitles, compared to those who understand the source language dialogue, and Taylor's view that the subtitles should be reduced as far as possible might therefore be questioned.²²⁴ On the other hand, though, reduced subtitle text would allow the viewer more time to focus on the images.

Taylor mentions a reception study undertaken at the University of Trieste, where viewers watched *The Flintstones* with two different versions of subtitles.²²⁵ These were the 'maximum'-subtitled version (a term Taylor uses to denote subtitles which include all information possible whilst adhering to recommended reading speeds, etc.), and the 'minimum'-subtitled version, where the language is condensed as far as possible given information available through the rest of the polysemiotic network. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire detailing their opinions '... on the efficacy of the two versions in providing a suitable translation for what we shall term entertainment purposes'.²²⁶ The participants preferred the minimum-subtitled version, and Taylor notes 'the disturbance caused by having to concentrate on the maximum titles outweighed the benefits of the extra information'.²²⁷

The proposed framework for this thesis has been developed as an attempt to combine the above-noted linguistic- and multimodality-based analytical approaches, in a methodology that draws on the most useful aspects of each. This

²²⁴ In a study, it was found that viewers watching a film in their native language understood the AV content better than those watching an interlingually subtitled version. Those watching the content (in their native language) with the addition of subtitles in a language they also spoke fluently actually hindered their understanding of the AV content. See Dominique Bairstow, 'Audiovisual Processing While Watching Subtitled Films: A Cognitive Approach', in *Audiovisual Translation in Close-up: Practical and Theoretical Approaches*, ed. by Adriana Serban, Anna Matamala, and Jean-Marc Lavaur (Bern ; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 205–19 (p. 216).

²²⁵ Christopher J. Taylor, 'Multimodal Transcription in the Analysis, Translation and Subtitling of Italian Films', *The Translator*, 9.2 (2003), 191–205.

²²⁶ Taylor, p. 203.

²²⁷ Taylor, p. 204.

methodology has been developed using a combination of theories from Translation Studies, AVT, linguistics and sociolinguistics, and film/media studies. The overarching ideas are adapted from Gambier's writing on the macro-context and the micro-context in AVT. These pull together a variety of elements which might influence the film's reception and translation, from the context in which it was released in the source culture, to the colour of the characters' clothes in a particular scene.²²⁸

It is not feasible to undertake multimodal transcription of each of the three case study films in their entirety - such an approach would draw on Taylor's work on the polysemiotic network, but would be too great a volume of work for the scope of this thesis. However, in light of Taylor's work, the film context in which certain subtitles appear will be analysed to attempt to take into account other information available to the viewer at a given point in the film. In addition to Taylor and Gambier's works that deal primarily with the polysemiotic aspect of audiovisual translation, the framework also draws on the work of some theorists from both linguistics and Translation Studies.²²⁹ For example, Halliday's work on register will be adopted for an in-depth analysis of the dialogue and translation solutions proposed.²³⁰ Halliday's model emphasises the importance of the interactants, the context and the topic of conversation in determining register. It therefore proves particularly useful when we consider the significance of identity, setting and themes in French *banlieue* cinema. This framework will assist in the identification of the register and perhaps the reason behind the choice of register. These features are linked to identity in that the relationship a speaker has with another affects the way in which they communicate with one another. The work of many other theorists will be drawn on as part of this integrated framework for analysis, which is presented and explained in the next section.

²²⁸ Yves Gambier, 'Créativité et décision: le traducteur audiovisuel n'est pas une roue de secours', in *Translating regionalised voices in audiovisuals*, ed. by Federico M. Federici (Roma: Aracne, 2009), pp. 179–95 (pp. 188–89).

²²⁹ Taylor; Gambier, 'Créativité et décision'.

²³⁰ M. A. K. Halliday, 'Language as Social Semiotic', in *The Communication Theory Reader*, ed. by Paul Cobley, 1996, pp. 359–83.

The Theoretical Framework

The methodology developed in this thesis studies subtitles with an understanding of the polysemiotic nature of film. Furthermore, it seeks to counteract the invisibility of the subtitler, by bringing him/her into the research process. An understanding of the context in which the subtitles were produced allows for a more measured approach to their analysis, taking into account the real-world context in which the material studied was created. This is combined with a technical analysis of the subtitles which examines their readability. The close linguistic and thematic analysis of the subtitles which takes place in chapters five and six is therefore framed by an understanding of the internal and external constraints of time and space within which they were written, and within which they function.

The Subtitling Situation

It was not possible to access the commission information for each film studied, as some of them were subtitled 15 years ago, but a general understanding of the *banlieue* film subtitling industry gives some indication of discourses surrounding the translation of the genre and the general guidelines to which the subtitlers involved are working. For example, it is useful to know whether subtitlers are usually asked to use a certain variety of English - given the large and diverse potential target audience, were these subtitles written with a British English audience in mind? Are subtitlers asked to adhere to certain guidelines, such as ESIST's Code of Subtitling Practice, or Karamitroglou's Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe, for example?²³¹

Subtitler Questionnaires

The above-mentioned issues related to the commission and guidelines were addressed where possible through a questionnaire that was sent to a number of French to English subtitlers who have worked on films they may describe as belonging to the genre. There were seven respondents to the survey. It has been

²³¹ Mary Carroll and Jan Ivarsson, 'Code of Good Subtitling Practice', 1998 <<https://www.esist.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Code-of-Good-Subtitling-Practice.PDF.pdf>> [accessed 10 July 2017]; Fotios Karamitroglou, 'A Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe', *Translation Journal*, 2.2 (1998) <<http://translationjournal.net/journal/04stndrd.htm>>.

noted that the *banlieue* film industry is rather small in comparison to Hollywood, for example; this means that there exists a smaller pool of subtitlers to work on such films, as there is not a high demand. Participants were approached via the Facebook page for the group *Anglo Subtitlers in France* (ASIF), and once a subtitler expressed an interest in participating in the study, they were to be sent a questionnaire via email. They were asked to offer any information they could, and to provide any additional notes or materials they felt able to.

This approach meant that the subtitlers offered varying degrees of detail in their responses. As noted before, some of the films studied were released (and therefore subtitled) a number of years ago; asking the subtitlers about their work on specific films, and strategies employed, for example, would therefore not necessarily prove fruitful, as they may not have an accurate memory of the process of working on those projects. The purpose of collecting this data was to obtain a general understanding of the professional context in which the subtitling of French *banlieue* cinema is carried out. The working conditions of the subtitlers informs and shapes their work on the films, and frames the close analysis undertaken in this thesis on a broader level.²³² Indeed, Mason notes the importance of acknowledging the network within which translators work, noting that ‘these are dynamic, interactive processes which, in researching translation, we cannot afford to overlook.’²³³ Hence, rather than offering individual background information for each film to be studied, the questionnaire responses offer a picture of the industry, and a general idea of the kind of interaction subtitlers may have with production companies when working on these challenging films. The responses provided by the subtitlers of the films chosen for case study analysis included some detail regarding those specific jobs. This was followed up for further information and clarification via email, but the function of such specific information within the analysis of the subtitles is more anecdotal than informative, given the limitations of questioning a professional about their work so many years later.

²³² See, for example, Kristiina Abdallah, ‘Quality Problems in AVT Production Networks’, in *Audiovisual Translation in Close-up: Practical and Theoretical Approaches*, ed. by Adriana Serban, Anna Matamala, and Jean-Marc Lavaur (Bern ; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 173–86.

²³³ Mason, p. 19.

Analysis of the information collected via the questionnaires will be primarily qualitative, since the questions were open, and required a written response. However, given the small amount of data collected, some quantitative information may be used concerning how many of the subtitlers use professional subtitling software, for example. The questionnaire is included in the appendices, and as can be seen, features questions regarding each subtitler's background (in terms of experience and qualifications), their process of obtaining work, the sort of information usually included with the commission, time scales (deadlines, working patterns), the challenges of working with *banlieue* film, their work flow, the resources they use and their methods for maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of the language. There were also questions about whether they would use 'incorrect' syntax in a subtitle to reflect linguistic errors in the SLD, which strategies they use in dealing with the *langage de banlieue*, and whether their subtitles have ever been changed without their consultation. The final question was designed to ascertain how far the subtitlers are 'responsible' for the final version of the subtitles viewable online or on DVD *La squala L'esquive*. Finally, there was room on the form for respondents to include any additional comments they wanted to share.

On receipt of the initial responses to the questionnaire, it was recognised that more detail on certain aspects of the subtitlers' work would be useful, and some 'follow-up' questions (included in the appendices) were sent in order to gain clarification about some more technical issues such as reading speeds, guidelines and workflow. Subtitlers were also asked explicitly about the variety of English they are expected to use in their subtitles.

Since the project involved collecting data from human participants, there were certain ethical issues to consider. Ethics approval was obtained for the questionnaires from the University of Glasgow College of Arts Research Ethics Committee. The participants were not vulnerable adults and were provided with an information sheet (included in the appendices), and asked to give written consent prior to responding to the questionnaire. The data collected is not sensitive in nature, and the participants will not remain anonymous - due to the nature of the interviews, and the information they provided in their responses, a subtitler could be identified through the name of a film they worked on. For this reason, the information sheet provided to participants explicitly stated that any

responses would not be anonymised. The data collected was stored on password protected devices for the duration of the research project. The participants were made aware that any data collected would be used in this thesis, and may also be used in further publications either online or in print.

Technical Considerations

Further to the discussion in Chapter One of audiovisual translation in general, and subtitling in particular, the subtitles were also examined in relation to the technical considerations that govern any act of subtitling. The technical considerations referred to here are linked to the constraints of subtitling discussed earlier and explored in De Linde and Kay's text on *The Semiotics of Subtitling*; constraints of time, of space, and of synchronisation.²³⁴

The analysis consisted of an examination of the subtitles in terms of technical considerations such as reading speed and character counts. In order to facilitate the technical analysis, the subtitles were ripped from the DVDs using 'SubRip'.²³⁵ SubRip is open source software designed to rip subtitles and their timecodes from a DVD or video file. The software uses OCR (Optical Character Recognition) with user-input to identify where and when subtitles appear. It produces an .srt file with the subtitles and timecodes.²³⁶ This .srt file will be imported into WinCAPS Qu4ntum subtitling software, and Black Box subtitle analysis software to run certain timing checks. The Netflix subtitles were downloaded from the streaming platform, also producing an .srt file which can be analysed in the same way.

The results of the timing checks were studied in reference to the guidelines suggested by Karamitroglou in his 'Proposed set of subtitling standards in Europe', and the ESIST (European Society for Studies in Screen Translation)-approved 'Code of Good Subtitling Practice' (referred to forthwith as The Code).²³⁷ Since the Code was written with ESIST members, and is still shared on their website today, this is seen as a model for subtitling which is encouraged by the main organisation for

²³⁴ De Linde and Kay, pp. 6–7.

²³⁵ 'SubRip Download | SourceForge.Net' <<https://sourceforge.net/projects/subrip/>> [accessed 4 November 2017].

²³⁶ An .srt file is a common subtitle file type which includes only text and timecodes, with no audiovisual material stored within the file.

²³⁷ Karamitroglou; Carroll and Ivarsson.

research and teaching in subtitling in Europe. This document was written in 1998. However, in Chapter One it was noted that although there are some scholars advocating for more creative approaches to subtitling, subtitlers are still working to the same guidelines.²³⁸ The Code may not be commonly found on the desks of professional subtitlers, but Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that the guidelines it contains are ‘largely regarded as standard in the profession’.²³⁹ Thus, studying the subtitles against these recommendations is assessing them in relation both to professional standards, and the general guidelines along which most subtitles consumed by British viewers are produced. This is not to suggest that these guidelines are the most appropriate; that is a debate which will not take place in this thesis. However, where the subtitles adhere to these guidelines, they are seen to adhere to the conventions by which many subtitler trainers are working.

Karamitroglou’s proposed standards were referenced as a more detailed set of guidelines based on descriptive studies, which includes recommendations concerning reading speeds and some other technical factors not covered in The Code. Finally, Díaz-Cintas and Remael’s course book on subtitling was also referred to for recommended reading speeds and character limits, as there is some variation where these recommendations are concerned. In this stage of the analysis, the first technical aspect of the subtitles examined was the distribution of text. This includes subtitle length, segmentation, line breaks and the display of the text on screen (for example, the alignment of the subtitles on screen). Reading speed was then also be examined for each of the case study .srt files. In this stage of the analysis, particular attention was paid to those subtitles that did not adhere to the recommended maximum reading speeds, or minimum amount of time the subtitle should be on screen, for example. The main concern of this analysis was to determine whether the subtitles adhered to conventions concerning text distribution and reading speeds, and if not, whether this could have a big impact on readability for the viewer. This gave an overall impression of the viewer’s comfort when watching the subtitles, which then could be linked to factors which may arise later in the analysis. If, for instance, the subtitles featured low reading speeds, then the inclusion of unusual vocabulary or abbreviations may be justified, since the viewer would have more time to process such information. On the other

²³⁸ See McClarty., for example.

²³⁹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 80.

hand, where reading speeds were very high, it could be suggested that the viewer would struggle to read the subtitles in time, and therefore the inclusion of non-standard language, for example, might compromise the viewers' comfort. Following this contextualisation of the subtitling of *banlieue* film within the professional environment and the wider norms and conventions of subtitling, the three case study films were examined in turn, and placed within the broader cultural contexts of release, and the socio-political themes they present.

The Macro-context

An initial analysis of the macro-context, as discussed by Gambier, was undertaken.²⁴⁰ Gambier describes the various factors contributing to 'context', which he then breaks down further into aspects of 'macro context' and 'micro context'. Gambier's discussion of these factors is in relation to their influence on the subtitler's choice of strategies. He notes that the AVT context '...ne semble pas avoir [...] de frontières, tout en affectant le choix des microstratégies de traduction'.²⁴¹ The purpose of this analysis is both to understand the *relevance* of the *langage de banlieue* in terms of its usage in the subtitled films, but also to understand *why* the subtitler might have chosen a certain translation solution. Although Gambier's overarching ideas have been used, they have been developed here for the purposes of this research project, and certain aspects have been expanded upon using the work of other researchers. For instance, Gambier's brief discussion of paratext is elaborated upon through reference to work by Genette, but also by Gray, who relates the notion of paratext to film specifically.²⁴² In addition, the nature of film as polysemiotic is discussed in relation to Taylor's multimodal analysis, which allows for the identification of some particularly pertinent aspects of the various semiotic channels for consideration. Gambier suggests that analysis of four main areas should be undertaken in order to have a grasp of a film's macro-context. These are the general cultural context,

²⁴⁰ Gambier, 'Créativité et décision', pp. 188–89.

²⁴¹ 'Does not seem to have [...] limits, while nonetheless influencing the choice of micro-strategies in translation.' Gambier, 'Créativité et décision', p. 188.

²⁴² Gérard Genette, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22.2 (1991), 261–272; Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010).

distribution and marketing, target audience and film genre. Analysis of the context (both macro- and micro-) is important because, as Gambier notes

Le spectateur se servira du « contexte » pour interpréter la référence, le traducteur pour sélectionner une solution, le chercheur pour décrire ou expliquer ce choix du traducteur.²⁴³

Thus, the contextual analysis carried out in Chapter Four will allow for: an examination of the contexts of release and reception, and some insight into the viewers' expectations; an understanding of specific translation solutions and potential reasons for their selection; and therefore, the tools with which to identify and explain the strategies applied by the translator and the potential impact of these on the subtitled film.

General cultural context

Within the general cultural context, external factors which may affect the film's translation and/or reception have been considered. For example, in the case of *banlieue* film, the socio-political context in which the film was released is of great value in terms of determining the significance of the film: are the events surrounding the release of the film likely to affect the kind of audience which may watch the film? To what extent does the film intervene in social debates or position itself in relation to dominant representations? For instance, the significance of *La haine* being made following the death of Makomé M'Bowolé has already been noted. This timing, combined with the use of authentic footage from riots, and a plotline surrounding a victim of police violence who is in hospital in a critical condition, lends a realist tone to the film which highlights its relevance to current affairs in the contemporary French society into which it was released.

A concern with the context of release overlaps significantly with paratextual theory. The notion of paratext was first put forward by Gerard Genette who related this concept specifically to literature, highlighting the significance of the elements surrounding a text, and through which an audience accesses it.²⁴⁴ Genette broke the paratext down further into two categories; *epitext* - those

²⁴³ 'The viewer will use "context" to interpret a reference, the translator to choose a solution, the researcher to describe or explain the translator's choice.' Gambier, 'Créativité et décision', p. 189.

²⁴⁴ Genette.

elements surrounding a text's release, such as interviews and newspaper articles, and *peritext* - the elements 'within' or 'attached to' the text, but not necessarily part of it, such as the title, cover, or chapter headings, for example. This theory has been developed considerably by Jonathan Gray, who applies it to the case of film and TV in the present day.²⁴⁵ Gray expands Genette's theory to incorporate the specificities of the audiovisual medium. For example, a DVD can include a director's interview or 'making of' footage; this information might have originally formed part of the *epitext* of a film's release, but later forms part of the *peritext* on the DVD edition. He highlights the importance of paratext in an audience's decision to watch a film, noting that this decision can be influenced by 'the actors, the production personnel, the quality of the previews, reviews, interviews, the poster [...] what cinema it is playing at[...].'²⁴⁶ This can be linked to the earlier discussion of the target audience for subtitled *banlieue* film in the UK; these are usually screened at independent or art house cinemas, which often attract an audience of upper middle class over 35-year-olds.²⁴⁷ The very fact that *banlieue* film is screened in such venues results in exposure to certain demographics, and perhaps even non-exposure to others. Although at the time the subtitler is commissioned, s/he does not know in which cinemas the film will be screened (s/he may even be creating them for a film festival), s/he does have an idea of the genre of the film. Since many *banlieue* films are screened in similar situations, and arguably to similar audiences, this could also inform the approach taken by the subtitler.

The significance of the paratext in shaping audience expectations is also recognised by Gambier.²⁴⁸ Therefore, in this phase of the macro contextual analysis, director interviews, marketing materials, and newspaper articles were analysed. Gambier notes: 'Ces éléments créent, préfigurent, orientent les attentes, les besoins, avant même que le film sorte sur les écrans de la ville'.²⁴⁹ This information, therefore, when combined with the general cultural context,

²⁴⁵ Gray.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 25.

²⁴⁷ Figures from 2010; Mike Gubbins, 'Art House On Demand', *Movie Scope*, 2012 <<http://www.moviescopemag.com/market-news/featured-editorial/art-house-on-demand/>> [accessed 26 September 2016].

²⁴⁸ Gambier, 'Créativité et décision', pp. 188–89.

²⁴⁹ 'These elements create, presage, and direct [viewers'] expectations and needs, before the film even appears in the cinema.' Ibid. p. 189.

could inform the subtitler's work, and the audience's reading of a film (subtitled or not). Not only could the paratext encourage or discourage viewers' attendance at the cinema, or purchase of the DVD, it could also continue to shape their interpretation of the film, even after they have finished viewing an item.²⁵⁰ Thus, the paratext is an important consideration when examining how a given translation may be received, not only within the context of a specific scene, but also within the context of the film's release. The analysis of the paratext examined how far viewers of the film (both native French and non-French-speaking British viewers) might understand references to France, to the issues presented in the films such as migration, identity and exclusion, and to additional themes which may arise. Thus, this analysis of the French and Anglophone paratexts for each film will serve to clarify the reception context and its influence on readings of the film.

The paratexts also allowed for an examination of the socio-political messages addressed in the films, either in terms of themes highlighted, or messages/intentions which are explicitly explained by the director. This then offered further information concerning the language in the film, and whether certain aspects of it were particularly important in a specific case. This could then be linked to Goudaillier's list of themes in *banlieue* language which, he notes, has a particularly rich vocabulary concerning certain issues which are perhaps more prevalent in the *banlieue*, including, for example, drugs, sex and 'illicit business'.²⁵¹ Some of the themes noted by Goudaillier also emerged as prevalent themes in a number of the works considered for inclusion here, and there is thus a clear overlap between linguistic themes in the *langage de banlieue*, and themes represented on screen in *banlieue* film, which warrants further investigation within the case study analysis of the films selected for this project. These thematic factors and socio-political messages will also certainly have an impact upon the target audience for subtitled *banlieue* films, and the themes which a potential audience would be expecting, and paying close attention to, when viewing the film.

²⁵⁰ Gray, p. 45.

²⁵¹ Goudaillier, p. 17.

Target Audience

The general target audience for art-house cinema, and by extension, *banlieue* film was discussed earlier on in relation to *banlieue* cinema more generally. It was established that it is difficult to ascertain for whom the subtitler was translating in each specific case study. Further, it is also challenging to identify one specific target audience for each set of subtitles, since they may have been written with an ‘international’ audience in mind, and perhaps later added to a UK DVD or Netflix release of the film. However, there are additional aspects of the macro-contextual analysis which will inform our understanding of potential viewers’ expectations for each case study film. Elements of the paratext will indicate whether the marketing of the film could lead to certain groups of viewers being more likely to watch the film than others. This should be considered in relation to the notion of ‘bridging the gap’ between source culture and target culture.²⁵² Considering *banlieue* film in particular, the audience might have a greater or lesser tolerance for swearwords depending on aspects of the film which were foregrounded in the marketing. This could inform the subtitler’s choice of strategies. An important consideration here would also be how far elements of the Source Culture presented in the film may be recognisable to the Target Audience - if there are certain cultural references featured in the film which are also shared with the Target Audience, or another culture to which the Target Audience is regularly exposed, this may have implications in terms of semiotic cohesion, which will be discussed shortly.

Film Genre

Following the structure of Gambier’s description of various factors contributing to the context in AVT, certain aspects are noted under the heading of *genre filmique*. In the case of *banlieue* film - and, indeed, within the criteria for selection of films for case study analysis - elements such as themes and characterization (particularly its linguistic manifestations), are key features which *make a banlieue film a banlieue film*. The amount and function of any dialogue within a film varies from genre to genre.²⁵³ An action film, for example, will often have less dialogue

²⁵² Nida notes that in translation in general, where the ‘gap’ between cultures is smaller, the translator usually faces fewer big issues, but where languages are close then ‘false friends’ can pose a challenge. Eudene Nida, ‘Principles of Correspondence’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 3rd edn (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 141–55 (p. 145).

²⁵³ Kozloff, pp. 136–38.

compared to other genres; this dialogue may then be even further reduced in the subtitles, in order to avoid distracting the target audience and weakening the impact of any special effects, for instance.

The storyline and themes should also be identified and understood, they may allow for identification of key scenes or discussions. Where utterances have a significant role in the plot, although they may not seem to be of great importance in a particular scene, they may have been prioritised in the subtitles, perhaps at the expense of other information within a scene. Similarly, the language used in a film could reflect certain themes - considering for example, the significance of race in many *banlieue* films. The *langage de banlieue* often reflects the fact that race is not a taboo subject in the *banlieue*; ²⁵⁴ this is not necessarily the case in the United Kingdom, so the translation of these terms can prove challenging.

Elements of characterization (and relationships between characters), where manifested linguistically, were pinpointed. In the case of *banlieue* film, where socio-political messages are often conveyed regarding members of the *banlieue* community and their experiences, individual and collective identity are important. Immigration being a recurring theme in these films, some characters' origins are evident linguistically, through an accent, or the language in which they communicate with family members. It was noted earlier that many residents of *banlieue* maintain connections with both the French language and culture, and the native language and culture of relatives. This is an important element of life in the *banlieue* and of the past which may shape a character and their experiences. The close linguistic analysis of the subtitles will be explained later under micro-contextual analysis.

The use of a certain register or vocabulary could demonstrate the difference in status between two characters, or the closeness of their relationships. An understanding of relationships between the characters in a film informs the analysis of certain exchanges and register shifts in a character's dialogue. An understanding of key relationships in the case study films also informed the selection of specific examples and sequences for analysis.

²⁵⁴ Doran, p. 503.

The final point under the subheading of genre relates to elements of intertextuality within a film. This is linked to genre in the case of *banlieue* films as some of them draw on the success of earlier films, a good example of this would be *Les Kaira* (Gastambide, 2012), which parodies some elements of *La haine* (Kassovitz, 1995). In this case it might be argued that in order to retain the elements of intertextuality of the source text, any linguistic references should be translated in such a way that they are recognisable to the TA (though they may not have the same relevance if they are references to French films). Where the SL of the texts referenced is English, the original ST quote might be best in the subtitles. An example of this working well could be the extract referenced earlier from *La haine*, in which Vinz re-enacts a scene from *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976) ‘c’est à moi que tu parles?’, which is subtitled using the original line in English from the film ‘You talkin’ to me?’.²⁵⁵

These elements of characterisation and themes identified in the films could also have an effect on the intended function or outcomes of the film; some *banlieue* films have political implications, or there are certain issues dealt with in them which must be handled sensitively in order to convey socio-political messages in translation.

The Micro-context

Analysis of the Polysemiotic Network

Gambier’s primary focus in terms of suggestions for micro contextual analysis in audiovisual translation is on the polysemiotic network, therefore specific examples will be examined within that. Taylor’s model for multimodal analysis is mentioned here as an example of what may be described as ‘the opposite end of the methodological spectrum’ in terms of a primarily linguistic vs. a primarily multimodal-based analysis. Taylor’s work highlights the significance of the polysemiotic network, and demonstrates that close attention to the visuals and soundtrack can reveal information which might otherwise be missed. The disadvantage of such an approach is that in this particular case, it would not allow for in-depth analysis of dialogue or subtitles. In addition, such a focus would

²⁵⁵ Kassovitz, *La Haine*. 09mins 35secs

reduce the scope of the project and would not allow for an examination of the macro-contextual elements of the translation.

In the analysis of particular subtitles or sequences of interest, the semiotic channels, and the meaning made by them when they work together was examined. For example, the character's tone of voice might present information which could be considered as 'missing' from the subtitle. Or, as Taylor suggests, certain scenery could convey the status of the characters, and therefore present certain information about the way the characters might speak, though on this point, it is unclear whether Taylor is referring to information the subtitler or the TL audience may retrieve.²⁵⁶ Indeed, a subtitler could use this information to remind him/herself of register requirements. However, a less culturally aware audience which has knowledge of neither the source language, nor the source culture might not draw the same conclusions, and therefore the subtitles (and the register conveyed therein) are still of significant value in terms of the audience's understanding of the characters and the relationship between them. With this in mind, analysis of the four semiotic channels explained earlier was undertaken.

Visual-nonverbal

This included an analysis of the on-screen information, excluding any text (subtitles or signs, for example). Any visuals which may convey useful information were noted, including the way in which the characters were interacting with one-another. For instance, a lot can be ascertained about characters' feelings towards one-another through body language. If a character has their arms crossed in front of their body, they could be feeling defensive, or under attack. If characters are having an argument, even without understanding what they are saying, a viewer may understand that they disagree through certain behaviours, such as them throwing their arms in the air, or gesturing dramatically. Certain scenery or costumes can give the viewer an idea of the social status of the characters, and therefore an idea of the way in which they may speak (since this, as I have already established, is strongly linked to their identity). Analysis of this information could reveal that the elements not present in the subtitles (for example, a character's

²⁵⁶ Taylor, p. 198.

accent/regional identity) is apparent on screen, and therefore remains visible in the subtitled version of the film.

There are other aspects of the visual non-verbal channel which Taylor highlights in his model for multimodal transcription of audiovisual content, such as camera movements, and the colour of certain items in a scene.²⁵⁷ However, the elements selected here are those which are arguably most apparent to a non-specialist, and would therefore most attract the attention of the viewer. Nevertheless, that is not to say that should a certain feature of the visual non-verbal network prove particularly interesting and relevant, it was excluded; I am simply highlighting those features which provided most material for analysis.

Aural-nonverbal

This channel includes all sound except for the characters' dialogue.²⁵⁸ This includes sound effects and music. Music can affect the mood of a scene, and sound effects may offer information that is repeated in a character's dialogue. In the same way that features of the visual-nonverbal channel may contribute to meaning in a film and affect how far certain features of a character's speech need to be included in the subtitles, so might information in the aural-nonverbal channel.

Visual-verbal and Aural-verbal

The visual-verbal channel is any text that appears on screen, and the aural-verbal any dialogue in the film, be that from characters on screen, or voiceovers, for example. These semiotic channels are those which provide the most material for study where subtitling is concerned, as these informed the linguistic analysis of the translations. These channels do not exclusively convey dialogue and subtitles, though; the aural-verbal channel may also feature lyrical music. This was particularly interesting in *La haine*, for example, in the iconic DJ sequence featuring a mix of NTM's *Nique la Police* [Fuck the Police] and Edith Piaf's *Non, je ne regrette rien* [I Regret Nothing], the lyrics of which were subtitled in order to allow the non-French speaking audience access to their symbolic meaning. The

²⁵⁷ Taylor.

²⁵⁸ Zabalbeascoa, p. 24.

visual-verbal channel may also include other on-screen text (which may or may not be subtitled), such as signposts, newspapers, or graffiti, as can be seen in the example below, from *La haine* (Kassovitz, 1995):



Figure 2 - *La haine* 01:24:16

The linguistic analysis of the subtitles focuses on the features of the *langage de banlieue* which were described in Chapter One, and how these have been handled in translation, within the polysemiotic network. Thus, where the features discussed in Chapter One are presented in the SLD, the subtitles for that dialogue were examined. Linguistically, a selection was made of subtitles featuring *verlan* and argot; culturally-specific language; swearing and insults; and loanwords and multiculturalism. These are the features which define the *langage de banlieue*, and therefore serve as markers of identity as explained by Doran, and Lepoutre. Since we are here concerned with identity in subtitled *banlieue* films, an analysis of such features offers an understanding of how far linguistic markers of identity are evident in the subtitles. These factors also present notions of protest (for instance, through the characters' use of *verlan*), of characters' daily reality (rich vocabulary in relation to specific themes, culturally-specific language and swearing/insults), and of migration and cultural heritage (loanwords and multilingualism). Many of these features were linked to themes and socio-political messages which were identified through macro analysis.

Integrating the Macro- and Micro-contextual Analysis

Since it would not have been feasible to analyse every single subtitle within such a holistic methodology, all subtitles were considered for analysis (there was not a

focus on selected scenes), but only those particularly relevant to the discussion of language, identity, and socio-political messages in the case study films were analysed in-depth as part of this thesis. The selection of subtitles for close study was guided by the macro contextual analysis of each film, which revealed key themes as highlighted in the paratexts and featured in the films. Strand writes about *Entre les murs* (Cantet, 2008) and *L'esquive* (Kechiche, 2003), two films which deal with representations of authority and the education system as it relates to the *banlieusards* in France, noting that the two 'are clearly playing an important role in provoking a national reconsideration of, to quote Doran again, "what it means to speak, and to be, French"'.²⁵⁹ Since this genre of French cinema presents socio-political messages concerning life in the *banlieues*, and these socio-political messages are intrinsically linked to the identity of those living in these areas and represented on screen, the representation of identity and key themes are arguably both linked, and important features to be examined in the subtitling of the genre.

It would be useful here to consider Vanoye's work on the horizontal and vertical dimensions of film dialogue. Remael notes

As Vanoye (1985:116) has pointed out, film dialogue, like theatre dialogue, always functions on two levels. The interaction between the characters is the "horizontal" level of communication, whereas the interaction between film and audience, the storytelling proper, constitutes the "vertical level" of communication.²⁶⁰

This is an important consideration in the study of subtitled films, and supports the idea behind the methodology developed in this thesis. The 'horizontal' communication can serve to make the action seem realistic or believable, and the 'vertical' communication is important in terms of 'storytelling' as Remael notes above. This can help to explain the link between the macro- and micro-contextual analysis undertaken as part of this methodology. The vertical communication could also encompass the themes and issues presented by the director; in the case of *banlieue* film, in order to highlight aspects of life in the *banlieue*, for instance.

²⁵⁹ Dana Strand, 'Être et Parler: Being and Speaking French in Abdellatif Kechiche's *L'Esquive* (2004) and Laurent Cantet's *Entre Les Murs* (2008)', *Studies in French Cinema*, 9.3 (2009), 259–72 (p. 271).

²⁶⁰ Aline Remael, 'Mainstream Narrative Film Dialogue and Subtitling: A Case Study of Mike Leigh's "Secrets & Lies" (1996)', *The Translator*, 9.2 (2003), 225–47 (p. 227)

The macro-contextual analysis revealed certain key aspects of the films in terms of plot, and in terms of the directors' goals in making the film. These aspects can be traced through into the characters' dialogue and examined in relation to the vertical communication in the subtitled version of the film. This methodology, through considering the interaction *between* characters, but also between the director and the viewer, examines the subtitled films in terms of both of the above-mentioned dimensions of film dialogue.

In terms of the analysis of SLD and TL Subtitle together, the notion of 'diagonal translation' as put forward by Gottlieb highlights the move from the oral to written forms of language in interlingual subtitling. Non-standard language, and particularly the variety represented in *banlieue* films is primarily spoken, and appears in writing in very few places.²⁶¹ Thus, some shift in translation here is arguably inevitable, particularly when we consider that subtitlers are discouraged from employing uncommon non-standard vocabulary, grammar and spelling in subtitles.²⁶² The written subtitles were examined in terms of how far they feature unfamiliar varieties of language, for example, slang and abbreviations, or phonetic spellings of spoken varieties of English.

Other strategies for conveying the specific variety of language used by the characters in the subtitles were also examined. This analysis aimed to examine the subtitling of *banlieue* film in a way that accounted for the specificities of dealing with audiovisual texts, and which places the analysis within the cultural context of reception, whilst considering the subtitles for the whole film, rather than selected extracts. As Remael notes, 'Dialogue works sequentially and is both context-dependent (it builds on previous turns) and context-renewing (it adds something to the previous turn).'²⁶³ Thus the analysis will consider the subtitling of certain key features across the films, and occurrences and translations of some of these have been mapped out throughout the films. In order to adequately examine the subtitles and how they represent identity, the following additional

²⁶¹ With the exception of some literary works, such as Faïza Guène, *Kiffe Kiffe Demain*, Le Livre de Poche, 30379 (Paris: Hachette littératures, 2004). Or Mohammed Dib, 'Le Prophète', in *Comme Un Bruit d'abeilles*. (Albin Michel, 2001), pp. 186–224.

²⁶² See, for example, Carroll and Ivarsson.

²⁶³ Aline Remael, 'A place for film dialogue analysis in subtitling courses', in *Topics in audiovisual translation*, ed. by Pilar Orero, Benjamins translation library, 56 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), pp. 103–26 (p. 109).

frameworks and theories were applied to the micro analysis of subtitles in the films.

Register

Register is a particularly interesting aspect of the translation of *banlieue* film given the significance of the *langage de banlieue* as a tool for the *banlieusards*; a tool which they wield with great skill, either to express frustration and resistance, or to exclude ‘outsiders’ from their discussions.²⁶⁴ Analysis of the subtitles in relation to register was undertaken with reference both to Newmark’s scale of formality, and Halliday’s *field*, *tenor* and *mode*.²⁶⁵ I used Newmark’s scale of formality in an attempt to classify lexical items in the SLD and subtitles, and this allowed for an examination of the extent to which lexical items ‘match the register expectations of their prospective receivers’ as Baker suggests the goal should be.²⁶⁶ Halliday’s *field*, *tenor* and *mode* assisted in understanding the significance of language use in context, and how changes in context resulted in shifts in register.

In *L’esquive* for example, the importance of performance, language and identity mean that register shifts can drive the plot, and they convey a great deal of information about characters in the film. They therefore play a key role in terms of both horizontal and vertical communication within the film. Register shifts are an important factor in all *banlieue* films; they are instances in which additional information is conveyed through a change in a character’s use of language. This means that they may demonstrate a change in atmosphere, important information about the relationship between two characters, or about whether or not a character is at ease in a particular situation.

Register and dialect are both important considerations in the subtitling of the *langage de banlieue*. As Halliday notes, the two features are closely linked:

²⁶⁴ Goudaillier, p. 10; Duchêne, p. 35.

²⁶⁵ Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (New York ; London: Prentice-Hall International, 1988), p. 14; Halliday, ‘Language as Social Semiotic’, p. 362.

²⁶⁶ Mona Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, 2nd ed (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 14.

...dialect variation expresses the diversity of social structures (social hierarchies of all kinds), while register variation expresses the diversity of social processes [...] the two are interconnected -what we do is affected by who we are [...] The registers a person has access to are a function of his place in the social structure; and a switch of register may entail a switch of dialect.²⁶⁷

So, the characters in *banlieue* film usually have similar dialects as they have a comparable social status. Their social status means they often find themselves communicating in similar situations and involved in similar processes. When the inhabitants of the *banlieue* are communicating with people from outside the community, they switch to more standard language, as can be seen in *La squale*, where the girls switch register when attending a beauty shop in central Paris. This can also be related to the list of themes Goudaillier highlights in the critical introduction to his *Dictionnaire du français contemporain des cités*. He notes that since they are often involved in ‘le trafic [...] la drogue [...] les arnaques [...]’, for example, the banlieusards have a large vocabulary related to these topics.²⁶⁸ Similarly, their reappropriated terms for referring to race and religion reflect their social circles, in which their peers come from different backgrounds and have different religions as noted by Doran.²⁶⁹ However, these different ‘processes’ sometimes require different registers; the youths will speak differently to figures of authority, such as teachers or the police than to their peers, for example.²⁷⁰ This can be linked to the origins of *verlan* as a code language; certainly, both Duchêne and Goudaillier affirm the ‘cryptic’ function of *verlan*.²⁷¹

Halliday suggests that in order to determine register, one must consider ‘field’, ‘tenor’, and ‘mode’: what is happening, who is speaking, and the channel of communication respectively.²⁷² When there is a change in one or more of these factors, there is often a shift in register to suit the new situation or relationship. As Halliday notes above, this may or may not involve a change in dialect, though

²⁶⁷ M. A. K. Halliday, “Introduction”, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*, in *The Communication Theory Reader*, ed. by Paul Copley, 1996, pp. 88–93 (p. 90).

²⁶⁸ Goudaillier, p. 16.

²⁶⁹ Doran, p. 503.

²⁷⁰ Lepoutre notes, for instance, his pleasant surprise at the students’ *verlanisation* of his name to *vid’da*.

²⁷¹ Goudaillier, p. 14; Duchêne, p. 35..

²⁷² Halliday, ‘Language as Social Semiotic’, p. 362.

those shifts that do involve a change in dialect are perhaps the most obvious given that this can involve a change in grammar, lexicon and pronunciation. Particularly in the case of *banlieue* film, register shifts can also demonstrate the youths' control over and awareness of their language. These register shifts were therefore carefully considered in the analysis; field, tenor and mode were be examined in both SLD and TL subtitle in order to understand the reason for the register shift, and whether or not this was reflected in translation.

Functionalism and Identity

Building on the work of Vermeer and Katharina Reiss, Christiane Nord developed a theory of 'translating as a purposeful activity'.²⁷³ She notes that in Vermeer's theory 'one of the most important factors determining the purpose of a translation is the addressee, who is the intended receiver or audience of the target text with their culture-specific world-knowledge, their expectations and their communicative needs'.²⁷⁴ She also highlights the importance of the 'translation brief' in determining the *skopos* of the target text.²⁷⁵ Many of the aspects of Nord's functionalist approach support the development of the theoretical framework applied in this thesis. Although it would not be possible to access specific commission information, or translation briefs, for each case study film, the subtitler questionnaires will inform the understanding of the work of subtitlers translating *banlieue* film, and the kind of requests made of them. Indeed, explaining the development of functional approaches to translation, Nord notes that 'Holz-Mänttari places special emphasis on the actional aspects of the translation process, on analysing the roles of the participants (initiator, translator, user, message receiver) and the situational conditions (time, place, medium) in which their activities take place.'²⁷⁶ The importance of these factors is also highlighted by Mason.²⁷⁷ The macro-contextual analysis will serve to inform our understanding of the context of reception (or the situational condition of the message receivers), as well as, to some degree, the roles of the director and the

²⁷³ Christiane Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*, Translation Theories Explained (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997).

²⁷⁴ Nord, p. 12.

²⁷⁵ Nord, p. 30.

²⁷⁶ Nord, p. 13.

²⁷⁷ Mason, p. 19.

audiences (both in France and the UK). The subtitler questionnaires mentioned earlier will offer an insight into the situational conditions in which the films were produced, and the subtitles written, as well as the subtitlers' perspective on the roles of the participants (including themselves). The examination of some of these features is advocated by Nord in relation to literary translation, as they form part of what she refers to as the 'communicative situation'.²⁷⁸

Vermeer refers to intertextual coherence and intratextual coherence in relation to functionalism. Intratextual coherence is related to the TA and their understanding of the target text, whilst intertextual coherence is to do with the relationship between the ST and TT. Of course, in the case of subtitling, this is of paramount importance given the juxtaposition of the ST (or SLD here) and the subtitles - the TT in subtitling is the AV whole including the added subtitles. There appears to be intertextual coherence in some subtitles for *banlieue* film. However, considering the subtitles from a specifically *British* perspective will shed more light on this, as there are certain phrases that may cause confusion for a British English viewer. In addition, there may be instances in which the subtitles do not make sense.²⁷⁹ It might also be argued that intertextual coherence is limited. The conclusions of scholars working on earlier *banlieue* films - in particular Montgomery - would suggest that existing subtitles do not represent all aspects of the sociolect in the films. Based on existing research, then, which primarily consists of case studies of *La haine*, it seems that there could be greater intra- and intertextual coherence in subtitles for French *banlieue* cinema. This will be examined in the case studies. In addition to the importance of coherence between (and within) SLD and subtitles in the translation of *banlieue* film, this integrated methodology will aim to consider whether there is also semiotic cohesion within the subtitled films. This is the point at which the linguistic and polysemiotic analyses truly come together. Furthermore, the notion of semiotic cohesion could be linked to Vermeer's intertextual coherence, since the ST and TT are brought together in one audiovisual whole, and the intertextual coherence of the subtitled film relies upon the various aspects of the polysemiotic network

²⁷⁸ Nord, pp. 80–84.

²⁷⁹ An example of this was highlighted in one case study of *La haine*, where Vinz's 'il tue trop, sa mère!' [lit. 'he kills too much, his mother!' Fig. 'he's killing it, man'] is subtitled as 'he's a real mother killer'. Hamaidia, pp. 9–10.

functioning together (thus the other strands of the network may supplement the information provided in the subtitles to convey meaning).

Semiotic cohesion is related to the polysemiotic nature of film, and the meaning made by the channels as they function together. In his case study of the subtitles for *La haine*, Mével suggested that the ‘dialect-for-dialect approach’ employed by the subtitlers might lead to a displacement of the characters’ identities.²⁸⁰ He suggests that the subtitles in themselves are not necessarily problematic, but the use of American language on images of a very specific French context ‘is rather incongruous’.²⁸¹ Mével’s comments on *La haine* could be related to semiotic cohesion as initially explained by Chaume, and discussed by Díaz-Cintas and Remael, who note that information on screen can supplement the subtitles, filling information gaps, for example, and vice-versa.²⁸² They also highlight some important factors in semiotic cohesion including synchrony between subtitles and image, body language, and editing and camera movements.²⁸³

The significance of the link between subtitles, dialogue and the rest of the polysemiotic network is one of the reasons for which this methodology has been adopted. Audiovisual translation is studied as a phenomenon apart from translation proper precisely because of the nature of audiovisual content as a combination of modes which work together to create meaning. If we are to examine how far the subtitles in question convey identity, the other information available to the viewer when they watch a subtitled film should be considered.

The methodology is represented in Figure 4, which demonstrates how the various aspects described above are integrated. The subtitling situation feeds into, and underpins the macro- and micro-contextual analysis, which come together when the subtitled films are analysed closely in relation to skopos theory and the socio-political messages presented within them.

²⁸⁰ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 53.

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 55.

²⁸² Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 50.

²⁸³ Ibid. pp. 50-54.

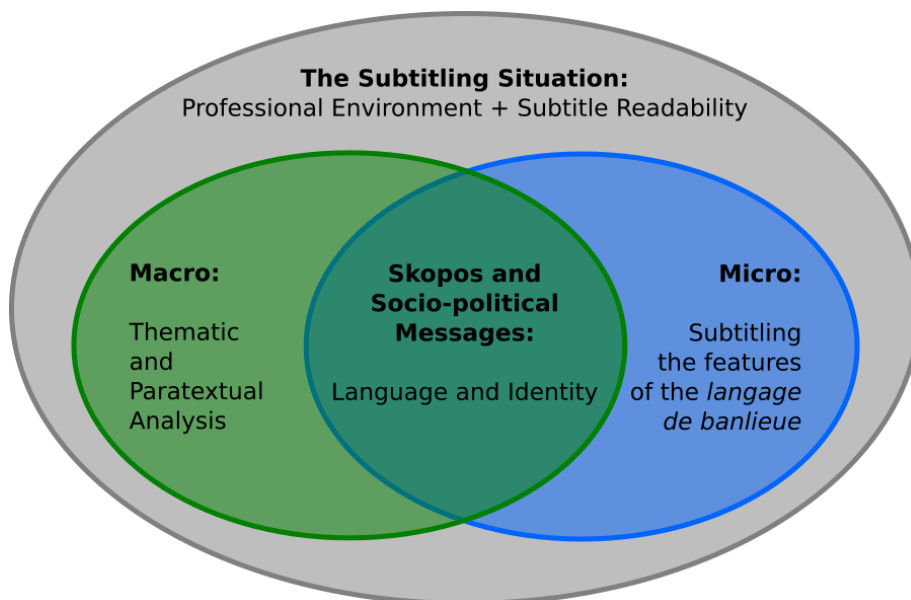


Figure 3 - An Integrated Methodology

Chapter Three: The Subtitling Situation

The following analysis of the subtitling situation allows us to ascertain how far the translation solutions presented in the subtitles might be the result of factors such as subtitler working conditions, or the technical constraints of subtitling. This involves analysis of questionnaire responses provided by subtitlers working on *banlieue* film. These responses demonstrate how far subtitlers have responsibility for the different aspects of the subtitles. In addition, including the thoughts of subtitlers in this thesis works to counteract the invisibility of the subtitler, and aims to analyse the process as well as the product. A close technical inspection of the subtitles results in an understanding of their readability, which frames the linguistic analysis of translation solutions to be carried out in Chapter Five, in terms of understanding the consequences of unusual vocabulary featured in the subtitles, or the reasons behind possible examples of linguistic standardisation.

The Professional Environment

The professional subtitling environment varies across the globe in terms of rates and practices, and Arista Szu-Yu Kuo notes that the freelance nature of the work of many subtitlers makes it a difficult area of study.²⁸⁴ This means that there is no one explanation of the professional subtitling process, environment, or working conditions which applies globally. In a survey of 429 subtitlers, it was found that rates varied greatly among the respondents, even those working in the same country.²⁸⁵ The results of the survey showed links between working conditions and the presence of ‘strong subtitlers’ associations and unions’, revealing that in countries with strong unions, ‘the working conditions of subtitlers... were more homogenous and more likely to remain at a certain level, particularly as regards rates, royalties and credits...’²⁸⁶ Thus, in certain countries, there is less variation in conditions, as freelancers are supported by associations and unions which can sometimes negotiate rates and other conditions on their behalf.²⁸⁷ This indicates

²⁸⁴ Arista Szu-Yu Kuo, ‘Professional Realities of the Subtitling Industry: The Subtitlers’ Perspective’, in *Audiovisual Translation in a Global Context: Mapping an Ever-Changing Landscape*, ed. by Rocío Baños Piñero and Jorge Díaz Cintas (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 163–91 (p. 163).

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 171.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 189.

²⁸⁷ Szu-Yu Kuo, p. 175.

that there is value in the creation of unions and associations, and that their presence does have a concrete positive impact on the profession. The French context is highlighted by Kuo as an example of one in which subtitlers have the support of the *Association des Traducteurs et Adaptateurs de l'Audiovisuel*, which is described as ‘a rather active and visible AVT association.’²⁸⁸ Thus, the context in which the subtitlers interviewed here work should be recognised as offering better conditions than some.²⁸⁹ Furthermore, the subtitlers surveyed for this thesis were approached due to their membership of ASIF, and thus benefit from contact with other freelance subtitlers working in the same country, with the same language combinations. This means that they are arguably not as isolated as some freelancers might be, and benefit from a professional network with which they could discuss rates, deadlines, and other relevant factors affecting their daily work.

Scandinavian countries seem to have better conditions, this is particularly evident where issues such as translator credit are concerned.

The percentage of respondents who had ‘always’ been credited for their work in Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden was much higher than the rest of the countries under analysis (either close to or above 50 percent).²⁹⁰

It is recommended in the Code of Good Subtitling Practice that the subtitler be credited at the end of the translation, but this is not always the case in reality.²⁹¹ The positive responses highlighted just above could be due to the presence of strong unions in Nordic countries.²⁹² In Finland, for instance, after five years of negotiations, agencies and translators working with audiovisual material signed an agreement covering issues such as fees and copyright in 2015.²⁹³ This is a positive

²⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 172.

²⁸⁹ Portugal is offered as an example of a country in which subtitlers do not have the support of unions and professional organisations, and in which the lower rates received by subtitlers might be explained by the lack of such organisations. Ibid. p. 172.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 180.

²⁹¹ Carroll and Ivarsson.

²⁹² Szu-Yu Kuo, p. 180.

²⁹³ This agreement was not signed by SDI media. For more information, see ‘Audiovisual Translators and Translation Agencies Reach a Collective Agreement in Finland – Agreement Left Unsigned by One Company - Av-Kääntäjät’ <http://www.av-kaantajat.fi/in_english/?x245667=494081> [accessed 1 November 2017].

development for AVT professionals in Finland, and perhaps an example to be followed by those working in AVT in other countries where there are no unions.²⁹⁴ The responses from subtitlers in Portugal do indicate a difference in conditions compared to those working in the Scandinavian countries, for example. In the UK, subtitlers can join organisations such as SUBTLE, which aims to ‘promote high-quality subtitling and to maintain standards of professionalism within the industry’.²⁹⁵ It was mentioned above that there is also a union in France working towards similar goals.

In *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*, Díaz-Cintas and Remael explain the main stages in the subtitling process, noting that once the client has commissioned the translation, the copy of the film provided is checked by the agency.²⁹⁶ They also verify the dialogue list, and note any additional information that needs to be translated. Following this, a working copy of the film is made, and at this stage measures may be taken to prevent pirating (the agency may only provide those scenes for which translations need to be done, for example). The next step is spotting the film, where the dialogue is broken into sections for which one subtitle would appear, and the in and out times of each subtitle are set. The materials are then sent to the subtitler, though Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that sometimes the translator may have to work from a text document or template, rather than having a copy of the audiovisual content. Of course, Díaz-Cintas and Remael’s description of the subtitling process is an ‘ideal’ example, and in practice the process varies, as well as the materials to which the subtitler has access. For example, Kuo found that 10.7 percent of respondents never work with a copy of the film.²⁹⁷ The approach adopted in this thesis highlights the significance of the multimodal nature of film, and I would argue that this is the case not only in the analysis, but also in the production of subtitles. Nevertheless, 71.8 percent of subtitlers responding to the survey always work with the audiovisual material. Sometimes the subtitler is also required to do the spotting of the film - indeed,

²⁹⁴ Although this is a positive development, it should be noted that the agreement does not cover freelancers in Finland. It represents a step in the right direction, but there is still room for improvement.

²⁹⁵ ‘SUBTLE - The Subtitlers’ Association || Subtitlers.Org’ <<http://www.subtitlers.org.uk/>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

²⁹⁶ For the full explanation, see Díaz-Cintas and Remael, pp. 30–34..

²⁹⁷ Szu-Yu Kuo, p. 185.

that is the recommendation of the Code - and if this is the case, they will return their work in a subtitle file type, such as an .srt file, or another file type specific to the software they use.²⁹⁸ An .srt file, for example, includes the subtitles and timecode information, but not formatting such as colour.

It can be seen, therefore, that there is huge variation in global subtitling practices. This general overview serves as a context into which the data collected for this thesis can be placed. Given the variation in rates, deadlines and union support, it should be noted that subtitlers working with French companies do appear to benefit from better conditions than some.²⁹⁹

Subtitling *Banlieue* Film – The Industry

The number of French films released each year is much smaller than the number of Anglophone films to be translated into other languages, and the number of French *banlieue* films even smaller.³⁰⁰ It has been noted that most of the subtitlers interviewed were members of ASIF, thus based in France, and therefore benefit from the support of the ATAA.³⁰¹ The goal of ASIF! is:

to raise awareness in the French film community that to maintain a pool of talented and highly-skilled translators for subtitling, we need to be paid a decent commercial rate that reflects the added value we bring to a movie.³⁰²

Thus, the subtitlers interviewed were nearly all involved in a movement to promote the value of their contribution, and to campaign to be paid a fair rate for their work. The website lists 42 members at the time of writing, and these members have worked on some prominent films in their time.³⁰³ They regularly

²⁹⁸ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 32; Carroll and Ivarsson..

²⁹⁹ Szu-Yu Kuo, pp. 171–72.

³⁰⁰ In 2014, global box office figures for films from the US/Canada amounted to \$10.4 billion (this is without considering other Anglophone film markets), while figures for those released in France in the same year were \$1.8. MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America, *Theatrical Market Statistics: 2014*, p. 30 (p. 30) <<http://www.mpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MPAA-Theatrical-Market-Statistics-2014.pdf>> [accessed 23 October 2015].

³⁰¹ 'Anglo Subtitlers in France – ASIF!'

³⁰² ASIF!, 'About - Anglo Subtitlers in France', *Anglo Subtitlers in France*, 2014 <<https://anglosubtitlers.wordpress.com/about/>> [accessed 21 October 2015].

³⁰³ Including *Bande de Filles [Girlhood]*, subtitled by Ian Burley, Abdellatif Kechiche, *La vie d'Adèle [Blue is the Warmest Colour]* (Artificial Eye, 2013). subtitled by Andrew Litvack

consult on rates, and have made collective agreements to boycott films in the past, where large-budget productions are offering much less than the recommended rate for film subtitles. In April 2014, members of ASIF! agreed to boycott two films, *Sous les jupes des filles* (Audrey Dana, 2014) and *L'homme que l'on aimait trop* (André Téchiné, 2014), for which subtitlers were offered a rate of €1,10 per subtitle, when the union recommended rate is €4,10 per subtitle.³⁰⁴

For this research project, some members of ASIF! were interviewed about their work on *banlieue* films in order to contextualise the professional environment in which these films are subtitled into English. Thus, the case study analysis will be undertaken with an awareness of the conditions in which the subtitles were written, the greatest challenges they see in the subtitling of *banlieue* film, as well as some understanding of the strategies subtitlers generally employ to overcome these challenges. For example, if the subtitlers working with *banlieue* film do not generally have access to a copy of the film, then more issues of semiotic cohesion might be anticipated. In addition, a research methodology which is informed by practice allows for an exchange of information between industry and academia; indeed, some of the subtitlers who have provided responses to the questionnaire have expressed an interest in seeing the results of the project, and in this way, this research project aims to have an impact on professional practice, whilst also being informed by it. This could take a number of forms - the work will highlight strategies applied by subtitlers to overcome the issues presented by the *langage de banlieue*, but it will also indicate certain practices regarding rates or workflow which could be implemented in other contexts to improve the working conditions of subtitlers, and therefore, potentially, the quality of the work they produce, as advocated by Abdallah.³⁰⁵

Initial contact was made with subtitlers through the Facebook group for ASIF! A post was made explaining the research project, and asking for expressions of interest from those subtitlers who have worked with films they would consider to be *banlieue* films, and who would be interested in answering some questions.

³⁰⁴ ASIF!, 'April 2014 – Anglo Subtitlers in France' <<https://anglosubtitlers.wordpress.com/2014/04/>> [accessed 21 October 2015]. 'Les Sous-Titreurs Anglophones Au Bord de La Grève', *Le Film Français*, 25 April 2014 <<http://www.lefilmfrancais.com/cinema/118118/les-sous-titreurs-anglophones-au-bord-de-la-greve>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

³⁰⁵ Abdallah, *Translators in Production Networks*, pp. 36–37.

Those who responded were then sent an information sheet, a consent form and the questionnaire. These documents can be found in the appendices. The questions included were aimed at finding out more about the general background of the subtitlers, along with more details about their workflows, and the process of subtitling a *banlieue* film from commission to submission of the translation. In addition, I was interested in finding out what the subtitlers found most challenging when subtitling *banlieue* film, as this might indicate areas of tension in the subtitles, or aspects of the analysis which could assist subtitlers in future if they are able to see how others address those issues. Six *ASIF!* subtitlers returned completed questionnaires; John Miller, Ian Burley, Sionann O'Neill, Mariette Kelley, Cynthia Schoch, and Charles Masters. Most of them agreed to answer any further questions via email, and provided informative responses. Based on their initial responses, a follow-up questionnaire was devised in order to further examine certain areas of interest, such as the use of professional subtitling software, and the various stages in the work flow process.

The subtitlers who responded to the questionnaire have diverse backgrounds; some hold multiple language, translation and subtitling qualifications, while others hold no formal qualifications in translation or languages. All of them have spent extensive time both in France and in Anglophone countries, and clearly possess excellent knowledge of French and English. All of the subtitlers were native English speakers, with the exception of one bilingual (Franco-American) subtitler, born in France but raised in the United States, speaking French at home. At the time of responding to the questionnaires, all of those interviewed lived in France, and had done so for 20 years or more. Four of the subtitlers had studied subtitling and/or film translation at postgraduate level. The other two had studied film or media, but had received no formal tuition in translation or subtitling. Thus, as was also found by Kuo in her larger study, among this small group of respondents working specifically in the French context, there was variation in the level of education received. However, where only 32.9 percent of Kuo's respondents possessed a specialised qualification in subtitling, 2/3 of the respondents in this smaller group of participants had.³⁰⁶ In all cases, the subtitlers were translating into their native language. This is often recommended by scholars in Translation Studies. Newmark, for example, in his *A Textbook of Translation*, writes 'I shall

³⁰⁶ Szu-Yu Kuo, p. 167.

assume that you [...] are learning to translate into your language of habitual use, since that is the only way you can translate naturally, accurately and with maximum effectiveness'.³⁰⁷ In addition, translator trainer programmes often require that students work into their native language.³⁰⁸

In addition to questions about their backgrounds, the subtitlers were also asked how they were given jobs. None of the subtitlers mentioned bidding for jobs, and the majority are contacted by the production company or international distributor/sales company. In the case of *banlieue* films and similar, the subtitlers generally obtain work through word of mouth and most have solid client bases that contact them directly with subtitling work. Only one subtitler noted that subtitling is not his only professional activity, though the question was not posed explicitly. Two of the subtitlers mentioned occasionally working for agencies or subtitling houses, although one highlighted that this is usually in the case of TV or corporate work, rather than film subtitling. Ian Burley, however, stated that he never works for agencies, only directly with production companies:

There was a huge movement a couple of years ago, that I more or less launched, against labs or agencies trying to negotiate our rates for us which led to the formation of ASIF.³⁰⁹

The absence of an organisation in the middle, it would seem, allows the subtitlers to have greater control over their rates and conditions, as they can explain to the director or production company any particularities or issues with the work they are to undertake. Rates are a matter of contention in the subtitling industry, perhaps because there is not a great amount of transparency - though there are various websites where you can find out how much translators charge per word, there are not many such forums for subtitling. From personal experience, the best way to find out about rates is to speak directly to a subtitler, though many in the

³⁰⁷ Newmark, p. 3.

³⁰⁸ Course information for the University of Glasgow MSc in Translation Studies reads: 'in keeping with established practice in professional contexts, students are normally expected to translate into their native language.' 'University of Glasgow - Postgraduate Study - Taught Degree Programmes A-Z - Translation Studies: Translation & Professional Practice' <<https://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/translationstudiesprofessionalpractice/>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

³⁰⁹ Ian Burley, Questionnaire Response.

industry may be wary of sharing such information.³¹⁰ This is why ASIF! and other such organisations are invaluable.

Many of the subtitlers noted that they would usually have around three weeks to one month to subtitle a film, though some noted that they can have one week or less for the task.³¹¹ Ian Burley noted that he was given two months to work on *Entre les murs*, and mentioned that for some other *banlieue* films, he was ‘given plenty of time’, stating that ‘it looks like producers know more time is needed for such films’.³¹² It would therefore appear that it is possible for the subtitler to negotiate longer deadlines when working with such difficult language as the *langage de banlieue*, and that for *banlieue* cinema, the process of commissioning and subtitling the films works slightly differently than in other areas of the subtitling industry. John Miller, however, noted that the deadline situation is getting worse, and sometimes producers may wait until their film is selected for a festival before commissioning the subtitles.³¹³ The subtitlers usually work at a rate of around 200 subtitles per day, or 50 subtitles an hour.³¹⁴ Those rates do not include time for proofreading or checking the work; Cynthia Schoch notes ‘the revision process after that can be a reel every 2 days, and then time to solve outstanding translation problems’. A feature film can require around 1200-1500 subtitles.³¹⁵ It is easy to see, then, why 3 days or even a week would be a very challenging timescale within which to subtitle such challenging films as those examined in this thesis.

Though time scales and the commission process are similar for most of the respondents, it is interesting to note that they do not all work in the same manner. When asked whether they do their own spotting, the subtitlers’ responses varied from ‘never’, to ‘not usually’, to others who have purchased software and are

³¹⁰ Given that the questionnaires were not anonymous, the subtitlers were not explicitly asked about rates, but personal communication with one of them revealed that even for one subtitler there is significant variation in the rate paid for each job.

³¹¹ Cynthia Schoch mentioned one film she worked on where she had only three days for the task. Cynthia Schoch, Questionnaire Response.

³¹² Cantet; Burley, ‘Questionnaire Response’.

³¹³ John Miller, Questionnaire Response.

³¹⁴ Questionnaire responses from Cynthia Schoch, Charles Masters, Ian Burley, Siobhan O’Neill and Mariette Kelley.

³¹⁵ Charles Masters, Questionnaire response.

now increasing the amount of spotting they do.³¹⁶ Some of the subtitlers are resistant to spotting themselves, and the reasons for this vary, some maintain that they are simply not trained for it, and it therefore takes them too long to be economical. Ian Burley notes that there are a number of reasons why he tries to avoid spotting work himself, indicating that it cannot be billed under the ‘auteur’ status which subtitlers have in France, and so the earnings would have to be declared separately. It is also a task that technicians have been trained to do, and he notes that many of the trained technicians are now losing their jobs due to these changes in subtitling practices.³¹⁷

Many of the subtitlers work with subtitling software, which is not always the case in today’s industry - this means that they all work with a copy of the film. Half of the subtitlers use Annotation Edit, which is Mac-compatible subtitling software.³¹⁸ The other half use EZTitles.³¹⁹ Although they do not all carry out their own spotting, they do return the subtitles in .srt format, and some of them indicated that they adjust the timecodes slightly as they work. Thus, where technical aspects of the subtitles are concerned, it is difficult to know how far the timing of the subtitles, and reading speeds, are influenced by the subtitler, without speaking to the subtitler working on each specific film. It is also worth noting that it may be less common in France for subtitlers to do the spotting as well as translation, given the complications this results in where taxes and bureaucracy are concerned.

In addition to the presence of ATAA in France, and therefore relatively good rates and working conditions in France compared to some other contexts, the questionnaire responses revealed that in the majority of cases, the subtitlers attend a *simulation*:

³¹⁶ Personal correspondence.

³¹⁷ Burley, ‘Questionnaire Response’.

³¹⁸ ‘Annotation Edit’, 2017
<http://www.zeitanker.com/content/tools/zeitanker_tools/zeitanker_annotation_edit/> [accessed 29 August 2017].

³¹⁹ ‘Home | EZTitles’ <<http://www.eztitles.com/>> [accessed 29 August 2017].

... where we sit down and watch the film to check that all the subtitles are in the right place, etc. This is usually done with the director present.³²⁰

This stage in the process was returned to in the follow-up questions sent to the subtitlers. All but one of the subtitlers responded to the additional questionnaire, and indicated that most of the time they did attend such an event.³²¹ Many of them highlighted the valuable input they receive at this stage, even where the director/producer does not speak English well. Indeed, Mariette Kelley wrote:

... it's vital [because] it gives me perspective [...] Some clients feel their English isn't good enough to judge the English or make themselves useful. I find that, in a majority of cases, they are almost always useful. They ask surprising questions that lead to you reconsidering your choices... give you behind the scenes information that shed[s] light on a specific scene, etc. I have one client who now considers it unnecessary to simulate when we work together and I deeply regret his choice. I'm never as confident on the final outcome as when there's been a simulation.³²²

This indicates the presence of fruitful communication between director/producer and subtitler in the majority of cases of *banlieue* film translation. The practice of *simulations* in subtitling feature films is one which has not been discussed elsewhere, and thus sets apart the subtitling of *banlieue* film (and arguably feature films in France more generally, though the questionnaires focussed on subtitling *banlieue* film specifically) from subtitling in other contexts. This is particularly interesting given the new approach adopted in this thesis, which attempts to study *banlieue* films as political interventions, and in relation to the intentions of the directors who made them. Contact and discussions between the subtitler and director suggest that the intentions and thoughts of the director are considered important in the subtitling of the films. A functionalist approach to the analysis of subtitled *banlieue* film which takes into account the directors' intentions therefore seems appropriate in the circumstances. In the follow-up questions, the subtitlers were asked to whom/what they aimed to be faithful in their translation of *banlieue* films. Most of the subtitlers indicated that they were faithful to the director's message, and this relates to the macro-micro analysis

³²⁰ Burley, 'Questionnaire Response'.

³²¹ Questionnaire responses from: Cynthia Schoch, Ian Burley, John Miller, Sionnan O'Neill, Mariette Kelley.

³²² Mariette Kelley, Questionnaire Response.

undertaken in this thesis, whereby the paratextual information is analysed in order to gain an understanding of the director's intentions, and the subtitles are analysed closely to ascertain how any linguistic manifestations of those messages are presented in the English subtitled version.

The subtitlers were asked specifically about what they saw to be the main difficulties of subtitling *banlieue* films, and some of the factors mentioned here allow for explicit links to be drawn between the industry reality of working on the subtitling of the *langage de banlieue* into English, and the methodology adopted in this thesis. Three of the subtitlers mentioned the speed of the dialogue in many *banlieue* films as being one specific challenge they faced when working to subtitle the *langage de banlieue* into English. They were highlighting this for two reasons. Firstly, two of them noted that fast-paced dialogue can prove challenging when it comes to writing subtitles which are in synchrony with the dialogue, Ian Burley mentioned that this can result in 'less room for the translation'.³²³ Cynthia Schoch explicitly highlighted readability in relation to this. The technical analysis which will be undertaken in the next section of this chapter will allow for a close examination of the readability of the subtitles. Thus, the subtitles will be studied in relation to factors such as reading speeds and maximum and minimum character count in order to see how far they meet the recommendations and conventions for these. It has already been established that in most cases, the subtitlers do not spot the films themselves, but it was mentioned by one of them that she *does* tweak the timecodes on occasion, and for this reason works with subtitling software.³²⁴ In addition, even without changing timecodes, in some cases the subtitler could condense the subtitle text in order to reduce reading speeds; '...the language itself is often somewhat redundant or repetitive, making it possible to condense'.³²⁵

The second reason for which the subtitlers mentioned the speed of the dialogue in their responses was the impact this can have on comprehension of the source language dialogue. Charles Masters highlighted difficulty in comprehension when it comes to the SLD, noting that this is heightened by the speed of the dialogue.

³²³ Burley, 'Questionnaire Response'; Schoch.

³²⁴ Kelley.

³²⁵ Schoch.

However, he also notes that ‘the whole point... is, to some extent, to have a “private” language not readily understood by outsiders from that group’.³²⁶ Indeed, these responses are very much in line with the discussion of the features of the *langage de banlieue* which took place in Chapter One, indicating that although the subtitlers in question are dealing with fictional dialogue in film, the features of the SLD are often similar to those identified in ethnographic studies.³²⁷

In addition to the challenges related to the speed of the characters’ dialogue, some of the subtitlers mentioned the challenge of rendering the *langage de banlieue* in English. They noted issues with translating into an English dialect, and how such an approach may not be appropriate for all members of the Target Audience. Charles Masters refers to the challenges of selecting an appropriate dialect, questioning whether it is

an advantage to find an obscure slang word that not everyone in the putative audience will know means “father”, or is it clearer to dispense with any attempt at capturing the flavour of the language and just use a common word like “dad” or “pa” for the sake of clarity?

He concludes that he ‘tend[s] to opt for the latter’.³²⁸ In Hamaidia’s case study of *La haine*, she highlights some subtitles which convey the ‘literal meaning’ of the SLD without indicating the presence of slang.³²⁹ Sionann O’Neill expressed similar views:

You need to keep it natural and fresh and not get bogged down trying too hard. Like with any subtitling job, you want your subtitles to disappear. You want people in the film, not in the subtitles. This can of course mean sacrificing color in the interest of light.³³⁰

Indeed, here we return to the traditional view that subtitles should not be noticed, and that ‘subtitlers should never be drawing too much attention to their invaluable but preferably “invisible” work.’³³¹ This is one of the great debates in the translation of dialects, and often it seems that the subtitler must choose

³²⁶ Masters.

³²⁷ Goudaillier, p. 10; Duchêne, p. 35.

³²⁸ Masters.

³²⁹ Hamaidia, pp. 9–10.

³³⁰ Sionann O’Neill, Questionnaire response.

³³¹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 192.

between translating into standard language and eliminating difference, or writing imaginative translations which draw attention to themselves. It will be interesting to consider whether the subtitles studied for this thesis succeed in demonstrating difference without 'standing out' when that is considered inappropriate.

If a subtitler does make the decision to translate source language dialect into target language dialect, they face, as was mentioned above, the challenge of selecting the appropriate TL dialect. Mariette Kelley mentions the challenge of writing a subtitle which is 'understandable by as wide an English-speaking audience as possible'. She notes 'I tend to prefer writing something that feels right vs. something that say the Korean audience will understand right off the bat, unless the director or producer insists otherwise'.³³² It seems that many of the subtitlers would opt for a more standard rendering of a certain phrase rather than compromise readability. The above-mentioned issue of rendering dialect-for-dialect arose in Mével's case study of the subtitles for *La haine*, in particular in relation to the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as a translation for the *langage de banlieue*. This question also arose in other questionnaire responses. John Miller pointed out that one of the main challenges of subtitling *banlieue* film is

Trying to render it in 'mid-Atlantic'. You can't use Cockney or any other regional English, so it does tend to be watered down to what you expect people with a reasonable grasp of English to understand.

This is linked to the fact that the subtitles are often initially commissioned for film festivals; a point which should be highlighted in relation to the examination of the subtitles for a British English audience in this thesis. Indeed, the subtitles are not necessarily *written* with a British English audience in mind, but when they are added to a Region 2 DVD for a European Anglophone audience, then it might be suggested that becomes the audience for that translated version. Considering audience design here from the subtitler's perspective, there is no clear-cut primary audience for *banlieue* film in general, and it was mentioned earlier that asking specific questions about subtitlers' work on films from a long time ago is not appropriate. The subtitlers were asked explicitly about the choice of British and American English, or being requested to translate into 'mid-Atlantic English'.

³³² Kelley.

This is a particularly interesting point which will be returned to throughout this thesis. Mariette Kelley (the bilingual subtitler) is Franco-American, and therefore a native US English speaker; Sionann O'Neill and Cynthia Schoch are also American-English speakers. The other three are British-English speakers. Mariette Kelley notes that she does not 'attempt to be able to write British English', and Cynthia Schoch states that anyone who hires her knows that 'they will get American English'. Interestingly, in the follow-up questionnaires, Mariette Kelley notes 'I don't really believe in mid-Atlantic English. Just as I don't believe that a British translator can pull off sounding American consistently, or vice versa.' This can be linked to the generally accepted practice of translators working into their mother tongue, and Kelley suggests that when translating work with more slang, you '[rely] more on the short cuts, jokes and idioms of your mother culture'. Ian Burley tends to agree with this, he writes:

Being of British origin, I subtitle into British English. Producers know that and if one of them does request American English, I suggest that they contact an American colleague. The economics of subtitling mean that it's impossible to produce multiple versions in English more suitable to Great Britain, Ireland, the USA, Australia, Canada, etc. So I stick to what I know. In the case of the USA, distributors are notorious for altering our subtitles without our consent anyway.³³³

One area of interest in the case studies, then, will be to examine how far the subtitles in question tend towards one particular variety of English. However, it is clear to see from the quotation above that the final product may have been altered since the subtitler submitted their translation. Again, this makes audience design problematic in this case. Given the subtitling process, and the practice of clients or distributors altering subtitles without consultation with the subtitler, it is entirely possible that the subtitles are worked on by a number of people with different audiences in mind.

Although many of the subtitlers suggested that they only translated into their native variety of English, they were not all in agreement. Charles Masters noted:

The British, US issue would no doubt apply more if one knew that the subtitles were destined for either of those specific markets. Usually, the subtitling I do is destined primarily for the international sales market (since the films often do not already have distribution deals in

³³³ Ian Burley, Follow-up Questionnaire Response.

either the UK or US), so I tend to go for a ‘mid-Atlantic’ tone, and try to avoid terms that are too culturally specific. The audience may well include international festival audiences, or international buyers from elsewhere in Europe, Asia, etc., who rely on the English to understand the film, but whose level of English is not necessarily to the standard of native English speakers. I try to bear this in mind.³³⁴

The above quotation has multiple implications. Firstly, it relates back to the point that the target audience for the subtitles is not necessarily a clearly-defined, homogenous group of people when they are initially written. This kind of professional environment arguably makes it very difficult for the subtitler to take an informed approach to audience design. Secondly, it raises questions regarding the translation of a culturally-specific context, and culturally-embedded language for an incredibly broad audience. It highlights issues regarding dialect-for-dialect and culture-for-culture replacement strategies, since there will always be members of such a broad audience who may be unfamiliar with the target culture chosen to replace that present in the film. Finally, where readability is concerned, it might be suggested that the most appropriate reading speeds would be lower than those recommended by Díaz-Cintas and Remael. However, although the subtitles for *La squale*, *L’esquive* and *Divines* may have been written with an international audience in mind, they are studied in this thesis in relation to the context of reception defined through the paratextual analysis, and will therefore be examined with a British English context in mind.

The valuable information offered by the subtitlers who responded to the questionnaires has shaped the analysis which follows, in that certain issues which were highlighted in the responses were sought out in the subtitles. These were: register, understanding the SLD, the speed of the dialogue, dealing with the specific features of the *langage de banlieue* (*verlan*, argot, culturally-specific terms), trying to render the subtitles in ‘Mid-Atlantic English’. Knowing that the subtitlers found these aspects of the dialogue challenging to translate means that analysis of those aspects in translation will provide useful data which subtitlers can use to address those challenges in future. For instance, in relation to culturally-specific terms, Charles Masters gave the following example:

³³⁴ Masters.

For a word like “*feuj*”, the clear meaning is Jew (or Jewish), and despite being slang, it doesn’t seem to carry any pejorative overtones in itself, whereas most of the slang terms for Jew in English would tend to be slightly, if not very offensive (ie, unlikely to be used by a Jewish person about themselves or their community). So I would ignore the linguistic twist of the word *feuj* and just translate it as Jew/ish, in this case.³³⁵

This is a clear example of one of the specific challenges faced by subtitlers working with this variety of French - that of explicit, but not derogatory, references to race and religion - and is one aspect of the *langage de banlieue* which was highlighted in Chapter One, but also by Hamaidia in her case study of *La haine*.³³⁶ As such, the case study films will also be studied for examples of slang terms for race and religion, to ascertain how they are dealt with in the subtitles, and what effect is produced by the combination of the strands of the polysemiotic network, including the English subtitles, in the given context of reception. The same will be done with other examples of *langage de banlieue*-specific vocabulary, which has been highlighted as challenging, not only by scholars working on the subtitling of *banlieue* film, but also by the professional subtitlers interviewed here. Some of the aspects of the technical analysis can also be linked to factors arising in the subtitler surveys, particularly where readability and the speed of the dialogue are concerned. In addition, on top of emerging as an important part of Mével’s discussion of the subtitles for *La haine*, the implementation and appropriateness of a dialect-for-dialect approach, and of using AAVE in the subtitles in particular will be examined in *La squala*, *L’esquive* and *Divines*.

What has become clear from the subtitler questionnaire responses, is that they have all had different experiences in terms of their experience of directors’ input, and that they have different approaches to dealing with the challenges of subtitling *banlieue* film into English. One clear piece of evidence for this is their responses to the question ‘do you ever use “incorrect” syntax in a subtitle to reflect linguistic errors in the dialogue of the characters?’ The responses ranged from ‘Hell yes!’ to ‘I almost always decide against it in the end because too often, it just looks like a typo.’ However, many of the subtitlers noted that if it was possible to include incorrect syntax without it looking like there were ‘mistakes’

³³⁵ Masters.

³³⁶ Hamaidia, p. 8.

in the subtitles, then it was a strategy they tended to use. I will be looking out for such strategies as non-standard syntax and non-standard spellings which may appear in the case study subtitles.³³⁷

It would have been very useful to receive questionnaire responses from the subtitlers who worked on each of the films selected for case study analysis. In practice, this was not possible, since some of the subtitlers were difficult to get in touch with, and most of them are, of course, extremely busy. In addition, given that some of the films were subtitled a number of years ago, specific questions about strategies applied and translation solutions would be inappropriate after so much time has passed. Nevertheless, in the case of *L'esquive*, I am lucky to be able to draw on information gained through personal correspondence with Ian Burley who, after an unpleasant experience working on the subtitles for the film, asked to have his name removed. This will be discussed in more detail in the thematic and paratextual analysis of the film. Other aspects of the subtitlers' responses will be referred to throughout the thesis where relevant and appropriate.

Technical Considerations

The next stage of the analysis was to consider the subtitles for the three case study films in terms of readability, which, as can be established from the subtitler responses discussed above, can be a challenge for translators working with *banlieue* film. The issue of readability is closely related to the discussion of constraints which took place in Chapter One. This technical analysis, combined with the earlier discussion of the professional context will allow for the contextualisation of the later in-depth subtitle analysis in terms of the context of reception, and the production and general technical readability of the subtitles.

³³⁷ Examples given include "dunno", "gimme", "gotta".' O'Neill.

In order to fully examine the subtitles in relation to these constraints, some of the more technical aspects of film should be considered. The timecodes of subtitles are recorded in hours, minutes, seconds and frames:

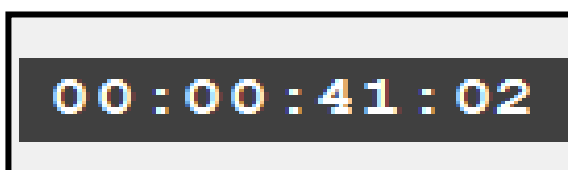


Figure 4 - An example of a timecode presented in hh:mm:ss:ff

Most European films are displayed at a rate of 25 fps (frames per second). This rate describes the number of individual images recorded per second; a higher framerate would indicate a more accurate recording of movement (the more individual images saved, the more accurate the representation of a moving object's location when a film is paused). Generally accepted framerates vary across the globe; in America, for example, films have an fps rate of 29.97.³³⁸

Díaz-Cintas and Remael suggest that a subtitle should be on screen for a minimum of 1, and a maximum of 6 seconds, since if a subtitle disappears too quickly, this may confuse the viewer, who could feel as if they are missing out.³³⁹ Similarly, if a subtitle is left on screen for too long, the viewer may re-read it, possibly missing the start of the following subtitle, or simply feeling confused.³⁴⁰ The longer a subtitle, the longer it will take to read. Given restrictions imposed by the size of the screen, there are also recommended character limits for subtitles. There is variation in recommended character limits, which differ according to the requirements of the commissioner, but also according to the type of screen. For instance, the maximum number of characters per line for TV is normally 37, but can be set as low as 33 and as high as 41.³⁴¹ For DVD and Cinema subtitles, the maximum is usually 40 characters, but Netflix sets a limit of 42 characters per

³³⁸ 'Final Cut Pro 7 User Manual: What Is Frame Rate?'
<<https://documentation.apple.com/en/finalcutpro/usermanual/index.html#chapter=D%26section=1%26tasks=true>> [accessed 14 September 2017].

³³⁹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, pp. 89–90.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 85.

³⁴¹ Ibid. p. 84

line.³⁴² Generally, a subtitle should be a maximum of two lines long, and displayed at the bottom of the screen, in order to avoid interfering with the image too much.³⁴³ A recommended average reading speed is used to measure a subtitle's adherence to the constraints of time and space. This reading speed is measured in words per minute (wpm), and the recommended maximum varies according to the audience and the platform. A viewer's reading speed may be affected by various factors, including their age, their level of education, and the extent to which they are used to reading text on screen. Recommended reading speeds, therefore, differ according to the intended audience, and the platform (it may be different for cinema and TV, for example). Different TV channels or production companies may also have their own guidelines where reading speed is concerned. In the UK, reading speed is usually set at 180wpm, but again, Netflix has slightly different regulations, with a recommendation of 200wpm. These technical considerations will be examined further in Chapter 3, but they are designed to allow for maximum readability, which means that the viewer can comfortably read the text on screen, without feeling as though there is too much or too little time.

In order to examine readability, an .srt file of the subtitles for each film was imported into WinCAPS Qu4ntum subtitling software to run timing checks in terms of reading speed.³⁴⁴ All three .srt files were also analysed using Black Box subtitle analysis freeware, which can be used to analyse subtitles statistically in terms of minimum and maximum durations, character limits and reading speeds.³⁴⁵ Black Box works exclusively in characters per second, so WinCAPS was used for reading speed analysis in words per minute. Conversions between the two would be inaccurate. Indeed, Martí Ferriol notes that different pieces of subtitling software do not offer the same calculation of reading speed for the same subtitle examples.³⁴⁶ Reading speed calculations offered by current software are therefore

³⁴² Ibid; 'English Template Timed Text Style Guide', *Netflix | Partner Help Center* <<http://backlothelp.netflix.com/hc/en-us/articles/219375728-English-Template-Timed-Text-Style-Guide>> [accessed 24 February 2017].

³⁴³ Karamitroglou.

³⁴⁴ 'WINCAPS Q4 Subtitling Software', *Screen Systems* <<https://subtitling.com/products/subtitle-create/create/wincaps-q4-subtitling-software/>> [accessed 1 December 2017].

³⁴⁵ 'Black Box Download | SourceForge.Net' <<https://sourceforge.net/projects/usablackbox/>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

³⁴⁶ José Luis Martí Ferriol, 'Subtitle Reading Speed: A New Tool for Its Estimation', *Babel*, 59.4 (2004), 406–20 (pp. 409–11).

not precise and will not form a significant part of the subtitle analysis in this thesis. The analysis of these technical aspects of the subtitles will provide an insight into how far the subtitles meet the norms and conventions of subtitling in the UK. Analysis of these factors will contribute to an understanding of the overall readability of the subtitles. If, for instance, the analysis reveals that the subtitles all have very high reading speeds, then the impact of unusual slang terms featured in the subtitle text could be greater than unusual words in subtitles with very low reading speeds.

‘Black Box’ subtitling freeware was designed by J. David González-Iglesias González, and analyses an .srt file according to certain parameters set by the user. It provides statistics related to subtitle length, line length, minimum and maximum duration, and reading speed.. It was particularly useful in determining the longest subtitle lines, and for statistics concerned with duration and subtitle length (e.g. one line vs. two lines). In the first instance, the segmentation of the subtitles will be considered, followed by a discussion of reading speeds and duration for each set of subtitles. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn based on this analysis, which will offer a general understanding of the technical considerations as applied to each set of subtitles.

Line Breaks

Most subtitles that appear on TV, in the cinema, and on DVD in the UK adhere to the guidelines for a maximum of two lines agreed on by Karamitroglou and Díaz-Cintas and Remael.³⁴⁷ The subtitles studied here were no exception to the norm, and none of the case study films included subtitles of more than two lines in length. In addition to a recommendation of no more than two lines per subtitle, the Code of Good Subtitling Practice recommends:

Wherever two lines of unequal length are used, the upper line should preferably be shorter to keep as much of the image as free as possible and in left-justified subtitles in order to reduce unnecessary eye movement.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Karamitroglou; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 82.

³⁴⁸ Carroll and Ivarsson.

This recommendation is related to aesthetics, since Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that a shorter upper line will interfere less with the image.³⁴⁹ It has also been suggested that a longer upper line could increase the reading time; the gaze would have further to move from the end of the upper line to the start of the lower line.³⁵⁰ However, as with any translation activity, there are also other factors to be taken into consideration, and the subtitler must prioritise. Karamitroglou notes that the line breaks in a subtitle should be arranged in such a way that they ‘coincide with the highest syntactic node possible.’³⁵¹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael explain this in the following manner:

When we segment a sentence, we force the brain to pause its linguistic processing for a while, until the eyes trace the next piece of linguistic information. In cases where line breaks are inevitable, therefore, we should try to force this pause on the brain at a point where the semantic load has already managed to convey a satisfactorily complete piece of information.³⁵²

Thus, these recommendations are related to ensuring maximum readability; the segmentation within a subtitle could reduce readability were it to break at a point where the viewer had not yet received a complete ‘unit of grammatical sense’. Therefore, in order to examine the subtitles in relation to these factors, there are a few issues to consider. In the first instance, all subtitles with a longer upper line were identified in each film. Then, all subtitles that featured two speakers were eliminated, as each line could be considered a complete locution that could be processed by the viewer without too many issues. Thirdly, of the remaining one-speaker subtitles with a longer upper line, all subtitles with punctuation at the end of the upper line were eliminated from the selection. This was a very straightforward way to identify those subtitles that are broken into phrases that could be processed individually. The remaining subtitles were studied in more detail to ascertain whether they could have been displayed differently to improve

³⁴⁹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 87.

³⁵⁰ Jan Ivarsson, *Subtitling for the Media: A Handbook of an Art* (Stockholm: Transedit, 1992). cited in Delia Chiaro, ‘Issues in Audiovisual Translation’, in *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Edited By Jeremy Munday (Oxon and New York: Routledge Ltd, 2009), pp. 141–65 (p. 151).

³⁵¹ Karamitroglou.

³⁵² Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 173.

aesthetics and readability, by reducing the length of the upper line whilst retaining a segmentation at an appropriate grammatical point in the subtitle.

Of the 962 subtitles for *La squale*, all were centred, and 155 of those with two lines were identified as having a longer upper line.³⁵³ 69 included text for two speakers, and were therefore removed from the selection. 65 of the remaining subtitles had punctuation at the end of the top line - this would generally indicate that the line break occurs in between units of sense. This may not necessarily suggest that the subtitles have been segmented in the only way possible, although further analysis of those subtitles would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the analysis will focus on the remaining 21 subtitles, which were displayed with a longer upper line, with only one speaker and no punctuation at the end of the first line. It should be noted here that these 21 subtitles equate to only 2.2% of the total number of subtitles, which is not a large proportion of them at all.

In terms of the subtitles for *L'esquive*, there were 1930 centred subtitles in total. 354 of those subtitles had two lines, and a longer upper line. 108 were discounted from further analysis as they had two speakers, a further 162 had punctuation at the end of the upper line, leaving 84 subtitles (4.4% of the total number) to be examined more closely.

There were 1170 English subtitles for *Divines*, and these were generally centred. Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that subtitles on DVD are usually centred, and this is the case for cinema too, as this offers the best viewing experience to all audience members who might be sitting in a large film theatre. They also note that this is favourable due to the majority of action taking place in the centre of the screen.³⁵⁴ It has already been established that in most cases, English subtitles for *banlieue* film are written for film festivals and then used on DVD - the centring of subtitles in the three films studied is therefore not surprising. In *Divines*, however, the subtitles did occasionally move to a different position on the screen where that would allow for a better viewer experience in terms of leaving other important information in the visual channel unobscured. Of the 230 two-line subtitles for

³⁵³ 1 subtitle appeared at the very end of the running-time, and contained the subtitler's name: David Aronson.

³⁵⁴ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 88.

Divines, there were 110 with a noticeably longer upper line, though 49 of those had two speakers. As with the other subtitles, any with punctuation at the end of the upper line (and only one speaker) were also discounted from the analysis, as for reasons of scope it was assumed that they were segmented into the best logical line-break in terms of units of grammatical sense. This left 19 subtitles (or 1.6% of the total number) for further analysis. Table 1 summarises the above statistics for all three films.

Table 1 - Line breaks, formatting and punctuation

	<i>La squala</i>	<i>L'esquive</i>	<i>Divines</i>
Total Subtitles	963	1930	1170
One Line	626 (65.0%)	1210 (62.7%)	940 (80.3%)
Two Line	337 (35.0%)	720 (37.3%)	230 (19.7%)
Longer Upper Line	155 (16.1%)	354 (18.3%)	110 (9.4%)
Two Speakers	69 (7.2%)	108 (5.6%)	49 (4.2%)
Punctuation	65 (6.7%)	162 (8.4%)	42 (3.6%)
Remaining for in-depth analysis	21 (2.2%)	84 (4.4%)	19 (1.6%)

From the above table it can be seen that a rather small number of subtitles for each film has the potential to pose issues in terms of segmentation - the majority are arguably distributed in the best way.

Although the films were released across a period of 15 years, just three films from across that period would not really offer much in terms of concrete information regarding the evolution over time of technical factors for subtitling *banlieue* film. However, what is interesting here is what might be inferred about the genre as a

whole, and how it is subtitled. Further analysis of those subtitles that may not be displayed in the best possible manner will inform later discussion of the subtitles. With this in mind, it will be useful to examine those identified as possibly flouting the aforementioned guidelines and conventions. This will help in ascertaining how far these subtitles might have a negative impact on the viewing experience. When combined with poor segmentation or display, the effect of any confusing language, for example, might further diminish the viewing experience. However, it should be noted at this point that even the percentage of subtitles in each case that have been identified as requiring further analysis, does not suggest the need to be concerned in this respect. The questionnaire responses revealed that the subtitler is not always responsible for the technical aspects of subtitling, so this is a point where the collaborative nature of subtitling might have had an impact upon readability - someone who does not speak the target language distributing the subtitle text would not as easily spot alternative line break options.

Of those subtitles for *La squale* examined in detail, a number of them displayed the most logical segmentation in terms of grammar. However, there were some subtitles in which the distribution of text between the two lines could have been altered in order to have a shorter upper line whilst maintaining a grammatically logical segmentation of the text. For example:

S0627

I still don't know more about
my father.

I still don't know	(18 characters)
more about my father	(21)

There were 9 subtitles in which the segmentation could have been altered in this manner, this equates to less than 1% of the subtitles studied. It can be concluded that in the majority of cases where the subtitle had a longer upper line, the line break was placed in the most logical place in terms of grammar - thus presenting the information in complete pieces of information that allowed the viewer to comfortably read them, without forgetting any previous information, or needing to re-read sections. Maximum readability therefore seems to have been achieved in most subtitles for *La squale*, where the technical constraints examined here are concerned.

In most cases, when the selected subtitles for *L'esquive* were studied further, the subtitles were segmented at a grammatically logical point; in fact, the line break often came just before the conjunction 'but' or 'and', thus indicating that the subtitle had been split with one clause on each line:

E1225 - 01:07:07:02 01:07:10:07

The chandelier's beautiful
but you don't see it.

In a very small number of cases, it was possible to move the line break so that the upper line was shorter, and the subtitle was still broken into logical phrases. This could have increased readability, by reducing the amount of eye movement required for the viewer's gaze to travel from the end of the first line to the start of the second line. However, given that the number of cases in which moving the line break would have increased readability was once again very small, the data suggests that there was not a great deal of room for improvement where the technical aspects of subtitle readability for *L'esquive* are concerned.

In the subtitles for *Divines*, there were also a number of cases in which an alternative distribution of text would not improve the readability of the subtitle. However, in a small number of cases it was also possible to move the line break to an earlier point in the text and still display the text in sense blocks:

D0143 - 00:11:04:23 00:11:07:12

Three hundred for your shopping
at Leader Price.

Which could be redistributed as:

Three hundred
for your shopping at Leader Price.

However, these alternative segmentations raise the question of how far, in centred subtitles, a shorter upper line would actually increase subtitle readability. When the above examples are both displayed as centred subtitles, the distance for the eye to move between the end of the top line and the start of the second line does not differ hugely:

Three hundred for your shopping
at Leader Price.

Three hundred
for your shopping at Leader Price.

When the amount of text displayed on screen remains the same, and only the distribution of that text between two lines is adjusted, this will arguably have an impact on line-to-line eye movement in a very small number of cases. Given that the Code of Good Subtitling Practice was written in 1998, when it was perhaps more common to see left-aligned subtitles, it might be time to question whether these should be updated to reflect new norms in subtitling. Or, to take differences related to medium into account, since subtitles for the cinema are often centred, and that this also seems to be happening more and more in TV nowadays too.³⁵⁵

Through the above analysis, it emerged that in all three sets of subtitles there were cases in which two lines could be displayed on one. Of course, one additional consideration here would be proportional lettering. In those lines that are particularly long, with several wider letters such as ‘m’ or ‘w’, for example, it is easy to see why the decision might have been made to split those subtitles into two lines. Indeed, Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that ‘especially in the cinema, and if the subtitles are centred, some subtitling companies do prefer for aesthetic reasons to have two shorter lines of equal length rather than one exceedingly long line...’.³⁵⁶ Thus, the primary counter argument for a subtitle with one long line rather than two short lines would be related to aesthetics. However, it might also be suggested that one long line would increase the amount of time taken for the viewer to move their gaze from the end of the subtitle to glance at the action, which would usually be occurring in the middle of the screen. In all three films, one-line subtitles are displayed on the bottom of the two lines available, and therefore cover much less of the image than two-liners. In order to ascertain which of these options offers the optimum viewer experience, more reception studies would be required, to examine how far these factors have an impact on the

³⁵⁵ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, pp. 87–88.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 86.

viewing experience and on the time taken to read the subtitles by viewers. An eye-tracking study could be one way to test these factors.

In terms of line length, the two longest subtitle lines in *La squale* were both 41 characters; the second line of subtitle 58, and the second line of subtitle 756. These subtitles did include a high number of punctuation marks though; ‘...’ and three apostrophes respectively. This would mean that although the character limit was 41, the lines would still arguably be much shorter than those with less punctuation and the same number of characters. Within the subtitles analysed further for readability, there were two subtitles in which the total number of characters was 37, but the subtitles were still distributed between two lines. This may also be the case in some of the other subtitles (where the upper line was not longer than the lower line); 37 characters could feasibly be displayed on one single subtitle line - and indeed this is done in later subtitles.

S0227

Fuck. They’ve got nothing	(25)
for blacks.	(11)

Fuck. They’ve got nothing for blacks.	(37)
---------------------------------------	------

Clearly the total character limit was higher than 37 characters per line, since there are some subtitles with 38 characters in them, with no punctuation smaller than a question mark. Karamitroglou recommends that ‘Each subtitle line should allow around 35 characters[...] attempting to fit over 40 per subtitle line, reduces the legibility of the subtitles because the font size is also inevitably reduced.’³⁵⁷ In their 2007 book, Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that ‘for cinema and DVD a maximum of 40 characters seems to be the norm.’³⁵⁸ I would therefore suggest that those subtitles with a total of 37 characters or fewer would be better displayed on one single line of text, guidelines and text distribution permitting, as this would reduce the eye movement of the viewer and disrupt the remainder of the visual information to a lesser degree.

³⁵⁷ Karamitroglou.

³⁵⁸ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 84.

The longest subtitle line for *L'esquive* was shorter, at 38 characters, and the line displaying 38 characters featured two apostrophes. In fact, there were only 43 lines in the whole set of subtitles which contained 35 characters or more. It may be that in this case, the subtitler was given a particularly low character limit for the subtitles. Nevertheless, as with *La squala*, there were some subtitles that could arguably have been displayed in one line, for the same reasons as those offered above:

4070 - 00:24:51:29 00:24:54:18

Note this in your books
for tomorrow.

Subtitle 470 has a total of 37 characters, and could therefore be comfortably read by the audience if displayed on one line:

Note this in your books for tomorrow.

Indeed, the final case is particularly interesting in this respect. The two longest subtitle lines in the subtitles for *Divines* are both 42 characters; subtitle 73, line 1 and subtitle 302, line 1. As with the subtitles for *La squala* and *L'esquive*, the longest lines have more punctuation in them. However, there are 41-character subtitles, featuring a full-stop as their only punctuation. The subtitling guidelines for Netflix are freely available online, and these clearly state a maximum of 42 characters per line.³⁵⁹ Therefore, the following subtitle could be displayed on one line, thus reducing interference with the image and the need for the viewer's gaze to move from one line to another:

D660

Do it with the kebab box	(24)
on your head.	(13)

Do it with the kebab box on your head.	(38)
--	------

Without testing these alternatives with an eye tracking study, it is difficult to say how great an impact such changes might have on the viewing experience, but these suggestions would result in subtitles that interfere less with the other

³⁵⁹ 'English Template Timed Text Style Guide'.

information in the visual channel, and would not increase the subtitle reading speed. A study of a greater number of films would be necessary to say whether this increased character limit for the last of the case study films is indicative of a development of subtitling conventions over time, and of course, viewers of films on Netflix are able to pause and rewind a film, unlike those viewing in the cinema. However, their experience arguably does not differ too much from that of someone viewing a subtitled film on DVD.

Although the subtitles do adhere to recommendations concerning the maximum number of lines, Netflix has longer character limits, and the subtitles for all three films are sometimes distributed across two lines where they would fit in one line. The reasoning behind this is unclear, although Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that opinion varies on the use of one or two-line subtitles. They do state that a subtitle is usually only distributed over two lines ‘because the one-line subtitle would be very long...’, but this comes down to decisions usually made by the subtitler.³⁶⁰ However, given that the subtitler is not always responsible for the technical aspects of the work, it could be that in one or more of these cases the subtitler did not decide how the text would be distributed on screen.

Reading Speed

The subtitles for each film were analysed against reading speed recommendations using WinCAPS Qu4ntum subtitling software. Figure 5 below shows the configuration of the timing rules in WinCAPS to allow for a study of those subtitles where the reading speed exceeded 180wpm. WinCAPS automatically calculates a maximum subtitle display rate of 20% higher than the ‘default’, and in this case set the value to 216 words per minute.

³⁶⁰ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, pp. 85–86.

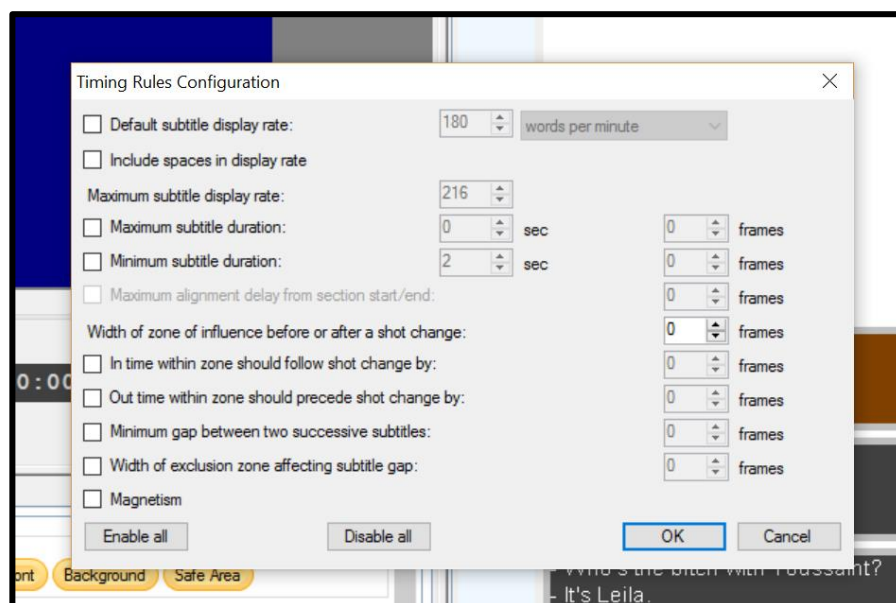


Figure 5 - WinCAPS Qu4ntum Timing Rules for Case Study Analysis
 Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by ScreenSystems.

There were 89 subtitles in *La squale* for which the reading speed exceeded 180wpm; only eight exceeded the recommended maximum subtitle display rate of 216wpm. These eight subtitles equate to 0.83% of the total number of subtitles. This analysis is useful as those subtitles highlighted here as having a particularly high reading speed of over 216wpm will be closely considered in the in-depth analysis of subtitles in context. It may also be useful to compare the subtitles for the three films in terms of the percentage of subtitles in each case that exceed this maximum reading speed.

Ian Burley, subtitler of *L'esquive* noted that the speed of the dialogue is one of the greatest challenges in subtitling *banlieue* film, and this has an impact on the reading speed of subtitles, how long they should be on screen for, and how much text they can include.³⁶¹ The reading speed of some of the subtitles for the film was quite low (as little as 38wpm), but many of them had a reading speed of between 100 and 160wpm. This is a rather low rate, considering Díaz-Cintas and Remael's recommended average of around 180wpm. However, it should be acknowledged that a slightly lower reading speed might allow for the use of more experimental language, and would give the viewer more time to focus on the action. On the other hand, there were also one or two subtitles with a very high reading speed, such as subtitle 0729, 'You broke up!' which had a reading speed

³⁶¹ Burley, 'Follow-up Questionnaire Response'.

of 220wpm. Such a large disparity in the reading speeds of subtitles within the same film is not recommended; it is suggested that ‘The duration of all subtitles within a production must adhere to a regular viewer reading rhythm’.³⁶² There does not seem to be any empirical research concerned with disparities in reading speed and the effect this would have on viewers. I would suggest that such irregularities could cause discomfort for the viewer, since a subtitle on screen for too little or too much time could cause the viewer to miss out on information, or reread subtitles. In this case, though, we know that Ian Burley did not spot and timecode the subtitles himself - this was carried out by a *technicien*.³⁶³ This is another element of the subtitling situation that goes against recommendations that the subtitler should undertake the spotting as well as the translation of dialogue.³⁶⁴ Burley uses Annotation Edit for his work, which allows the user to add timecodes and check reading speeds. However, if the final spotting is carried out by a *technicien*, then it is unclear how much influence he had over these elements.

In the subtitles for *Divines*, the reading speed exceeded the recommendation of 180wpm in 91 subtitles. However, the Netflix guidelines specify a reading speed of 200wpm for adults - it is not clear whether this is the recommended or the maximum display rate.³⁶⁵ Nevertheless, 23 subtitles exceeded the maximum reading speed of 216wpm. This equates to 2.0% of the total number of subtitles. The highest reading speed in the subtitles was for subtitle number 79, which had a reading speed of 325wpm:

D0079	325wpm	00:08:23:00 00:08:23:21
		Have a good afternoon.

This is 81% over the recommendation of 180wpm. The subtitle remains on screen for only 21 frames, and could therefore pose serious difficulties for the viewer. At this stage in the analysis, the subtitles are being examined from a purely technical perspective, but an analysis of this subtitle in-context may reveal that this could

³⁶² Carroll and Ivarsson.

³⁶³ Burley, ‘Follow-up Questionnaire Response’.

³⁶⁴ Carroll and Ivarsson.

³⁶⁵ ‘English Template Timed Text Style Guide’.

have been resolved through omission, condensation, or alteration of timecodes. It could be that there is not a great deal of action occurring at this point in the film, but I would still argue that 325wpm far exceeds a comfortable reading speed for the viewer.

Technical Analysis Conclusions

Although this discussion could go on to examine every instance of high reading speeds or poor segmentation in the subtitles, that would not necessarily be enlightening in terms of the subtitling of the genre in general, and the challenges the *langage de banlieue* can present in film translation. This technical analysis has offered an insight into reading speed and segmentation patterns in the three films, and will provide an understanding of these issues to inform the in-depth analysis. As has been noted here, those subtitles with particularly high reading speeds will be examined closely within the polysemiotic network and in light of the macro contextual analysis of the cultural context in which the films were released. The technical analysis of the subtitles is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 - Summary of technical analysis

	<i>La squala</i>	<i>L'esquive</i>	<i>Divines</i>
Running Time	1h40	1h57	1h45
Total Subtitles	963	1930	1170
Long Subtitles (>6s)	0	0	0
Short Subtitles (<1s)	62 (6.4%)	88 (4.6%)	62 (5.3%)
Long Lines (>40 characters)	2 (Both 41 characters)	0	4 (2x41, 2x42)
Subtitles with 1 Line	626 (65.0%)	1210 (62.7%)	940 (80.3%)
Subtitles with 2 lines	337 (35.0%)	720 (37.3%)	230 (19.7%)
> 2 lines	0	0	0
Fast >180wpm	89 (9.2%)	55 (2.9%)	91 (7.8%)
Super fast >216wpm	8 (0.8%)	3 (0.2%)	23 (2.0%)

Although many of the technical regulations discussed in this chapter are based on empirical research in terms of reading speeds and maximum and minimum reading

duration, I would also argue that these could now be considered norms.³⁶⁶ Toury describes norms as

the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community... into performance “instructions” appropriate for and applicable to concrete situations. These “instructions” specify what is prescribed and forbidden, as well as what is tolerated and permitted...³⁶⁷

As it is generally considered that subtitles should adhere to these reading speeds and character limits, such recommendations could now be described as norms, as they determine what is accepted in subtitling for a British audience. Indeed, Díaz-Cintas and Remael’s book is intended to serve as a textbook for students and teachers of subtitling, and therefore puts forward recommendations for the training of the next generation of professional subtitlers.³⁶⁸

In terms of the data collected during this analysis, all of the subtitles adhere to the norm regarding a maximum of two lines, and it would appear that they generally adhere to reading speed norms too. Nevertheless, in each case there are a relatively small number of subtitles that do not adhere to these norms. Since these subtitles have not been studied in relation to the commission or brief, it is hard to say who (whether the production company, the subtitler, or the director, for example) made certain technical decisions, or whether there were strict guidelines for the subtitler. An in-depth analysis of these factors would require a great deal more research into this specific aspect of the subtitles, and would certainly be time consuming in terms of testing the subtitles in a number of different software packages. Reading speed measurements are, of course, not the only way in which readability can be measured. Analysis of reading speeds and

³⁶⁶ Empirical research such as that carried out by d’Ydewalle et al. supports the 6-second rule on which many technical recommendations are based. However, Díaz-Cintas notes that the more recent elevated reading speed recommendation of 180wpm is due to ‘technical changes’ and increased exposure to text on screen. Géry d’Ydewalle and others, ‘Watching Subtitled Television Automatic Reading Behavior’, *Communication Research*, 18.5 (1991), 650–66; *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Jorge Díaz-Cintas, Benjamins Translation Library (BTL). EST Subseries, Volume 77 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008), p. 97.

³⁶⁷ Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies – and beyond Revised Edition*, Benjamins Translation Library, 2nd edn (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012), IV, p. 63.

³⁶⁸ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 1.

durations here has served to highlight key issues and flag up certain subtitles - in particular, those with a very high reading speed.

Although there were some instances in which the distribution of text could have been altered to allow for a shorter upper line whilst adhering to recommendations regarding segmentation, it is not clear how great an impact such changes could have on readability. In addition, there were very few cases in each film where this would have been advisable. There does not seem to be cause for concern in relation to line breaks in the subtitles examined, and these generally adhere to the recommendations.

There were more instances of subtitles exceeding a display rate of 216wpm in the subtitles for *Divines*, but Netflix does recommend a higher reading speed than that which is generally considered the norm.³⁶⁹ Since this data only offers a limited picture of the subtitling of three films within the genre, it would be interesting in future research to analyse this reading speed data for a much greater number of films. This would allow for a diachronic analysis of the average, maximum and minimum reading speed rates presented in English subtitles for French *banlieue* cinema over the last 15 years.

³⁶⁹ 'English Template Timed Text Style Guide'.

Chapter Four: Thematic and Paratextual Analysis

This chapter consists of an examination of the source culture and target culture contexts of release and the related paratexts. This analysis will also allow for identification of any socio-political messages or themes which were highlighted in the marketing materials, and which may inform the viewing experience - in the French context and the British context, but also for the subtitler. In addition, this analysis will provide some of the information necessary to ascertain a context of reception for the subtitles, and this will inform later readings of the subtitled films. In the first section, the films will be presented individually, in chronological order, for the sake of clarity. Links will be drawn between them, and in subsequent chapters the analysis will be presented thematically, in order to comment on the subtitling of *banlieue* film as a genre, and to bring multiple related examples from the different case study films into the discussion.

La Squale

The first film selected for case study analysis, Fabrice Genestal's *La squale*, was subtitled by David Aronson, a FR>EN subtitler who has worked on at least 70 films.³⁷⁰ Besides the page on the BFI website, it is difficult to find out much about him. It is unclear whether the list of film subtitles attributed to David Aronson on the BFI website is exhaustive, and the most recent film listed there was from 2009. Unfortunately, though an attempt was made to contact him via LinkedIn, and through other subtitler contacts, it was not possible to speak with Aronson.

Written by Genestal and Nathalie Vaillaud, *La squale* received 32,825 admissions at the French box office in its first week.³⁷¹ It was not officially released in US cinemas, and is rated as 2.9 out of five stars by the French press on *allociné*.³⁷² The film does not, therefore, appear to have been met with huge success in France; for comparison, five years earlier *La haine* had received 1,860,000

³⁷⁰ 'David Aronson', *BFI* <<http://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2bbf555e0a>> [accessed 31 October 2017].

³⁷¹ IMDb, 'La Squale (2000) - IMDb' <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0250744/>> [accessed 31 October 2017].

³⁷² AlloCiné, 'La Squale: Les Critiques Presse' <<http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm-27103/critiques/presse/>> [accessed 31 October 2017].

admissions at the box office.³⁷³ The film's success at home will have affected its promotion abroad, and I would suggest that given these figures *La squale* was not expected to be a hit overseas.

Plot and Themes

La squale follows the arrival of Désirée in the cité where Toussaint and his fellow gang members reside. Alongside Désirée's story, we see how Toussaint and his gang treat women in the *banlieue*; the film opens with a scene in which Toussaint and the other members of his gang rape a young woman in what might be described as a 'gang ritual'. Désirée falls for Toussaint, and they enter into a relationship until she walks in on him trying to rape another girl from school, Yasmine. Désirée manages to stop Toussaint, threatening him with a knife, but Yasmine runs away and Toussaint beats Désirée. At this point, Désirée has already learned that she is pregnant with Toussaint's child, and following his treatment of her, decides to exact revenge. She sets Toussaint up to make it appear that he has turned on his gang. They confront Toussaint and stab him to death. Désirée and Yasmine develop an unexpected friendship, and the film ends with them lying on a beach in Brighton, Désirée stating that if the baby is a girl, they will keep her, but if it's a boy, they will have an abortion. The theme of the treatment of women, and relationships between women and men thus runs right through to the final moments of the film.

Considering these key themes, there are already certain translation issues which can be identified at this point. Gang rapes are referred to in the *banlieues* as *les tournantes* - and also by the phrase *faire tourner une fille*; the same expression might be used to describe the passing around of a joint.³⁷⁴ Herein lies the first translation issue, this is a central theme in the film and the translation of terminology pertaining to gang rape is key in conveying attitudes towards it within the *banlieue*. The additional themes of gang activity and drug dealing could be linked to Goudaillier's discussion of linguistic themes for which the *banlieusards* seem to have a particularly rich vocabulary, and this is reflected in the film's

³⁷³ IMDb, 'La Haine (1995) - IMDb' <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0113247/>> [accessed 31 October 2017].

³⁷⁴ Goudaillier, p. 283; Philippe Normand, *Dictionnaire Des Mots Des Flics et Des Voyous* (Paris: Balland, 2010), p. 327.

dialogues.³⁷⁵ This could pose a challenge in terms of the representation of this diverse vocabulary in translation, since the richness of vocabulary related to these themes is a culturally-specific feature of the *langage de banlieue*.

The film also demonstrates the racial diversity within France's *banlieues*: Toussaint and Désirée are black, and Yasmine is of North African origin, as are a number of the members of Toussaint's gang. Two of the members of Désirée's group of friends are also black, and racial tension is evident in the film, during a scene in which Désirée and her friends visit a beauty shop in central Paris and notice that much of the makeup on offer is designed for fair skin. References to race and religion are common within the *banlieue* subculture; Doran notes that youths have a number of ways to refer to race, religion and immigration status among themselves, and that this is a way for 'them to treat ethnicity as a valid and normal component of self- and other-identification'.³⁷⁶ It will become apparent that this can pose a problem in translation, given the lack of equivalent terms as positive references to race and religion in British English.

Another element of the film that could be a challenge in translation is the significance of certain names, some of which rely on cultural knowledge that may not be available to viewers in the British context. Toussaint, a key character in the film, shares a name with the '...heroic leader of the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint Louverture'.³⁷⁷ He was able to 'mastermind resistance against the French, British and Spanish, to deliver emancipation from slavery, and to lay the foundations for what would be the second independent state in the Americas.'³⁷⁸ Louverture therefore represents struggle against dominant powers, both in terms of the colonial powers and slavery. Toussaint's name arguably adds a further element of exclusion from and struggle against France which may be lost to viewers (both in France and the UK) without the necessary cultural knowledge to extract the additional meaning. In addition, although the given name of the film's protagonist, Désirée, does still convey ideas of desire in English her nickname *La squale*, does not hold any meaning for non-French speaking viewers. The film is

³⁷⁵ Goudaillier, p. 17.

³⁷⁶ Doran, p. 503.

³⁷⁷ Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg, *Toussaint Louverture : A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions* (London: PlutoPress, 2017), p. 1.

³⁷⁸ Forsdick and Høgsbjerg, p. 4.

so named after the scene in which one member of a girl gang which will later become Désirée's friends states '*Elle s'est pris pour une squalé!*' [She thinks she's a shark], which is subtitled as 'Thinks she's bad'. This translation does indicate the suggestion is that Désirée is perhaps a little 'too big for her boots', and that she needs taking down a peg or two. However, this is the phrase from which the name of the film is taken, and the title was not translated. The title thus has no significance for a British audience, as they do not see the term 'squalé' in any of the subtitles.³⁷⁹ Where the marketing of the film for the Anglophone context is concerned, translating the name could have been advantageous, as viewers would have been aware that Désirée was the main focus of the film as soon as she was introduced. An alternative would have been to give the film a different title in English, which could have been adapted appropriately to appeal in the UK context.

Context of Release

Despite the problematic translation, or lack of, the name of the film, at the time of its release, potential British viewers for *La squalé* had been exposed to issues of immigration, exclusion and violence in France's *banlieues*. Just 18 months earlier, in July 1998, the French national team won the World Cup. The team was made up largely of descendants of immigrants (a fact which featured in the UK news), and did not receive a huge amount of support at the beginning of the tournament. Indeed, a year later, an article titled 'Banlieue Babylon' featured in the Observer and highlighted 'racist violence' in France's *banlieues*.³⁸⁰ It could be suggested that the same educated urban population that attends art-house cinemas, and engages with French film in the UK, would read a broadsheet such as the Observer.³⁸¹ Thus, when *La squalé* was released in the UK, the *banlieues* were not completely unknown to a potential British art-house cinema audience, and were even referred to using the French term. Stuart Jeffries, writing for the Guardian, mentioned *La squalé* in an article in which he wrote about the 'macho

³⁷⁹ In one newspaper article in which the film was mentioned, there was even an explanation of the title provided in brackets, 'a squalé is a girl tearaway'. Stuart Jeffries, 'France Horrified by Rise of the Teenage Killers', *The Guardian*, 2000, p. 15.

³⁸⁰ Simon Rawles, 'Banlieue Babylon', *The Observer* (London (UK), 1999) <<http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/1999/jul/25/life1.lifemagazine3>>.

³⁸¹ 'The Observer - Readership Figures', *Media.Info* <<https://media.info/newspapers/titles/the-observer/readership-figures>> [accessed 18 July 2017]; 'Observer Reader Profile', *The Guardian*, 30 April 2010 <<http://www.theguardian.com/advertising/display-audience-observer-reader-profile>> [accessed 18 July 2017].

culture’ and noted that the film was ‘set in a tough estate’ just as *La haine* was.³⁸² This information may provide some insight into a British viewer’s expectations of the film, and his/her knowledge of the French socio-political context in which it was made and released. In addition, since *La haine* is arguably the most popular *banlieue* film to be released in the UK, attaching a reference to it in discussions of *La squale* may encourage people who have seen *La haine* to watch Genestál’s film.

Paratexts

The French trailer for *La squale*, viewable on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), opens with close-up, sexualised images of Désirée, Toussaint and Yasmine, giving the illusion of a love triangle, before the music changes and guns and knives appear, with youths running from the police.³⁸³ The music also changes from instrumental to French rap. The trailer features the phrase ‘*musique composée par: Cut Killer*’ [music composed by: Cut Killer] centre-screen; *Cut Killer* would appear to be a key feature in the marketing materials surrounding the film. Highlighting the appearance of *Cut Killer*’s music on the film’s soundtrack may be an attempt to capitalise on the earlier success in France of *La haine*, which featured Cut Killer in the famous DJ sequence where Edith Piaf’s *Je ne regrette rien* is mixed with NTM’s *Nique la police*.³⁸⁴

The UK trailer for *La squale* is identical to the French trailer, with the addition of subtitles. The sexual violence present in the film is not necessarily foregrounded in the trailer, although we do see extracts of scenes of physical violence with knives and cricket bats, and a clip from a scene of Désirée and Toussaint having sex. Potential viewers of the film may not be expecting such graphic scenes of sexual violence, and this could be true for the the French language ST as well as the subtitled TT. This may have implications in terms of the subtitling of sexually violent language and derogatory references to women in the film, particularly

³⁸² Jeffries.

³⁸³ The Internet Movie Database is an online database of information relating to audiovisual material (TV shows and films, but also video games, for example). In addition to box office data, the site also allows users to review material on a 1 – 10 star basis. IMDb, ‘La Squale (2000) - IMDb’.

³⁸⁴ Kassovitz, *La haine*.

since this does emerge as a key theme, and this interpretation of the film is reinforced by interviews with the director that will be discussed shortly.

Analysis of the trailers for the film reveals a marketing strategy which highlights some elements of the *banlieue* subculture discussed in Chapter One. In particular, I would refer back once again to Goudaillier's list of topics for which the *banlieusards* seem to have a wealth of vocabulary, as this included violence, drugs, 'illicit business', sex, women and gangs of friends.³⁸⁵ Once again, it is clear that where *banlieue* film is concerned, culture and identity are both linked to language and vocabulary, and the presence of these themes in the subtitled versions of the films will be examined to ascertain how these aspects of *banlieue* culture are presented in the subtitled films. It could be argued that viewers drawn to a film about drugs and gang violence would not be surprised by graphic content. It might also be suggested that such viewers would be accustomed to strong language, and once again, this will inform later readings of the subtitles.

Genestal chose to focus on the violent, macho culture of the *banlieue*, as he wanted to make a film about the experience of women and girls living in the French *banlieues*, and the violence they experience. Genestal grew up in *la cité des Courtilières*, and later taught at a school in Sarcelles. In an interview for Les Inrocks, he said:

... ce qui m'a tout de suite choqué, c'est la situation des filles et la manière dont elles sont traitées dans les banlieues. Elles sont les premières à subir la haine des garçons, à leur servir de souffre-douleur. Ce qu'on entend de la vie des cités, en particulier par le biais du rap, ce sont des témoignages de mecs, qui sont plutôt les leaders des cités - les filles n'ayant pas voix au chapitre [...] Quitter le point de vue masculin sur la cité, c'est sortir d'un certain psychodrame [...] Je voulais parler des exclus parmi les exclus.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ Goudaillier, p. 17.

³⁸⁶ '... What surprised me right away was the situation of girls, and the way they are treated in the banlieues. They are the first to suffer the hatred of boys, to act as their punchbags. What we hear about life in the *cités*, particularly through rap music, are the testimonies of men who are basically the leaders in the *cités* – girls don't have any say in the matter... leaving the masculine point of view of the *cités* is leaving a certain psychodrama... I wanted to talk about those excluded by the excluded.' Tewfik Hakem, 'Fabrice Genestal - "La Squale"', *Les Inrockuptibles*, 2000 <<http://www.lesinrocks.com/2000/08/01/cinema/actualite-cinema/fabrice-genestal-la-squale-11219615/>> [accessed 13 October 2017].

Genestal's choice to focus on the marginalised members of the *banlieue* subculture places women in the *banlieue* as one of the primary themes in *La squale*, and this is also reflected in the language used in the film. A key part of the case study of the English subtitles, then, will be to examine the way in which dialogue concerning women and rape is translated, and whether the subtitles appear to reflect Genestal's intentions. Does the subtitled version of *La squale* present the same socio-political messages concerning women in the *banlieue* and their experience as those presented in the Source Language version? Could the viewer of the English subtitled version of *La squale* still understand the way women in the *banlieue* are spoken about; not only by men, but also by other women? When translating a film, the subtitler must prioritise information and cannot always include everything in the subtitles. If the significance of conveying socio-political messages in the translation of *banlieue* film is to be highlighted here, then the subtitling of language relating to the film's central themes is of great importance.

Although the French reception of the film was discussed briefly in terms of the box office and ratings, it should also be noted that both *La squale* and *Samia* (Faucon, 2001), 'received positive critical reviews underlining their perceived authenticity'.³⁸⁷ Tarr notes that the film was 'shown to local dignitaries as a transparent reflection of *banlieue* life', and this also reinforces the perceived realist nature of *banlieue* cinema.³⁸⁸ However, in terms of understanding the context of reception for the subtitled film, reviews of *La squale* online were also examined. Given the accessible nature of content on the internet, all English-language content was considered, as a British viewer choosing whether to watch a film would arguably not exclude sources from outside of the UK when looking it up. There were not many online reviews for *La squale*, and a review in the Guardian was notably missing. However, there were some other pieces about the film, which was also mentioned in later Guardian articles noted above. Contrary to the trailer, one review on *Time Out* does foreground the theme of gang rape in the film, but *Variety* describes the film as a 'violent youth film' without reference

³⁸⁷ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 111.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 122.

to the sexual nature of the violence.³⁸⁹ *Time Out* compares the film to *La haine*, and echoes the French reception of *La squale* noting that providing ‘a more studied framing against which the endemic violence of French immigrant ghetto life beats like harsh weather, the film boasts an undeniable street-level authenticity.’³⁹⁰ This authenticity is important and can be linked back to the discussion of the politicised nature of *banlieue* film in Chapter Two. If these films are perceived as ‘authentic’ representations of life in the *banlieue*, then the translation of the *langage de banlieue* is arguably of significance in terms of providing an accurate representation of the *banlieue* subculture.

The film is described as presenting ‘appealing performances’, though Levy seems to have misinterpreted the film, since he writes that Désirée ‘takes action’ when Toussaint ‘betrays her with another girl’.³⁹¹ However, Désirée is actually angry that Toussaint has raped Yasmine, and this is why she seeks such fierce revenge. This raises the question of whether her motives are clear in the subtitled TT, and this will be examined in Chapter Six.

L’Esquive

L’esquive was Abdellatif Kechiche’s second feature film, and was released in 2003, three years after his first, *La faute à Voltaire*. Kechiche wrote *L’esquive* with Ghalia Lacroix. It was a low-budget project, as Kechiche was unable to obtain the *avance sur recettes* for the film.³⁹² However, this had its advantages, the director notes: ‘we used a hand-held camera to work faster, because of budget problems and it turned out to suit the actors - we had fewer crew members on the set, and we could be more free’.³⁹³ The hand-held camera lends a documentary-effect to the film, making it feel more realistic, and it might be suggested that this

³⁸⁹ GE, ‘La Squale’, *Time Out London* <<https://www.timeout.com/london/film/la-squale>> [accessed 30 March 2017]; Emanuel Levy, ‘Review: “The Squale”’, *Variety*, 2000 <<http://variety.com/2000/film/reviews/the-squale-1200464730/>> [accessed 30 March 2017].

³⁹⁰ GE.

³⁹¹ Levy.

³⁹² “‘La Graine et Le Mulet’: Entretien Avec Abdellatif Kechiche’, *Les Inrocks* <<http://mobile.lesinrocks.com/2007/12/11/cinema/actualite-cinema/entretien-abdellatif-kechiche-la-graine-et-le-mulet-1207-1158380/>> [accessed 4 November 2017].

³⁹³ Joan Dupont, ‘Game of Love and Chance in a Paris Suburb’, *International Herald Tribune The New York Times*, 12 February 2004 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/12/style/game-of-love-and-chance-in-a-paris-suburb.html>> [accessed 24 May 2016].

reinforces the impact of the socio-political messages it presents, since the realist nature of the film could make it easier to relate to.

L'esquive did not fare particularly well at the French box office, with only 47 797 tickets sold in its first week of release.³⁹⁴ It is surprising that the film was not more popular following its critical acclaim (which will be discussed later in this section), although the critical acclaim may have been countered by the small budget and lack of big names, meaning that the French general public perhaps weren't as aware of it as they might have been. However, the film was also screened in a number of high schools in the 9-3 (Seine-Saint-Denis, the 93rd department of France) where filming took place, and so was disseminated within France, perhaps more so than the box office statistics would reveal.³⁹⁵ Although Kechiche has expressed that he wanted the film to be seen by people who usually only see the media representations of those who live in the *banlieue*, the film also seemed to do well when screened to high school students.³⁹⁶ The director spoke of their reaction to the arrest scene; “Ah putain [...] c'est trop vrai comment ça se passe.” Ils se sont sentis très proche du langage des personnages’[“Shit... it really happens like that”. They felt very close to the language of the characters].³⁹⁷ This supports suggestions that the film conveys a realistic representation of life in the *banlieue*; the school children thought the police scene (which will be examined in Chapter Six, when the subtitling of register shifts is analysed) was an example of a daily reality they face.³⁹⁸

It was noted earlier that *L'esquive* was subtitled by Ian Burley, who has written the English subtitles for various high-profile French films.³⁹⁹ Contrary to recommendations in the Code of Good Subtitling Practice, though, his name is not

³⁹⁴ IMDb, ‘Games of Love and Chance (2003) - IMDb’ <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0338977/>> [accessed 31 October 2017].

³⁹⁵ Jean-Marc Lalanne, ‘Les Inrocks - “L'Esquive” : Entretien Avec Abdellatif Kechiche’, *Les Inrocks*, 2004 <<http://www.lesinrocks.com/2004/01/07/cinema/actualite-cinema/entretien-abdellatif-kechiche-lesquive-0104-1185003/>> [accessed 26 May 2016].

³⁹⁶ Lalanne.

³⁹⁷ “Oh shit, it's so true, it really happens like that.” They felt very close to the language of the characters.’ Lalanne.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹These include Malik Chibane, *Douce France* (MKL Distribution, 1995), *Entre les Murs* and more recently, *Bande de Filles [Girlhood]*.

included on the DVD for *L'esquive* - he was not pleased with the results of the project.⁴⁰⁰ In a response he offered to a questionnaire, Burley notes:

I did work on "L'Esquive" but it was a horrible experience (less than a week to do the subtitles, a simulation on New Year's Eve when I was supposed to be cooking for guests, a huge clash with the production assistant who refused to let me contact the director until the very day of the simulation, a director who barely answered my countless questions when I finally managed to speak to him). I was not at all happy with the result and removed my name from the film.⁴⁰¹

This information from the subtitler is significant because it demonstrates that he was working to very tight deadlines when subtitling the film. When questioned about these, Burley notes that he would usually request three weeks or more, but is often only allowed a week to subtitle a film.⁴⁰²

The copy of the film analysed in this thesis is a region 1 DVD. Given the particularly interesting example constituted by the film, it was decided that its inclusion in this thesis was nevertheless appropriate. The subtitles were written by Burley, a British English subtitler. Given the earlier questionnaire responses cited, it is highly likely that the subtitles which feature on the region 1 DVD are those written by Ian Burley (who states that he only subtitles into British English), since economically, it is unlikely that more than one set of subtitles was commissioned for the film, and the networks of FR>EN subtitlers are very tight, so Burley would arguably have heard of an additional set of subtitles being commissioned.⁴⁰³ The film has been screened at film festivals in the UK, and given the tight deadlines to which Burley was working, it is likely that his subtitles were commissioned for festival screenings, and later also included on the DVD.⁴⁰⁴ However, it is also clear that once Burley delivers his subtitles, he does not know what will happen to them before they are added to a DVD. He no longer holds a copy of the subtitles he

⁴⁰⁰ Carroll and Ivarsson.

⁴⁰¹ Burley, 'Questionnaire Response'.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ For example, the film was screened as part of the French Film Festival UK in 2004: Ciné-Lumière, Thurs 18 Nov; Edinburgh, Fri 19 Nov and Sun 21 Nov; Glasgow, Sat 20 Nov. 'French Film Festival UK 2014 – 5 November – 4 December 2014 » Blog Archive » Kechiche Wins Palme d'or' <<http://frenchfilmfestival.org.uk/FFF2013/wp/?p=227>> [accessed 26 May 2016].

submitted, and they were written some 13 years ago now, so he would be unlikely to be able to recognise which changes were made.

Given that the only available copy on the market is the region 1 DVD, and that technological advancements mean that EU citizens can purchase multi-region DVD players, or set PC disk drives to play region 1 DVDs, it is likely that a viewer in the UK would access this subtitled version. This version is also held in a number of university libraries in the United Kingdom.⁴⁰⁵ *L'esquive* is a highly interesting case of a film featuring the juxtaposition of the *langage de banlieue* with the *marivaudage* of the 18th century, but which has also been screened as part of political movements or discussions.⁴⁰⁶ It is also a case of a job carried out by a subtitler in conditions which did not meet his requirements, resulting in work with which he was not happy. Finally, it is a set of subtitles written by a British English subtitler, who was translating the film into British English, which was then possibly adapted without a subtitler's input, to feature on a region 1 DVD which would be accessed globally.

Ian Burley noted that for the work he is most proud of, he was given plenty of time in each case - for *Entre les murs* for instance, Burley revealed that he had two months, pointing out that often producers seem to know that extra time is required for more complex jobs.⁴⁰⁷ This is promising news for translators and subtitle quality, since in the subtitling industry in general, deadlines can be tight and clients are not always aware of the time a translator needs.⁴⁰⁸ That some producers allow extra time, at the subtitler's request, for particularly challenging work, offers hope for the future in terms of improving working conditions for subtitlers. However, Burley's experience on *L'esquive* demonstrates that although some directors are aware of the challenges inherent in working with the *langage de banlieue*, there is still room for improvement where deadlines are concerned.

⁴⁰⁵ University Libraries of Queen Mary University London, Royal Holloway University London, University of Glasgow. See Copac service (Jisc), 'Copac National, Academic and Specialist Library Catalogue' <<https://copac.jisc.ac.uk/>> [accessed 18 September 2017].

⁴⁰⁶ The film was screened in Bristol in June 2008 as part of Refugee Week. Jim Burke, 'L'Esquive (15)', *Metro*, 2008 <<http://metro.co.uk/2008/06/17/lesquive-15-193072/>> [accessed 31 August 2017].

⁴⁰⁷ Burley, 'Questionnaire Response'.

⁴⁰⁸ 17.5% of participants in Kuo's survey indicated that they 'were usually given assignments with less than 24 hours' notice'. Szu-Yu Kuo, p. 181.

Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that a simulation often takes place in subtitling, but that the subtitler does not always attend.⁴⁰⁹ Access to the director and/or producer is of great value to the subtitlers, as they are able to ask for clarification from the ‘author’ of the source text (Kechiche also co-wrote the script). Hence, in this case, Burley’s difficulty in contacting the director had a serious impact on his confidence in the final product. It should be highlighted here, that on top of a huge amount of experience, Burley never has to bid for work, and never works for agencies. All of his work comes directly from production companies he has worked with before, or other companies to which he has been recommended; he is therefore clearly respected in the industry.⁴¹⁰

Ian Burley’s experience of working on *L’esquive* highlights fundamental issues with the subtitling industry. That such an experienced and reputable practitioner would have to work in conditions which result in a product with which he is so unhappy underlines the lack of general understanding of the process of translation. Of course, it has been acknowledged that the general working conditions of subtitlers working on the French to English translation of *banlieue* film are of a higher standard than in many other parts of the industry. The working conditions of FR > EN subtitlers working on *banlieue* film, and that of Ian Burley for this job specifically, illustrate part of the context within which the subtitles for *L’esquive* were produced. Ian Burley did not carry out the spotting, and was clearly unhappy with the finished product, which offers some insight into the issues which might arise in analysis of the subtitles in question.

Plot and themes

L’esquive features a group of school children as they rehearse for a performance of Marivaux’s *Le Jeu de l’amour et du hasard* [Games of Love and Chance]. Lydia, one of the main characters in the film, plays a leading role in the play. Her classmate Krimo develops a crush on her, and in order to get closer to Lydia, he convinces one of the other actors to drop out so that he can take her place. The film follows developments in their relationship alongside developments in the play (or not - Krimo does not seem comfortable with his new occupation). The language

⁴⁰⁹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 33.

⁴¹⁰ Burley, ‘Questionnaire Response’.

of the Marivaux play is juxtaposed with the *langage de banlieue* mastered by the teenagers as they experience jealousy, fear and love. Given the strong link between language and identity in the *banlieue*, and the way in which the *banlieusards* use language to express their sense of exclusion from the rest of society, this theme of language and identity would arguably shape the way in which a subtitler would seek to translate this film, particularly considering Díaz-Cintas and Remael's comments concerning the significance not only of *what* the characters say (denotative meaning), but also *how* they say it (connotative meaning).⁴¹¹

Language and identity are arguably key themes in all *banlieue* films, and certainly in the three studied in this thesis. This is a key consideration where the subtitling of this (and arguably many varieties of) non-standard language is concerned. There have been a number of academic works concerned with *L'esquive* and representations of identity, and these issues are arguably relevant to discussions of all three films. However, the linking of identity and language is even more explicit in this particular case through the juxtaposition of two contrasting varieties of language; Ari Blatt notes of *L'esquive*

its staging of one of the most classic of French cultural traditions in the most marginalized of contemporary social spaces represents, precisely, an allegory for a society that is struggling to forge a national identity faithful to its most venerable heritage, while simultaneously striving to come to terms with the growing demographic diversity of its population.⁴¹²

Blatt is highlighting the difficulty many citizens face in contemporary French society which has also been touched on by Doran - many of the youths living in the *banlieue* are grappling with what Doran terms a 'hybrid identity', negotiating their place between the pull of the language and culture of their family, and of their country of residence.⁴¹³ Doran notes that the *langage de banlieue* is

a strategic and functional tool used to construct an alternative social universe, a 'Third Space' (Bhabha) of social interaction in which

⁴¹¹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 185.

⁴¹² Ari J. Blatt, 'The Play's the Thing: Marivaux and the "Banlieue" in Abdellatif Kechiche's "L'Esquive"', *The French Review*, 81.3 (2008), 516–27 (pp. 523–24).

⁴¹³ Doran, p. 498.

youths can define themselves in their own terms, along a more métisse and hybrid identity continuum that rejects the fixed categories of ‘French’ vs. ‘immigrant’ that continue to dominate in mainstream journalistic and political discourse.⁴¹⁴

The usefulness of the term ‘hybridity’ to describe such situations, particularly in relation to post-colonial communities, is contested. Indeed, Hutnyk synthesises and critiques existing work on hybridity, suggesting that the danger of the term is that in order for there to be a ‘hybrid’, there must be an ‘original pure’.⁴¹⁵ There is also a concern that referring to a ‘shared post-colonial condition’ can serve to ‘obscure[s] the specificities of particular cultural situations’.⁴¹⁶ This is indeed a concern in the subtitling of French *banlieue*; I have already highlighted the specificity of the cultural situation in the French *banlieue*, and the danger of contributing to a homogenising cultural discourse through subtitling strategies which might be seen to displace the identity of the characters as asserted by Mével.⁴¹⁷ Nevertheless, while I acknowledge concerns raised by scholars regarding hybridity, it is still a useful notion here and will be used in reference ‘to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization’, in line with Ashcroft et al’s assertions that Bhabha’s conception of the ‘Third Space’ renders ‘the claim to a hierarchical “purity” of cultures untenable’, since this Third Space is where cultural identity is formed (as opposed to being formed separately, and then ‘merged’).⁴¹⁸ Returning to Doran, it is the rejection of the ‘Frenchness’ often enforced in the French media which is put forward in *banlieue* cinema,⁴¹⁹ and since the *langage de banlieue* can be seen as a manifestation of this resistance, the translation of this variety of French, and terms of ethnicity (such as the example of *le noich* analysed in Chapter Five) is

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ John Hutnyk, ‘Hybridity’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28.1 (2005), 79–102.

⁴¹⁶ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 109.

⁴¹⁷ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 53.

⁴¹⁸ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, p. 108.

⁴¹⁹ See, for example, a scene in *Banlieue 13*, in which Damien, an undercover police officer, cites the French values of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* [liberty, equality, fraternity], to which Leito, an inhabitant of the Parisian *banlieue* offers the rhyming response *l’eau, le gaz, l’électricité* [the water, the gas, the electricity], suggesting that he does not believe in France’s national motto, or at least, that he has more immediate concerns. Morel.

arguably of great significance in the transmission of these messages to a non-French-speaking Anglophone audience.

In the case of *L'esquive*, the contrast between the youth language and the language of the Marivaux play *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard* allows Kechiche to demonstrate the youths' uneasiness at trying to 'play a part'. The language of the play is unfamiliar to them, but so is the behaviour they are expected to replicate. The teacher uses the play to show her students that they can dress up, and try to behave differently, but she suggests that in the end their true personalities and origins will come through. Interestingly, though, the characters who seem most comfortable with the language, behaviour, and dress of the Marivaux play are Lydia and Rachid (played by Rachid Hami); the two Caucasian characters.

In an article discussing both *L'esquive* and *Entre les murs*, Strand notes that these films '... are clearly playing an important role in provoking a national reconsideration of, to quote Doran, 'what it means to speak, and to be, French'.'⁴²⁰ This would support earlier assertions that *banlieue* films are often made in order to provoke discussion surrounding these socio-political issues. A French-speaking viewer would be struck by the contrast between the *langage de banlieue* and the language of the play (sometimes referred to as *le marivaudage*), which, although considered 'unusual' in its day, is now seen to be 'particularly emblematic of the qualities of the French language, and incarnates all that is supposedly classical French'.⁴²¹ The contrast between the *langage de banlieue* and the *marivaudage* is key in demonstrating changes in the scenes, highlighting when the characters are pretending to be someone else. The characters' social class and identity are conveyed through their manner of speaking, and the subtitling of the film will thus have a big impact on how a non-French speaking Anglophone audience would receive and perceive the film, and the characters and themes addressed therein. The film was given the title 'Games of Love and Chance' in English; so-named after the play it features.⁴²² An Anglophone viewer that was

⁴²⁰ Strand, p. 271; Doran, p. 498.

⁴²¹ Vinay Swamy, 'Marivaux in the Suburbs: Reframing Language in Kechiche's *L'Esquive* (2003)', *Studies in French Cinema*, 7.1 (2007), 57–68 (p. 60).

⁴²² See, for example, Adrienne S. Madel's translations of *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* in Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux, Oscar Mandel, and Adrienne S. Mandel, *Seven Comedies by Marivaux* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984)..

aware of the Marivaux play would be able to make the connection upon hearing the title, in contrast to the French title, which does not refer to Marivaux's work. For an English-speaking viewer, the presence of Marivaux's work in the film is therefore foregrounded, highlighting the intertextuality of the film in a way that the ST title does not. However, the recognition of the reference depends on the receiver's knowledge of the French play, and in a UK context, this would arguably be much less likely than for French viewers. Thus, although the French title does not draw on the link to Marivaux, the English-language title does, and the translated version may therefore attract those with an interest in the playwright, more so than the ST would. The ST title *L'esquive* ['the dodge'] likely comes from Lydia's 'dodging' of Krimo when he asks her to go out with him, and later, Krimo's 'dodging' of Lydia at the end of the film.

Context of Release

L'esquive was first screened in the UK at the BFI London film festival, which took place during October-November 2004. Around this time period, France was not big in the UK news. *L'esquive* was released just before the 2005 riots, which took place in October and November. However, some of the newspaper articles about France that were published in the UK in late 2004 and 2005 seem to reinforce the negative media discourses around the *banlieue* which have been mentioned by scholars writing about the French context.⁴²³ One such article, published in the Independent on 30th November 2004 is titled 'Murder on the Champs Elysées as Banlieue Gangs invade City'.⁴²⁴ The article highlights the fact that the attacks which occurred that night were carried out between groups of 'poor young men' in an area of Paris where they do not live, and which is supposed to be 'among the safest places in the French capital'.⁴²⁵ The article does, however, state that the violence is not of a racist nature, but that the gangs are made up of youths from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The article highlights the differences between the French, British and American contexts, but although it foregrounds the multi-racial nature of the *banlieues* and those who live there, it also suggests that the youths do not 'belong' on the Champs Elysées. Thus, *L'esquive* entered

⁴²³ Tarr, *Reframing Difference*, p. 17.

⁴²⁴ John Lichfield, 'Murder on the Champs Elysees as Banlieue Gangs Invade City', *The Independent*, 30 November 2004, p. 22.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

cinemas in the UK at a time when potential UK viewers could have been reading about violence among the *banlieusards*. This means that violence in the film, and scenes of interaction with authority figures such as the police, will arguably be at the forefront of some viewer's minds.

Paratexts

One of the paratexts that has already been mentioned is the English-language trailer for the film, which can be accessed on the DVD. It features 'typical French' accordion music (this features in both trailers), which many non-French viewers would probably associate with France, even if they were not accustomed to viewing French films, or familiar with French culture.⁴²⁶ The English trailer opens with a group of male youths discussing an act of violence they plan to carry out in retaliation for an injustice towards one of their friends. The group is multi-ethnic, and their harsh, violent language, coupled with the French accordion music, hints that this film features a France that may not be familiar to many viewers. The trailer goes on to present other themes within the film, from young people grappling with a variety of language that is unfamiliar to them, to young love and related peer-group drama. We then witness a classroom scene in which a teacher tells her student '*essaie de jouer quelqu'un qui a du pouvoir, essaie de frimer, essaie de... change de langage, change de manière de parler, change de manière de bouger... amuse-toi !*' [Subtitles: Try to play someone with power, try to show off! / Change your language, the way you speak or move. / Have fun!]. This quotation from the film shows the teacher explicitly drawing a direct link between identity and power and language.

The trailer, thus, presents a film in which identity is key, in which a role model tells her students they could have fun if they try to act like someone else, 'someone with power'; followed by the common *banlieue* film scene of police violence towards the *banlieusards*. Viewers who had seen this trailer would therefore be expecting to see a film which features a multi-ethnic community, and would probably expect the film to deal with questions of identity, and identity performance. This point could be significant where subtitling is concerned,

⁴²⁶ Accordion music is often associated with France and French culture, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain [Amélie]* (TF1 Video, 2001). for example, features accordion music, as well as many CDs offering compilations of 'French' music.

considering the *langage de banlieue* as a marker of identity for members of the *banlieue* communities. Since identity is highlighted in the marketing of the film, I would suggest that identity, and therefore, in this case, sociolect are important considerations for the translation.

An additional factor affected by budget concerns was the casting; Kechiche displayed posters in the area he chose to film, and recruited a cast primarily made up of non-professionals with no acting experience.⁴²⁷ There was one exception: the female lead (Lydia) was played by Sara Forestier, who had previously played some smaller roles. There were, therefore, no well-known actors featured in the film, and this aspect forms part of the paratext surrounding *L'esquive*. Gray highlights the significance of hype in a film's reception, suggesting that this, which may lead us to watch a film, or to not watch a film, will also inform our expectations and, therefore, *how we read a film*.⁴²⁸ Since *L'esquive* did not have a big budget, and there were not any famous actors in the film, there was not a huge amount of anticipation for its release.

In an interview published in the New York Times, Kechiche stated that 'the media focus on violence. These young people have been demonized. I wanted to make a movie with them, and not betray them.'⁴²⁹ He later notes that he 'wanted to show them in their daily lives'.⁴³⁰ His intention, then, was to create a film which would work against dominant media discourse concerning the *banlieues*. Ervine highlights '...the extent to which it departed from conventional representations of the *banlieues*. *L'esquive* rarely depicts subjects such as violence, crime and drugs that are frequently present in press coverage of France's *banlieues*.'⁴³¹ It could be suggested that Kechiche wanted to shine a light on the residents of these areas, humanising them and demonstrating that the young people growing up in the *banlieues* have similar relationships and daily concerns as everyone else. Kechiche's words can be linked to the theme of identity which is foregrounded by

⁴²⁷ Dupont.

⁴²⁸ Gray, p. 25.

⁴²⁹ Dupont.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ervine, p. 132.

the inclusion of the Marivaux play - Kechiche made *L'esquive* to show people the *banlieues* and the youths who live there.

Despite the small budget, the film did exceptionally well with the French critics, and was awarded four Césars: Best Film, Best Director, Best Female Newcomer (Sara Forestier), and Best Original or Adapted Screenplay (Kechiche and Lacroix).⁴³² It is now ranked 82 in Time Out's 100 best French films.⁴³³ There are some articles about *L'esquive* in the Anglophone press, and they are largely positive, describing the film as 'a first-rate teen drama.'⁴³⁴ Some of the reviews do mention the questions of identity which are raised in the film, highlighting the ethnicities or social class of the characters.⁴³⁵ Another article in the Guardian contrasts *L'esquive* with *Les Choristes* (Christophe Barratier, 2004) which was also released around that time, noting that although *L'esquive* did not see great success at the French box office, it was popular with the critics at the Césars.⁴³⁶ *L'esquive* is a film which has been mentioned in the media a number of times since its release, sometimes in relation to Kechiche's more recent films, and it might be suggested that the audience for the film therefore continues to grow.

More recently, Laurent Cantet was interviewed about *L'esquive* for a piece on 'Film-makers on film'.⁴³⁷ Cantet's views are particularly interesting here, given his work on *Entre les Murs* (Cantet, 2008), another film featuring the *langage de banlieue* and dealing with youths living in the *cités*. The article notes

⁴³² Communications, '2005 César Awards', 2005 <<http://en.unifrance.org/news/1952/2005-cesar-awards>> [accessed 18 July 2017].

⁴³³ 'Games of Love and Chance (2004)', *Time Out London* <<https://www.timeout.com/london/film/games-of-love-and-chance-2004>> [accessed 30 March 2017].

⁴³⁴ Burke.

⁴³⁵ Peter Bradshaw, 'Baby, I Don't Love You', *The Guardian*, 11 February 2004 <<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2004/feb/11/festivals.berlinfilmfestival2004>> [accessed 1 September 2017].

⁴³⁶ Virginie Guichard, 'Songs of Praise', *The Guardian*, 10 March 2005 <<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2005/mar/10/1>> [accessed 1 September 2017].

⁴³⁷ Sheila Johnston, 'Film-Makers on Film: Laurent Cantet', 7 July 2006 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmmakersonfilm/3653648/Film-makers-on-film-Laurent-Cantet.html>> [accessed 26 May 2016].

... this terrific film has barely been seen abroad, and for one reason: the characters speak a baroque slang - a lightning-fast rap peppered with Arab words - that's virtually impossible to translate.⁴³⁸

The notion that language is one of the reasons for the film's lack of success abroad is particularly interesting, given that *La haine* featured the same language and did see some success. The author describes the *langage de banlieue* as 'virtually impossible to translate', just as Jäckel did.⁴³⁹ Indeed, perhaps the difficult conditions in which the subtitler was working had something to do with the film's success abroad. Of *L'esquive*, Burley noted

I'm sure a great job could have been done on that particular film if the producers had displayed the same attitude as, say, those of "Entre les Murs", and, as a result, "L'Esquive" could have had a much better international career.⁴⁴⁰

Burley worked on the subtitling for both films and saw a stark contrast in the Director and/or Producer's attitudes towards the work he was undertaking.

"It's partly about language: the contrast between the 'official' language of Marivaux and that of the kids," Cantet says, [...] "each person's way of speaking - their choice of words, the tone they use - expresses their character as much as their clothes or gestures."⁴⁴¹

This supports our suggestion that the film dialogue, and the use of the *langage de banlieue* in films such as *L'esquive*, contributes to the plot and the representation of identity, and this is largely recognised by directors working on *banlieue* film. Furthermore, potential viewers of Kechiche's film who might have read this article would be more aware of the specificity of the language used, and be expecting to notice the contrast between the two varieties of French, and even perhaps learn more about the characters' use of language.

The film was screened four years following its initial release in 2008 as part of Refugee Week in the UK, at which time it was described as 'full of heart and good humour', and also linked to *La haine*.⁴⁴² Thus, potential viewers might connect the

⁴³⁸ Jäckel, p. 226.

⁴³⁹ Johnston.

⁴⁴⁰ Personal correspondence.

⁴⁴¹ Johnston.

⁴⁴² Burke.

two, and would then be expecting a film set in the same low-income housing estates as *La haine*.

Divines

The final case study film was released in 2016 and is thus the most recent of the films studied. *Divines* is the first feature film directed by Houda Benyamina, and was inspired by her experience of the 2005 riots in France. The 2005 riots occurred between the release of *L'esquive* and *Divines*, and could be described as a key event in the contemporary history of the French *banlieues*. A parallel could be drawn between the events inspiring Mathieu Kassovitz's *La haine*, and Benyamina's film released 21 years later.⁴⁴³ Indeed, Pavlova notes that 'the storyline resemblance between both French films and between the politically charged intentions of their authors is obvious.'⁴⁴⁴ On the 27th October 2005, two French youths of 17 and 15 years were electrocuted after hiding in a substation on the run from the police in Clichy-sous-Bois. Riots followed across France, with many of those involved being 'unemployed teenagers from destitute suburban housing projects'.⁴⁴⁵ The events were reported in international news and thrust France's *banlieues* and related issues of immigration, integration and social exclusion into the limelight. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain questionnaire responses from the subtitler, Howard Bonsor. *La squale*.

Netflix

Divines is accessible on Netflix, a video-on-demand service which is available in over 190 countries.⁴⁴⁶ Netflix was founded in 1997, and launched its streaming service in 2007; it now has 104 million members worldwide, who watch over 125 million hours of films and TV programmes daily.⁴⁴⁷ *Divines* was made available on

⁴⁴³ Kassovitz made *La haine* following the death of a *banlieue* teenager at the hands of the police.

⁴⁴⁴ Yoana Pavlova, 'If You Want to Talk About France and Feminism', *Fandor*, 2016 <<https://www.fandor.com/keyframe/if-you-want-to-talk-about-france-and-feminism>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁴⁵ 'Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs, November 2005' <<http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/>> [accessed 10 February 2017].

⁴⁴⁶ 'Netflix Is Now Available Around the World', *Netflix Media Center* <<https://media.netflix.com/en/press-releases/netflix-is-now-available-around-the-world>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁴⁷ 'About Netflix', *Netflix Media Center* <<https://media.netflix.com/en/about-netflix>> [accessed 18 July 2017]; 'Netflix : Overview' <<https://ir.netflix.com/>> [accessed 18 July 2017].

Netflix in the UK and all other Netflix-eligible countries on 18th November 2016, with the exception of France, due to French media chronology rules.⁴⁴⁸ *Divines*, and the messages Benyamina presents within the film, will therefore be much more widely disseminated than *La squale* and *L'esquive*. The film is also available to buy on DVD in France. These factors have repercussions in terms of accessibility and potential viewers. As was noted in Chapter Two, the growth in popularity of online streaming services during the production of this thesis could not be ignored, and the final case study film addresses this new aspect of film consumption. This alternative way to access media raises a number of points that should be noted here. In the first instance, the English-language subtitles attached to a film on Netflix are available for all English-speakers across the countries of availability. At the time of writing, *Divines* is available through Netflix in 11 countries.⁴⁴⁹ These include the United Kingdom and the USA, but English-speaking residents of the other countries may also choose to watch the film with English subtitles. This means that although in this thesis the subtitles will be considered in terms of a British context of reception, the subtitles available online are not necessarily produced with that exclusive context in mind. Nevertheless, the same may be said for all of the films considered here; just because the subtitles are available on a region 2 DVD, this does not necessarily mean that they were written with a specifically British English audience in mind. Indeed, the earlier discussion of audience design in light of the subtitler questionnaire responses revealed the difficulty of ascertaining a specific audience for the subtitled films from the translator's perspective.

The film's availability on Netflix also means that it will most likely be consumed in a slightly different manner. A viewer has to go to more effort to watch a film on DVD - they have to find out about the film, and acquire a copy of the DVD. A Netflix viewer will automatically have access to the film as part of their ordinary subscription. They may not even have to search for the film - the Netflix platform

⁴⁴⁸ French media chronology rules state that a film cannot be made available via online streaming within three years of being screened in cinemas. 'Critically-Acclaimed Cannes Caméra d'Or Winner "Divines" Premieres on Netflix Today' <<https://shadowandact.com/critically-acclaimed-cannes-camera-dor-winner-divines-premieres-on-netflix-today>> [accessed 20 March 2017]; 'Caméra d'Or Winner "Divines" Coming To Netflix Globally', *Netflix Media Center* <<https://media.netflix.com/en/press-releases/camera-dor-winner-divines-coming-to-netflix-globally>> [accessed 20 March 2017].

⁴⁴⁹ 'Divines (2015)' <<http://en.unifrance.org/movie/42025/divines>> [accessed 12 February 2017].

could offer the film as a recommendation based on the viewer's other interests, or on the viewer's homepage in 'recently added' material. Furthermore, the film may be recommended among friends who all have access to the platform. There is no obligation to continue watching, no additional cost on top of their existing subscription, and in addition to these factors, there are reviews and other data attached to the film in the Netflix platform. The image below shows the film as it appears on Netflix:

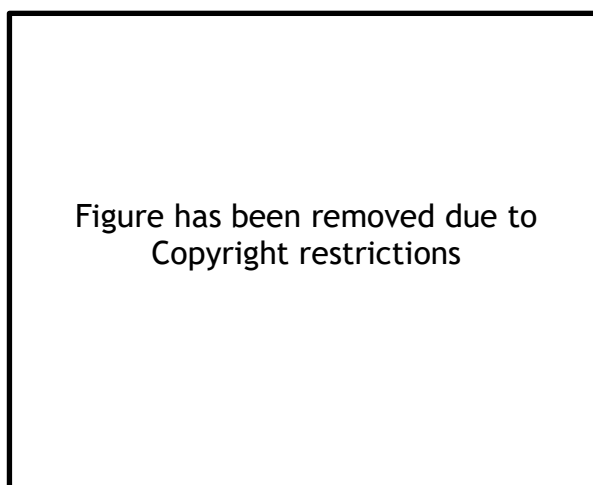


Figure 6 - Information provided about *Divines* on Netflix

We can see the name of the director, and of some of the main actors, as well as a list of genres to which the film belongs. The film is described as 'Emotional, Gritty'. This additional categorisation of films on Netflix compared to DVDs has the potential to both encourage and discourage potential viewers. The film has 79 reviews at the time of writing, and these appear to be largely positive, encouraging those reading to give the film a try. The ease of accessibility of *Divines* means that people who do not normally watch subtitled films might decide to start watching the film and see if they like it. It might be suggested that in this context, the viewer will not necessarily be accustomed to watching subtitled films (although those who do will still probably be more likely to watch it), and this could be considered in the analysis of the subtitles.

Plot and Themes

Divines is set in the *banlieues* of Paris, with a focus on the friendship between Dounia (who lives in the Roma camp), and Maimouna, daughter of an Imam. The film follows Dounia as she quits school and approaches Rebecca, the leader of the local drug-dealing circle, to see if she can work for her. Intermingled with the

story of Dounia and Maimouna's friendship and foray into drug-dealing is Dounia's brief romantic encounter with Djigui, a dancer who also works as a supermarket security guard. Dounia is mistreated by Rebecca, and tries to get revenge by running away with money she has stolen for her. Rebecca traps Maimouna and there is a scene of confrontation in the basement of one of the blocks of flats. A fire breaks out and the three are trapped, with Maimouna unable to squeeze through the small window opening. The fire brigade arrives but will not enter the estate without a police escort.

Context of Release

11 years after the 2005 riots, when Benyamina's film was released, discussions of race and integration were once again at the forefront of international news about France. In 2014, the French right-wing made huge political gains, with the *Front National* winning its first seats in the senate.⁴⁵⁰ Such political developments clearly had an impact on discourses regarding France's underprivileged and immigrants. These events were followed in 2015 by two Islamic State attacks on French soil; the first being the armed attack at the offices of French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in which 12 people were killed including four cartoonists and two journalists.⁴⁵¹ The second occurred in November, when 130 people were killed in attacks in multiple locations across Paris. Following these attacks, there was a large online outpouring of grief and support in the UK and further afield, with the hashtags *#jesuisCharlie* and later *#jesuisParis*. Since France's *banlieues* are home to many immigrants, the people represented in *banlieue* film were regularly featured in the news both during and after the release of *Divines*. The contemporary topics touched upon in *banlieue* cinema might mean that people are more inclined to watch and discuss the films.

Paratexts

The trailer for the film opens with Dounia selling sweets and lighters in the school playground. We then see her in the classroom with her teacher, stating all she

⁴⁵⁰ Anne Penketh, 'Front National Wins Seats in French Senate for First Time', *The Guardian*, 28 September 2014 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/28/front-national-wins-seats-french-senate-first-time>> [accessed 5 January 2017].

⁴⁵¹ 'French Terror Attacks: Victim Obituaries', *BBC News*, 13 January 2015 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-30724678>> [accessed 10 February 2017].

wants in life is money. This is foregrounded as a key theme in the film. In addition, the main characters in the trailer are all female, with the exception of Rebecca's blond male companion who is objectified, and Djigui, who is being 'strung along' by Dounia. The trailer clearly demonstrates that Dounia will experience a personal journey through the film; she is training, and being taught the business by Rebecca. The key themes that emerge in the trailer include the role of female relationships (with Maimouna, with her mother, with her teacher, and with Rebecca) and Dounia's identity and development throughout the film. Finally, God and religion are also presented, as Maimouna states that 'Quand t'es dieu, t'as des responsabilités, t'es obligé de veiller sur tes enfants, c'est comme ça, c'est écrit.' [When you're God, you have responsibilities, you have to watch over your children] 'Et ben en attendant, il nous a pas reconnue' [well in the meantime, he's forgotten about us], responds Dounia. It is clear that Dounia feels hard done by, and that the film will depict some struggle on her part. Dounia's relationship with God and religion will emerge as an important, but in some ways subtle aspect of the film, and these final words of the trailer, along with a rather choral soundtrack, reflect this.

The film might be described as a modern take on 'the boy who cried wolf'. As the fire service will not help Maimouna, who is trapped in a burning basement and unable to escape, the viewer remembers a previous scene, in which Dounia sets a car alight and shouts abuse at the emergency services who arrive on the scene. The fate of those in the *banlieues* is thus presented as a vicious cycle. Benyamina has strong feelings about the prospects for those living in the *banlieues*, and in response, set up an organisation called *1000 Visages*, which trains youths from the *banlieues* and rural areas in various cinematic crafts, including acting, screenwriting, directing and producing.⁴⁵² She felt that the film industry was 'blanc, bourgeois et misogyne,' [white, middle-class and misogynist] and *1000 Visages* aims to work against that.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² '1000 Visages - About' <https://www.facebook.com/pg/1000visages/about/?ref=page_internal> [accessed 5 November 2017].

⁴⁵³ "'Divines', César Du Meilleur Premier Film', *Ladepeche.Fr* <<http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2017/02/25/2524305-divines-cesar-du-meilleur-premier-film.html>> [accessed 5 November 2017].

The underlying inspiration for this film, the 2005 riots, serves as a reminder that the setting of *Divines* is also incredibly important. Although the majority of the action takes place in the *banlieue* spaces which have been discussed since the beginning of this thesis, the subheading of the Guardian article which features an interview with Benyamina describes the film as a ‘below-the-banlieues thriller,’ suggesting that the slums in which Dounia’s family resides are a step below the *banlieues* on the social ladder.⁴⁵⁴ The underlying themes of class and immigration which are presented in *banlieue* films are also present in *Divines*; Benyamina said ‘Je parle de gens en prise avec leurs émotions et qui font avec les moyens du bord. J’ai voulu donner chair à cette jeunesse trop souvent stéréotypée et méconnue, dans toute son humanité, belle et laide.’⁴⁵⁵ Benyamina’s decision to make a film set in the *banlieue* and featuring the *banlieusards*, their hopes and concerns, could be described as a political one - a move, as has been done by other directors of *banlieue* cinema, to shed light on the struggles of those living in the *banlieues*, but also to highlight their humanity.

The epitext for *Divines* is still developing at a significant pace, as the film continues to receive nominations and praise at awards ceremonies. Nevertheless, there are already a number of newspaper articles online, as well as the film’s press kit which can offer some insight into the director’s intentions and the ways in which these might shape the film’s reception context. An article was published on the BFI website from *Sight & Sound* which describes *Divines* as ‘Officially the best debut feature at Cannes 2016’.⁴⁵⁶ The author notes that the film received a 10-minute standing ovation at the festival, and goes on to offer a little more information about the plot. The article foregrounds the theme of money in the film, but also describes the main character as ‘a manic ball of female teenage energy’, and explains that the focus of the film is her relationship with her friend Maimouna. The strong female characters at the core of the film are also highlighted in the press kit. Benyamina has said ‘Je n’ai pas fait un film féministe,

⁴⁵⁴ Steve Rose, ‘Divines Director Houda Benyamina: “It’s Better to Make a Film than a Bomb”’, *The Guardian*, 10 November 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/nov/10/divines-director-houda-benyamina-its-better-to-make-a-film-than-a-bomb>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁵⁵ ‘I’m talking about people who are in touch with their emotions, and are getting by as best they can. I wanted to represent this youth which is too often stereotyped and little-known, in all of its humanity, beautiful and ugly.’ *Divines* (2015).

⁴⁵⁶ ‘Cannes First-Look Review: Houda Benyamina’s *Divines* (2016) | Sight & Sound’, *British Film Institute* <<http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/reviews-recommendations/divines-first-look>> [accessed 13 February 2017].

j'ai fait un film humaniste' [I didn't make a feminist film, I made a humanist film].⁴⁵⁷ Feminism is mentioned in a number of the articles related to the film, which often highlight the strong female characters and reversal of traditional gender roles.⁴⁵⁸ Not all would describe the film as feminist, though - Amy Nicholson writes that the film 'isn't feminist. Dounia and Rebecca's big dream is to open a bar for sex tourists in Thailand, to literally earn cash pimping out other women. But it's thrillingly, fiercely female.'⁴⁵⁹ The fact that the film is discussed in relation to feminism and female strength is what is significant here.⁴⁶⁰ In an interview, Benyamina is asked what was her 'main focus', and responds:

I wanted to have a story of two best friends. Dounia is ready to do anything for her best friend, Maimouna. She has a need and recognition for power... these are warrior women. It's about that girl who wants to get to the top.⁴⁶¹

Thus Benyamina's focus was on female friendship and Dounia's thirst for achievement. These themes are particularly relevant following the film's release, with a recent resurgence of feminist debate, and a growing interest in women's rights and intersectionality. The last few years have seen the development of what might be described as a more accessible feminism, through initiatives such as the Everyday Sexism Project, and podcasts such as 'The Guilty Feminist', there has been a growth in online engagement with feminist issues.⁴⁶² Within this context of a growing recognition of the need for women to support one another in solidarity across a range of social and political contexts, a film such as *Divines* could see a growth in popularity as some women identify with the characters and their

⁴⁵⁷ 'Feminism is a key theme', 'no, I haven't made a feminist film, I've made a humanist film.' Press Kit 'Divines: un film de Houda Benyamina' Diaphana Distribution, available at: 'Press Kit "Divines: Un Film de Houda Benyamina" Diaphana Distribution' <<http://medias.unifrance.org/medias/106/122/162410/presse/divines-presskit-french.pdf>> [accessed 13 February 2017].

⁴⁵⁸ Catherine Bray, 'Cannes Film Review: "Divines"', *Variety*, 2016 <<http://variety.com/2016/film/reviews/divines-film-review-1201778704/>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁵⁹ 'The Brutal Girl Power of Divines', *MTV News* <<http://www.mtv.com/news/2957251/divines-netflix-review/>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁶⁰ Bray; Pavlova.

⁴⁶¹ 'Houda Benyamina Tells a Visceral and Personal Story with Divines at Cannes | The National' <<http://www.thenational.ae/arts-life/film/houda-benyamina-tells-a-visceral-and-personal-story-with-divines-at-cannes>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁶² 'Everyday Sexism Project' <<https://everydaysexism.com/>> [accessed 3 November 2017]; 'The Guilty Feminist – The Comedy Podcast Hosted by Deborah Frances-White' <<http://guiltyfeminist.com/>> [accessed 3 November 2017].

struggle. This could also affect potential viewers' exposure to the film. For example, it could be featured in the Netflix category of films 'featuring a strong female lead'. In the analysis of the subtitles for the film, then, close attention will be paid to linguistic manifestations of identity, particularly in relation to gender. Since the director aimed to represent the relationship between the two young women in the film, an analysis of how this friendship is conveyed in translation will be of particular interest. One line in the film which stands out in some of the press surrounding *Divines*, and features in the trailer is Rebecca's statement to Dounia; '*t'as du clitoris, j'aime bien!*' [you've got clitoris, I like it]. This phrasing is a female answer to the French equivalent of 'you've got balls' and would stand out to the majority of viewers as a feminist linguistic innovation.⁴⁶³ One might argue, then, that viewers would be expecting a film which challenges traditional expectations regarding gender.

As the most recently released film to be examined in-depth, the success of *Divines* is still growing. At the time of writing, the film has won a number of prizes at film festivals, including the *Camera d'Or* at Cannes, and a Golden Globe for *Best Motion Picture - Foreign Language*.⁴⁶⁴ In addition, the film/cast have been nominated for seven awards at the 2017 *Césars*.⁴⁶⁵ Benyamina's first film, which features a number of previously unknown actors and actresses, has been well-received by the critics, and seems to mark the start of a promising career. There were 106 156 tickets sold in *Divines*' first week of release, and it is therefore the most popular of the three case study films.⁴⁶⁶ There has been a lot of discussion about the film in the French press; along with the film's success at the *Césars*, a lot of potential viewers in France would arguably have heard of the film. Serious cinema goers in the UK might also have heard about the film's success at the film festivals, and the film is not unknown in the UK press either, with the Guardian featuring an interview with Benyamina and a review of the film. In addition to the film's accessibility online, its relative success compared to *La squale* and

⁴⁶³ François Brunet and Declan Mc Cavana, *Dictionnaire Bilingue de l'argot d'aujourd'hui = : Bilingual Dictionary of Today's Slang* (Paris: Pocket - Langues pour tous, 2004).

⁴⁶⁴ 'IMDb'.

⁴⁶⁵ 'Nommés 2017 - Académie Des Arts et Techniques Du Cinéma' <<http://www.academie-cinema.org/ceremonie/nommes.html?annee=2017#meilleure-actrice-dans-second-role>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

⁴⁶⁶ 'Divines (2016)- JPBox-Office' <<http://www.jpbox-office.com/fichfilm.php?id=16039&affiche=paris>> [accessed 20 February 2017].

L'esquive means that it does have the potential to reach a broader range of viewers than the other case study films.

Macrocontextual Analysis Conclusions

This analysis of the plot and paratexts of each of the three films has led to the identification of certain key themes in each film and underlined the nature of the films in question as political interventions. In each case, clear links can be drawn between language and identity, and the messages conveyed by the directors. This is supported by those working in film, but also by the discussion of language and identity which took place in Chapter One.

Women, their treatment, and relationships between them emerged as key themes, particularly in *La squale* and *Divines*. The analysis of the subtitled versions of the films will therefore examine how far the treatment and position of women in the films is presented in the subtitled versions, through close analysis of language specifically related to these issues. Based on the paratexts for *La squale*, potential viewers would have been made aware of the presence of physical violence and scenes of a sexual nature, but not necessarily the sexual violence which is foregrounded in the film. In Genestal's film, we see the presence of very strong and often graphic language in discussions by women and about women on the subject of the female body, and this is linked to the director's aim to make a film about the macho culture and the treatment of women in the *banlieue*. *La squale* *L'esquive* deals with issues of identity and exclusion and is a particularly interesting example in which the *langage de banlieue* and the French of Marivaux are juxtaposed to highlight the performance of identity. The relationships at the centre of the plot, between Krimo and Magali, Krimo and Lydia, and Lydia and Magali, as well as Fathi's attempts to intimidate Frida, raise questions of gender and power, which in the context of representations of the *cités* are closely linked. Additional themes emerging in *Divines* include money and religion, which are at times subtle, but important. The close analysis of the subtitles which follows in Chapters Five and Six will involve a study of the films as political interventions, in relation to the themes highlighted in the paratextual analysis above. The analysis will seek to establish how the themes of identity and gender are presented in the subtitled films. Furthermore, the analysis will examine issues related to race and exclusion which are significant themes in many *banlieue* films, and the translation

of these aspects. This will involve the identification of particularly significant sequences of language as it relates to the above themes, and a close analysis of the subtitled film at those points, as well as some broader, thematic discussion of the subtitled films in relation to skopos theory and the directors' intentions.

Chapter Five: Subtitling the Features of the *Langage de Banlieue*

In this chapter, instances of *verlan* and argot, culturally-specific language, swearing and insults, loanwords, and multilingualism, are identified in the French-language films, and the subtitled versions of the films are analysed to examine how these features are presented in translation. In some cases, examples will be discussed with reference to the surrounding polysemiotic network (where this is particularly relevant), and in every case the analysis is underpinned by the previous examination of the cultural context of release, the directors' intentions, and the marketing of the films, so that the politicised nature of the films in question is a key consideration in the analysis.

The individual subtitles to be discussed will be displayed in table format, with some or all of the following information:

Subtitle Number Preceded by: 'S' for <i>La squale</i> , 'E' for <i>L'esquive</i> and 'D' for <i>Divines</i> (from SubRip file)	IN Timecode in HH:MM:SS:FF	OUT Timecode in HH:MM:SS:FF
<p><i>SLD: Source Language Dialogue*</i></p> <p>[Gloss Translation of SLD*]</p> <p>Subtitle: Subtitle Text (displayed with line breaks as they appear on screen)</p>		

* Where the origin of certain vocabulary is relevant, this will be indicated in the Source Language Dialogue (SLD) through underlining and an asterisk* and explained in the gloss through curly brackets, for example {slang} or {verlan}.

Verlan and Argot

As one of the most striking features of the *langage de banlieue*, the lexicon of this sociolect is featured in all three of the films studied and was a factor in the identification of these films as belonging to the genre of *banlieue* film and in their selection for case study analysis here. A detailed description of the lexical features of the *langage de banlieue* and an explanation of its significance was offered in Chapter One, which highlighted the function of the *langage de banlieue* as a marker of identity for those living in the *banlieue*, and a means for them to express their frustration with and rebellion against mainstream society. Identity is a thread which runs throughout this thesis, and scholars have long stressed the links between language and context, or the way in which we view the world around us.⁴⁶⁷ Macro-contextual analysis of *La squale*, *L'esquive* and *Divines* has revealed that each of these films was conceived with and framed by socio-political messages concerning aspects of the *banlieue* subculture and lifestyle, and these themes are reflected in the use of language in the films. These thematic concerns and the way in which they are presented in the subtitled films will be examined in-depth in Chapter Six, but it is not possible to separate the larger themes identified in Chapter Four from individual dialogues and subtitles examined here.

In a *New York Times* article about *L'esquive*, it was stated that the 'script, which Mr Kechiche wrote with Ghalya Lacroix, choreographs a dizzying series of collisions between the hip-hop influences, Arabic-inflected staccato of working-class youth slang and the decorous melodies of Marivaux's prose.'⁴⁶⁸ Hence, though the cast featured local residents with little to no acting experience, the film was heavily scripted (unlike *Entre les murs*, for example, which was workshopped before being filmed), and this script included a great deal of the features of the *langage de banlieue* discussed in Chapter One. Hamaidia notes that in *La haine* 'the characters' use of local dialect also expresses their solidarity in the face of unemployment and their alienation from the social establishment', and this view

⁴⁶⁷ See, for example, Basel Al-Sheikh Hussein, 'The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis Today', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2.3 (2012), 642–46; M. A. K. Halliday, *Language and Society*, ed. by Jonathan Webster, The Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday, v. 10 (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 134.

⁴⁶⁸ A. O. Scott, 'A Classic French Tale Echoes in the Gritty Paris of Today', *The New York Times*, 31 August 2005 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/31/movies/a-classic-french-tale-echoes-in-the-gritty-paris-of-today.html>> [accessed 24 May 2016].

is reinforced by Doran's work on the *langage de banlieue*.⁴⁶⁹ Thus, the representation of certain features of a character's speech in translation can have implications on their characterisation in a translated film. When linked to wider socio-political messages which can be identified in *banlieue* film in general, and have been in these three cases, this can further have an impact on the way in which the director's intentions are presented in the subtitled films.

The challenge with rendering discourse markers in subtitling is related to the tight technical requirements explained in Chapter Three. Since these elements of a character's speech can often be less informative than other aspects vying for space in the subtitle, they are sometimes omitted in translation. In the case of *L'esquive*, there are therefore some elements of Lydia's characterisation which are not always rendered in the subtitles. In addition to her use of words from Arabic (which will be discussed later in this chapter), the Caucasian character, Lydia also employs a number of discourse markers which set her speech apart from that of her peers. One scene in which these are particularly evident is when she visits the dressmaker to collect a dress she has commissioned for her costume in the school play. Lydia is slightly unhappy with her dress and asks the dressmaker to lengthen it. In order to maintain a sense of camaraderie with the dressmaker, and to avoid the discussion becoming unpleasant, Lydia peppers her pleading with *mon frère*, as if to show that she recognises the dressmaker as belonging to a similar social sphere.⁴⁷⁰ It was noted earlier that speaking the *langage de banlieue* reinforces a sense of community among the speakers, excluding those who do not 'belong'. Although it is unclear whether Lydia is being genuine, or whether this is a strategy to convince the dressmaker to help her out, the way in which she addresses him does not convey a lack of respect.

⁴⁶⁹ Hamaidia, p. 5; Doran, p. 498.

⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, 'Frère' is defined as 'ami(ie)' [friend] in Cédric Nagou, *Lexik Des Cités Illustré* (Paris: Fleuve noir, 2007), p. 158.

E0100	00:06:38:29	00:06:41:21
<p><i>Mais vas-y, <u>mon frère</u>*, allonge-le-moi un petit peu. Il doit y avoir quelqu'un qui peut le faire en 5 minutes là.</i></p> <p>[But go on, my brother {slang}, lengthen it a little for me. There must be someone who can do it in 5 minutes now.]</p> <p>C'mon, lengthen it</p> <p>Someone here can do it.</p>		

E0106	00:06:52:21	00:06:54:08
<p><i>Vas-y, mon frère, allonge-le-moi.</i></p> <p>[Go on, my brother, lengthen it for me.]</p> <p>C'mon, lengthen it.</p>		

E0121	00:07:44:04	00:07:45:05
<p><i>Non mon frère on a dit 50.</i></p> <p>[No my brother we said 50.]</p> <p>No, brother, 50.</p>		

The *banlieusards* will typically only use the *langage de banlieue* when communicating with someone else from the same community. Indeed, Lepoutre notes that it would have been inappropriate for him to use the *langage de banlieue* during his fieldwork as a teacher in the *banlieue*.⁴⁷¹ Furthermore, according to Halliday, register is linked to the ‘situation type’.⁴⁷² Thus, if there is a change in *tenor* (participants), then the speaker may change register. However, in this case, Lydia maintains the same register, and says *mon frère* three times in the sequence. Only the final *mon frère* is subtitled as ‘brother’. Such discourse markers arguably constitute an important feature of the *langage de banlieue*, and serve to remind viewers that the characters on screen belong to the *banlieue* subculture. Of course, an audience viewing *L’esquive* with English subtitles would still be able to hear the rhythm and intonation, and would perhaps even hear that Lydia repeats *mon frère* regularly in her speech. This could be an argument in favour of the omission of such discourse markers in the subtitles, particularly given the frequent need for the reduction of text in subtitling. Furthermore, combined with the speed of speech in *banlieue* film, which was highlighted as challenging by subtitlers, omitting such discourse markers does reduce reading speeds and could help to improve the readability of the subtitles.

Dounia is referred to by many in the *banlieue* where *Divines* is set as *la bâtarde*, presumably in relation to her mother’s perceived promiscuity. The occasions on which Dounia is referred to as *la bâtarde* feature in Table 3 below.

⁴⁷¹ Lepoutre, p. 157.

⁴⁷² Halliday, ‘Language as Social Semiotic’, p. 363.

Table 3 - Occurrences of *la bâtarde*

	IN time OUT time	Source Language Dialogue	Subtitle
D0008	00:02:32:22 00:02:34:17	<i>Wesh qu'est-ce que tu as à me mater comme ça la bâtarde là ?</i> [What's with you looking at me like that, the Bastard, there?]	What are you looking at, bastard?
D0369	00:30:26:09 00:30:27:15	<i>Wesh elle fait quoi la bâtarde là ?</i> [What is she doing there, the Bastard, there?]	What's the bastard doing here?
D0734	00:00:49:14 01:00:51:15	<i>Attends, t'as trop pris de la confiance, sale bâtarde, va.</i> [Wait, you've become too confident, dirty Bastard, go on.]	You're getting too cocky, bastard.
D0779	01:05:51:14 01:05:53:03	<i>Tout se paye, bâtarde!</i> [Everything comes at a cost, Bastard!]	You had it coming, bastard!
D1082	01:36:39:06 01:36:41:13	<i>La bâtarde tu vas mourir la bâtarde!</i> [The Bastard you will die the Bastard!]	You're gonna die, you bastard!
D1086	01:36:48:11 01:36:50:05	<i>Tu m'appelles plus jamais 'la bâtarde'!</i> [You will never again call me 'the Bastard'!]	Never call me bastard again!

The nickname comes from the denotational meaning of the term 'bastard', it functions in a similar way to its English equivalent and is now also used as a general insult in French.⁴⁷³ The use of the nickname in *Divines* therefore has multiple meanings which would arguably transfer into English given the semantic

⁴⁷³ 'One begotten and born out of wedlock; an illegitimate or natural child.'Oxford English Dictionary Online'.

similarities between the term in both languages. However, throughout the film it is subtitled as an insult exclusively, since it is not capitalised. Therefore, the non-French speaking viewer would probably assume that Samir is insulting Dounia, but he is not the only character who refers to her as *la bâtarde*. Following the development of Dounia's character throughout the film, in her final confrontation with Rebecca (see subtitle D1086 above), she says *Tu m'appelle plus jamais 'La Bâtarde'!* This is a moment in which Dounia finally realises the power she has, and she attempts to command respect by requesting that people no longer use the nickname she was given. Although the inclusion of 'bastard' in earlier subtitles throughout the film does suggest a repetition of the adjective used to describe her, the fact that it is not capitalised does not clearly indicate its use as a nickname. This becomes more problematic when, at the end of the film, one of the young *banlieusards* tells Dounia that the emergency services will not enter the *cité*, referring to them as 'fils de putes', and this is subtitled as 'those bastards won't come in'. The use of the insult therefore seems to be prevalent and it could be argued that its significance as a reference to Dounia's mother's circumstances is not evident in the subtitled version of the film.

One approach taken by the subtitlers of the films studied involved the inclusion of certain less formal terms in order to render the lexical features of the *langage de banlieue* in the subtitles for the speech of certain characters. One example of this is the case of Reda in *Divines*. This is arguably less challenging since he does not have a great deal of dialogue in the film, and the use of slang terms in one or two subtitles has less serious implications in terms of readability than the use of slang terms throughout the film in the subtitles for Rebecca's dialogue would have.

D0960	01:19:04:06	01:19:07:11
<p><i>Soirée de lancement hein, <u>bête</u>* de showcase avec un groupe de rap <u>d'ouf</u>*. Ça te dirait ?</i></p> <p>[Launch party, hey, awesome {slang} showcase with a crazy {verlan} rap group. Do you fancy it?]</p> <p>Fancy going to a gig? A shit-hot new rap group</p>		

D0967	01:19:26:21	01:19:30:04
<p><i>Tu sais, les autres <u>meufs</u>* de la dernière fois, c'était les <u>tapins</u>* de mes potes, hein.</i></p> <p>[You know, the other women{verlan} from last time, it was the tarts {slang} of my friends, hey.]</p> <p>Those other girls were my mates' slags.</p>		

In the subtitles for Reda's dialogue, register has been maintained through the use of slang terms and non-standard grammar. For example, in the first subtitle above, the beginning of the question has been shortened: 'fancy going...' instead of 'do you fancy going...' this is a common feature of non-standard English, similar to the removal of the verb 'to be' mentioned earlier, and combined with swearing, 'shit-hot' in the second line, conveys the casual nature of the conversation. This is important because Reda does not know Dounia, he saw her in a night club, but he has never spoken to her, and yet he immediately opens with slang and non-standard language. In the dialogue for the second subtitle, Reda's opinion of women is clearly conveyed; he refers to them as belonging to his friends, and uses the term 'tapin'. 'Faire le tapin' is a synonym for prostitution.⁴⁷⁴ The vocabulary

⁴⁷⁴ Josette Rey-Debove, Alain Rey, and Paul Robert, *Le Nouveau Petit Robert: Dictionnaire Alphabétique et Analogique de La Langue Française* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2009), p. 2506.

employed in the subtitles presents a derogatory reference to women as belongings which are there to provide pleasure for the men. There will be a discussion of similar expressions in *La squale* in Chapter Six, in relation to the themes of rape and sexual violence which are prominent in the film. However, it might be suggested that the use of this kind of language to speak about and to women in the *banlieue* is an important part of the subculture, and thus a key aspect of the representation of the *banlieue* on screen.

The strategy of substituting slang terms in the SLD with slang terms from English in the subtitles which was used in the example above has also been employed in some other isolated cases as a means to translate *verlan* and *argot* in all three films. As will be demonstrated by the following examples, this approach conveys an informal register, but does not necessarily demonstrate the use of a particular sociolect in the source language dialogue. One sequence in *L'esquive* in which the SLD is heavily laden with *verlan* and *argot* is towards the beginning of the film, when Lydia visits a friend to show her the dress she has had made for the play. Her friend is impressed with the dress:

E0164	00:09:51:21	00:09:52:14
<p><i>Elle est chanmée !</i></p> <p>[It's wicked.]</p> <p>Wicked!</p>		

E0165	00:09:52:20	00:09:54:04
<p><i>Sérieusement ?</i> <i>Elle est super belle !</i></p> <p>[Seriously? It's super beautiful]</p> <p>- Seriously? - It's fly.</p>		

'Chanmée' is a verlanisation of the French *méchant*, which could be translated as 'mean' in some contexts. Here, though, the term is used positively, suggesting that Lydia's dress is 'awesome', or something along those lines. In the absence of a similar form of back slang in English, the adjective 'wicked' has been used in the subtitle, thus retaining a similar informal register in translation.⁴⁷⁵ In addition, 'wicked' would originally have been used negatively, as a synonym for 'sinful', for example, and still is used in such a manner by older British English speakers, while *méchant* can be used in much the same circumstances; *chanmé* can equally be used to mean *vicieux* [depraved], or *impressionnant* [impressive].⁴⁷⁶ The SLD is not entirely accessible to all French speakers, so one might argue that the same should be the case for the English-language subtitles.

In the next subtitle, the character reinforces her previous statement with *elle est super belle* [it's super-beautiful]. In the SLD, then, the dress is stated to be cool/'wicked' and very beautiful. 'Fly' as an adjective is defined as '[1970s+] (US campus) ...attractive, pretty, stylish.'⁴⁷⁷ Urban dictionary, a popular online slang dictionary offers 'cool, in style', and the term is not regularly used in British

⁴⁷⁵ Here used for its positive definition ; 'excellent, wonderful' in Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London: The Softback Preview, 1999), p. 1285.

⁴⁷⁶ Abdelkarim Tengour, *Tout l'argot Des Banlieues: Le Dictionnaire de La Zone En 2600 Définitions* (Paris: Opportun, 2013), p. 123; Roget, Peter Mark, *Roget's Thesaurus: Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1964), p. 347..

⁴⁷⁷ Green, p. 435.

English.⁴⁷⁸ In the translation, then, the use of ‘fly’ means the emphasis seems to fall more on style than beauty; not only has a slang term been used as a translation for a more standard French phrase (though arguably one which belongs more to mainstream youth speech than general usage), it also has slightly different connotations to the adjective featured in the SLD. This may be an example of compensation - a slang term has been included in this subtitle, as it was not possible to do so in the previous one. Díaz-Cintas and Remael contend that this strategy ‘means making up for a translational loss in one exchange by overtranslating or adding something in another.’⁴⁷⁹ Compensation has also been discussed by Vinay and Darbelnet, who suggest that it constitutes ‘a technique which maintains the tonality of the whole text by introducing, as a stylistic variant in another place of the text, the element which could not be rendered at the same place by the same means.’⁴⁸⁰ Although Vinay and Darbelnet probably did not have subtitling in mind when they wrote their methodology, compensation is particularly relevant here, where the constraints of the medium often necessitate deletions or reductions in particular subtitles. Compensation allows for the subtitler to reduce the ‘shift’ in translation if a suitable solution is available. I would argue that the slight shift in register here would not have as great an impact on the reception of the film as the use of an Americanism (fly). Americanisms have been used in a similar manner in both *La squale* and *L’esquive*, and this ‘dialect-for-dialect’ approach will be fully examined in the next chapter.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁸ Urban Dictionary is a crowdsourced online dictionary – in the case of slang, this means that the definitions are provided by those who currently use the terms. ‘Urban Dictionary’, *Urban Dictionary* <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/>> [accessed 13 October 2017].

⁴⁷⁹ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 202.

⁴⁸⁰ Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*, trans. by Juan C. Sager and M.J. Hamel, Benjamins Translation Library (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995), p. 199.

⁴⁸¹ The term ‘dialect-for-dialect replacement’ is used by Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 53.

The strategy of using lexicon to highlight the informal nature of the characters' speech was also identified in the subtitles for *Divines*:

D0151	00:11:24:07	00:11:26:00
<p><i>Elle a <u>que dalle</u> !</i></p> <p>[She has nothing {slang}!]</p> <p>Skint!</p>		

In the above example, a slang term has been used in the English subtitle for the common slang phrase *que dalle* [nothing]. This strategy, though it does not highlight the nature of the *langage de banlieue* and its broader implications of identity and resistance, does highlight the informal register of Dounia's speech, which at this point in the film is significant, since she is speaking disrespectfully to her teacher.

In addition to the strategy of using lexicon to convey the informal register in *banlieue* film, there is evidence which suggests that some subtitlers employ a strategy of spelling certain words phonetically. The case study findings are corroborated by the subtitler questionnaire responses, in which some indicated this was a strategy they used (to varying degrees) in subtitling *banlieue* film.⁴⁸² This has the effect of evoking non-standard pronunciation of target language words, thus demonstrating the presence of *verlan* and other slang in the source language dialogue. Some of the approaches demonstrated in the subtitles might be explained in this way. Non-standard spellings often have the advantage of featuring contractions, and thus a reduced number of characters, or the replacement of certain letters with an apostrophe instead. Therefore, the resulting words often take up less space on screen than the standard spelling would. Lexical recreation should be used with care in subtitling; the need for maximum readability, and the importance of avoiding the risk of confusion for the viewer have already been discussed. This risk is usually addressed through the use

⁴⁸² O'Neill; Masters; Miller.

of quotation marks, which is not the case here.⁴⁸³ In *L'esquive*, Lydia asks if her friend can come with her to rehearsal and receives the following response:

E0204	00:11:26:02	00:11:29:11
<p><i>Déjà y'a ma grande sœur tout à l'heure elle est passée elle m'a dit si je pouvais venir avec elle chez elle</i></p> <p>[Already there's my sister earlier she came by she said if I could come with her to her place]</p> <p>My sista called by earlier to ask me to go with her</p>		
E0205	00:11:29:17	00:11:30:29
<p><i>ma reum* elle m'a fait vas-y laisse tomber.</i></p> <p>[My mum *{verlan} she went come on forget it.]</p> <p>Mom said no way.</p>		

Firstly, the above sequence is a good example of the speed of dialogue referred to by Ian Burley in his questionnaire responses.⁴⁸⁴ The characters are speaking extremely quickly, so in this example, much of the dialogue can be condensed without the need to omit important information; the character has expressed herself in a very 'wordy' manner. In this case, *chez elle* has been omitted from the subtitles, and this information is not integral to the plot. The verlanised form of *mère* appears in the speech for the second subtitle: *reum*, but unless through an alternative linguistic recreation, there is no clear way to convey that verlanised term in the subtitles. Hence, an example of linguistic recreation/non-standard spelling has been included in the previous subtitle; 'sista'. Many viewers would not find this subtitle problematic, particularly since the reading speed of the first

⁴⁸³ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 206.

⁴⁸⁴ Burley, 'Follow-up Questionnaire Response'.

subtitle is 146wpm, and the second 111wpm. These reading speeds are considerably lower than the average reading speed of 150-180wpm recommended by Karamitroglou in his guidelines, and thus allow the viewer plenty of time to process the subtitles.⁴⁸⁵ This strategy would therefore appear to be a particularly useful one for subtitlers working with non-standard varieties such as the *langage de banlieue*.

Gottlieb's notion of 'diagonal translation' which emphasises the move from one language to another, but also from the oral to the written, is relevant to the discussion of non-standard spelling in subtitles.⁴⁸⁶ In a later piece, he notes that viewers 'expect subtitles to follow written conventions.'⁴⁸⁷ This is a very relevant consideration here; in subtitling, audience expectations are particularly important due to the short amount of time for which the viewer has access to the translation. If the subtitle features unexpected language, they may have to reread the subtitle to check whether they understood the meaning, and therefore miss some information either in the subtitle or elsewhere in the polysemiotic network. Gottlieb also highlights that viewers' reading speeds may be changing and points to differing industry standards to illustrate his point.⁴⁸⁸ This is supported by the higher reading speed regulations for Netflix subtitles discussed in Chapter Three.⁴⁸⁹ These changes in reading speed could counteract the argument that subtitles should only feature standard spelling, as audiences can potentially read more quickly than they are given credit for. Furthermore, in the digital age, people have access to subtitles from a variety of sources, such as fansubbing or other non-professional subtitles accessed via Facebook videos, for example. The phenomenon of Facebook videos auto playing in a user's 'News Feed' has resulted in the regular presence of subtitles on online videos - the user can access the media content without the need to press play or turn on sound. Nowadays, anyone with a camera phone can create a short video to put online, and they can add subtitles on YouTube, or other free websites such as Dotsub, not to mention

⁴⁸⁵ Karamitroglou.

⁴⁸⁶ See Gottlieb, 'Subtitling: Diagonal Translation'.

⁴⁸⁷ Henrik Gottlieb, 'Subtitles - Readable Dialogue?', in *Eye Tracking in Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Elisa Perego, Englishes, 2 (Roma: Aracne, 2012), pp. 37–81 (p. 54).

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p.57.

⁴⁸⁹ 'English Template Timed Text Style Guide'.

downloadable subtitling freeware such as Aegisub.⁴⁹⁰ It might be suggested, then, that viewers are not entirely unaccustomed to seeing non-standard spelling or syntax in subtitles.

One related strategy which seems to have been adopted throughout *L'esquive* is to drop the 'g' on some words, adding an apostrophe, such as in 'tryin'', or 'thinkin''. In addition, some non-standard, but generally recognised and understood spellings of certain words have been employed. Examples of this include 'gimme' instead of 'give me', and 'watcha' as an alternative to 'what are you'. As noted above, these spelling-related strategies also have the advantage of reducing the character-length of the subtitles in which they are used. When asked whether they would use incorrect syntax in a subtitle to reflect a character's linguistic errors, the subtitlers were divided, with some suggesting that such a strategy is entirely necessary, whilst others noted that they did so very rarely. Ian Burley said:

There's always the likelihood of the audience thinking that the translator has made a mistake or doesn't know how to write properly. If it can be done from the outset and consistently through the film, then I go for it.⁴⁹¹

This is clearly the strategy adopted in *L'esquive*, and the consistency does allow for it to be employed without the risk of the viewer questioning whether there are mistakes in the subtitles. Gottlieb would agree with Ian Burley's comments, as he highlights the importance of proofreading to avoid spelling mistakes and bad punctuation.⁴⁹²

There are a few examples of the use of non-standard spelling to reflect slang in the SLD in the subtitles for *La squale*. One such instance can be found in subtitle S0089, where the general register of the scene is conveyed through the non-standard rendering of 'ain't' for 'is not'. That subtitle is one of a sequence which

⁴⁹⁰ 'YouTube' <<https://www.youtube.com/>> [accessed 25 September 2017]; 'The Leading Way to Caption and Translate Videos Online | Dotsub' <<https://dotsub.com/>> [accessed 25 September 2017]; 'Aegisub Advanced Subtitle Editor' <<http://www.aegisub.org/>> [accessed 25 September 2017].

⁴⁹¹ Burley, 'Questionnaire Response'.

⁴⁹² Gottlieb, 'Subtitling: Diagonal Translation', p. 116; Gottlieb, 'Subtitles - Readable Dialogue?', p. 54.

highlights the dialect-for-dialect approach as it is implemented in *La squala*, and as such will be discussed in Chapter Six. However, this non-standard rendering is one aspect of that sequence which indicates register through a non-standard rendering which would be familiar to a British audience.

In contrast to the frequency with which this strategy is implemented in *La squala* and *L'esquive*, the subtitles for *Divines* feature significantly fewer contractions or non-standard spellings. These appear to have been used primarily in situations where the characters are angry or upset. For example, in the subtitles for the scene in which Djigui has an argument with the choreographer, he gets angry, and the subtitles feature the contraction 'gonna' (subtitle 342). Similarly, when Dounia is being beaten up, 'wanna' and 'outta' are included in the subtitles (number 587 and 590). However, this strategy is not used very often, and in contrast to contractions appearing in the subtitled versions of *La squala* and *L'esquive*, most of those which are used are also employed in writing, such as 'hasn't', for example. There could be a few reasons for the reduced number of contractions in the subtitles for *Divines*. It is the most recent of the case study films, and given its dissemination via Netflix, and the greater ease with which audiovisual content can be disseminated internationally nowadays, was perhaps subtitled with a broader international audience in mind. This could explain the lack of dialect-for-dialect approach, which results in a translation that, on the one hand, features less non-standard language than the subtitles for the other two case study films, but then also runs less of a risk of presenting language which would be 'unfamiliar' to English-speaking viewers. Furthermore, it has been noted that a strategy by which the subtitles present less non-standard features than the SLD is 'without a doubt the most frequently identified strategy' in research of non-standard language in translation.⁴⁹³ In addition, the character limits and reading speeds for Netflix subtitles are higher than in many other cases, and this could mean that there was less of a need to reduce the number of characters in the subtitles.

The use of non-standard spellings, particularly contractions, or what might be described as 'phonetic' spellings of certain words, could also be seen to account

⁴⁹³ Sara Ramos Pinto, 'Film, Dialects and Subtitles: An Analytical Framework for the Study of Non-Standard Varieties in Subtitling', *The Translator*, 0 (2017), 1–18 (p. 7).

for some of the phonetic features of the *langage de banlieue*. Fagyal notes that *langage de banlieue* differs from standard French in terms of pronunciation, in addition to the other aspects discussed in more depth in Chapter One. She references an interview with B. Cerquiglini in which he mentioned ‘l’extrême réduction des voyelles et le renforcement des consonnes’, noting that ‘ces changements peuvent être liés au contact du français avec les langues de l’immigration en provenance du Maghreb’.⁴⁹⁴ Thus, the way in which many *banlieusards* pronounce words can be linked back to the multicultural nature of the areas in which they live. It might be argued, then, that the difference in pronunciation is a key aspect of the *banlieue* subculture being represented on screen. This suggests that the non-standard spellings described above are particularly useful in subtitling *banlieue* film, as they may go some way towards signalling this non-standard pronunciation to the viewer of the subtitled film. There are other aspects of the *banlieue* subculture which are represented in the language spoken by the characters in *banlieue* film which refer explicitly to the reality of the situation in which they live. These will be discussed as culture-specific references in the next section.

Culturally-specific Language

The link between language and identity has been discussed at length in this thesis, and it follows that linguistic varieties such as the *langage de banlieue* are extremely culture-bound, as their usage (and understanding) depends on knowledge of a specific social or geographical context. This is one of the reasons why the use of a dialect-for-dialect approach in the translation of slang might be problematic, and will be discussed in depth in Chapter Six. However, the link between language and culture in the *banlieue* is very efficiently demonstrated in the critical introduction written by Goudaillier for his *banlieue* slang dictionary. This was discussed in Chapter One, and has been referred to a number of times since then. Goudaillier highlighted certain primary aspects of the *banlieue* culture or life for which the *banlieusards* possessed an extensive vocabulary. The topics highlighted by Goudaillier have emerged in the films studied, and are interesting because they stand out in comparison to standard French. They do, therefore,

⁴⁹⁴ ‘The extreme reduction of vowels and the intensification of consonants...’ ‘these changes can be linked to the contact between French and Magrebi languages of immigrants’. Fagyal, p. 93.

present a challenge when it comes to their translation into English, which will arguably not benefit from as wide a variety of synonyms related to them. This section will take some of these topics and the related Culture-Specific terms, and examine the translation of those terms in the three case study films in order to establish how the subtitlers dealt with this translation problem in *banlieue* film.

Díaz-Cintas and Remael offer a taxonomy of culture specific references which is broken down into three categories. The taxonomy they present is based on those developed by Vandeweghe in 2005 and Grit in 1997, and includes three main categories; ‘Geographical references’, ‘ethnographic references’ and ‘Socio-political references’.⁴⁹⁵ The first two categories are particularly relevant here, and will be used in combination with those identified by Goudaillier, in order to present some examples identified in the films studied.⁴⁹⁶ The terms belonging to Goudaillier’s categories could be described as culture specific references since, as Doran notes

On a symbolic level [...] these semantic innovations and shifts within suburban youth language point to the construction of what Halliday (following Peirce) has called an alternative *universe of discourse*, in which it is *cit * youths, rather than dominant society, who hold the power to name and to categorize their local social reality.⁴⁹⁷

Thus, the terms in question *belong* to the *banlieusards* and therefore do not belong to the sphere of cultural reference of most native French speakers. Duch ne is in agreement with Doran’s suggestion and notes that this variety of language represents ‘la pens e, l’esprit d’un groupe de locuteurs, sa fa on d’ tre et sa vision du monde.’⁴⁹⁸ This reinforces the notion of language being linked to culture and world view suggested above. Newmark upholds this view in relation to translation, noting that

... when a speech community focuses its attention on a particular topic (this is usually called ‘cultural focus’), it spawns a plethora of words to designate its special language or terminology[...] frequently where there is a cultural focus, there is a translation problem due to the

⁴⁹⁵ D az-Cintas and Remael, p. 201.

⁴⁹⁶ Goudaillier, p. 17.

⁴⁹⁷ Doran, p. 502.

⁴⁹⁸ ‘the thoughts and spirit of a group of speakers, the group’s manner of being and its world view’. Duch ne, p. 36.

cultural ‘gap’ or ‘distance’ between the source and target languages’.⁴⁹⁹

Thus, the above-mentioned topics which are a bigger part of the daily reality for the *banlieusards* will lead to the creation of many terms to describe the activities or phenomena, and this ‘cultural focus’ is evidenced by Goudaillier.⁵⁰⁰ In some cases, where there is not too great a cultural gap, this may not cause translation problems - for example, if two cultures both have a big interest in a certain topic, then the translation of related terms between them may not be too challenging. However, in the case of the French *banlieue* specifically, there is already some distance between the *banlieue* subculture and language, and mainstream French culture and language.⁵⁰¹ When that culture is then subtitled into English, the translator may find themselves struggling to come up with as great a variety of terms related to one topic in the target language as are used in the source language dialogue. These terms will therefore inevitably pose a challenge to translators working into other languages and cultures.

The first category of culture-specific language to be addressed is that of ethnographic references, which are particularly interesting in the case of *banlieue* cinema, given the multicultural nature of the *banlieues* and the fact that youths refer to race and ethnicity in their friendship groups without this being a taboo subject. This translation challenge was introduced and discussed in Chapter One. *La haine* Hamaidia notes that the use of terms such as the reverlanisation of the word *beur* from *Arabe*; *reubeu/rebeu* ‘expresses and reinforces solidarity between the main characters’, and this function of the language in film arguably replicates the real-life effects of the use of *verlanisation* to reappropriate terms for use by the members of the *banlieue* community.⁵⁰² One particularly interesting and challenging example of a direct reference to race can be identified in *L’esquive*, in the scene where Lydia shows her friend her new dress. This scene was discussed

⁴⁹⁹ Newmark, p. 94.

⁵⁰⁰ Goudaillier, p. 17.

⁵⁰¹ Revel highlights the ‘us and them’ attitude with which many French people speak of the *banlieues* in her book ‘Qui a peur de la *banlieue*?’ [Who is afraid of the *banlieue* ?] In her case study of the subtitles for *La haine*, Jäckel notes the difficulty with which many viewers understood the film’s dialogues at the Cannes film festival. Jäckel, p. 225.

⁵⁰² Hamaidia, p. 8.

earlier in this chapter, and in that same conversation, Lydia is asked where she bought the dress.

E0170	00:10:03:11	00:10:05:03
<p><i>Tu l'as pris où ?</i> <i>Chez le <u>noich</u>*.</i></p> <p>[Where did you get it? At the <u>Chinese's place</u> {verlan}.]</p> <p>-Who made it? - Slant-eyes</p>		

In the first line of the subtitle, the question has been reformulated from asking where Lydia got the dress, to who made it. This reformulation of questions is a common strategy in subtitling, and is termed '*modulation*' by Vinay and Darbelnet. It involves a grammatical change in the utterance, and can be used to make a phrase sound more idiomatic in translation.⁵⁰³ In subtitling, certain variations on this strategy might be ruled out; for example, if a character is nodding, the question cannot be reformulated in such a manner that the response would be negative, as then there will be a disparity between the subtitle and the on-screen information provided in the non-verbal visual channel. In this particular example from *L'esquive*, the strategy allows for a reduction in text in the next line - the response need only be a name. Lydia's response employs the verlanised form of 'chinois', *noich*.⁵⁰⁴ This is an example of a phenomenon explained by Doran:

by creating a new set of terms for race and ethnicity through verlanization and other means, youths were able to endow them with alternative meanings, ones that 'belonged' to the local community and lacked the kinds of racist and stigmatizing connotations that they might have in the dominant language.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ Vinay and Darbelnet, p. 36.

⁵⁰⁴ Tengour, p. 386.

⁵⁰⁵ Doran, p. 503.

Hence, the term used by Lydia to refer to the Chinese dressmaker - *le noich* - is not a pejorative one in the *banlieue* community. The verlanised form means that the term belongs to the people of the *banlieue*, who are themselves immigrants, some of them Chinese. During an ethnographic study carried out by Doran in a Parisian *banlieue*, the youths she studied ‘stressed that recognising “difference” within the group was less a way of emphasizing particularisms of origin than of affirming the bonds of shared membership in a multi-ethnic community’.⁵⁰⁶ Hence, although in an Anglophone context, referring to race in such a way may be seen as a means of ‘othering’, in this context, the use of a verlanised form of *chinois* does not necessarily have negative connotations. It has already been established that no similar terms are identifiable in British English, at least none which are as widely used and understood. The translation here features a slang term in British English, which indicates that the characters are speaking informally. Given the clear difference in SC and TC attitudes towards race and ethnicity, this aspect of translating *banlieue* film is clearly very challenging. However, the translation of this reference as ‘slant-eyes’ could be questioned, as this is a derogatory and offensive term, and implies that the characters in the film do not appreciate difference, but rather see it as a negative thing.⁵⁰⁷ Perhaps a more appropriate translation would be ‘the Chinese guy’, which, although failing to convey the *banlieue* cultural phenomenon of reappropriation of race terms, would not add further negative connotations, besides the cultural unfamiliarity of referring to race in such a manner. Another example of explicit references to race and ethnicity can be found in *La squalle*, in the scene where the group of girls travel into Paris and visit a beauty store. One of the characters notes that the store does not hold products for ‘*les renois*’ [the blacks - verlanisation of ‘noir’ meaning black]. This is directly translated as ‘blacks’, but is not such a problematic example since the character is referring to her own ethnicity, and not that of someone else, thus removing some potential negative connotations from the utterance. The sequence in which this example appears will be discussed again in Chapter Six.

Where geographical references are concerned, one significant group of references within the *langage de banlieue*, and *banlieue* film (and even outside of those

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 503.

⁵⁰⁷ See, for example: Green, p. 1087; ‘Oxford English Dictionary Online’; ‘Urban Dictionary’.

areas, for example, in academic works on these topics), consists of the multiple terms with which the *banlieusards* refer to the place where they live. At the beginning of this thesis, it was established that there is no exact equivalent for the specific socio-cultural situation which exists in France's *banlieues*, and this is the reason for which the French term has been retained in this thesis. However, some academics have used alternative English words to refer to the *banlieue*, instead of retaining the French term. Mével, for example, refers to the *cités* as 'projects'.⁵⁰⁸ He also talks of the 'housing estate' where *La haine* is set, but refers to the variety of language spoken in these areas as '*banlieue* French', rather than adopting an alternative term, noting that the word itself 'is difficult to translate'.⁵⁰⁹ The translation of this, and other related terms, in the English subtitles for all three films is discussed below.

In the earliest of the case studies, *La squale*, there are a few examples of characters referring to the space of the *banlieue* either in relation to it being the area where they live, or the area in which they 'work' or conduct their 'business' - this is often an illicit activity such as drug dealing, for example. One such term which is used in the film is '*secteur*':

S0747	01:06:20:22	01:06:23:15
<p>Alors c'est ça ta cachette ? C'est mon <u>secteur</u> ici.</p> <p>[So that's your hideaway? It's my 'sector' {slang} here.]</p> <p>- So, this is your hideaway - It's my hood.</p>		

In this case, the use of the word *secteur* by Toussaint is noteworthy. He is suggesting that he does not need to hide away, as the *cité* is his domain. *Secteur* would appear to have origins in military language, along with connotations of

⁵⁰⁸ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 49.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

business; 'secteur. 3 cour. Partie d'un front ou d'un territoire qui constitue le terrain d'opération d'une unité... 4 (après 1914 - 1918; de la langue milit.) FAM. Endroit, lieu, coin...' ⁵¹⁰ It is also used by the police, and the characters represented in *banlieue* cinema have frequent contact with law enforcement. In fact, it might also be suggested that the character is using institutional language ironically. The term 'hood', does not have the same connotations, though since it is often used in circumstances pertaining to gang activity, perhaps the definition of the term has developed to encompass these related ideas of 'business'. In addition, 'my hood' does express the ownership conveyed in the SLD. aA alternative translation which might retain the military and/or business connotations in British English would be 'zone', 'district', or even 'sector', though such terms might seem out of place in the speech of these youths, and perhaps draw the viewer momentarily out of the film world. 'Hood' is an American slang term for 'the area in which one lives'. ⁵¹¹ Although analysis seems to indicate a global strategy of dialect-for-dialect replacement in the subtitling of the *langage de banlieue* in *La squale* specifically, it will be interesting to examine the translation of this and other terms related to space and place in the other case study films, as the parallels that are often drawn between the two socio-political environments mean that the French terms are frequently substituted by terms to denote low-income areas in the United States, both in film and in non-fiction texts. This is the case for *secteur* in *La squale*, which was subtitled using the same term - 'hood' on at least one other occasion in the film. In addition, subtitle 0714 for *La squale* features 'projects' as a translation for *cité* in the SLD. In Mével's article, *cité* is translated as 'projects', and the same trend can also be seen in some newspaper articles. ⁵¹² The term 'projects' does suggest low-income housing, but it evokes specifically US connotations.

⁵¹⁰ 'Sector. 3. Part of a battlefiend or of a territory which constitutes a unit's operating zone... 3 (after 1914-1918; from military language) Familiar. Place, area, neighbourhood...' Paul Robert, Josette Rey-Debove, and Alain Rey, *Le Nouveau Petit Robert: Dictionnaire Alphabétique et Analogique de La Langue Française, Nouvelle Édition Du Petit Robert de Paul Robert* (Paris: Le Robert, 2007).

⁵¹¹ Green, p. 608.

⁵¹² Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 49; Dupont; Rose.

The term ‘hood’ is also employed in the subtitles for *L’esquive* as a translation for *cit *:

E0245	00:13:27:18	00:13:29:17
<p><i>Eh, mais t’as travers� toute <u>la cit� sap�e</u> comme �a, l� ?</i></p> <p>[But, you crossed the whole estate {slang} <u>dolled up</u> {slang} like that, there?]</p> <p>You crossed the hood like that?</p>		

Thus, the subtitles for the first two case study films both demonstrate the dialect-for-dialect approach whereby AAVE is substituted for the *langage de banlieue*, to the extent that even some culture-specific linguistic references are transposed to those which would work in a US context. The implications of American language in the subtitles will be discussed further in Chapter Six, but this transposition of the terms to the US context does not highlight the cultural specificity of the context, which is a key aspect of the directors’ intentions when making films depicting the *banlieues*. Indeed, Genestal made *La squale* to raise awareness of the sexual violence experienced by women in the *banlieues*, and so the setting of the *banlieues* is a very important aspect of the film. The same can be said for *L’esquive*, where the emphasis is very much on identity and performance as rooted in the *banlieue* culture.

In contrast to the use of US English terms to subtitle references to space and place in *La squale*, the subtitling of these terms in *Divines* is dealt with slightly differently. Indeed, overall, the subtitles for *Divines* do not seem to feature as much American slang in general. In Benyamina’s film, references to the *banlieue* are often translated as ‘estate’ in the subtitles, or the need for a noun to denominate the place is eliminated in the subtitles through a reformulation of the phrase in translation. For example, in the scene where Dounia and Maimouna are watching Djigui’s dance rehearsal from their spot above the stage, Djigui is getting frustrated with the choreographer, and answers back, stating that he did not go to a dance school, that is not how he trained. Maimouna mocks him:

D0306	00:26:01:12	00:26:04:19
<p>'Moi je viens des quartiers, moi je viens des banlieues...' vas-y, ouais.</p> <p>['I'm from the underprivileged areas, I'm from the <i>banlieues</i>...' Yeah, right.]</p> <p>'I'm from a tough estate...' Yeah, right!</p>		

The term 'estate' is distinctly British, in contrast to the use of 'hood' in the subtitles for *La squale* and *L'esquive*. There is no socio-cultural equivalent for the *banlieues* in either Great Britain or the United States.⁵¹³ The same could be said for the 'projects' in the US, or 'council housing estates' in the United Kingdom, and this makes a translation strategy which might be described as *Equivalence* by Vinay and Darbelnet problematic, precisely because these terms are not equivalent.⁵¹⁴ They describe what some might call 'similar' situations, but evoking a very culturally-specific situation from a *different* culture than that represented on screen could have a number of consequences. In the case of interlingual subtitling, the TA is continuously exposed to the original soundtrack of the film, and can therefore constantly hear the foreign language. The use of culturally-specific terms in the TL could then extract the viewer briefly from the film-world, and this might affect their ability to absorb enough information during a particular sequence.

Other lexical groups which might be discussed here are references to the police and other representatives of authority, and to drugs and drug dealing. However, these terms have instead been discussed primarily in relation to other factors (e.g. the use of *verlan*), or are integrated with other examples. Goudaillier also highlights the abundance of terms related to sex and women within the lexicon of the *langage de banlieue*, but since this linguistic aspect of all three films is also a

⁵¹³ For a discussion of the cultural specificity of the *banlieue* phenomenon in French, see Chapter One.

⁵¹⁴ Vinay and Darbelnet, p. 38.

thematic concern, the translation of language related to women and the way they are discussed (by both men and women) will be examined in more depth in Chapter Six.⁵¹⁵

Swearing and Insults

In Lepoutre's ethnographic study of the *banlieue*, he highlights the link between language and status within these communities.⁵¹⁶ He remarks

La grossiereté et l'obscénité prennent place aussi bien dans les énoncés narratifs que dans les différents échanges verbaux rituels ("vannes", insultes, apostrophes, remerciements, saluts), et aussi bien dans les rapports conviviaux que dans les interactions conflictuelles.⁵¹⁷

Thus, swearing is not only a feature of emotional situations or arguments, but of everyday language. This feature of the *langage de banlieue* therefore poses a number of problems where subtitling into English is concerned. Firstly, since the use of obscenities is not always intended to offend (as Lepoutre notes, swearing is even a common feature of story-telling), it is difficult to achieve the same effect in translation. Swearing can provoke different reactions among different people as tolerance to obscenities varies from person-to-person, even within the same generation. Since there is often not enough room to include a direct translation of every single word of a character's dialogue, the subtitler may choose to omit swearwords. Hjort quotes the Frequently Asked Questions section of the website for the Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters, which states that 'Swearwords must be cut in order to fit in the most relevant information...'.⁵¹⁸ However, in her survey of Finnish television viewers, Hjort found that respondents were often 'annoyed' by this reduction in swearwords.⁵¹⁹ Thus, the argument held by some that swearwords are stronger when they appear in writing does not seem

⁵¹⁵ Goudaillier, p. 16.

⁵¹⁶ Lepoutre, p. 155.

⁵¹⁷ 'Swearing and obscenities feature equally in narrative statements as well as in the various ritual verbal exchanges (jibes, insults, rude remarks, thank-yous, greetings); in friendly relationships as well as in hostile interactions.' Lepoutre, p. 159.

⁵¹⁸ Hjort, p. 203.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. p. 203.

to deter viewers from watching content where the subtitles feature a lot of swearwords.⁵²⁰

The scene discussed earlier, in which Lydia and her friends discuss the price of her dress, features a variety of swearing and slang words and phrases. Lydia's friend expresses surprise at the price she paid for the dress through her choice of language; *la putain-de-sa-mère*. Literally, this means something along the lines of 'the whore of his mother', and is used in French as a general curse, perhaps similar to 'fucking hell' in English. One translation for this might be '60 fucking euros', which also includes fewer characters than the translation offered on the DVD:

E0184	00:10:35:18	00:10:37:09
<p>60 euros la <u>putain-de-sa-mère</u>* !</p> <p>[60 euros fucking hell {slang}!]</p> <p>60, the motherfucker!</p>		

The inclusion of the term 'motherfucker' in the above subtitle serves to maintain a similar taboo register in the TL. However, Coupled with the previous insult towards the dressmaker ('slant-eyes'), this could affect characterisation and, more generally, the reflection of *banlieue* subculture portrayed in the film. 'Motherfucker' appears again later in the sequence, as a translation for *enculé*, where the term is employed as a general curse, rather than an insult directed at the dressmaker. The cumulative effect of these translations could mean that it is not clear to the viewer whether the girls are speaking ill of the dressmaker, or simply annoyed at the situation:

⁵²⁰ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 197.

E0185	00:10:37:14	00:10:39:00
<p><i>T'as vu, j'ai <u>craché la maille*</u> <u>mon frère*</u>.</i></p> <p>[See, I spat out the dough {slang}, my brother {slang}.]</p> <p>I coughed up the loot.</p>		
E0186	00:10:39:05	00:10:40:28
<p><i><u>Enculé*</u>!</i></p> <p>[Bastard! {slang}]</p> <p>Motherfucker!</p>		
E0187	00:10:41:19	00:10:43:10
<p><i>P'tain j'lui aurais <u>craché dans la gueule*</u> <u>mon frère*</u>.</i></p> <p>[Fuck, I'd have spat in his face {slang} my brother {slang}.]</p> <p>I'd've spat in his face!</p>		
E0188	00:10:43:15	00:10:45:13
<p><i>T'as vu, j'avais le seum !</i></p> <p>[See, I was pissed off!]</p> <p>You saw me, I was wicked.</p>		

The taboo language is not the only challenging aspect of this sequence in terms of translation. Lydia talks of not wanting to *cracher* [spit out] *la maille* [the money], and her friend says she would have instead *craché* [spat] in his face. It might be suggested that Lydia's friend has chosen to say this because of Lydia's use of the verb *cracher* in the previous locution. Thus, in the SLD there is some ambiguity surrounding the girls' feelings towards the dressmaker, where these feelings may appear to be very negative in the subtitled version. Nevertheless, the subtitles do feature swearing, and therefore the subtitler does not seem to have reduced the taboo language in translation to the degree highlighted by other scholars. This approach would seem to be more in line with viewers' wishes, such as those interviewed in Hjort's study, for example.⁵²¹

In some cases, a literal translation of insults has been adopted, as in this scene from *La squale*. Désirée is getting bored at the party, and, having been hurt by Toussaint's earlier rejection of her, does not want to hang around when he joins their group:

S0322	00 :28 :33 :12	00 :28 :34 :24
<p><i>Je vous laisse avec ces <u>crevards</u>*</i>.</p> <p>[I'm leaving you with these <u>scroungers/ponces</u> {slang, lit. corpse}.]</p> <p>Stay with the corpses.</p>		

A literal translation of the insult featured in the SLD appears in the subtitle, which does render Désirée's disdain for those to whom she is referring. This is not a conventional use of the word 'corpse'; in this context something more appropriate might be 'stay with these losers', for example. However, this example of a word-for-word translation could serve to remind the viewer of the subtitled film that the characters do have a particular manner of speaking..

⁵²¹ Hjort, p. 203.

Divines also features some examples of literal translation of insults. For example, at one point when Dounia and Maimouna want to enter the supermarket, they are refused entry:

D0498	00 :39 :38 :02	00 :39 :40 :00
<p><i>Eh, les cafards, vous, vous rentrez pas ici, là.</i></p> <p>[Hey, cockroaches, you, you're not homing in here, now.]</p> <p>You're not coming in, cockroaches!</p>		

D0503	00 :39 :49 :19	00 :39 :51 :11
<p><i>Vous <u>dégagez</u>*, <u>connasses</u>* !</i></p> <p>[You <u>get out of here</u> {slang}, <u>bitches</u> {slang}!]</p> <p>Piss off, you little sluts!</p>		

In these examples from *Divines*, a literal translation of the insults seems more effective than in the previous example from *La squalie*. In verb form, 'piss off' is often used in the imperative, meaning 'to depart... go away!'⁵²² It belongs to British English.⁵²³ The fact that the supermarket security guards speak to the young women in this manner, even though they are working, demonstrates unprofessionalism and a lack of respect.. Presumably, referring to the young women as cockroaches expresses a sense of disgust at their living conditions.⁵²⁴ Describing them as *connasses* in French does not suggest sexual promiscuity.

⁵²² Eric Partridge and Paul Beale, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English: Colloquialisms and Catch Phrases, Fossilised Jokes and Puns, General Nicknames, Vulgarisms and Such Americanisms as Have Been Naturalised*, 8th edn (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1984), p. 890.

⁵²³ Eric Partridge, Tom Dalzell, and Terry Victor, *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 1496; Tony Thorne, *Dictionary of Contemporary Slang*, Book, Whole, Fourth (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 335.

⁵²⁴ The term is also used to refer to people who are 'pests' as is noted by Goudaillier, p. 79.

However, the inclusion of ‘little sluts’ suggests the men are insulting them for their sexual behaviour or perhaps simply their gender. This will obviously have an impact on the characterisation of the security guard who is speaking, suggesting that he has additional prejudices. Both subtitles feature language and insults which would be familiar to a British audience, without suggesting a specific culture or subculture, this avoids displacing the characters’ identity as Mével suggests the use of Americanisms in the subtitles for *La haine* can.⁵²⁵ Thus, what seems to be most effective in the subtitling of swearing and insults from the three films is a more direct translation using TL terms which indicate a lower register, but not cultural specificity.

Since swearing is often an indication that the characters are feeling emotional, in some cases it could be argued that obscene language serves to convey information about characters and the relationships between them. Díaz-Cintas and Remael highlight the additional functions of such language, and they note:

Subtitlers must therefore first identify and evaluate the impact and emotional value of a given word or expression in the source culture, and then translate it into a target culture equivalent that is deemed appropriate in the context.⁵²⁶

I would argue that in the example from *Divines* explained above, the subtitler has largely achieved the aim described here; ‘piss off’ would work in an equivalent context and evokes an impression of a similar relationship between shoplifters and security guards as might be seen in a UK context. The advantage of the strategy described by Díaz-Cintas and Remael above is that it seems to achieve equivalent effect. Later in the film, when Dounia and Maimouna have been arrested, they are both leaving the police station with their parents, and Maimouna’s mother gets very angry with Dounia’s, and says:

⁵²⁵ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 53.

⁵²⁶ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 196.

D0840	01 :09 :47 :01	01 :09 :50 :00
<p><i>Tu n'as même pas le temps d'élever ta fille, garce que tu es !</i></p> <p>[You don't even have time to bring up your daughter, tart that you are!]</p> <p>You've had no time to raise her, slut that you are!</p>		

The language in the SLD here is particularly striking, since Maimouna's parents are religious (her father is the local Imam), and events before this suggest that Maimouna's parents have encouraged Dounia to take care of and respect her mother - there is one scene in the mosque in which Maimouna's father tells Dounia that paradise lies at a mother's feet. This language is therefore designed to shock; and clearly has this effect on Dounia's mother, evident in her facial expression. On the subject of translating swearwords, Díaz-Cintas and Remael note that

Judging the strength of the utterance to be used in the target film is a delicate issue, not only because of the strong social and ethical implications, but also because one is translating unstable connotative rather than denotative meanings.⁵²⁷

The difficulty in translating the 'strength' of what is being said was evidenced in the previous example from the supermarket scene, but is even more of a challenge in this case. The Imam's wife presumably does not usually speak in such a manner, and this is perhaps why she uses a word which seems more old-fashioned than alternative insults to suggest sexual promiscuity. *Garce* is glossed as 'fille ou femme de mauvaise vie', and slut is perhaps slightly stronger than this, but certainly would not be considered an 'old-fashioned' insult. This issue is highlighted in the quotation above - these are 'unstable connotative... meanings,' and therefore those meanings may not be the same for all speakers of a language, or may also change over time.

⁵²⁷ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 199.

In addition to the unstable nature of the meanings of swearwords, there are other complications involved with the translation of swearwords specifically working from French into English. This is summed up eloquently by Jäckel in her case study of the subtitles for *La haine*, she writes that ‘One four-letter word appears 83 times in some 1,500 subtitles’.⁵²⁸ The variety that French has compared to English means that on some occasions, excessive swearing can seem repetitive when translated into English, and is another reason why swearing may sometimes be omitted in subtitles. The sequence of altercation between Fathi and Frida in *L’esquive* is a good example of this:

E1422	01:18:02:02	01:18:04:01
<p><i>Sur la tête de <u>oim</u>* tu me reparles une fois comme ça, je te nique ta race.</i></p> <p>[On <u>my</u> {verlan} head you speak to me again like that one time, I’ll fuck you up.]</p> <p>Watch it or I’ll fuck you over.</p>		

E1425	01:18:09:14	01:18:13:21
<p><i>Rends-moi mon téléphone, putain de merde, espèce de p’tit bouffon, va !</i></p> <p>[Give me back my phone, fucking hell, you little prick, you!]</p> <p>Gimme my fuckin’ cell, you shit! You fuckin’ joker!</p>		

⁵²⁸ Jäckel, p. 229.

E1428	01:18:18:15	01:18:21:08
<p data-bbox="405 275 1270 344"><i>Vas-y va niquer ta race, espèce de pédé, va te faire foutre, va !</i></p> <p data-bbox="405 398 1198 434">[Go on go fuck yourself, gay boy, go fuck yourself, go!]</p> <p data-bbox="405 483 823 553">Fuck you, fuckin' faggot motherfucker!</p>		

The swearing apparent in the SLD has been rendered in the English subtitles and the register of the source text is arguably therefore maintained in translation - both would be classed as 'taboo' in Newmark's scale of formality.⁵²⁹ On the one hand, it is interesting that the force of the SLD has been conveyed in the subtitles, though some may disagree with this approach - particularly the aforementioned school of thought suggesting that swear words are stronger when they are written down.⁵³⁰ However, it might also be suggested that given contemporary audiences' regular exposure to informal written media (Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites, for example), in addition to the proliferation of subtitles in the modern world (TV screens in pubs with subtitles but no sound, subtitled videos on YouTube and Facebook, for example), that viewers are becoming desensitized to written swearwords and therefore this argument may no longer be valid. However, the subtitling in this sequence certainly demonstrates the variety of swearwords available in the French language, compared with the regular use of 'fuck' as a translation for these in English.⁵³¹

An alternative strategy which was employed in the subtitles for *La squale* was transposing the insult with a similar insult in the TL:

⁵²⁹ Newmark, p. 14.

⁵³⁰ See, for example: Jäckel, p. 229; Hjort, p. 204.

⁵³¹ Note the frequency of one profanity in the subtitles for *La Haine*; '83 times in 1,500 subtitles' Jäckel, p. 229.

S0339	00 :30 :14 :24	00 :30 :15 :21
<p><i>Moi, je <u>nique ta race</u>* !</i></p> <p>[Me, I <u>fuck you and everyone like you</u> {slang, set phrase often used}!]</p> <p>You're fucked!</p>		

A bilingual slang dictionary offers the following renderings of *nique ta race*! 'Fuck you and all like you!, fuck your kind!, fuck your tribe!'.⁵³² *Tout l'argot des banlieues* states that 'ta race' strengthens whatever it follows. In the above translation, 'you're fucked' retains register, and it is clear from the context that the speaker is angry with the listener as a fight is beginning to break out, and the characters are shouting at one another, though the sense of agency here is perhaps not as strong in the subtitled version.

Loanwords and Multilingualism

Loanwords and multilingualism as a feature of the *langage de banlieue*, and of the films studied here, serve to demonstrate the languages in contact, and diverse cultural heritage of the residents of the *cités*, and of the characters featured in the films. The presence of different languages in the films' soundtracks foregrounds the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of those represented on screen, and therefore contributes to the picture of identity which is conveyed. The subtitling of multilingual films is a significant area of research and is not the primary focus of this thesis, but the multilingual nature of some *banlieue* films (and indeed some of those cases studied here) means this aspect of the subtitling cannot be ignored.⁵³³ Indeed, even those *banlieue* films without significant sections of dialogue in another language often feature loanwords, notably from Arabic, but also from other languages in contact in the *banlieues*, which were highlighted by Doran.⁵³⁴ Of the three case study films, both *L'esquive* and *Divines*

⁵³² Brunet and Mc Cavana, p. 611.

⁵³³ See, for example, the *trafilm* project: 'Trafilm - The Translation of Multilingual Films in Spain', *Trafilm* <<http://trafilm.net>> [accessed 3 November 2017].

⁵³⁴ Doran, p. 500.

feature sections of dialogue in other languages, but also occasional loanwords as part of *banlieue* dialect spoken by characters who do not necessarily have a linguistic heritage related to the language form which the words were borrowed. Firstly, instances of loanwords and their subtitling in the films will be examined, before moving on to a discussion of multilingualism and longer sequences or scenes where another language features prominently.

Loanwords can be challenging for the subtitler, particularly in the case of subtitling French *banlieue* cinema into English. In French, many people would understand some Arabic terms which are regularly heard in spoken language, and that is arguably not the case for many British English-speaking viewers. The approach to subtitling such terms in the case study films is not always consistent, even when considering the same term, used by the same character, in the same film. One example of this is Lydia's regular use of the phrase *Inch'Allah* [God willing, from Arabic] in *L'esquive*. In some cases, the phrase has been omitted entirely in the subtitles, but in other cases a strategy of 'borrowing' has been adopted; this is discussed by Vinay and Darbelnet, who note that 'the decision to borrow a SL word or expression for introducing an element of local colour is a matter of style and consequently of the message.'⁵³⁵ Given the link between form and content in the *langage de banlieue*, loanwords are a good example of the link between the two, particularly considering the significance of identity, and of the language as a form of protest. In this case, the term in question is already a borrowing from Arabic which appears in the French-language source text, and does add some 'local colour' as mentioned in the above quotation. In addition, in the SLD, the term demonstrates the nature of languages in contact in the *banlieue*, the close nature of the *banlieue* community, as Lydia is not presented as having Arabic cultural heritage. This strategy does demonstrate that there are North African influences at play, and the visuals here, particularly in the screenshot below, with a Caucasian character in close-up and the setting of the typical *tours et barres* of the *banlieues* results in a transmission of North African language via the French *banlieue*, which is indeed the case here.

⁵³⁵ Vinay and Darbelnet, p. 32.

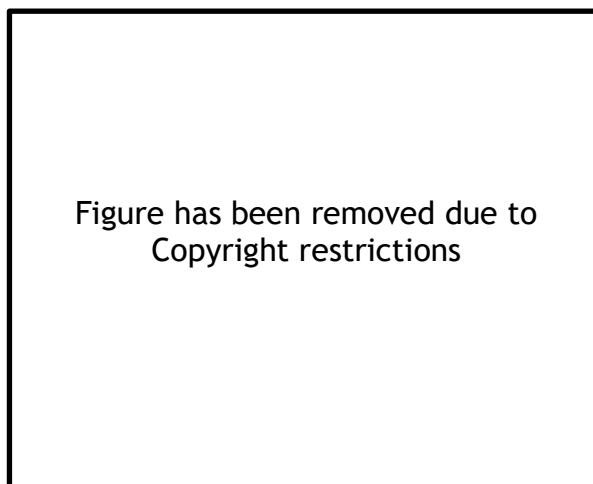


Figure 7 - *L'esquive* 00:33:45

In French, many people understand the term 'inch'Allah', which comes from Arabic, and is sometimes used by non-Muslims and non-Arabic speakers. In a British context, few people would understand it, though they would hear (or in this case see) 'Allah' and possibly then associate the speaker with Islam. The strategy here, to include the loanword from French in the English-language subtitles demonstrates notions of cultures-in-contact discussed above, and perhaps works to counteract the potential ethnocentrism caused by the use of some American slang terms through which the *banlieue* culture is negotiated in translation. In addition, this term is among the most well-known Arabic terms among English speakers and would therefore not present a great obstacle to readability.

L'esquive features more loanwords than were seen in *La squale*, and those which do appear are in some cases much less common in mainstream French than those featured in many *banlieue* films. Although there are some words from Arabic which have become rather popular in French, some of those which appear in the speech of Lydia and her friends would not necessarily be comprehensible to the average French viewer. It has already been suggested that the characters' dialogue should not always be 'easy' for an English-speaking viewer to access, since the variety of French spoken in the *banlieues* is used to express the speakers' sense of alienation from the rest of society. With this in mind, some of the strategies employed in the subtitles for *L'esquive* are particularly interesting.

E0230	00:12:55:06	00:12:56:04
<p><u>Psartek*</u> <u>Mabrouk*</u></p> <p>[Congratulations {Arabic}. Congratulations {Arabic}.]</p> <p>- Ace! - Phat!</p>		
E0231	00:12:56:21	00:12:58:08
<p><i>Elle est belle ?</i> <i>Elle est <u>fracassante</u> !</i></p> <p>[It's beautiful? It's stunning!]</p> <p>- Pretty? - Really bad!</p>		

E0234	00:13:02:20	00:13:05:11
<p><u>Wallah [ouallah]*, elle est trop belle, <u>mabrouk*</u> !</u> <u>Sérieux ?</u></p> <p>[I swear {Arabic}, it's too beautiful, congratulations {Arabic}!]</p> <p>- It's phat, all right! - Seriously?</p>		

The above examples were all selected from the same sequence, in which the characters employing terms from Arabic may be of 'maghrébin' origin, though this is not made explicit in the film. The key words here are *psartek*, a word from Arabic, which is a 'formule de félicitations', a way of congratulating someone;

mabrouk, which is also a way of congratulating someone, and *wallah*, also spelled *ouallah* meaning ‘je te jure’ [I swear to you].⁵³⁶ The overall strategy adopted for this sequence appears to be dialect-for-dialect replacement, using American street slang. In particular, the rendering of *mabrouk* as ‘phat’ lends an American feel to the scene; ‘phat’ belongs to African American slang,⁵³⁷ or ‘hip hop slang’.⁵³⁸ It is often used as a positive adjective, and in this subtitle the translator has opted for equivalent effect, rather than a literal translation. The subtitles here do not convey the congratulatory tone of the SLD, but they do demonstrate that the characters are being positive about Lydia’s costume. However, the elimination of the strong Arabic/North African influence in the subtitles could reinforce notions of cultural homogeneity. On the other hand, the subtitler would arguably have had great difficulty in finding Arabic terms for inclusion in the English subtitles which would be understood by British viewers. Although the SLD terms may not be understood by all French viewers, using such unfamiliar terms in the subtitles could have greatly affected readability and may have broken the ‘contract of illusion’ described by Pedersen.⁵³⁹ Pedersen explains that there is an ‘agreement... between the subtitler and the viewers to the effect that the subtitles *are* the dialogue, that what you read is actually what people say’.⁵⁴⁰ It might be suggested that including Arabic words which are completely unknown to the TA would cause them to think about the subtitles as a translation, and wonder whether the characters *would* actually say what is written in the subtitles, thus breaking the ‘illusion’. Here, then, though it would have been difficult to include Arabic terms in the subtitles, these do still feature slang terms which indicate the close relationship between the characters, and do indicate the informal nature of their speech.

In *La squalé*, although there are not as many loanwords used as in *L’esquive*, there is one example of a common word used in the *langage de banlieue* which is particularly interesting since its presence denotes not only linguistic influence

⁵³⁶ Nagou, p. 350; Tengour, p. 393.

⁵³⁷ ‘Oxford English Dictionary Online’.

⁵³⁸ ‘Online Etymology Dictionary’ <<https://www.etymonline.com/>> [accessed 20 July 2016].

⁵³⁹ Jan Pedersen, *Subtitling Norms for Television: An Exploration Focussing on Extralinguistic Cultural References* (Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co, 2011), p. 22.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 22.

from Arabic, but also a cultural attachment to another place as ‘home’. Yasmine asks her mother:

S0298	00 :26 :56 :13	00 :26 :58 :10
<p><i>Tu savais que Leila a été renvoyée au <u>bled</u>* ?</i></p> <p>[Did you know that Leila has been sent back to <u>the village</u> {slang, from Arabic}??]</p> <p>You hear Leila was sent back home?</p>		

The word *bled* is used in the *banlieue* (mainly by those of North African origin) to refer to the village from which they or their parents originate.⁵⁴¹ They often maintain a connection with the *bled*, and visit during the year to visit relatives. Girls are threatened with being sent there if they do not behave themselves, and it seems that some parents dream of being able to return and make a good living there. Given the cultural specificity of the term, this solution indicates a close attachment to another place. The multicultural nature of the *banlieue* is therefore still highlighted, but through a different means than the presence of loanwords. Further, in this case the translator does not necessarily know to which country the character is referring, so it would have been difficult to explicitate, for example. Translation challenges such as this highlight the specificity of the multicultural nature of France’s *banlieues*. Though there may be some loanwords from other languages in English, the translator lacks a loanword from Arabic to refer to the same phenomenon. In many cases, this seems to be the best solution considering readability and the implications of substituting loanwords in the TL for loanwords in the SL.

In addition to the presence of loanwords and Arabic phrases in predominantly French sentences, both *L’esquive* and *Divines* feature sequences in which characters express themselves entirely in another language. For instance, around two and a half minutes into *L’esquive*, when we are introduced to Magali and

⁵⁴¹ Goudaillier, pp. 67–68.

Krimo as a couple, Krimo calls on Magali and they meet in the stairwell. As Magali leaves her flat, her mother calls out to her in Spanish, to ask where she is going:



Figure 8 - *L'esquive* 00:02:38

As can be seen above, the subtitles do not indicate that these phrases were not spoken in French. I would suggest that an audience viewing *L'esquive* with English subtitles would not be able to recognise that Magali and her mother communicate in a different language from the soundtrack alone. Bartoll takes the example of Catalan films featuring both Castillian and Catalan dialogue; the intended viewer of the source text would understand both languages, and he suggests, therefore, that both languages should be translated for the audience of the subtitled film.⁵⁴² He maintains that where a film features dialogue in a second language, this should be subtitled 'when we are sure that the audience of the source text will understand all the different languages used in the original.'⁵⁴³ Bartoll's suggestion implies that the subtitled version of the film should retain the same level of accessibility for the target audience as the source language dialogue held for the audience of the untranslated film. However, the notion that the film should retain the same level of accessibility in translation is interesting. The importance of readability in subtitling has already been discussed. The viewer of a subtitled film is required to process a great deal of information at any one time - this would be an argument for subtitled versions of *banlieue* films being more accessible than

⁵⁴² Eduard Bartoll, 'Subtitling Multilingual Films', in *MuTra 2006 – Audiovisual Translation Scenarios: Conference Proceedings*, 2006, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 1.

their unsubtitled counterparts, as was the case with *La haine* for its French-speaking audience viewing the film at Cannes with English subtitles.⁵⁴⁴ Given the cognitive load implied in watching a subtitled film, attempting to retain the same level of accessibility in subtitled *banlieue* films (where native French speakers do not understand everything that is being said), could result in an unpleasant viewing experience for the target audience.

Nevertheless, Bartoll recognises that this approach raises the issue of whether the multiple languages should be signalled in some way, and goes on to indicate some approaches which have been employed by subtitlers in the past (such as, for example, italics to indicate a change in language, though since this strategy is sometimes used for the dialogue of characters off-screen, this may not always be appropriate).⁵⁴⁵ In the example from *L'esquive* highlighted above, a useful strategy might be to include a note of the language being spoken. Thus, subtitle E0042 might read as: '[in Spanish] I'm gonna see Krimo.' Though this strategy would increase the reading speed of the subtitle, it would highlight important information about Magali's relationship with her mother, and her origins. It would also reinforce notions of languages and cultures in contact in the *banlieue* highlighted as a key aspect of the subculture by scholars such as Doran and Goudaillier.⁵⁴⁶ Furthermore, this would be an opportunity to highlight hybridity in the *banlieue*; indeed, non-transmission of such cultural elements in translation brushes over, once more, the cultural specificity of the *banlieue* as a point of many cultures-in-contact. This is a fundamental difference between the *banlieue* and the American 'ghetto', where areas seem to be inhabited by a particular ethnic group, rather than people of all origins living together as one community.⁵⁴⁷ In the subtitles for *L'esquive*, we seem to retain evidence of Arabic/North African influences in the *banlieue* (through the borrowing of Inch'Allah in the subtitles for Lydia's dialogue), but not other languages and/or cultures. However, it may be that the commissioner of the subtitles, the production company or the director,

⁵⁴⁴ Jäckel, p. 225.

⁵⁴⁵ Bartoll, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁶ Doran, p. 497; Goudaillier, pp. 6–7.

⁵⁴⁷ 'The term ghetto has come to apply to any urban area exclusively settled by a minority group.' 'Ghetto', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Britannica Academic, 2015 <<http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/levels/collegiate/article/ghetto/36690>> [accessed 20 October 2017].

did not allow for the inclusion of additional information in brackets within the subtitles. This might explain why borrowings from Arabic are included, but other languages are not signalled using the aforementioned strategy.

Although in *Divines*, Dounia frequently speaks to members of her family in Arabic, this use of another language seems related to family and generation, as was also seen in the previous example of Magali's interactions with her mother in *L'esquive*. Dounia and Maimouna both speak Arabic, but choose not to use that language to communicate with one another, even when discussing religion, Allah and 'djinnns'.⁵⁴⁸ In some cases, Dounia's family have whole conversations or arguments in Arabic, but on other occasions they speak primarily in French with the use of Arabic words and phrases mid-sentence. Interestingly, the same approach isn't adopted in every case. For instance, sometimes Arabic words or phrases are subtitled in English with no evidence that they were not spoken in French. Other times, Arabic is not subtitled at all. This strategy seems to be in line with Bartoll's recommendation above, that the subtitles offer the same level of accessibility to the TL-speaking audience as to the audience of the untranslated film.⁵⁴⁹ A French-speaking audience would arguably understand sentences that feature isolated Arabic words or phrases, since they would probably manage to extract meaning from the context. This would be the case with, for example, the dialogue corresponding to subtitles 219 and 220, and 431 in the table below. For these utterances, the Arabic has been included in the subtitles. On the other hand, Arabic words in the middle of English-language subtitles could cause the viewer to hesitate and possibly miss out on the meaning of some or all of the subtitle, given readability concerns. Table 4 below lists approaches to Arabic in the subtitles for *Divines*. Uses of Arabic are indicated with [Arabic] in most cases, since the content of the dialogue would not be understood by the majority of French-speaking viewers.

⁵⁴⁸ When *Dounia* and *Maimouna* collect petrol, they are talking about an Islamic phenomenon, and they also talk about 'God' watching over them. Since language is so important in Islam, and some suggest that the Qu'uran should not be translated into another language due to the 'holiness' of the Arabic language, they might have been expected to speak in Arabic at this point. See, for example, Ahmed Gumaa Siddiek, 'Viewpoints in the Translation of the Holy QURAN', *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 1.2 (2012), 18–25.

⁵⁴⁹ Bartoll, p. 1.

Table 4 - Occurrences of Arabic in *Divines*

	Description of SLD	Subtitle
Before D0001	The film opens with prayers in Arabic	No subtitle
D0169	[Arabic]	You're not exactly studying for a PhD!
D0170	[Arabic]	You can go to Maimouna's later.
After D0189	[Arabic]	No subtitle
D0190	C'est le travail [Arabic] c'est pour manger !	This is work, so we can eat!
D0219	Salam	<i>Salam</i>
D0220	Alaykumu salam...	<i>Alaykumu salam</i>
D0221	[Arabic]	How could he do that to me? It's disgusting!
D0222	[Arabic]	Stop blubbering.
D0223	[Arabic]	No one's dead.
D0224	[Arabic]	Amin. Who's Amin?
D0230	Les hommes ils pensent pas avec ça... [Arabic]	Men don't think with this, but with this!
D0239	Before this subtitle Dounia says 'Salam Aleykoum, Alumi'	Not subtitled.
D0410	After this subtitle, Maimouna prays in Arabic	No subtitles.
D0431	Insh'Allah	<i>Insha'Allah.</i>
D0591	[Arabic music, possibly Islamic prayer music]	Not subtitled.
D0623 ->	[Arabic]	Where's this money from?
D0626	[Arabic]	Stop worrying. Make the most of it.
D0627	[Arabic]	Here, let me smell it.
D0628	[Arabic]	Swear it's true.
D0631	[Arabic]	Lord, forgive me.
D0848	Dounia, s'il te plait, habibi, excuse-moi	Please, Dounia, I'm sorry.
D0847	Excuse-moi, je sais que j'ai merdé	I know I've messed up,
D0849	Wallah que je sais que j'ai merdé, mais je vais changer.	But I'm going to change.

In *Divines*, Dounia's mother's speech is often peppered with Arabic words, but this is not conveyed in the subtitles. In Chapter One, the use of loanwords as an act of protest was touched upon, but it could also be that in certain cases, Dounia's mother finds certain issues and feelings easier to express using her Arabic vocabulary, and this could be to do with her cultural sphere of reference and her

Arabic heritage.⁵⁵⁰ It could be suggested that this usage is slightly different to that of loanwords, since these are not common features of the *langage de banlieue*, but rather part of Dounia's mother's idiolect. This brings us back to the thread of language and identity which runs throughout this thesis; the presence of non-French words serves as a reminder that the characters in *banlieue* film have a different sphere of cultural reference which might be described by some (not unproblematically) as hybridity.⁵⁵¹ Where Dounia's family life is concerned, Dounia's mother speaks in Arabic when she talks of being hurt by a man, around 17m30s into the film. When Dounia's mother's locutions are partially in Arabic, this is not conveyed through the visual-verbal channel (for instance, in the corresponding speech to subtitle 848 in the table above). Thus, the TA is dependent on the soundtrack, and on their own linguistic knowledge, to detect the additional language present in the scene. However, when Dounia enters her home, and makes the traditional Arabic-language greeting of *Salam*, to which her brother offers the traditional response *Alekoum Salam*, the subtitles read 'Salam' and 'Alaykumu Salam', thus featuring spelling variations of the Arabic in the SLD. This greeting is not well-known in English, but from the context, it is clear that Dounia and her family are greeting one another. The subtitles for *Divines*, then, do convey Dounia's family's Arabic heritage, and show that the Arabic language and culture are still a big part of their life in France. However, later in the scene, Dounia's mother's speech is subtitled entirely in English, even when she does say partial sentences in Arabic. This could have the effect of lessening the significance of the characters' cultural heritage, as it does not demonstrate that the characters sometimes switch into Arabic when their emotions are running high. However, the strategies adopted in the subtitles for *Divines* do seem to follow Bartoll's recommendation, in that the subtitles offer the same level of accessibility to non-French speaking viewers as native speakers would have to the SLD. In a case study of *The Terminal*, Ellender notes

⁵⁵⁰ Besemeres examines the relationship between language and emotions in Eva Hoffman's 1989 memoir *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* and, in relation to Hoffman's usage of various terms for emotions in each language finds 'For a Polish/English bilingual, the emotional style made possible by such words is part of the two emotional worlds that she lives in, which engage different parts of her self...' Mary Besemeres, 'Different Languages, Different Emotions? Perspectives from Autobiographical Literature', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 25.2–3 (2004), 140–58 (p. 156).

⁵⁵¹ For a discussion of 'hybridity', see, for example, Hutnyk.

When Viktor is distressed, upset and unable to express himself, he resorts to using his mother tongue, the fictitious language of his native land. At times, use of this language lasts for minutes. This is clearly incomprehensible to the SL audience, reinforces Viktor's sense of exoticism and consequently somewhat alienates the SL audience. It is therefore totally acceptable to leave this untouched in the film's French version, which ensures that the TL audience experiences a comparable sense of alienation.⁵⁵²

In such a case, the majority of TL viewers (French-speaking) would arguably be able to hear the change in language from English. However, in the case of an Anglophone viewer of a French-language film featuring a third language, the viewer may simply be confused about why there are no subtitles. It might be suggested that omitting subtitles completely for the third language, though an effective strategy when working in certain language directions, would not be appropriate here as it may cause confusion for the viewer. The approach to Arabic in *Divines* here means that the viewer is made aware of the use of Arabic by characters, without being left confused. Linguistic diversity is indicated, but not at the expense of readability. Of the three films selected for this thesis, multilingualism is most common in *Divines*, and this reflects the heritage of Dounia's family, but is also linked to the theme of religion. The theme of God and Religion is very present in *Divines*, and this is conveyed clearly even through the title of the film. There is some overlap between the presence of the Arabic language and the theme of Religion or the 'divine' in *Divines*. This is arguably due to the significance of the Arabic language in Islam - Muslims will pray in Arabic even if that is not a language they speak fluently. In terms of the ways in which this theme is presented in *Divines*, this is done primarily through the aural-verbal channel; not only through spoken prayer, but also through music. An interesting factor for consideration here is whether a non-French speaking viewer can hear the difference between Arabic and French when viewing the subtitled film. There are certain points in the film where it may not be clear to a non-French speaking viewer that the characters are not speaking French. In some cases, this is indicated in the subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, but in the standard English interlingual subtitles, an English translation is offered with no indication of the source language used. One point in the film where this might have an impact on the viewer's understanding of the plot development is when Dounia visits a

⁵⁵² Ellender, p. 137.

church to do a drug deal. During the deal, there is loud choral music, and the camera focuses on an image of Christ and two angels:

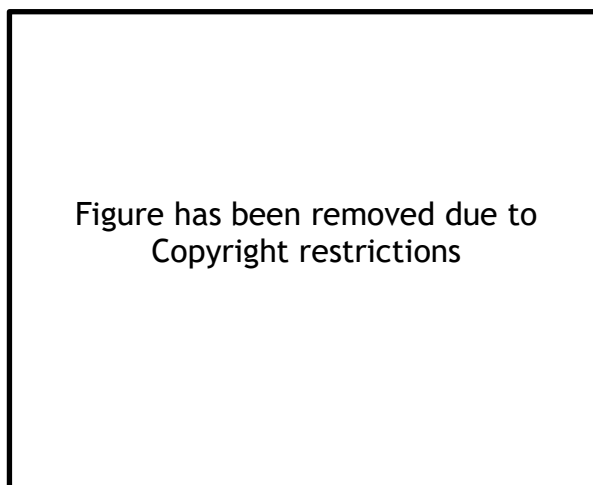


Figure 9 - *Divines* 00:53:55

Thus, the fact that Dounia is in a Christian place of worship is clear to the viewer. Dounia goes on to pray in whispered Arabic, and this demonstrates her sense of guilt, perhaps related to her location (and what she has done there), but also her struggle with religion more generally.

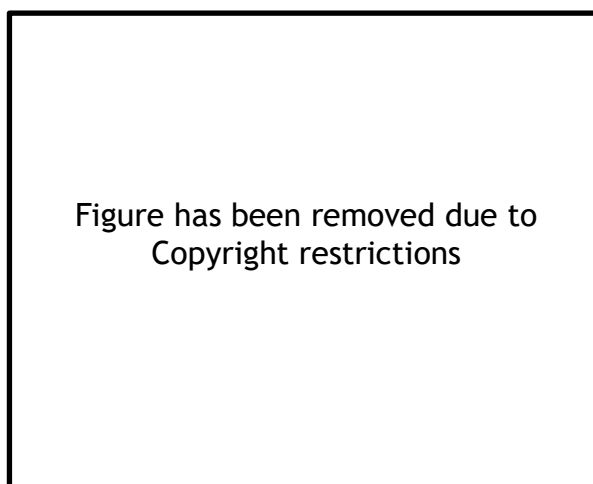


Figure 10 - *Divines* 00:53:48

The prayer is subtitled, and Dounia holds her hands together in a gesture of prayer which would be recognisable to many. However, the subtitles do not show that Dounia is praying in Arabic, which is somewhat incongruous with her surroundings. This is an important aspect of Dounia's characterisation, and a non-French speaking viewer would not necessarily realise that Dounia is struggling with her

Islamic faith at this point in the film. This relates back to the earlier discussion of multilingualism, and this has not been indicated elsewhere in the film either. One possible solution to the issue here, though, would be for the subtitle to read ‘Allah, forgive me’, thus making it clear that this is a question of another faith. On the other hand, the viewer is aware that Dounia has attended the mosque in the past, so they may make this assumption anyway. Audience reception studies would be required to determine viewers’ understandings of this scene, and of religion in general, as presented through multilingualism.

Conclusions

This discussion of examples from the subtitling of *La squale*, *L’esquive* and *Divines* into English has proven that the variety of language represented in these films is clearly a challenge for the subtitler. In some cases, there are more factors for consideration than in others, and some features of the language appear to be more easily translatable into English. The analysis in this chapter has revealed that in many cases, the local strategies employed for dealing with *verlan* and argot are successful in conveying the informal register in which the characters are speaking. However, the challenges of translating the *langage de banlieue* are such that some aspects of the cultural specificity of the *banlieue* situation, and the notions of rebellion which are indicated linguistically, cannot always be retained in the subtitled versions. The use of lexical choices indicated register in many cases, but the strategy of using non-standard spelling has both advantages and disadvantages. For instance, ‘wanna’ has fewer characters than ‘want to’, and given the constraints in relation to character limits, this could be advantageous. Ellender notes that for *Bienvenu chez les ch’tis*, the subtitler used linguistic creativity to replicate aspects of the ch’ti pronunciation and dialect in English.⁵⁵³ In the case of *Bienvenu chez les ch’tis*, this is perhaps more feasible, as the linguistic variety is acknowledged and discussed by the characters, thus providing an inherent explanation for the unusual subtitles to the viewer. Since there is no such explicit discussion of dialect in the *banlieue* films discussed here, recreating aspects of the *verlan* in the subtitles through such methods risks causing confusion. Furthermore, the impact of unusual spellings on reading speed and overall viewing experience has not been sufficiently researched to be clear.

⁵⁵³ Ellender, pp. 161–70.

Subtitling guidelines generally indicate that the standard conventions for the written form of a language should be adhered to in the translations. However, the example offered in this chapter of ‘wanna’, is not entirely uncommon, and although not the standard presentation of the term(s), would perhaps still be quite familiar to a British viewer. It also conveys a sense of orality, and possibly indicates non-standard pronunciation which is also a feature of the *langage de banlieue* and presented in the films in question.

Another strategy for translating *verlan*, and loanwords which was identified in the subtitles for the case study films was to maintain the register in the subtitles, through lexical choices. For instance, the subtitling of *keum* (the *verlan* of *mec*) as ‘guy’. Such strategies demonstrate that the *banlieusards* are employing slang words in their vocabulary, but do not necessarily convey the specificities of the *langage de banlieue* and its significance as symbol both of solidarity and of resistance. These findings are in line with those of Ellender, who notes

In the French-language subtitles of *Lock, Stock and Fish Tank* and the English-language subtitles of *Polisse*, the subtitlers frequently employ non-standard grammar and vocabulary and an informal register in order to recapture in their translations the non-standard qualities of the given SL film.⁵⁵⁴

Another such example would be the subtitling of Arabic terms in *L’esquive* (*Mabrouk*) using AAVE [phat], which conveyed the informal nature of the conversation between the characters in question, but did not demonstrate the multilingual influences in the *langage de banlieue*.

The subtitler arguably needs to consider the function of swearing in such films, where it can often reveal information about the relationship between two characters, or about a character’s emotional state.⁵⁵⁵ The connotations of swearwords included in subtitles can have an impact on the TA’s perception of the situation or the characters, so their inclusion often requires careful consideration, particularly since swearwords have ‘unstable’ connotations.⁵⁵⁶ This has been demonstrated through translation shifts examined in the examples from

⁵⁵⁴ Ellender, p. 173.

⁵⁵⁵ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 196.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 199.

the three films studied here. However, one additional consideration is the changing impact of a swearword as it moves ‘diagonally’ from one language to another, but also from the oral to the written form. Particularly given some arguments that swearwords are stronger when written down. Finally, the significant difference in the wealth of vocabulary where swearing is concerned between French and English means that in subtitling in particular, there will be translation shifts when dialogues featuring an abundance of swearing or taboo words are subtitled into English. This is linked to the necessity of condensation in subtitling, and the fact that where the text needs to be condensed, the repetition of the same word a number of times could be the element removed, particularly given the earlier point regarding the ‘strength’ of swearwords when they are written down. ‘Fuck’ appearing in written form once is one thing, but repeated throughout the subtitles for a sequence, its impact may change.

Where the translation of loanwords and multilingualism is concerned, it seems that there are varying approaches to subtitling this dimension of *banlieue* cinema, and there are inconsistencies even across one film with the translation of the same term. Indeed, some Arabic terms appearing in the SLD (*inch’Allah*) were included in the English subtitles on some occasions, but not on others within the same film. The impact of the inclusion of such terms in the subtitles is not clear, but then neither is the impact of their inclusion in the SLD. Some complete sequences of Arabic were subtitled in English, with no indication that the characters are not speaking French. Possible reasons for this approach were discussed above, but without audience reception studies, it is difficult to say whether a viewer would perceive the change in language without this being indicated in the subtitles. In *Divines*, this could mean that non-French-speaking Anglophone viewers of the film do not fully understand the theme of religion as it is presented to native French speakers, however this is also a question of the cultural specificity of the French situation and the general presence of Arabic in contemporary French society. However, it is suggested here that the inclusion of certain Arabic words or phrases at key points in the interaction (such as greetings, for example), could be enough to signal the presence of Arabic heritage to the viewer of the subtitled film. Thus, the subtitled version of the film does indicate the cultural variety present in the *banlieue*, and perhaps to some extent the specificity of the French situation in terms of the solidarity demonstrated by the inhabitants of France’s *cités* despite

their various cultural differences. This aspect of the subculture may be more clearly communicated, though, through clearer signposting of language shifts in the subtitles. The multilingual aspect of the *langage de banlieue* is inherently linked to the nature of *banlieue* film as political intervention. This political aspect of the films and its link to language will be explored further in Chapter Six, which studies the themes identified through the macro contextual analysis as they are presented in the subtitled versions of the three case study films.

Overall, the methods adopted here by the subtitlers do indicate that the characters are speaking a non-standard variety of language, and in many cases certain features of this language (such as swearing and loanwords from Arabic, for example) are also apparent to the viewer of the subtitled film. Indeed, Guillot discusses Fowler's Theory of Mode in relation to subtitling, noting that 'cues in text are sufficient to trigger particular types of experiences and reactions; it only takes a few cues of orality in a written text, for example, for the text to be experienced and responded to as speech...' ⁵⁵⁷ She therefore suggests that features such as occasional loanwords, non-standard spelling and informal lexicon identified in these case studies could be enough to signal certain information about the characters' speech, and therefore identity, to the viewer of the subtitled film.

⁵⁵⁷ Guillot, p. 483.

Chapter Six: Socio-political Messages, Language and Identity

This chapter returns to those themes and messages which emerged from the macro contextual analysis of the films and paratexts which was carried out in Chapter Four. It was established in Chapter Two that *banlieue* films are often considered to be political, in terms of the issues they explore, but also in their implementation as tools to encourage discussion or debate. I would suggest that as these films are often made to contribute to discourse concerning the *banlieues*, their subtitled versions could achieve the same effect for a non-French speaking British viewer. In order to ascertain whether the socio-political interventions constituted by the films are presented to the British viewer, this chapter will approach the films through the lens of skopos theory. It will consider the intended function of the subtitles, and of the subtitled films. It has been established that all *banlieue* films deal with issues of identity and exclusion, and this could be described as inevitable when representing a marginalised subculture on screen. This chapter will consider the subtitled films in terms of the translation of identity and gender, and in relation to skopos theory.

Given the function of the *langage de banlieue* as a marker of identity for the *banlieusards*, the primary question at the heart of this thesis has to do with the translation of identity. The sociolect spoken by the characters in *banlieue* film adds to their characterisation, and loanwords and phrases from other languages demonstrate their linguistic and cultural heritage. *Verlan* could be described as a form of linguistic protest, given its cryptic function and the sense of rebellion its usage conveys. Thus, language can be linked to power; Lepoutre and Fagyal both noted that the successful use of *verlan*, and the ability to use it fluently and at speed is a sign of status within a group.⁵⁵⁸ It is also linked to status because it can reveal a lot about the relationship between characters. In the three films in question, gender, sexual violence, and the treatment of women is a recurring and significant motif. In *La squale*, the focus is on sexual violence towards women in the *banlieues*, and this was also mentioned by Genestal in interviews. In

⁵⁵⁸ Fagyal, p. 173; Lepoutre, p. 155.

L'esquive, in certain scenes of altercation (between Fathi and Frida, for example), and in discussions concerning the relationship between Krime and Magali/Lydia, the lower status of women is evident in discussions between the characters. In *Divines*, the close relationship between two young women is foregrounded, but Rebecca, in her role as gang leader, also adopts certain mannerisms and language which would normally be deemed 'masculine'. At various points in all three films, attitudes towards women, aspects of character identity, and power plays are all manifested linguistically. These themes were revealed to be key aspects of the films in the examination of the macro-contextual analysis discussed in Chapter Four. These themes were, in some cases foregrounded in marketing materials, and in others, explicitly highlighted by the directors of the works in interviews. It was established in the introduction that skopos theory is particularly useful in examining the subtitling of a genre such as *banlieue* film, where these intentions are particularly important.

Gender

Since it has already been established that the theme of gang rape is key in *La squale*, it follows that the translation of terms pertaining to gang rape and the treatment of women is very important in relation to the director's intended social commentary on life for women in France's *banlieues*. Sexual violence in France is a prominent issue which has been addressed both in scholarly works, and in the French media.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, 'discussions of violence against women were remarkably absent from the public arena' until late 2000, when, Ticktin notes, there was 'a media explosion on the issue of *les tournantes*, or the gang rapes committed in the *banlieues* of Paris'.⁵⁶⁰ She mentions *La squale*, as do some other scholarly articles concerned with sexual violence in France - some even noting that *La*

⁵⁵⁹ See, for example, the special issue Maghrebi-French Sexualities in Modern and Contemporary France 2 (21), 2013., Adrien Sénécat, 'Violences sexuelles : pourquoi un tel décalage entre nombre de victimes et condamnations ?', *Le Monde.fr*, 12 May 2016 <http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2016/05/12/violences-sexuelles-pourquoi-un-tel-decalage-entre-le-nombre-de-victimes-et-les-condamnations_4918208_4355770.html> [accessed 27 July 2017]; Henry Samuel, '100 per Cent of Frenchwomen "Victims of Sexual Harassment on Public Transport"', 17 April 2015 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11545643/100-per-cent-of-Frenchwomen-victims-of-sexual-harassment-on-public-transport.html>> [accessed 27 July 2017].

⁵⁶⁰ Miriam Ticktin, 'Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-immigrant Rhetoric Meet', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 33.4 (2008), 863–89.

squale brought the debate into the public sphere - thus highlighting the political impact of the film.⁵⁶¹ In 2011, the Istanbul Convention, or the ‘Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence’ came into effect, and sparked further media and scholarly activity.⁵⁶² At the time *La squale* was released, then, it seems that Genestal was reacting to a lack of prominence of the situation of women in the *banlieue*, and this would explain his description of women in the *banlieues* as ‘les exclus parmi les exclus’ [the excluded among the excluded].⁵⁶³ Indeed, the film was made based on young girls’ testimonies of gang rape in the *banlieues*.⁵⁶⁴ It seems clear that he made the film to raise the profile of the issue, and that this is one of the ways in which *La squale* constitutes a political intervention.

The poor treatment of and lack of respect for women in the *banlieues* is demonstrated in the language used in the film; not only through the way the male characters speak about women and their actions towards them, but also through the way women characters speak about other women and the way they have been treated by men. In *La squale*, there were some instances of graphic language in relation to this theme. The findings here were similar to those of other scholars, in that the language was often ‘softened’ in translation.⁵⁶⁵ The following section presents a closer study of some subtitles related to questions of gender and the treatment of women in *La squale* and its subtitled version. The first includes a direct reference to gang rape in the dialogue of a character who speaks using the *banlieue* sociolect:

⁵⁶¹ Christelle Hamel, ‘La sexualité entre sexisme et racisme : les descendantes de migrant·e·s du Maghreb et la virginité’, *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, 25.1 (2015), 41–58; Claire Cosquer, ‘Race, sexualité, et luttes de véridiction : la racialisation dans les représentations cinématographiques de la « tournante »’, *Genre, sexualité & société*, Automne 2016.16 (2016).

⁵⁶² Gill Allwood, ‘Gender-Based Violence against Women in Contemporary France: Domestic Violence and Forced Marriage Policy since the Istanbul Convention’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 24.4 (2016), 377–94.

⁵⁶³ Hakem.

⁵⁶⁴ Carrie Tarr, “Grrrls in the Banlieue”: Philippe Faucon’s Samia and Fabrice Génestal’s *La Squale*, *L’Esprit Créateur*, 42.3 (2010), 28–38 (p. 28).

⁵⁶⁵ In her case study of *Fish Tank*, Ellender finds that swear/taboo words are ‘frequently omitted or toned down’. Ellender, p. 189.

S0782	01 :11 :23 :03	01 :11 :26 :05
<p><i>Et les filles que tu fais tourner comme Leila, là. Elles aussi, tu les respectes ?</i></p> <p>[And the girls you gang rape like Leila, there. Them too, you respect them?]</p> <p>And girls you gang bang, like Leila? You respect them?</p>		

There was an earlier discussion of the translation problem presented by the phrase *faire tourner une fille* [partager sa (son) partenaire avec ses amis], and it was established that we do not have an equivalent in British English.⁵⁶⁶ The English ‘gang bang’ included in the subtitle here has the same denotative meaning at the SL term, though the term does not imply the same ritualistic nature as the French *tournantes*. However, given recurring references to gang rape, and the opening scene in which the *tourmente* is very much presented as a recurring ritual in which the perpetrators ‘brand’ the women they rape, it is unlikely that the significance and frequency of these events in the *banlieue* portrayed in Genestal’s film would be lost on viewers of the subtitled version.

S0326	00 :29 :00 :02	00 :29 :01 :18
<p><i>Je vais la tourner, cette chienne !</i></p> <p>[I will screw her, that bitch!]</p> <p>Let me turn that bitch around.</p>		

The language in this subtitle arguably does not present the character’s intentions as graphically as the SLD - ‘I will’ is much more forceful and shows more serious intent than ‘let me’, which suggests a request for permission from someone.

⁵⁶⁶ Tengour, p. 557.

Though ‘turn around’, is much less graphic than the SLD, this is in line with the general trend to ‘tone down’ language in subtitles. The character’s speech is still threatening in the subtitled version; there is a voyeuristic feel to the scene, in which Désirée is being observed from above by the group of men. Often, with the reappropriation of words in the *langage de banlieue*, words and phrases come to take on multiple meanings besides the original ‘standard French’ meaning of the terms. Although the subtitle ‘Let me turn that bitch around’ does have sexual connotations, more graphic terminology in the subtitle here might serve to render the way in which men speak about women more explicitly for the viewer. In order to match the tone of the SLD, perhaps ‘I’m going to screw that bitch’ would be appropriate: this has the same number of characters, but has a more explicit sexual meaning and conveys the forceful nature of the character’s intentions through the use of the phrase ‘I’m going to’. In terms of a skopos of conveying the socio-political messages of the film to a non-French speaking Anglophone viewer, subtle translation shifts such as the one occurring in this example could affect the reception of the message by the viewer. Nevertheless, working with such language is challenging, and the ongoing debates about the inclusion of graphic language in subtitles were discussed in Chapter Five. Indeed, viewers seem divided in terms of what they would like the subtitler to do.

S0134	00 :12 :36 :09	00 :12 :38 :23
<p><i>Je vais payer des tox*, ils vont <u>te défouler le moule*</u>.</i></p> <p>[I’ll pay some <u>drug addicts</u> {slang}, they’re going to ruin {slang} your twat {slang}.]</p> <p>I’ll pay some crack heads to gang bang you.</p>		

Here the character states explicitly what the drug addicts he pays will do to her genitals, the problem with toning down such language in subtitles is that the ease with which the character speaks so explicitly, violently and graphically is not necessarily evident to the viewer of the subtitled film. This could affect the viewer’s perception of attitudes towards women in the subtitled film. *Moule* is a

very vulgar term for the female genitals, but can also be used to mean idiot or jerk, for example, and might therefore be better rendered as ‘twat’ in English.⁵⁶⁷ Though it has already been noted that the subtitling of graphic language and swearing is a challenge for all subtitlers, it is interesting to consider the potential impact these practices could have in the case of graphic language related to key themes and socio-political messages presented in a film.

It is not only graphic language which is particularly relevant in relation to questions of gender, though. In a scene towards the end of the film, Désirée visits Toussaint at home and confronts him about what he did to Yasmine:

S0851	01 :18 :33 :15	01 :18 :34 :15
<p><i>Je vous aurais tués.</i></p> <p>[I would have killed you (plural).]</p> <p>I should've killed you.</p>		

With a reading speed of 240wpm, this subtitle exceeds the maximum recommended reading speed suggested by Díaz-Cintas and Remael and Karamitroglou.⁵⁶⁸ There are 8 frames between the out time of this subtitle and the in time of the next, so this subtitle could have remained on screen a little longer. In the subtitled version, it is not clear that Désirée blames both Toussaint and Yasmine (she refers to the plural ‘you’). ‘I’d have killed you both’ would only have been two characters longer, and would convey the important information that in some cases, women who are raped are also blamed. Given the director’s aim to bring attention to rape and the treatment of women in the *banlieue*, this is an important feature of the film. The issues highlighted here by such subtle shifts in meaning support earlier assertions that in *banlieue* cinema, macro-contextual

⁵⁶⁷ Brunet and Mc Cavana, p. 548.

⁵⁶⁸ Karamitroglou; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 98.

analysis is an important step in understanding the director's intentions in making the film, and how these might be maintained in subtitled versions.

S0853	01 :18 :37 :17	01 :18 :39 :04
<p><i>Mais tu l'as violée, cette salope !</i></p> <p>[But you raped her, that slut!]</p> <p>But you raped that bitch!</p>		

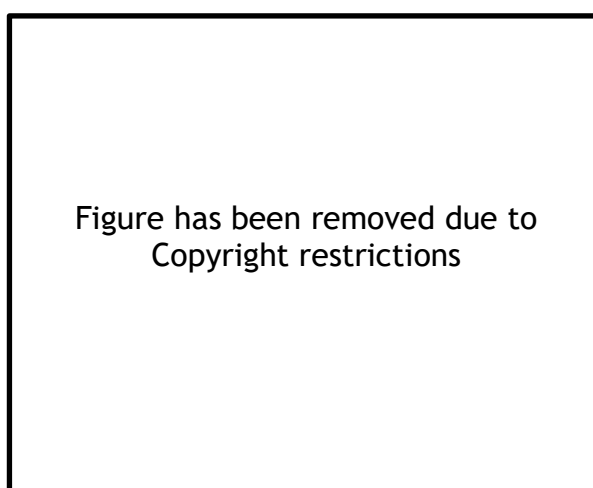


Figure 11 - *La squale*, 01:18:37

Désirée is once more blaming not only Toussaint, but also Yasmine - she calls her a *salope* [slut]. 'Bitch' is perhaps used as frequently in British English as *salope* is used in the French *banlieue* context, and it also retains the connotations of sexual promiscuity. Considering the body language in this scene, where the viewer is looking down on Toussaint from Désirée's higher perspective, and he has picked up the controller for his video game in order to give the impression that he is not bothered by her accusations, this subtitle is coherent within the context, and conveys the message implicit in the SLD, in a sequence which demonstrates attitudes towards rape in the *banlieue*. The subtitle is not too long, so the viewer has time to absorb the on-screen action, and what they witness is the beginning of Désirée standing up to Toussaint. In this example, then, it might be suggested that the aforementioned *skopos* is achieved; through the combination of

information available to them, the viewer would probably learn a lot about this particular instance of sexual violence and attitudes towards it. Genestal presents a situation in which some victim-blaming occurs, this is evident through Désirée's referral to Yasmine as 'cette salope'. However, Désirée's attitude also demonstrates that she is very angry with Toussaint, and that she sees his behaviour as unacceptable. Though in the previous example there may have been a slight shift in the subtleties of women's attitudes towards rape in translation, this subtitle could compensate for that, presenting this element of victim-blaming to the viewer more implicitly.

Later in the scene, Désirée tells Toussaint that she came back because she's pregnant. He says that he knew she wanted to get pregnant, and she asks him if he wanted this too:

S0876	01 :22 :15 :12	01 :22 :18 :11
<p><i>Moi, j'ai rien voulu, hein? C'est pas mon problème.</i></p> <p>[Me, I didn't want anything hey? It's not my problem.]</p> <p>I didn't want nothin'. It ain't about me.</p>		

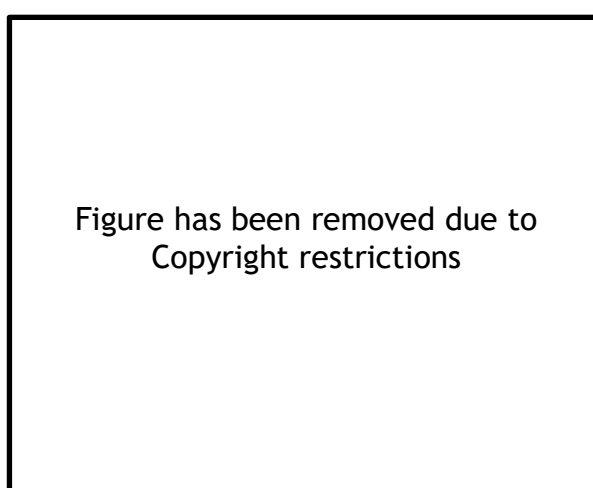


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Copyright restrictions

Figure 12 - *La squale* 01:22:15

This exchange shows that Toussaint is not willing to take responsibility for the baby he has fathered. In the SLD, he explicitly says that he didn't want anything and that the baby is not his problem. The screenshot above demonstrates Désirée's happiness to tell him she is pregnant, and their body language (which is clearly significant since they are shown in close-up) conveys the notion that Désirée is clinging on to Toussaint's back, seemingly craving closeness, while he, in turn, will not even look at her. On the other hand, the strength of Toussaint's conviction that her being pregnant has nothing to do with him, may not be entirely evident to the viewer, since the second line of the subtitle could be interpreted as him suggesting that the most important thing is for Désirée to have what she wants.

At another point in the film, we hear the girls talking about Leila, and how she behaved around Toussaint and his friends. This is another scene in which women's attitudes towards women are presented to the viewer through the characters' linguistic choices. Whether or not this is evidence of a linguistic tradition of using derogatory language to speak about women, language is shaped by reality, and this is reflected here:

S0264	00 :23 :25 :02	00 :23 :29 :05
<p><i>Elle mouillait* trop pour lui. En plus, tu sais quoi? Elle s'est laissée peloter * par tous ses potes.</i></p> <p>[She got too <u>wet</u> {slang} for him. And you know what else? She let all of his friends <u>feel her up</u> {slang}.]</p> <p>She was hot for him. She even made out with his pals.</p>		

'She was hot for him' does imply that Leila was attracted to Toussaint, but in the SL, the character says that she was 'wet', which is more graphic, and the character speaking clearly displays contempt for Leila through her facial expression and tone of voice. In the second line of the subtitle, the SLD implies inaction (she allowed them), rather than action on her part; the subtitle suggests that she actively 'made out' with them. What makes someone a 'whore' in the

eyes of these young women is inaction, rather than action. However, events in the film show that women do not always have a choice when it comes to the desires of the men around them. This is a linguistic subtlety which reveals a great deal about the attitudes of these young women towards others.

These examples from *La squale* demonstrate the challenges of subtitling extremely graphic language, which has already been shown in the discussion of the translation of swearing and insults in Chapter Five. They also indicate the challenge of rendering certain aspects of the characters' language in translation when these may reveal, subtly yet powerfully, important information about the *banlieue* lifestyle, and in particular, parts of this which Genestal wanted to highlight. In addition to the examples shown above, there is also language in both *L'esquive* and *Divines* which reflects the 'macho' subculture in the *banlieue*, and a negative attitude towards the women and girls who live there. For example, in Fathi and Frida's altercation in *L'esquive*, which will be examined in this chapter in relation to the abundance of Americanisms which were featured in the subtitles for that sequence, Fathi says 'C'est quoi l'embrouille ? C'est que mon pote, là, il est en train de péter un câble à cause de ta pute !' [What's the problem? It's that my mate, there, he's going crazy because of your whore!]. In this utterance, Fathi is referring to Lydia, suggesting that it is her fault that Krimo is unhappy, since she has not yet decided whether she wishes to be in a relationship with him. He refers to Lydia as 'ta pute' [your whore], which was rendered as 'ho' in the subtitles. Both SLD and subtitle demonstrate a lack of respect, and a suggestion of promiscuity on Lydia's part. Fathi's lack of respect for women and girls is further reinforced by his physical violence towards Frida; he uses his strength to overpower her and ensure that she feels threatened and unsafe. In this scene, given the surrounding subtitles and visuals, Fathi's lack of respect for women is clearly apparent in the subtitled film.

Fathi is not the only character who uses derogatory language to refer to women; after Frida's argument with him, she goes to see her friend, Nanou, and explains what has happened. During this discussion, Frida uses a number of disparaging terms to refer to Lydia, chaining them together in order to express her anger and frustration. For example, she says that Fathi became so aggressive 'à cause de cette putain de crasseuse de salope, là, Lydia!' [because of that fucking dirty slut, there, Lydia!]. In the subtitles, this is rendered as "'Cause of that fuckin' cunt

Lydia!’ In this case, the taboo register of the SLD is rendered in translation, and the strong swearwords in English do replicate the effect of the three swearwords in French chained together. Of course, due to the nature of subtitling, including three swearwords in the translation would take up a lot of characters, and within the scene in question, one-line subtitles allow the viewer more time to concentrate on the action, whilst reducing their cognitive effort which is already high due to the speed of the conversation taking place at this point in the film. However, compared to the French term ‘salope’, ‘cunt’ is a more general insult in British English which does not imply promiscuity and is less of a gendered insult (besides its denotative meaning referring to female genitals). Nevertheless, in the same scene Frida refers to Lydia as a ‘pute’ multiple times, and this is often rendered as ‘slut’ in the subtitles. The overall result is that in the subtitled film, Frida’s insults are explicitly sexualised and gendered.

The character of Reda in *Divines* expresses similarly sexist attitudes towards women. Particularly in the example discussed in Chapter Five, in which he explains to Dounia who he was with in the nightclub. Reda refers to the women as ‘*les tapins de mes potes*’ [the whores of my mates], this is rendered as ‘my mates’ slags’ in English, and whilst retaining a similar register in translation, this also indicates the possessive and insulting nature of Reda’s comment. Thus, the subtitled version of the film arguably does demonstrate the negative attitudes towards women which exist in the *banlieues*.

Another key theme identified in *Divines* during the macrocontextual analysis was female friendships and feminism, and it appears that the translated version of the film transmits all of these, sometimes conflicting themes, for a non-French speaking viewer. One way in which the film might be described as a feminist film is through the choice to portray a female character as the ‘leader/drug-dealer’ in the *cité*. This is a role which would traditionally be filled by a man. In this case, although it is played by a woman, Rebecca still behaves in the manner to be expected from this kind of character. She focuses on success and getting rich, and wouldn’t be averse to using other women to achieve her goal. In one scene, Rebecca is surrounded by a group of men and women (though primarily men), describing her trip to Thailand. She talks of wanting to move there to live, because she could make lots of money there.

D0205	00 :16 :22 :08	00 :16 :24 :09
<p><i>Et là-bas, y'a trop de maille à se faire, c'est un truc d'ouf !</i></p> <p>[And over there, there's too much dosh to make, it's something crazy!]</p> <p>Over there you can earn big.</p>		
D0206	00 :16 :24 :11	00 :16 :27 :15
<p><i>Sexe, alcool, drogue, tu peux te faire de l'argent facile.</i></p> <p>[Sex, alcohol, drugs, you can make money easily]</p> <p>Sex, booze, drugs... easy money!</p>		

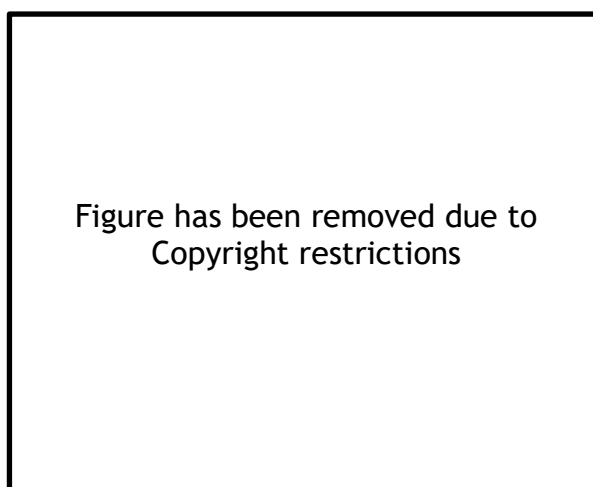


Figure 13 - *Divines* 00:16:24

This is a rich scene with lots of information transmitted through the various semiotic channels. Rebecca is surrounded by her audience, and when she talks about how much money she wants to make in Thailand, Dounia is clearly impressed. The emphasis in this scene is on the situation in which the characters currently find themselves - Rebecca gestures towards broken windows which have not been repaired in two years, and talks of her dreams of a better life. At this point, Rebecca seems to become a role model for Dounia, who wants to get closer to Rebecca and the money of which she speaks. In addition to demonstrating the

power she has over the other *banlieusards* as a person who has left and seen ‘how the other half live’, this scene also shows Rebecca telling men how to behave, and impressing them with her talk of women and money. There is a sense of a gender role reversal which contributes to the feminist slant some have identified in the film. During the scene an iPad is being passed around, with videos from Rebecca’s last trip:

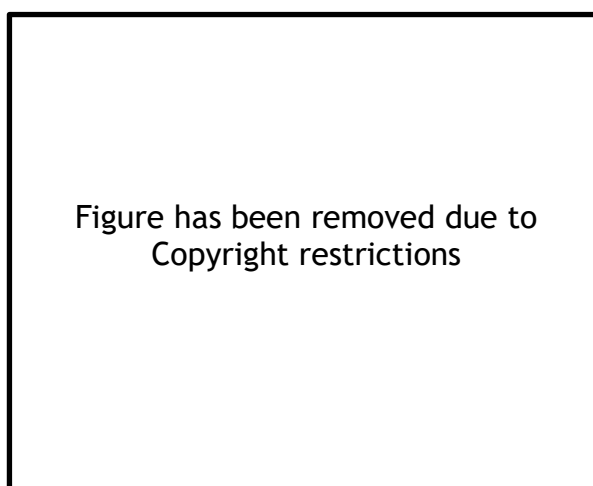


Figure 14 - *Divines* 00:16:27

D0207	00 :16 :27 :17	00 :16 :32 :05
<p><i>En ouvrant des bars à putes. Je fais la fête, je profite, et je fais de l'argent.</i></p> <p>[By opening whore bars. I party, I have fun, and I make money.]</p> <p>I'll open a bar with hookers and party while making loads of money!</p>		

Although some argue that the reversal of traditional gender roles demonstrates the film’s feminist nature, there are also aspects of the film which are very negative towards women. In the example just above, Rebecca explains her money-making plan, which involves exploiting women as sex workers in order to make money. The film thus expresses both feminist ideas of strong women in positions of leadership, but also demonstrates the negative attitude towards women in the *banlieues* and the macho culture (which one might say Rebecca has adopted

herself). The subtitled version of this sequence does seem to present these messages for the non-French speaking viewer because the viewer witnesses the youths' reactions to Rebecca, but is also clearly aware of her plan to make money from the sex trade through *des bars à putes*, which is subtitled as 'a bar with hookers'. 'Hookers' maintains the informal register of the conversation, whilst also retaining the matter-of-fact nature of Rebecca's speech in translation. In addition, although the term 'hooker' originated in North America, it is commonly understood in British English. This subtitled sequence, then, seems to meet the skopos of both working for the intended audience, but also conveying the socio-political messages that are presented in the films through a combination of the sound, visuals and subtitles.

Identity

Another important aspect of all three films is identity. The *langage de banlieue* functions as a marker of identity for the *banlieusards* and, as such, contributes to characterisation in *banlieue* film. Register shifts are one way in which changes in relationships or setting are signalled in the films. Halliday writes about dialect and register, noting that although these terms do not refer to the same concept, the two are linked:

...dialect variation expresses the diversity of social *structures* (social hierarchies of all kinds), while register variation expresses the diversity of social *processes*...the two are interconnected -what we do is affected by who we are...The registers a person has access to are a function of his place in the social structure; and a switch of register may entail a switch of dialect.⁵⁶⁹

So, the characters in *banlieue* film usually have similar dialects as they have a comparable social status. Their social status means they often find themselves communicating in similar situations, and involved in similar processes. Halliday suggests that in order to determine register, one must consider 'field', 'tenor', and 'mode'; what is happening, who is speaking, and the channel of communication respectively.⁵⁷⁰ When there is a change in one or more of these factors, there is often a shift in register to suit the new situation or relationship.

⁵⁶⁹ Halliday, "Introduction", *Language as Social Semiotic*, p. 90.

⁵⁷⁰ Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, p. 362.

As Halliday notes above, this may or may not involve a change in dialect, though those shifts that do involve a change in dialect are perhaps the most obvious given that this can involve a change in grammar, lexicon and pronunciation. This can be linked to characterisation, since the manner in which two people communicate can convey information about their relationship or respective social statuses. Particularly in the case of *banlieue* film, register shifts can also demonstrate the youths' control over and awareness of their language. The *banlieusards* adjust their register according to the situation in which they find themselves, such as when travelling into central Paris - a journey witnessed in other *banlieue* films such as *La haine*. When the inhabitants of the *banlieue* are communicating with people from outside the community, for example, they switch to more standard language. Similarly, the *banlieusards'* reappropriated terms for referring to race and religion reflect their social circles, in which their peers come from different backgrounds and have different religions as noted by Doran.⁵⁷¹ However, these different 'processes' sometimes require different registers; the youths will speak differently to figures of authority, such as teachers or the police, than to their peers.⁵⁷²

The first example to be considered is near the beginning of *La squale*, when Désirée and the gang of girls she has befriended have travelled into central Paris, where they visit a beauty shop:

S0227	00 :19 :25 :05	00 :19 :27 :10
<p><i><u>Putain*</u> ! Il y a vraiment rien pour les <u>renois*</u> ici!</i></p> <p>[<u>Shit!</u> There's really nothing for the <u>blacks</u> {verlan} here!]</p> <p>Fuck. They've got nothing for blacks.</p>		

In this first locution, the character is still addressing her friends, and this is apparent in her language; she swears (*putain* [shit]), and also uses the verlanised

⁵⁷¹ Doran, pp. 499–500.

⁵⁷² Lepoutre, p. 158. notes, for instance, his surprise at the students' *verlanisation* of his name to *vid'da*, indicating his integration into their world.

form of 'noirs': *renois*; black people. The significance of positive references to race and religion such as this was discussed in Chapter One; the *banlieusards* can choose to reappropriate mainstream (sometimes pejorative) terms for their own use, thus rendering the discussion of such taboo topics more acceptable.⁵⁷³ Using the verlanised form of *noirs* is an example of this. Although 'blacks' conveys the same denotative meaning, the viewer is not aware of the implications behind its use. This example could be linked back to the discussion of Lydia's use of *le noich* in *L'esquive* which was discussed in Chapter Five. However, in the absence of a similarly widespread phenomenon of reappropriation of terms referring to race and religion in British English, it would be difficult to find a suitable alternative. Indeed, the very presence of a reference to race among friends could signal the ease with which the characters discuss this aspect of their identity for the viewer.

At this point, Désirée decides to give her friend a makeover, and upon seeing what she has done, the shop assistant looks surprised, and suggests she might have an alternative product for the teenager:

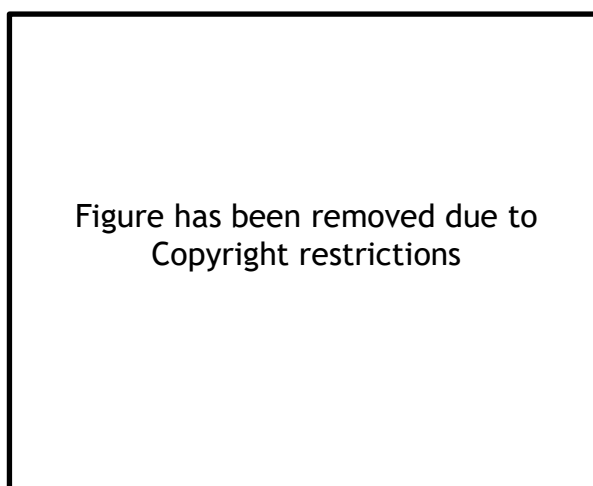


Figure 15 - *La squale* 00:20:07

⁵⁷³ Doran, p. 503.

S0238	00 :20 :08 :24	00 :20 :12 :15
<p><i>J'ai une crème plus ambrée qui mettra davantage en valeur votre carnation brune.</i></p> <p>[I have a more 'amber-coloured' cream which will highlight/bring out your brown complexion.]</p> <p>I've got something that will show off Your brown carnation.</p>		

The shop assistant is well-spoken, and from this particular locution it is clear that she does not want to offend the young women. She offers *une crème plus ambrée* that will highlight the character's *carnation brune*. This is a stilted and unusual way to phrase the sentence, and the subtitle reflects this, with the use of a literal translation, 'brown carnation', which here serves to indicate the awkwardness of the conversation occurring on-screen. The stilted nature of the SLD is reflected in the subtitled version of the film, and coupled with the visuals represents a cohesive translation. The characters are offended by the sales assistant, and in part this is in response to her use of language, which makes the girls feel uncomfortable - they are not used to being spoken to in this manner, and are perhaps confused by the shop assistant's phrasing. The linguistic choices made in this scene are therefore significant.

S0240	00 :20 :15 :08	00 :20 :16 :06
<p><i>Vous jouez avec moi là, ou quoi ?</i></p> <p>[Wait, are you playing with me, or what?]</p> <p>You fucking with me?</p>		

S0241	00 :20 :16 :11	00 :20 :17 :14
<p><i>Sale raciste !</i></p> <p>[Dirty racist!]</p> <p>Racist shit!</p>		
S0242	00 :20 :17 :19	00 :20 :19 :18
<p><i>Écoutez c'est un malentendu, Valérie n'a pas voulu vous blesser...</i></p> <p>[Listen it's a misunderstanding, Valérie didn't mean to upset you/hurt your feelings...]</p> <p>It's a mistake.</p> <p>No insult was...</p>		
S0243	00 :20 :19 :23	01 :20 :21 :16
<p><i>On t'a parlé la blondasse ?!</i></p> <p>[Did we speak to you, ...?]</p> <p><i>Nous les cannibals ...</i></p> <p>[Us cannibals...]</p> <p>- Bleached bitch! - Us cannibals</p>		
S0244	00 :20 :21 :21	00 :20 :23 :16
<p><i>On va foutre le dawa dans ta boutique !</i></p> <p>[We're going to cause chaos in your shop!]</p> <p>Are gonna kick up some shit.</p>		

The girls respond by asking if she is ‘messing with them’, then exclaiming that the sales assistant is a *sale raciste* [dirty racist]; they do not swear or use language exclusive to the *banlieue*. It must be reiterated that the *banlieusards* use their language as a tool to express their sense of belonging to a community. In this case, the field, tenor and mode of the scene are completely different to conversations among the *banlieusards* in their local environment. The characters are outside of their comfort zone, in central Paris, communicating with someone from outside of the *banlieue* and this is reflected in their language; they use the polite form of address, *vous*, when talking to the sales assistant. The choice to add the profanities ‘shit’ and ‘fucking’ in these subtitles might not reflect the characters’ acute awareness of their surroundings. Perhaps ‘racist’ alone would be more appropriate, since the reduction in characters would allow the viewer additional time to absorb the tension evident in the body language and behaviour on screen. The use of the term ‘fucking’ in the preceding subtitle is arguably unnecessary and does not present a clear rendering of the register in the SLD, since the characters do not use any taboo language when addressing the sales assistants, until the situation escalates. The language use in the SLD also reflects the power relationships between the characters; the shop assistant’s phrasing is carefully selected to make the girls feel uncomfortable faced with her formal register.

Similar issues are presented throughout the exchange: *blondasse* (which would translate as ‘bimbo’, for example) is translated as ‘bleached bitch’, and *on va foutre le dawa* is translated as ‘kick up some shit’, again, including unnecessary profanities and pejorative language which is not always present in the SLD. Given the disparity in registers between the SLD and the translation, the subtitles seem to demonstrate overcompensation in the translation of this exchange, particularly in terms of taboo language and swearing. Although a strategy of compensation can be useful in signalling the variety of language spoken in *banlieue* films, and its use is often inevitable given the constraints of subtitling, register shifts demonstrate the characters’ mastery of the *langage de banlieue*, and awareness of the appropriate situations in which to use it. Begag notes that there is a stigma surrounding the *banlieue* sociolect, and thus speakers should be aware of the consequences of using it in certain situations.⁵⁷⁴ The register shift in their speech

⁵⁷⁴ Begag, p. 36.

in this situation is evidence of their linguistic prowess, and this is not conveyed to the Anglophone viewer of the film.

When sitting in the waiting room of the Doctor's surgery with Désirée, the girls begin to talk about men, and one of them states:

S0533	00 :46 :48 :05	00 :46 :50 :19
<p><i>Ils te font croire leur love story, ils tapent leur pause mais tout ce qu'ils veulent, c'est ta <u>foufoune</u>*.</i></p> <p>[They make you believe their love story, they..., but all they want is your <u>fanny</u> {slang}]</p> <p>They come on about love. But they want pussy.</p>		

The character's choice to refer to the female genitals as *foufoune* here is noteworthy. The girls are discussing sexuality and the sexual (or non-sexual) nature of their relationships with others, but use a less vulgar term to refer to their genitals, especially given the manner in which they talk and swear on a more general level. The rendering of this locution features 'pussy' here, which is arguably more vulgar than *foufoune*, but also an objectifying term used by men to refer to women in general, 'with an implication of their being sexually available'.⁵⁷⁵ This gives the impression that the girls are much more comfortable with talk of this nature, and that they have a more sexually developed relationship with their bodies. In addition, the use of the term 'pussy' in the subtitles arguably brings in male terminology when the conversation is specifically women talking about women and their bodies. Nevertheless, it has been noted that it may prove difficult to find another word of a similar register which would be recognisable for all viewers. The translation of such terms is particularly challenging given that,

⁵⁷⁵ Green, p. 961.

even among speakers of the same dialect, there is arguably a great deal of variation where terminology related to genitals is concerned.⁵⁷⁶

In *L'esquive*, some register shifts occur due to a change in tenor (or participants in the conversation), such as Fathi's discussion with Krimo's mother, or, later on, during the police search. These are the register shifts which directly and explicitly affect characterisation. Krimo and Lydia sit in a car, while Fathi, Nanou and Frida wait a little to the side. The police arrive and search the car and the youths. Ervine suggests that representations of interaction between the police and the youths in *banlieue* film could be working as a metaphor for the relationship between those living in the *banlieue* and the French state.⁵⁷⁷ Indeed, relationships between the youths living in the *banlieues* and the police are often representative of *banlieue* relations with the state in general, with many clashes and riots occurring after incidents involving police violence towards the *banlieue* youth.⁵⁷⁸ Moran notes

The deadly pattern of violence and death or injury that has, since the 1980s, placed the inhabitants of these areas in staunch opposition with the forces of law and order, has resulted in the construction of an 'us versus them' paradigm.⁵⁷⁹

The linguistic altercations in this scene are therefore significant; this scene is a representation of a recurring issue between the state and the *banlieues*, and this example of provocation of the police shows another side to the situation than the dominant discourse in mainstream media. The translation of this scene, then, could have an impact on the message a viewer takes away concerning the treatment of the youths in the *banlieue* by the police, and to some extent, by the state in general. This scene escalates due to a police officer's overreaction to Fathi's request that they calm down. This is a case in which the specific language

⁵⁷⁶ For a discussion of the challenges of translating references to female genitals from French to English, see, for example, Pascale Sardin, "Writing without Shame": The Issue of Female Sexuality in the Anglo-American Translations of *Passion Simple*, *L'Événement* and *L'Occupation* by Annie Ernaux', 2011.

⁵⁷⁷ Ervine, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁸ For example, the 2005 riots occurred following the death of two youths who were electrocuted while on the run from police, and in 2007, rioting followed the death of a 16 and 17 year old from Villiers-le-Bel. Matthew Moran, 'Opposing Exclusion: The Political Significance of the Riots in French Suburbs (2005–2007)', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 19.3 (2011), 297–312 (p. 298).

⁵⁷⁹ Moran, p. 309.

used by Fathi is very significant and does have an impact on the plot and the film's reception. If we consider the elements of the paratext examined earlier, the police scene is key as a realistic representation of life in the *banlieue*.⁵⁸⁰ Films such as *L'esquive* have the potential to transmit important information about the socio-political situation in the French *banlieue*, and the way in which relationships between youths and figures of authority function. In this scene, the group of youths is treated roughly, searched and restrained against the bonnet of the car. Lydia struggles, and the female officer dealing with her becomes more aggressive. At this point, Fathi speaks:

E1808	01:43:24:02	01:43:25:08
<p><i>Putain*</i>, mais calmez-vous !</p> <p>[Shit {slang}, but calm down!]</p> <p>Fuckin' calm down!</p>		

In this case, there is a shift in translation between the strength of the word in the SLD, and the expletive used in the subtitles. In the SLD, Fathi uses *putain* as an exclamation, rather than to swear directly at the police officers. It was noted in Chapter Five that the challenge of subtitling swear words is, in part, that it is a question of translating unstable meanings. The Collins Robert suggests that *putain* as an exclamation might be translated as 'bloody hell! (*Brit*), goddammit! (*US*)'.⁵⁸¹ The subtitle features language which is much stronger than the SLD; I would suggest the SLD would belong to the 'slang' category of Newmark's scale of formality, and that the subtitle would be best described as 'taboo'.⁵⁸² In addition, the formulation in the subtitle suggests that Fathi is swearing at the police officers, rather than in general frustration. This scene is arguably designed to show an example of somewhat irrational police brutality - the police overreact as they

⁵⁸⁰ See macro contextual analysis of *L'esquive* (Chapter Four), in which it was ascertained that French youths found this scene to be particularly realistic.

⁵⁸¹ *Le Robert & Collins, dictionnaire français-anglais, anglais-français : [le dictionnaire de référence]* = *Collins Robert French dictionary*, 9th edn (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 769.

⁵⁸² Newmark, p. 14.

are looking for an excuse to become more aggressive. The translation offered on the DVD may lead a non-French speaking viewer to believe that Fathi has sworn directly at the police and thus their verbally and physically violent reaction may be in some way justified by his use of language. In terms of Fathi's characterisation, a viewer of the subtitled version of the film may be led to believe that he was verbally abusive towards the police, and perhaps that he is therefore justifiably being punished for such behaviour. It might be said that similar issues could arise in the subtitling of swear words in any genre.

Other register shifts in *L'esquive* occur without a change of interactants (tenor), though with a change of *process*. For instance, the same group of students switches from what might be classed as 'slang', or even 'taboo' to 'officialese' in Newmark's scale of formality, as they speak in the 'marivaudage' of *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard*.⁵⁸³ At these points, there is not only a shift in language use, but also in behaviour, as the youths become their respective characters in the play. These sequences are linked to the representation of identity and 'Frenchness' in *L'esquive*, as the youths adopt an alternative manner of speaking and behaviour according to the situation. The commencement of rehearsal is communicated to the viewer through various semiotic channels - their behaviour and positioning on screen changes, they begin to speak using a completely different register, and their intonation changes (in most cases). Krimo's character in particular is developed at these points in the film, he is extremely ill-at-ease when performing scenes from the play, and this is evident through all of the above features. A non-French speaking viewer would certainly hear that Krimo mumbles his words, eliciting frustration from the other people involved. This aspect of Krimo's characterisation drives the plot forward; neither his friends nor Lydia's understand why he is acting when he clearly does not throw himself into the task. Clear signposting of a register shift in the subtitles signal to an Anglophone audience that the students are performing the play, and give them a better understanding of the context of the conversation - since Lydia wears her costume for the play during most of the film, and Krimo mumbles frequently, the content of the dialogue, and the register, is a very important factor. The use of non-standard spelling and syntax has been identified in a number of the examples discussed, and this appears to be a useful strategy in highlighting register shifts.

⁵⁸³ Newmark, p. 14.

The use of what were described as ‘phonetic spellings’ was discussed in Chapter Five as one strategy which can be identified throughout the subtitles for *L’esquive*. This strategy does allow for differentiation between the language of the play and the more relaxed speech of the youths when they are communicating with one another.

Given the significant presence of religion in *Divines*, there are some scenes in which Dounia speaks to the Imam (who also happens to be Maimouna’s father). On these occasions, a register shift usually occurs. In the example below, the subtitles for Dounia’s conversation with the Imam (subtitles 239 - 249) do not feature slang terms, and only the most common contractions which would be expected in written form feature in the subtitles:

D0244	00:21:00:00	00:21:01:17
<p><i>Tu viens à la mosquée quand il y a plus personne ?</i></p> <p>[You come to the mosque when no one is here anymore ?]</p> <p>You come to the mosque when it’s empty?</p>		
D0245	00:21:04:20	00:21:08:05
<p><i>Pourquoi tu ne viens plus prier avec nous? T’aimais bien ça, avant.</i></p> <p>[Why don’t you come and pray with us anymore? You liked that, before.]</p> <p>Why don’t you pray with us anymore? You used to like it.</p>		

D0246	00:21:10:02	00:21:12:14
<p><i>Bon, moi je vais y aller Amin, parce qu'après je vais être en retard. Je suis désolée.</i></p> <p>[Ok, well me, I'm going to go, Amin, because after I will be late. I'm sorry.]</p> <p>I'd better go, or I'll be late.</p>		

D0249	00:21:15:15	00:21:17:20
<p><i>Le paradis se trouve sur les pieds des mères.</i></p> <p>[Paradise can be found on the feet of mothers.]</p> <p>Paradise lies at the feet of your mother.</p>		

As can be seen from the extracts above, the subtitles feature contractions such as 'don't', but there are no uncommon contractions which might indicate a lower register to the viewer, such as 'wanna,' which does feature earlier in the film. In addition to the full spellings of words and phrases, the viewer can see that Dounia is speaking to someone older, and the fact that this man is in the Mosque when, as he says, there is no one else there, would arguably make it clear to the viewer that he is the Imam, and that Dounia would probably speak in a more formal register to this authority figure. One important thing to note about these subtitles is that the first one transcribed above has a reading speed of 245wpm, which is higher than recommendations discussed earlier in this thesis. It would appear that the subtitle could remain on screen for a few more frames, and I would argue that this subtitle could cause problems for the viewer who may feel they have missed something. It is important that the word *mosquée* [mosque] is included in the subtitles, to make it clear where Dounia is. This scene is significant in terms of

the theme of religion in the film, as it becomes clear to the viewer that Dounia used to attend the mosque and that there has been a change in her behaviour.

Towards the end of *Divines*, when Maimouna is trapped in the burning cellar, there is another register shift when the youths try to convince the firemen to come and help. Dounia pleads with the firemen to go with her and help her friend.

D1148	01:39:35:20	01:39:37:15
<p><i>Il y a du feu partout !</i></p> <p>[There's fire everywhere!]</p> <p>It's burning!</p>		
D1149	01:39:37:17	01:39:39:18
<p><i>Je ne peux rien faire pour l'instant. J'ai des ordres.</i></p> <p>[I can't do anything right now. I have orders.]</p> <p>I can't do anything. They're my orders.</p>		

D1151	01:39:42:00	01:39:43:16
<p><i>Elle est bloquée, je vous dis !</i></p> <p>[She's trapped, I'm telling you!]</p> <p><i>On ne peut pas.</i></p> <p>[We can't.]</p> <p>-She can't get out! -We can't.</p>		

D1153	01:39:45:15	01:39:48:19
<p><i>Vous nous caillassez et donc on ne peut plus intervenir. On attend.</i></p> <p>[You throw stones at us and so we can't intervene any more. We're waiting.]</p> <p>You throw rocks at us. We're not allowed.</p>		
D1154	01:39:48:21	01:39:50:16
<p><i>Non, on ne va pas vous caillasser, monsieur !</i></p> <p>[No, we won't throw stones at you, sir!]</p> <p>We won't throw rocks</p>		
D1155	01:39:50:18	01:39:52:21
<p><i>Je vous jure, on ne va pas vous caillasser, s'il vous plait !</i></p> <p>[I swear, we won't throw stones at you, please!]</p> <p>I swear! Please!</p>		

Once again, these subtitles feature fewer irregular contractions than at other points in the film. Once again, given the other information available on screen about the participants of the interaction, and close-ups of Dounia's pleading expression, I would suggest that the viewer would understand that Dounia is being as polite as possible in order to convince the men to help her. Furthermore, there is a lot happening in this scene, with the sounds of people shouting and the fire blazing, as well as visuals of the bright fire on a dark night which contribute to the drama of the situation. There is a lot for the viewer to absorb here and the

subtitles are generally fairly short, which does allow for the viewer to take in a lot more information which is visible on screen.

Register shifts, therefore, occur in all three films, though they perhaps have differing degrees of significance in terms of the plot or characterisation. Nevertheless, they are significant in terms of characterisation and, as such, it is interesting to note that these register shifts seem to be communicated through a combination of the subtitles, the visuals and the soundtrack. This is often achieved through lexical choices. This strategy was also discussed in Chapter Five, and appears to be a useful means of demonstrating the informal register of most *banlieue* youth characters in the three films. This means that those aspects of the relationships between characters which are reflected in register (such as, for example, a more formal discussion between characters, a serious topic, or a difference in status), or even significant elements of the plot, would arguably be apparent to a non-French speaking Anglophone viewer in many cases. Although register is often conveyed in the subtitled versions through lexical choices, it was noted in Chapter Five that this strategy does not indicate the sociolect spoken by the *banlieusards*. In many of the examples discussed, there were slang terms from AAVE employed to translate *verlan* and *banlieue* slang terms in the SLD. This strategy was described as ‘dialect-for-dialect replacement’ by Mével, when he identified it in his study of the subtitles for *La haine*.⁵⁸⁴

Americanisms and Dialect-for-dialect Replacement

Given the importance of the *banlieue* sociolect within the subculture, the translation of identity is somewhat dependant on the translation of the sociolect. In the case of such a culturally-embedded text as a *banlieue* film, the common strategy of transposing the cultural specificity of the source text in a ‘dialect-for-dialect approach’ depends on a good knowledge of the target culture and dialect (often American English). However, such a dialect-for-dialect approach using American English can have the result of ‘displac[ing] the identity of the characters’ as highlighted by Mével.⁵⁸⁵ Indeed, Ellender finds that

⁵⁸⁴ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’.

⁵⁸⁵ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 53.

The nub of the challenge faced by the subtitlers of films which contain non-standard language and linguistic variation is, then, one of preserving the essence and variety of the SL and its connotational meanings, while at the same time avoiding any linguistic and cultural displacement of the original film in the TL.⁵⁸⁶

In the subtitles for *La squale* and *L'esquive*, the strategy of transposing cultural specificity through dialect-for-dialect replacement can be identified in some sequences, and these will be examined more closely in this section. The analysis will also consider how far this dialect-for-dialect replacement results in a 'displacement' of the films.

It should be highlighted, of course, that if only one set of subtitles is to be produced for the Anglophone world, then an American dialect is arguably most familiar to other Anglophone audiences. British audiences experience a high exposure to American cultural products such as films and TV series, whereas the same may not necessarily be said regarding British texts (in the broad sense of the term) for other parts of the Anglophone world. However, there are certain examples of American slang expressions which have a different meaning entirely for a British viewer, and could cause confusion for someone watching the film with the subtitles in question, as will be seen in this chapter.

It is unclear whether the subtitles for the three films studied here were intended to be American English, or a 'hybrid' variety designed to function in both a British and American English context. This approach would seem to work best for non-native English speaking viewers who have learned a mix of British and American English. The challenge of identifying a clear audience for subtitled *banlieue* film was discussed in the Introduction and returned to in Chapter Three. It was established that the commission information does not always specify a clear audience for the subtitled films, and that the audience imagined by the subtitler might not be the one to which the subtitles are presented. Here, we are concerned with the British context of reception, and some American English terms included in the subtitles may therefore be unfamiliar to these potential viewers. In this section, examples of American English as employed in the subtitles - primarily for *La squale* and *L'esquive* - will be analysed in relation to the skopos of the subtitled

⁵⁸⁶ Ellender, p. 171.

films as intending to transmit important messages about identity in the French *banlieue*. Interestingly, there were not many Americanisms discovered in the subtitles for *Divines*, and this will also be discussed in relation to the different platforms for the subtitles, and the later production date of the film and its translation.

The use of Americanisms in the subtitles for the *banlieue* films studied here is identified in two different applications. In the first instance, there are some isolated American slang terms used as translations for slang or *verlan* in the source language dialogue. In the second instance, there are sequences featuring the consistent use of American English slang terms, which could be seen to support Mével's assertions regarding the 'displacement' of the action in *La haine* due to the American language used in the subtitles for the film.

One of the earliest examples of American slang which might not be familiar to a British English-speaking viewer in *La squale* is from our introduction to Désirée as she arrives at school. She is being watched by a gang of girls whom she later befriends. One of the girls looks across the corridor and says:

S0070	00 :07 :56 :23	00 :07 :58 :11
<p><i>Putain ! Matez*-moi ça!</i></p> <p>[Fuck ! <u>Check that out</u> {slang} for me!]</p> <p>Fuck ! Scope that !</p>		

The camera follows her gaze to Yasmine, and then to Désirée. This is a conversation among girls. *Mater* is defined as 'to observe intently, to eyeball', and is an example of general slang that is probably used more frequently by the *banlieusards* than other members of French society.⁵⁸⁷ An equivalent would be 'check out' or 'get a load of'. 'Scope', however, is highlighted as belonging to 'US Black/Campus' slang, meaning '1. To look over, to stare at... 2. To stare at

⁵⁸⁷ Brunet and Mc Cavana, p. 51.

someone intently, usu. with sexual interest...'⁵⁸⁸ In this context, the character is not looking at Désirée with sexual desire, more with curiosity and distaste, though the verb does have some sexual connotations depending on its usage. It is also an unfamiliar term for a British English speaker. However, given the film context, it would not be difficult for the viewer to decode the term. Further, perhaps this slightly unusual term would remind the viewer that the characters are not speaking a standard variety of French. Later in the film, 'scope' is used again in the subtitles, this time in a context which would appear to fit the above definition:

S0325	00 :28 :57 :15	00 :28 :59 :13
<p><i>Putain, <u>chame-moi</u>* ça, comme elle est <u>bonne</u>*!</i></p> <p>[Fuck, <u>look at that for me</u> {slang}, how <u>hot</u> {slang} she is!]</p> <p>Fuck. Scope that. She's tasty.</p>		

Since this scene depicts men sexualising women and talking amongst themselves about how sexually attractive they find the women around them, 'scope' would appear to be an appropriate term in this context; particularly given that it can be defined as 'the erect penis'.⁵⁸⁹ Considering the director's intentions to represent rape culture in the *banlieue*, and the sexualisation of women, this additional facet to the connotations of the selected vocabulary could be described as a strategy of compensation,⁵⁹⁰ adding a further element of sexualisation through word choice. Although it has been noted that the verb 'to scope' would perhaps be unfamiliar to a British English-speaking viewer, the advantage of these two subtitles is that the reading speeds are sufficiently low for the viewer to decode the use of 'scope' in these contexts. In the first subtitle, the reading speed is 118wpm, and in the second, 162wpm; these are both lower than the aforementioned recommendation of 180wpm. Indeed, the first subtitle is much lower than the recommended

⁵⁸⁸ Green, p. 90.

⁵⁸⁹ Green, p. 1037.

⁵⁹⁰ Compensation is described as a strategy whereby additions are made in a subtitle, 'making up for a translational loss in one exchange.' Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 206.

reading speed, and by the time the viewer reaches subtitle number 325, they will have already seen the term once before.

In some cases, the use of Americanisms in the subtitles for *La squalle* could be more detrimental to the viewer's understanding of the film than the example discussed above. At least, in some cases, they could reduce readability to a greater extent. During a later sequence in *La squalle*, Désirée has spent the night at Toussaint's house, and the next day the pair enter the living area where they find his family about to eat. Toussaint proceeds to ask his sister for money:

S0360	00 :33 :08 :12	00 :33 :11 :04
<p><i>Anémone, t'aurais pas du <u>caisse</u>* à me <u>filer</u>*?</i></p> <p>[Anémone, you wouldn't have some <u>cash</u> {slang} to <u>give</u> {slang} to me?]</p> <p>Anemone, you got a hundred for me?</p>		

S0362	00 :33 :13 :18	00 :33 :15 :06
<p><i>Et arrête de me <u>taxer</u>*</i></p> <p>[And stop <u>taking stuff from me</u> {slang}]</p> <p>Stop hittin' on me.</p>		
S0363	00 :33 :15 :11	00 :33 :18 :20
<p><i>Un <u>taf</u>*! <u>Chui</u>* pas un <u>larbin</u>*, moi ! Quand je travaille, je travaille à mon compte.</i></p> <p>[A job {slang}! I'm {slang} not a lackey {slang}, me! When I work, I work for myself]</p> <p>A gig! I don't suck up. When I work, I work for me.</p>		

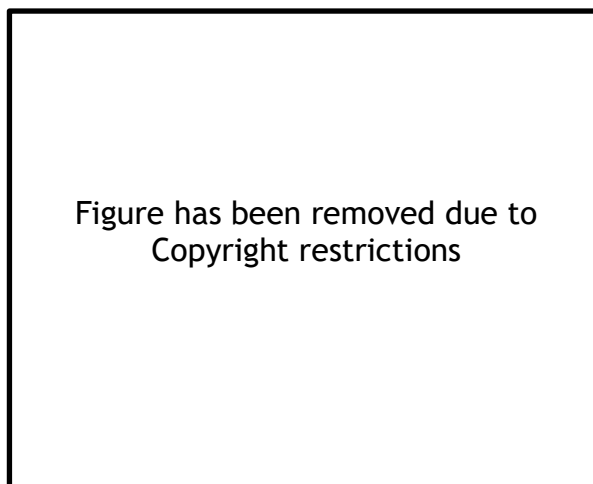


Figure 16 - *La squala* 00:33:13

One of the most striking elements of the translation of this exchange is the use of American slang which could confuse a British viewer. In subtitle number 0362, Anémone tells her brother to stop asking her for money, but this is subtitled as ‘stop hittin’ on me’, presumably because of the following definition provided by the Cassell Dictionary of Slang: ‘4 [1960s+] (US) to attempt to swindle or victimize’.⁵⁹¹ However, although a speaker of US English might understand the subtitle in this way, a British English speaker would generally understand this as Anémone telling her brother to stop trying ‘to seduce’ her.⁵⁹² This could prove very confusing, since there has been no indication of a romantic relationship between Anémone and Toussaint up to this point. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this; the viewer may realise that this subtitle represents an unusual and unfamiliar language usage, and therefore be reminded that the characters are speaking a non-standard linguistic variety, but on the other hand, the time which may be spent on this thought process would have an effect on readability and could result in the viewer reading the subtitle twice. This could mean that he/she misses out on the visuals, or finds him/herself with less than enough time to read the following subtitle.

In contrast to the use of some American expressions which may confuse the British viewer in *La squala*, the use of Americanisms in *L’esquive* is arguably more consistent, as the subtitles feature the repeated use of similar expressions which would perhaps be more familiar to potential British viewers of the subtitled films.

⁵⁹¹ Green, p. 596.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

For instance, when the characters discuss physical attraction, this is often subtitled as ‘being hot for s.o.’:

E0654	00:35:16:29	00:35:18:28
<p><i>Tu veux <u>te serrer</u>* Krimo?</i></p> <p>[You want <u>to pull</u>* Krimo?]</p> <p>Tell me, are you hot for Krimo?</p>		

E0773	00:40:26:09	00:40:28:20
<p><i>Toi aussi, euh, tu le kiffes ou quoi, wesh? Tu veux te le serrer?*</i></p> <p>[You too, um, you <u>fancy</u>* him or what, <u>eh</u>*? Do you want to <u>pull</u>* him?]</p> <p>So, girl, you hot for him or not?</p>		

In the above two examples, *tu veux te serrer* [you want to pull] has been translated by ‘you hot for?’, although the second subtitle is for speech which also includes *tu le kiffes?* The English term is American English meaning ‘enthusiastic, keen on...’⁵⁹³ ‘Hot for’ is regularly used as a translation for *kiffer*, in subtitles 1185, 1205 and 1206, for example, and so has been used with consistency. In addition, the verb ‘to be’ has been omitted, this strategy was also identified in the subtitles for *La squala*, and it was also found in the subtitles for *La haine* as a tool for replicating an American dialect.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ Green, p. 617.

⁵⁹⁴ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 54.

Another Americanism which features a number of times in the English subtitles is ‘homey’. This term is not regularly used in British English, though through exposure to American rap music, films and TV series, for example, a British viewer may be familiar with it. The use of this term could be linked to the strategy discussed in Chapter Five, whereby register is replicated in the subtitled through lexical choices. However, the issue here is that much of the lexicon included through this strategy belongs to the same dialect. The term ‘homey’ belongs to American English, and has been used in a number of ways in the subtitles. For example, when Krimo asks Lydia to go to the cinema with him, he tells her his friend is unwell:

E0564	00:30:22:16	00:30:25:08
<p><i>T’as vu je devais aller au cinéma avec un copain, et ce <u>con*</u> il a attrapé la <u>crève*</u>.</i></p> <p>[You seen I was supposed to go to the cinema with a friend, and this idiot {slang} he got a bad cold {slang}.]</p> <p>I was goin’ with a homey but he’s sick.</p>		

In this case, ‘homey’ is a slightly less formal term than the French *copain*. It is American slang; ‘(orig. US Black) an affectionate dimin. of HOMEBOY:... a good friend... a young Black or Hispanic member of a street gang’.⁵⁹⁵ The SLD could be classed as ‘neutral’ on Newmark’s Scale of Formality, while the addition of ‘homey’ in the subtitle results in a translation which would be classified as ‘slang’.⁵⁹⁶ However, this could be a result of a strategy of compensation employed in the subtitles - *la crève* is a slang term which has been translated into standard language ‘sick’. In this case, the compensation has occurred within the same exchange, but it has been used to make up for a ‘loss’ in terms of register, and here serves to maintain the general register of Krimo’s speech. An analysis of this example in relation to Halliday’s *field*, *tenor* and *mode* confirms that the context

⁵⁹⁵ Green, pp. 605–6.

⁵⁹⁶ Newmark, p. 14.

of situation is a rather informal one.⁵⁹⁷ The *field* here is a general chat between two classmates of a similar age and background (*tenor*), and this is a face-to-face oral conversation (*mode*). Krime is communicating with a friend of the same status, also from the *banlieue*, and is therefore using his sociolect, as Lydia will be able to understand him. Register is a particularly interesting aspect of the translation of *banlieue* film given the significance of the *langage de banlieue* as a tool for the *banlieusards* to express frustration and resistance, or to exclude ‘outsiders’ from their discussions.⁵⁹⁸ In *L’esquive*, the importance of performance, language and identity mean that register shifts even drive the plot, and convey a great deal of information about characters in the film.

The example of compensation discussed above communicates the lower register of the SLD achieved with the slang terms ‘con’[idiot] and ‘la crève’ [a bad cold], to the viewer of the subtitled film. ‘Homey’ has been used as a translation for a variety of French terms, and in some of these cases it does not have the same effect. When Lydia’s friends confront her about her feelings for Krime, Lydia’s friend asks:

E1537	01:24:36:11	01:24:38:04
<p><i>Même moi, ta meilleure pote*, tu m’l’as pas dit ?</i></p> <p>[Even me, your best mate, you didn’t tell me?]</p> <p>Not even me, your homey.</p>		

Lydia’s friend describes herself as her *meilleure pote* - she is not ‘just’ a friend of Lydia’s, she is her best friend, and that is why she is surprised that she was not informed of events in Lydia’s love life. Given the gang connotations of ‘homey’ (expressed in the definitions above), which would often be associated with the US ‘ghetto’ by a British English speaker, the use of such an Americanism throughout

⁵⁹⁷ Halliday, ‘Language as Social Semiotic’, p. 362.

⁵⁹⁸ Goudaillier, p. 10.

the film could have consequences concerning Anglophone viewers' perceptions of the characters, and this will be discussed in the next section. However, it is interesting to note that although there seems to be an abundance of American terms employed in the subtitles for *La squale*, there are slightly fewer in the subtitles for *L'esquive*, and very few in those for *Divines*.

False Semiotic Cohesion

In both *La squale* and *L'esquive*, in cases such as the one discussed above, a strategy of dialect-for-dialect replacement could have a number of consequences. In his case study of the subtitles for *La haine*, Mével examined the use of this strategy, and found that it 'can be seen to displace the identity of the characters, since the language used for the subtitles is evocative of American street culture, and puts the viewer under the impression that the action has been relocated.'⁵⁹⁹ The notion of displacement of identity is particularly interesting in this case, since identity has been foregrounded as a key aspect of *banlieue* cinema. Directors making films about the French *banlieues* are working to shed light on the *banlieue* subculture, and as has been established earlier, language is an important part of that culture. Language and identity are intrinsically linked, and Mével has identified the implications of transposing the *langage de banlieue* into an alternative geographically and socially connoted variety of language. He describes this as a strategy of domestication, since the subtitlers for *La haine* took the film 'closer to the culture of the language into which they translate[d].'⁶⁰⁰ He reaches this conclusion based on his identification of the use of African American Vernacular English as a translation for the *langage de banlieue* in the subtitles, and on the transposition of culture-specific references, strategies which resulted in the presence of as little unfamiliar information as possible in the subtitles for the viewer. Mével studied the subtitles from an American English perspective, and thus was able to describe this strategy as 'domestication'. However, where the British context of reception is concerned, this strategy of dialect-for-dialect replacement actually constitutes the replacement of one 'unfamiliar' variety with another, slightly less 'unfamiliar' variety.

⁵⁹⁹ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 53.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

It has been demonstrated that the dialect-for-dialect approach has been used to a greater extent in some cases than in others, and it is unclear how far this is down to the commissioner requesting subtitles written in ‘mid-Atlantic’ English.⁶⁰¹ The ‘Americanisation’ of subtitles is more apparent in *La squale* than in *L’esquive*, and arguably is not the case in the subtitled version of *Divines* - possible explanations for this will be explored shortly. Mével is not the only scholar to comment on the use of American slang in the subtitles for *La haine*: in Jäckel’s case study, she cited critics commenting that ‘the subtitling was “frankly geared towards the American market”. (Barry 1995-1996)’.⁶⁰² Another reviewer described the subtitles as ‘a sloppy pastiche of black American slang.’⁶⁰³ This would suggest that a lack of consistency in the dialect-for-dialect approach has been identified elsewhere. However, even if the subtitles appeared to have been written for American viewers, the issues of displacement highlighted by Mével are still key. Jäckel highlights the parallels which can be drawn between the *banlieue* subculture and what might be described as ‘American street culture’:

American culture undeniably influences Europeans... With young *beurs* and blacks wearing *Malcolm X* T-shirts, baseball caps, and trainers, the male-dominated suburban environment of many French suburbs does not seem to differ much from the African-American ghettos of America’s large cities.⁶⁰⁴

The similarities which might be drawn between the two cultural situations were touched upon in Chapter One, but the key issue here is that they are different contexts. Indeed, Jäckel’s reference to ‘African-American ghettos’ highlights one key difference - the ghettos are often home to one ethnic group, in contrast with the ‘melting pot’ of France’s *banlieues*. The directors of films such as *La haine*, *La squale* and other films depicting the *banlieues* are working to demonstrate the specificity of the *banlieue* situation and the people who live there. There may be some elements of US fashion which have influenced the *banlieusards*, but the context in which they live, and the events which resulted in the development of these low-income housing areas bear many differences to those of the American

⁶⁰¹ See the explanation of the professional environment in Chapter Three.

⁶⁰² Jäckel, p. 227.

⁶⁰³ David Styan, ‘So Far... Everything Is OK!’, *Vertigo*, Autumn/Winter (1995)., cited in Jäckel, p. 227.

⁶⁰⁴ Jäckel, p. 228.

‘ghettos’. The linguistic manifestation of this difference was examined in Chapter Five, with a study of the subtitling of loanwords and multilingualism in the case studies.

Chaume developed Baker’s work on textual cohesion to theorise ‘semiotic cohesion’, whereby ‘An ellipsis or gap in the (subtitled) dialogue may be filled with information the viewer obtains from the images on the screen rather than another passage from the (verbal) text’.⁶⁰⁵ This definition of semiotic cohesion highlights the multimodal nature of film and the various systems contributing to the polysemiotic network. Although Chaume is concerned with the way in which an element in one of the semiotic strands in an audiovisual text can ‘fill gaps’ in another on a more referential level (i.e. a character pointing at another on screen contributes to the meaning of ‘he’ in the subtitles), his theory is still useful here. The cultural information available to the viewer through the nonverbal-visual channel could contribute to their understanding of the visual-verbal - in the case of *banlieue* film, the subtitles specifically - as they are being presented with what is most likely an unknown cultural context, but a more familiar (though not entirely so) variety of marked language which they associate with a particular social context. The viewer might use, therefore, ‘their own knowledge of the world’ as suggested by Díaz-Cintas and Remael, to supplement the information available to him/her.⁶⁰⁶ I would term this phenomenon ‘false semiotic cohesion’.

The issue presented in the subtitled *banlieue* films studied here is deeply rooted in the multimodal nature of film, which was examined in Chapter Two. Baldry and Thibault explain that ‘multimodal texts are composite products of the combined effects of all the resources used to create and interpret them’.⁶⁰⁷ This view is corroborated by Pérez-González, who argues for ‘critical reflection on the impact that different mediation strategies... may have on the viewer’s holistic perception of the target language text as a semiotic unit.’⁶⁰⁸ Therefore, in order to ascertain

⁶⁰⁵Frederic Chaume, *Cine y traducción*, 1a ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 2004), pp. 232–37. And Mona Baker, *In Other Words : Coursebook on Translation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 218. cited in Díaz-Cintas and Remael, pp. 50–51.

⁶⁰⁶ Díaz-Cintas and Remael, p. 51.

⁶⁰⁷ Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault, *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis: A Multimedia Toolkit and Coursebook*, Equinox Textbooks and Surveys in Linguistics (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2010), p. 18.

⁶⁰⁸ Pérez González, p. 187.

the meaning created by a text, the impact of the various channels within the polysemiotic network when combined must be studied. A theory of false semiotic cohesion hypothesises that in some cases the resulting effect of the combined semiotic channels can have much bigger implications related to the film's overall message, and any representation of culture therein. Where semiotic cohesion might allow for the viewer to come to the correct conclusion about who/what is being referred to in a given scene, *false* semiotic cohesion would have the opposite effect: the viewer would be fooled into believing he/she understood, as the strands of the network function together to paint a picture which makes sense, based on his/her experiences. The false semiotic cohesion referred to here occurs on a more global level than the semiotic cohesion defined by Chaume, it is the result of more than one subtitle or element of an image, but the concepts remain the same.

Mével notes that there is a 'stark discrepancy that exists between what the viewer reads and the pictures he/she sees', and suggests that the characters in *La haine* would arguably not all speak using AAVE (African American Vernacular English) if they were native speakers of American-English.⁶⁰⁹ However, I would suggest that it is *because* of the cultural similarities that exist between American street culture and the French *banlieues* (particularly in terms of dress and some cultural references to music and film), that the choice of an American dialect to subtitle the *langage de banlieue* could result in what might be termed 'false semiotic cohesion'. This is where the variety of language presented in the subtitles, and some aspects of the visual non-verbal channel such as dress, cultural artefacts and scenery together contribute to a displacement of the identity of the characters presented on screen. In the case of *banlieue* film as political cinema, even if the viewer is aware that the situation represented in the film is not a US ghetto - they are still able to hear the French SLD - the seemingly logical combination of image, text, and in some cases sound (with hip hop music, for example) may still cause viewers to negotiate this new cultural situation *via* their existing knowledge of the US ghetto. This would be the relocation suggested by Mével, but further developed to encompass the suggested cultural similarities between the context of the French *banlieue* and that of the American ghetto. One sequence in which this is

⁶⁰⁹ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 55.

demonstrated is the scene in which Anis confronts Toussaint about beating up Désirée in *La squalé*.

S0805	01 :14 :12 :00	01 :14 :13 :17
<p><i>Fils de chat*</i>, qu'est-ce que t'as fait à Désirée ?</p> <p>[Son of a cat {slang}, what have you done to Désirée?]</p> <p>Sonofabitch!</p> <p>What you do to her?</p>		
S0806	01 :14 :15 :14	01 :14 :18 :13
<p><i>Qu'est-ce que tu fais là ?</i></p> <p>[What are you doing there?]</p> <p>What are you doing here?</p>		
S0807	01 :14 :15 :14	01 :14 :18 :13
<p><i>Tu me fais pitié, va, t'as frappé ta propre meuf* !</i></p> <p>[I feel sorry for you, go on, you hit your own <u>woman</u> {verlan} !]</p> <p><i>Attends, mais pourquoi tu te mêles?</i></p> <p>[Wait, but why are you getting involved ?]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beating on your own squeeze! - Who asked you? 		



Figure 17 - *La squale* 01:14:15

Firstly, the translations of insults in this sequence often feature American vocabulary. This term ‘sonofabitch’ is not unfamiliar to a British English speaker, though it may not be written as one word in British English. However, juxtaposed with other American slang, it does add to the American feel of the scene. Anis then accuses Toussaint of beating up Désirée; ‘beating on your own squeeze’ is another subtitle which would fit in an American context, not only in terms of vocabulary but also phrasing. In British English, it would be more common to hear ‘beating up’ rather than the US ‘beating on’, followed by Anis’ reference to Désirée as Toussaint’s *meuf* [the *verlan* of *femme*, woman] which is subtitled as ‘squeeze’. From a British English perspective, this is one of the more unusual subtitles in the film, as ‘squeeze’ is rather outdated, reminiscent of American films from the 60s, for example. This scene in general constitutes an example of the potential for false semiotic cohesion, since the combination of the general setting of blocks of flats, along with cultural elements such as dress (branded clothing), results in a situation where the subtitles featuring American slang could create the illusion of cohesion. Building on Mével’s suggestion of displacement - he points out one scene in *La haine* where ‘the Anglophone viewer is put under the impression that the action is taking place in a Harlem project’⁶¹⁰ - this illusion of cohesion could lead to a situation where the viewer equates the space of the French *banlieue* with the US ghetto they may have seen in other films.

⁶¹⁰ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 55.

However, in some cases, the use of dated slang terms from American English can have the opposite effect. For example, the above image from the film actually demonstrates a lack of congruity. These are two young men, clearly angry and facing up to one another, but using language which would not be expected of them at all. In this context, *meuf* is used as a slang term for girlfriend, rather than woman more generally, so alternatives might have been ‘bird’, or simply ‘woman’, as ‘your woman’ would convey the possessive nature of the French *propre*; your own woman.

S0808	01 :14 :18 :18	01 :14 :21 :14
<p><i>Tu te prends pour son <u>mac</u>* ou quoi ? Touche-toi pendant que je la <u>baise</u>*.</i></p> <p>[Do you think you're her <u>pimp</u> {slang} or what? Touch yourself while I <u>fuck</u> {slang} her.]</p> <p>You her pimp? Jerk yourself off while I bone her!</p>		

Similar examples of Americanised language can be identified later in the scene. ‘To jerk off’ is a North American slang term for masturbation, although the French is not so explicit, and perhaps more along the lines of ‘touch yourself’. Similarly, ‘to bone’ is also a term which, although comprehensible to a British English speaker, is still predominantly American. There are other American terms used in later subtitles for the exchange, including ‘jerk-off’ and ‘cop any pussy’, constituting various invocations of American street culture which could contribute to the homogenising cultural discourse mentioned at various points throughout this thesis.

Given the reduced amount of American slang in the English subtitles for *L'ésquive*, there are not as many scenes where false semiotic cohesion could occur, but there is one sequence in which it can be identified. In the second half of the film, Krimo's friend Fathi confronts Frida, a classmate of Lydia, in the makeshift theatre in the middle of the *cit *, where the characters have been holding rehearsals for the class's production of *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard*.




Figure has been removed due to
Copyright restrictions

Figure 18 - Fathi arriving at the 'theatre'




Figure has been removed due to
Copyright restrictions

Figure 19 - Frida rehearsing

This scene highlights some of the similarities which previous scholars may have been referring to when discussing the comparisons which could be drawn between the French and American low-income housing areas. First of all, Fathi's dress and body language (slouching, with his hands in the pockets of his tracksuit trousers), could be reminiscent of the kind of dress and behaviour sometimes associated with American street culture. Secondly, another aspect of the nonverbal-visual which is striking here is the setting, the backdrop to the scene. As can be seen in Figure 19 above, when the camera focuses on Frida, she is small against the huge blocks of flats visibly surrounding her rehearsal space. It might be suggested that these high-rise flats could evoke 'the projects' in the USA:



Figure 20 - Albany Housing Projects, BK NYC⁶¹¹

These elements of the film all form part of the polysemiotic network; the viewer not only has access to the SLD and the subtitles, but also the visual non-verbal, and aural non-verbal channels. All of these factors, as well as the paratexts, and events prior to this point in the film, have an effect on the audience's reception of the work, and interpretation of the subtitles. The above images illustrate the general experience the viewer might bring to bear on their interpretation of the subtitles. This context contributes to false semiotic cohesion, with images which could evoke the United States, and the subtitles detailed below:

E1362	01:15:22:13	01:15:24:09
<p><i>Quoi, je... mais vas-y rend-moi mon téléphone ! T'as quoi?</i></p> <p>[Go on, give me my phone back! What's up with you?]</p> <p>What? Gimme my cell back!</p>		

Firstly, the subtitle 'gimme my cell back!' uses US English ('cell') in preference to the British English equivalent, 'mobile'. Where subtitles are concerned, 'cell' clearly has its advantages with a length of only 4 characters. This, coupled with

⁶¹¹ 'Panoramio - Photo of Albany Housing Projects, BK NYC'
<<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/59715233>> [accessed 3 November 2017].

the Americanised slang spelling of ‘give me’ - ‘gimme’, and another non-standard spelling in the previous subtitle ‘watcha doin’’, though highlighting the non-standard speech of the characters, also add to the impression that they might be living in North America. The final subtitle in the above sequence, though, offers the greatest abundance of American slang with: ‘that ho’s driving my homey crazy’:

E1365	01:15:27:22	01:15:30:22
<p><i>C’est quoi l’embrouille ? C’est que mon pote, là, il est en train de péter un câble à cause de ta pute !</i></p> <p>[What’s the problem? It’s that my mate, there, he’s going crazy because of your whore!]</p> <p>This shit? That ho’s drivin’ my homey crazy.</p>		

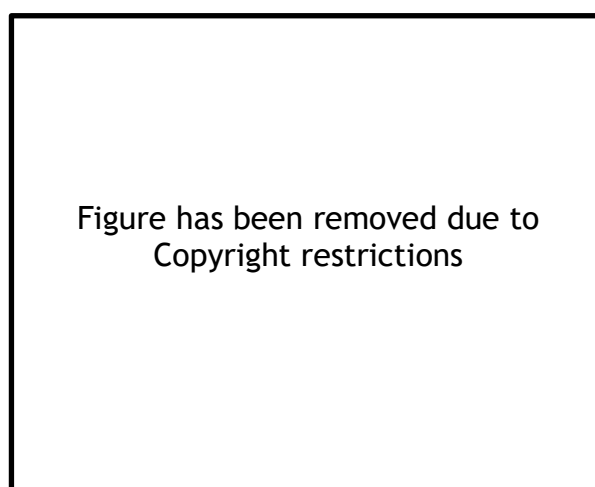


Figure 21 - *L’esquive* 01:15:27

Although one definition of ‘ho’ notes that from the 1950s US onward, this became ‘a generic term describing any woman,’ it later indicates that the term ‘is ostensibly neutral, but the undertones of its etymology still make it controversial.’⁶¹² Thus, the term does retain negative connotations. In the SLD, Fathi has used the word *pute*, which is a more *taboo* word than ‘ho’. This is compensated for in the subtitle with the word ‘shit’.¹ In the context and time

⁶¹² Green, p. 598.

frame within which these subtitles were produced, and knowing that the subtitler was unhappy with the outcome, it is hard to know how far these terms were selected by the subtitler, or changed post-submission.

In the questionnaire responses offered by subtitlers who have worked on films depicting the French *banlieue*, some of the translators suggested that they have been asked to subtitle into ‘mid-Atlantic English’.⁶¹³ This is a very interesting phenomenon, as it is usually expected that a translator work into their native language. The first issue here arises, then, when an attempt is made to define ‘mid-Atlantic’ English. Indeed, as Ian Burley noted:

As no one lives in the middle of the Atlantic, it's difficult to figure out what people would speak there! I've never once been asked to subtitle in so-called mid-Atlantic. Being of British origin, I subtitle into British English. Producers know that and if one of them does request American English, I suggest that they contact an American colleague.⁶¹⁴

There are a number of points here. Firstly, ‘Mid-Atlantic’ refers to ‘an accent with both British and North American characteristics’.⁶¹⁵ This actually seems to describe the approach which can be identified in the subtitles for *L'esquive*, where there are elements of both British English slang, such as ‘set my brother on you’ and the sequences featuring American slang which were examined earlier in this chapter. Thus, although there would appear to be some consistency in the use of American slang terms, there does not seem to be consistency in the overall dialect-for-dialect approach in terms of the continued use of one specific dialect. Nevertheless, the subtitler questionnaire responses indicated that ‘mid-Atlantic’ English is sometimes requested.⁶¹⁶ Therefore, an inconsistent dialect-for-dialect approach, using elements of both British and American English, can be part of the subtitler’s brief. Secondly, it appears that Burley was not asked to subtitle *L'esquive* into ‘mid-Atlantic’ English, and would have taken on the job with the intention of writing a British English translation. Nevertheless, nowadays, subtitling is a collaborative process, and the subtitler does not always have the

⁶¹³ Masters; Miller.

⁶¹⁴ Burley, ‘Follow-up Questionnaire Response’.

⁶¹⁵ ‘Oxford English Dictionary Online’.

⁶¹⁶ This was the case to some extent for Masters; Miller.

final word on some decisions. It is unclear how far the Americanisms identified in *L'esquive* are down to the subtitler's decisions, or suggestions/changes made by the other people involved in the subtitling process.

As I have suggested above, certain shared features can be found in both the French *banlieue* subculture and the American 'ghetto' culture. Indeed, comparisons are often drawn between them.⁶¹⁷ The similarities identified are normally to do with aspects of popular culture, such as dress, and music, and since these do feature heavily in *banlieue* film, the combination of these visual elements with the use of an AAVE dialect in the subtitles could give an 'American' veneer to the films, particularly in scenes featuring a lot of AAVE in the subtitles. However, although there are influences from US popular culture which have travelled to France and been adapted and adopted by the *banlieusards*, Wacquant has argued that the French *banlieues* and the US ghetto are very different phenomena.⁶¹⁸ Even where elements of popular culture are concerned, such as hip hop dance styles, McCarren has found that 'In France, le hip hop... refers to US culture without reproducing it in any simple way.'⁶¹⁹ She goes on to explain that for 'French hip hoppers... it is less the American or global circulation of hip hop that is at stake for them and more the specificity of French histories of immigration and assimilation.'⁶²⁰ Thus, even if this popular culture tradition was originally adopted from America, it is now about the specificity of the French situation. Wacquant's study leads him to the conclusion that while 'the popular banlieues of France are fundamentally pluri-ethnic zones where a multiplicity of nationalities rub elbows - resulting in well-documented frictions - the US ghetto is totally homogeneous in ethnoracial terms.'⁶²¹ This was highlighted earlier as one of the key differences between the two contexts.

This aspect of the *banlieue* subculture can be found throughout the films, not only in terms of the characters featured in the films, but also where language is

⁶¹⁷ Jäckel, p. 228; Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', pp. 49–50.

⁶¹⁸ Loic J. D. Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).

⁶¹⁹ Felicia M. McCarren, *French Moves: The Cultural Politics of Le Hip Hop*, Book, Whole (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. xvi.

⁶²⁰ McCarren, p. xxiv.

⁶²¹ Wacquant, p. 152.

concerned. In Chapter Five, examples of references to race and religion were examined which would be incongruous with US ghetto culture.⁶²² Thus, false semiotic cohesion in the case of *banlieue* cinema and AAVE subtitles could result in films which potentially work against the directors' intentions of showing the reality of life in the *banlieue*. Such an approach in the subtitling of *banlieue* film has the potential to contribute to American cultural hegemony by allowing viewers to access the 'foreign' through a lens of the familiar - albeit with the source text and SLD still available for consultation. Wacquant notes aspects of the two contexts which are perceived as similar but in reality differ a great deal. For example, in the *banlieues*, crime rarely results in death, he notes, but 'in the American ghetto, physical violence is a palpable reality that overturns all the parameters of ordinary existence.'⁶²³ Therefore, suggesting the two are more similar than they are could contribute to negative discourses surrounding both contexts. Given the extent to which these films are conceived by the directors as a response to the stigmatisation of the *banlieue*, the subtitles in question could evoke thoughts of a completely different situation, and could therefore, to some extent, undermine the politicised nature of the works. The negative media representations of both the *banlieue* and the US ghetto constitute, perhaps, the primary similarity between them. This would suggest that if directors are aiming to highlight the specificity of the *banlieue* situation, then the subtitling of the films using dialect-for-dialect replacement could result in films which contribute to the homogenising cultural discourse suggesting that disadvantaged urban populations are the same the world over.

In discussions of the translation of non-standard language, 'loss' in translation is often foregrounded. In the sequence from *L'esquive* featuring Fathi and Frida considered above, the approach taken appears to be in line with Gilbert Fong's description of 'naturalisation', which 'takes the film world to the audience' by adapting it to the TA's sphere of cultural reference, and is, he suggests, more similar to a strategy of domestication.⁶²⁴ The strategy of domesticating for a US Anglophone viewer might be understandable given the comparable audience sizes in the US and UK. Fong names two other possible approaches to subtitling,

⁶²² See, for example the discussion of the subtitling of the term *noich*.

⁶²³ Wacquant, p. 157.

⁶²⁴ Fong, p. 101. This was also suggested by Mével, 'The Translation of Identity'.

‘foreignization’, and ‘neutralisation’.⁶²⁵ Some scholars suggest that subtitling of audiovisual content featuring slang and non-standard language is often undertaken using the ‘neutralisation’ approach, which ‘attempts to take away the local colour and references, emphasising the universality of characters, setting and situation.’⁶²⁶ Hamaidia, in her case study of *La haine*, talks of ‘loss of depth in the characterization’, and Montgomery of ‘textual violence that silences the noise of the *téci*’.⁶²⁷ However, it might be more useful to think in terms of a ‘shift’ in translation, rather than ‘loss’ - particularly in the case of subtitling where the translation is added to the source text and it is, therefore, difficult to speak of ‘removing’ anything from the text in this mode of translation. Indeed, as was established in Chapter One, the additive nature of subtitling means that the TA always has access to the SLD, and nothing is removed in translation. The difference has to do with the viewer’s understanding of the film, which will differ from viewer to viewer, even when they are accessing the same content. Further, many of the approaches identified in the subtitled case study films could serve to indicate to the viewer the non-standard variety of language spoken by the characters. Indeed, when we are dealing with an ‘untranslatable’ sociolect, it might be suggested that this is the most that can be achieved.

Carbonell i Cortés’ assessment of potential strategies for translating the Other could be useful here. Carbonell i Cortés identifies four main strategies which are employed in translations of ‘otherness’: ‘identification’, ‘othering’, ‘familiarization’ and ‘foreignization’.⁶²⁸ ‘Familiarisation’ is similar to a strategy of domestication, ‘adapting the other’s discourse yet postponing an identification with it’, and ‘foreignization’ is described as a strategy which often ‘confirms common stereotypes in the culture of destination’. Although from the perspective of an American English viewer, it has been suggested that the strategies employed here could be described as domestication, or ‘familiarisation’, it might also be suggested that the use of AAVE as a replacement for the *langage de banlieue* is a strategy of ‘foreignization’ for a British English viewer (and a British subtitler).

⁶²⁵ Fong, p. 101.

⁶²⁶ Fong, p. 101.

⁶²⁷ Hamaidia, p. 7; Montgomery, p. 9.

⁶²⁸ Ovidi Carbonell i Cortés, ‘Can the Other Speak? Metonymic (Re)Creations of the Other in Translation’, in *Writing Back in/and Translation*, ed. by Raoul J. Granqvist (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2006), pp. 55–74 (p. 61).

According to Carbonell i Cortés, such a strategy ‘uses foreign-marked traits to establish the text as a prototypical other’.⁶²⁹ Although American street slang is a variety of English, it is still an unfamiliar variety in a British context, particularly where certain examples of slang are concerned - see, for example the use of ‘ho’ and ‘homey’ discussed earlier in this chapter. Thus, this would reinforce my assertion regarding false semiotic cohesion. Carbonell i Cortés notes the significance of translation as ‘a social action... which implies a degree of change in the perception of the translated culture’.⁶³⁰ He points out that through this social action, the translator (and collaborators) has the power to either reinforce or challenge stereotypes. An exoticising translation strategy of dialect-for-dialect replacement in the case of subtitling *banlieue* film into English does not challenge dominant discourses of ‘othering’ those who already live on the margins of society. Instead, such a strategy has the danger of contributing to a homogenizing cultural discourse concerning ‘the other’, where there is no attempt to understand communities in contexts such as the *banlieue*, rather they are all placed together in the category of ‘other’, with little attention paid to the specificities of their situations. Thus, the use of a ‘dialect-for-dialect’ replacement strategy to translate the sociolect in *banlieue* films does not appear to translate the identity of the characters in terms of their belonging to the *banlieue* subculture, the social context in which they live, and their sense of exclusion from, or ‘non-belonging’ to mainstream society.

Conclusions

The three case study films demonstrated a number of challenges to the subtitler and these have been dealt with differently in each film. In Chapter Five, many of the examples drawn from *La squale* and *L’esquive* featured AAVE terms as a translation for the *argot* and *verlan* in the *langage de banlieue*. Thus, this chapter included a discussion of the use of AAVE in a dialect-for-dialect approach. There were some sequences in *La squale* and *L’esquive* which clearly supported Mével’s earlier assertions that the use of this strategy in the English subtitles for *La haine* led to a displacement of the identity of the characters.⁶³¹ Although AAVE has been

⁶²⁹ Carbonell i Cortés, p. 62.

⁶³⁰ Carbonell i Cortés, p. 62.

⁶³¹ Mével, ‘The Translation of Identity’, p. 49.

described as a suitable translation for the *langage de banlieue* due to cultural similarities between the *banlieue* subculture and American street culture,⁶³² it has here been established that these similarities may be a reason *not* to use AAVE in the English subtitles for French *banlieue* film. In fact, the combination of semiotic channels including cultural elements visible on screen, such as dress and cultural references, along with the scenery which sometimes bears a striking resemblance to the American projects, along with subtitles which have a distinctly American feel to them can result in false semiotic cohesion. False semiotic cohesion in the case of French *banlieue* cinema could result in a film which works against the director's original intentions. That is to say, where a director set out to represent life in the *banlieue*, and demonstrate the cultural specificity of the situation through portraying a set of characters with their own dreams and ambitions, in order to counteract negative media discourses concerning the *banlieues*, false semiotic cohesion can lead to a subtitled film which could be seen to contribute to a homogenising cultural discourse, suggesting that marginalised and/or underprivileged populations in different contexts can all be placed together in the category of 'other'. It would seem that the use of lexicon to reflect a less formal register in the translation demonstrates that the characters are comfortable with their peers, and that they do not speak in standard French. On the other hand, as Mével highlighted, 'a dialect-for-dialect approach appears rather ambitious, because it presupposes not only linguistic, but also cultural... equivalences.'⁶³³ In the case of *banlieue* cinema, then, the use of AAVE in a dialect-for-dialect approach could be seen to erase the cultural difference which the directors of the films, and the speakers of the *langage de banlieue* are trying to highlight.

La squale *L'esquive* Where the translation of register shifts is concerned, close analysis of the scenes reveals some subtleties in conversations which may not always be evident in the subtitled versions. For instance, where the characters in *La squale* adapt their language use to the new environment of Paris, the subtitles feature more swearing than the SLD before the situation escalates and the young women begin to insult the sales assistants. This is also the case in the scene of altercation with the police in *L'esquive*, where the viewer may not see the injustice of the police's treatment of the youths. This scene was highlighted in

⁶³² Jäckel, p. 234.

⁶³³ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 56.

Chapter Four, as a clear example of the politicised nature of *banlieue* film - upon viewing this part of the film, some youths living in the *cit * stated that this was in fact the way police checks happened in the *banlieues*. This is therefore an important part of the film for Kechiche, and for those who live in the *banlieue*, as a way to show the outside world how unfairly they are treated by figures of authority. This is particularly relevant considering the many issues between the police and the *banlieusards* which were discussed in Chapter Four as forming the wider context for the release of, and sometimes inspiration for making these films.

In *Divines*, the example of Dounia speaking with the Imam suggested a slightly higher register, as did the subtitles for the end of the film, where Dounia pleads with the firemen to help Maimouna. However, the subtitles for *Divines* seem to feature less slang more generally and thus the same degree of shift may occur in all three films, but with a different point of departure. What did become clear in the analysis is that when taking the rest of the polysemiotic network into account, the viewer has access to other information which assists in determining the register of the interaction. Indeed, although the field or topic of conversation is primarily conveyed through the verbal visual channel, the viewer often gets more information about the tenor and mode from elsewhere. Previous events in the film probably tell the viewer most about the relationships between the characters, but with new characters, the nonverbal-visual channel reveals age and wealth/occupation (through dress) and perhaps status or relationship through body language. Therefore, although the subtitles could perhaps reflect register shifts more clearly, an analysis of the subtitles in-context suggests that this may not be to the detriment of some aspects of characterisation in the films studied. Further, the strategy adopted in *L'esquive* of using non-standard spelling through dropping the 'g' at the end of many words functions as a clear signal of register shifts in the film.

Given the significance of the purpose of the films and/or the directors' intentions working to counteract negative media discourses, skopos theory is apposite to the discussion of the translation of language related to the themes in the films and the need for the subtitles to convey the intended effect to the target audience. The findings varied for each of the films in this respect. The subtitled version of *La squalle*, although featuring negative and graphic language to and about women, did not always replicate the force of the SLD in terms of the linguistic violence

which accompanied the physical violence in the film. Although the subtitled version did clearly demonstrate that women are poorly treated in the *banlieue*, the extent of this treatment would not necessarily be evident to a non-French speaking viewer through the translation alone. Therefore, in the subtitled version, the linguistic aspect of the film perhaps plays less of a role in the presentation of messages concerning the treatment of women in the *banlieue* than in the original. Genestal's primary goal in making the film was to shed light on the treatment of women in the *banlieues*. The film's discussion in scholarly articles concerned with sexual violence in France indicates that it was responsible for initiating public discussion on the topic.⁶³⁴ The translation of these aspects of the dialogue is therefore important where the politicised nature of the film is concerned. This could be an argument for the subtitler to consider the macro-context when working with *banlieue* film, as analysis such as that undertaken in Chapter Four may encourage a prioritisation of these elements of the dialogue in translation.

The theme of identity in *L'esquive* was linked to the earlier discussion of strategies for subtitling the specific features of the *langage de banlieue*, and it was established that although there are some scenes in which false semiotic cohesion might occur, the translation of register and of the characters' specific manner of speaking is largely approached through a combination of lexical choices and non-standard spelling. However, on some occasions, this was done even where a change in topic led to a slightly higher register in the conversation. Given the clear visual shifts accompanying these linguistic shifts in the film, though, the significance of register shifts is still apparent in the subtitled version. .

Some of the themes presented in *Divines* are manifested through the content of the dialogue, but others through the form. For example, the theme of feminism was present in the characterisation of Rebecca and through some of the conversations she had with other characters. However, the theme of religion was closely linked with the language spoken (i.e. Arabic), and also through music. Generally, the subtitles seem to reflect Rebecca's opinions on success, money and women, and other aspects of her characterisation such as dress and mannerisms are still evident to the viewer of the subtitled film, but multilingualism in *Divines* is closely linked to the theme of religion, and codeswitching is not always clearly

⁶³⁴ As in Hamel; Cosquer.

indicated in the subtitles. On the other hand, it was noted that certain phrases were included in Arabic in the subtitles, and these could serve to alert the viewer to the multilingual nature of the ensuing conversation. Therefore, the multicultural, multilingual nature of Dounia's family life is presented both in subtitles and soundtrack. However, it is not clear how far a non-French speaking hearing viewer would notice when the characters are speaking in French, and when they are speaking in Arabic. In order to assess this, empirical research would be required. It is therefore unclear how present the theme of religion and the divine would be to a non-French speaking viewer of the subtitled film, but the English subtitles could enhance its transmission. For instance, in the intralingual subtitles for the film, changes in language are indicated to the viewer.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis set out to analyse the subtitling of French *banlieue* cinema into English, with particular reference to the social situation of the *banlieusards*, their language and identity, and its representation on screen and in translation. Although researchers have highlighted some of the challenges presented to the subtitler by these films, there was a need for further study in this area in order to examine a broader range of films and the issues they present, as well as studying the subtitled films in context. Although existing research *did* examine the films in relation to their political nature, this focussed on the *langage de banlieue* as a form of political resistance, and did not include a study of the paratexts, to ascertain specific socio-political messages presented in the marketing of the films or in director interviews. This thesis has taken a more holistic, integrated approach to the study of subtitled *banlieue* films, in order to examine thematic issues in addition to the specific challenges presented by the subtitling of an ‘untranslatable’ sociolect.⁶³⁵ Furthermore, unlike a lot of published case studies of interlingually subtitled films, the scope of a PhD research project allowed for the study of three subtitled films in their entirety, taking into account the polysemiotic network and all subtitles, rather than focussing on one or two extracts. This analysis was supported by an understanding of the professional subtitling context in which the films were translated, thus bridging the gap between industry and academia, and seeking to account for the collaborative nature of translation in the current industry.

The methodology developed in this thesis presents a new, integrated approach to the study of subtitled films. This approach draws on the various existing methodologies applied in current work on interlingual subtitling. In this thesis, *subtitled films* were studied, rather than subtitles, as subtitles are not designed to be consumed without the accompanying audiovisual material. Studying subtitled films in this way allowed for an examination of the meaning-making contribution of other information in the polysemiotic network. Furthermore, the significance of the conditions in which subtitlers produce their work cannot be denied in terms of its impact on the resulting translation.⁶³⁶ It is also fruitful to

⁶³⁵ Jäckel, p. 226.

⁶³⁶ Abdallah, ‘Quality Problems in AVT Production Networks’.

acknowledge the collaborative nature of translation; there are many people involved in the process of translation, before the product is finalised. Subtitlers were an important part of this research project, which sought to counteract the invisibility of the translators through their inclusion in the research process. This resulted in the identification of key areas of contention in the subtitling of *banlieue* film as highlighted by the professionals undertaking this work. Furthermore, it allowed for a more measured assessment of the subtitles, carried out with an understanding of the conditions in which they were devised.

The subtitler interviews undertaken as part of this research project revealed that the experience of subtitlers working on *banlieue* film can vary greatly, even for one subtitler. There does seem to be a small pool of subtitlers working on the majority of *banlieue* film releases, and many of them have the kind of connections that mean they no longer bid for work. When the working conditions of these subtitlers are compared with Kuo's findings concerning the professional subtitling environment more globally, it can be established that these conditions are much better than some.⁶³⁷ However, there could still be room for improvement. Interestingly, it was found that in the majority of cases, the subtitlers interviewed would not do their own spotting, for a variety of reasons.⁶³⁸ This means that the results of the technical analysis do not necessarily reveal much about the *subtitlers'* work. However, in many cases the subtitlers do benefit from contact with the producer/director, and such contact is not discussed in much work on professional subtitling, which would suggest the practice is much more common in the English subtitling of *banlieue* film than in other areas. It was also revealed that with such support, subtitlers feel they can do a much better job than when they are cut off from the director.⁶³⁹

The analysis of the paratexts surrounding the release of the films allowed for the identification of key themes in the three case study films, as well as an understanding of the directors' intentions when making them. In addition to a focus on identity and exclusion which can be seen as a primary feature of all *banlieue* cinema, gender was also found to be a prominent theme in all three

⁶³⁷ Szu-Yu Kuo.

⁶³⁸ For more on this, see 'The Professional Environment' in Chapter Three.

⁶³⁹ This point refers to Ian Burley's contrasting experiences with *L'esquive* and *Entre les murs*.

films, with *La squale* being made in order to shed light on the situation of women in France's *banlieues*. This was highlighted by the director as his main intention for the film; to focus on those who are marginalised within the *banlieue* subculture. Thus, the translation of language related to the status and treatment of women in all three films was studied closely. It was found that the subtitled version of *La squale* did not present the linguistic aspects of the poor treatment of women as explicitly to a non-French speaking viewer. In some cases, extremely graphic and violent language was not rendered as forcefully in English. However, the physical violence towards women is still presented through the other channels of the polysemiotic network, and the viewer is able to gain an understanding of the way men treat women in the *banlieue* depicted in Genestal's film. Certain linguistic subtleties of the attitudes demonstrated by women in the film were not always rendered in translation. There are a number of points in the film where women are disrespectful about other women, in some cases even suggesting that when a young woman is raped, this is in part her own fault (see, for example, subtitle 0853 from *La squale*, which was discussed in Chapter Six). Although it is clear in the subtitles, then, that male attitudes towards women are disrespectful and harmful to their development, the ingrained nature of such views as they are put forward in these representations of the *banlieue* is not always clear to the viewer of the English-subtitled film. In the case of *La squale*, where the film opened public debate on the topic of sexual violence in France, the shocking nature of the linguistic practices (and world views) presented in the film could be more explicit in translation.

In terms of gender in *L'esquive* and *Divines*, there were sequences of dialogue related to these issues, demonstrating attitudes towards women conveyed through derogatory language used by both male and female characters, and also reflecting the importance of masculine linguistic habits in relation to power and status within the *banlieue* community. Indeed, Lepoutre and Fagyal noted the importance of volume and speed of speech in relation to status in their ethnographic studies of *banlieue* life and language, and this contributes to the realist nature of the films studied.⁶⁴⁰ In examples studied from the subtitled version of *L'esquive*, it seemed that the force of women's negative discourse concerning other women was replicated in the subtitled version. For example, Frida's frustration with Lydia as

⁶⁴⁰ Fagyal, p. 172; Lepoutre, p. 167.

discussed in Chapter Six, is rendered as forcefully, and with as much taboo language in translation as in the SLD. *Divines* has been described as a feminist film, as it foregrounds female characters in the *banlieue*, and demonstrates the reversal of traditional gender roles. One significant aspect of this which is represented linguistically is the dialogue of Rebecca, the gang leader. She adopts a discourse traditionally associated with masculinity, suggesting that women can be used for her financial gain. The subtitling of Rebecca's speech, combined with her body language and tone of voice, does seem to present the (traditionally) masculine nature of her power and status.

In terms of the theme of identity, the very presence of the *langage de banlieue* as a marker of identity gives prominence to this theme in all three films. Some strategies identified were very effective in the translation of some aspects of characterisation, such as the attitudes, or very informal speech of some characters. In *L'esquive*, one way in which this was conveyed was through the dropping of 'gs' at the end of certain words, as discussed in Chapter Five. This approach, adopted by Ian Burley, contributed to the rendering of register shifts in translation, as it allowed for a demarcation between the *langage de banlieue* and the formal *Marivaux* French spoken by the youths when rehearsing the play. Combined with the other strands of the polysemiotic network, the register shifts and their implications for the plot were very clearly signalled in the subtitled film. On some occasions, this strategy was adopted where the characters were not using a significant amount of slang words, and this seemed to result in a shift whereby some of the subtle differences in the way some characters communicated were not completely evident to the non-French speaking anglophone viewer. One example of this was the scene in which Magali and Krimeo are discussing their relationship near the beginning of the film. At this point, the serious topic of their conversation means that Magali does not use a lot of slang when discussing this with Krimeo, but the subtitles present similar linguistic habits to those of other characters, and of Magali when having different conversations. Given Halliday's theory of field, tenor and mode, it was suggested that where register shifts are not evident in the subtitles, a viewer may not always be aware of certain dynamics between characters, or their feelings about a particular topic. Nevertheless, it was also noted that in some cases, the viewer may still receive the same information as a native French-speaker, as they still have access to the characters'

tone of voice and body language, which can also convey information about a character's feelings, or the relationship between two or more participants in a conversation.

The translation of identity overall is also linked to the other strategies employed in the translation of the *langage de banlieue*, which were discussed in terms of approaches to *verlan* and other slang terms, culture-specific references, swearing and loanwords. One of the primary strategies identified for translating *verlan* and other slang used by the characters was through lexical choices in the subtitles. Thus, certain English slang terms were adopted in the subtitles in order to reflect a character's use of the *langage de banlieue*. In some cases, this was achieved through a strategy of compensation, where a slang term was adopted for one word in a subtitle, but not necessarily for the corresponding slang word in the SLD. However, although overall it seemed that this strategy allowed for the rendering of the informal nature of characters' speech in the subtitles, it did not indicate the presence of the *banlieue* sociolect specifically in the films, and in particular the linguistic protest constituted by *verlan*, for example. Indeed, there is no equivalent of this kind of slang, but even if there were, it is not clear whether this would be appropriate. Certainly, this thesis has established that a dialect-for-dialect strategy as adopted in the subtitling of some *banlieue* films can prove problematic. The strategies used to signal the informal nature of the characters' speech in these three films indicate that there are some means of translating this 'untranslatable' sociolect, and do allow the viewer access to a significant portion of the *banlieue* subculture.

Mével had already highlighted the issues presented by the use of AAVE in a dialect-for-dialect replacement strategy where the subtitling of *La haine* is concerned, noting that such a strategy could result in a 'displacement of the action' where the film could be set in another time and/or place.⁶⁴¹ Interestingly, of the films studied for this research project, *La squale* featured the most AAVE, with the subtitles for *L'esquive* also presenting some AAVE slang terms. No specifically AAVE terms were identified in the subtitles for *Divines*. This could demonstrate a diachronic evolution of approaches to subtitling the sociolect, or it could be due to the fact that *Divines* was subtitled for Netflix, which perhaps offers a different

⁶⁴¹ Mével, 'The Translation of Identity', p. 53.

brief where subtitling into English is concerned. More study would be required on this subject, involving an examination of a larger corpus including more films from the time period, in order to ascertain whether there has been a change in the application of a dialect-for-dialect approach in the subtitling of *banlieue* film over this time period.

Some subtitlers interviewed for this research project noted that they were often asked to translate into 'Mid-Atlantic' English, regardless of the Anglophone country in which they learned English. However, Ian Burley, the subtitler for *L'esquive* noted that he refuses to subtitle into Mid-Atlantic English.⁶⁴² We also know that he removed his name from this project as he was unhappy with the results, and it is therefore unclear how far his work was altered post-submission. In the cases examined in this thesis, it was found that a dialect-for-dialect approach can result in a displacement of the action, and false semiotic cohesion was posited as the effect produced when the strands of the polysemiotic network function together to give the illusion of cohesion, where the viewer supplements the information available in the polysemiotic network with their own knowledge and experience of the world. In some of the films examined in this thesis (particularly in *La squale*, but also to some degree in *L'esquive*), the variety of language presented in the subtitles, and some aspects of the visual non-verbal channel such as dress, cultural artefacts and scenery together could contribute to a displacement of the identity of the characters presented on screen. In the case of *banlieue* cinema, given the cultural similarities between the French *banlieue* and US street culture, the use of AAVE in the subtitles could result in false semiotic cohesion in certain scenes, due to the aesthetic similarities between the scenery, clothing and music between the two contexts. Nevertheless, the viewer is continuously exposed to the original soundtrack, and thus can always hear the French language.

Doran notes that some aspects of the *langage de banlieue*, such as the reappropriation and reformulation of terms used in reference to race and identity, allow for the youths to express their own reality and identity, and work against homogenising cultural discourses.⁶⁴³ However, I would suggest that subtitling

⁶⁴² Burley, 'Follow-up Questionnaire Response'.

⁶⁴³ Doran, p. 501.

banlieue cinema using an AAVE dialect could counteract the socio-political messages presented by directors of the films, as this strategy does not fully indicate the specificity of the *banlieue* situation in terms of the variety of languages and cultures in contact, and their linguistic rebellion against mainstream society. Where the translation of dialect is concerned, translators can sometimes adopt a TL dialect with similar connotations in order to convey the humour of the SLD, for example.

Given the significance of the *langage de banlieue* as a marker of identity and an expression of linguistic process against mainstream French society, the subtitling of this sociolect can present great challenges to the transmission of the socio-political messages of the original. Although the visuals and soundtracks do still offer representations of marginalised communities, and the subtitles include signals to the viewer, such as non-standard spelling and slang terms, to indicate that the characters are speaking in a certain way, certain aspects of their identity and language are not always discernable in the subtitled versions. One striking example of this is related to the linguistic and cultural hybridity experienced by many inhabitants of the *banlieue*. This can be presented linguistically through multilingualism in the films, or through the use of loanwords. In some cases, such as Lydia's use of *Inch'Allah* in *L'esquive*, and some of Dounia's phrases in *Divines*, the other language (Arabic, in these examples) is included in the subtitles. This can often be understood by the viewer given the context provided by the polysemiotic network, and offers some exposure to additional languages and cultures which influence *banlieue* culture and the characters represented on screen. In a few cases (in some scenes in *Divines*, for example), all dialogue is subtitled into English, with no indication of the multilingual nature of the SLD in the scene in question. It could be that the viewer can hear the multilingual nature of the dialogue. However, this would need to be tested through audience reception research, to ascertain whether the subtitles and SLD offer enough information for the viewer to develop a full understanding of the cultural make-up of some families represented in *banlieue* film. The practice of including some loanwords from Arabic in the subtitles, where the meaning is clear from the context, is one strategy which does help to highlight the multilingual and multicultural heritage of the characters.

Since the skopos of subtitles is to work in the intended way for the intended audience, the question of varieties of English is particularly interesting here. There were some examples of AAVE employed in the subtitles for *La squale* and *L'esquive* which could confuse a British English viewer, at least some of the more dated expressions might stand out. It might be suggested that these could affect the readability of the subtitles, given that the viewer may need extra time to consider certain phrases. Once again, it was not possible to fully assess readability within the scope of this thesis, but research could be done into the readability of different varieties of English for Anglophone viewers. On the other hand, the presence of unusual language in the subtitled film could be said to provoke a similar reaction to that of French speakers when faced with the *langage de banlieue*, which is unfamiliar to many native speakers.

The holistic methodology applied in this thesis involved analysing the subtitles from a technical perspective. In the three sets of subtitles studied, there were no serious technical issues which may have caused great concern, such as extremely long subtitles or repeatedly high reading speeds, although there were one or two subtitles with excessively high or low reading speeds. This raised the question of whether such jumps in reading speeds, or irregular reading rhythms would cause a problem for the viewer. Within the scope of this research project, it was not possible to ascertain whether these disparities in reading speed would have consequences for the viewer in terms of comfort, or the absorption of information from the subtitles. It would be interesting to find out more about how far such variations in reading speed in consecutive subtitles would have an impact on the viewer's experience and reception of them.

One of the challenges presented by this ambitious methodology was the difficulty in drawing the various stages of analysis together into a coherent whole. Without a significant film studies component, the analysis of socio-political messages and themes presented in the films was carried out largely through paratextual analysis. The way in which meaning is produced could be further examined in these films, by studying the polysemiotic network in more detail in relation to its interaction with the subtitles. In addition, although themes and messages were identified through paratextual analysis, integrating those findings with close subtitle analysis around these issues proved challenging, and this suggests that the methodology developed for this research project could be further refined. The

study of translated *banlieue* films as political contributions could be furthered through comparative audience reception studies which examine the socio-political messages perceived by a native French viewer, and those perceived by an Anglophone viewer.

The dialect-for-dialect approach identified in *La haine* and here in *La squale* and *L'esquive* could serve to counteract the messages of resistance and rich cultural representation of the *banlieues* presented by the directors of the films. The use of AAVE in the case of *banlieue* film can sometimes lead to sequences of false semiotic cohesion, where the elements within the polysemiotic network function together to evoke thoughts of a completely different socio-political context. In the case of *banlieue* film, this is as a result of cultural and aesthetic similarities between the *banlieue* subculture and American street culture. Thus, some subtitles for *banlieue* film could be seen as contributing to a homogenising cultural discourse, where marginalised communities in completely different contexts, with different cultural make-up and history, are placed together in one category of 'other'. This does not present the hybridity of identity of many members of the *banlieue* community as reflected in their linguistic choices.

This study has examined the subtitling of three *banlieue* films released across a period of 16 years, and as such has built upon an existing small body of research into the subtitling of the *banlieue* sociolect. The methodology applied here allowed for an examination of the films in relation to the contexts of release and of reception, as well as the professional environment in which the subtitles were written. The analysis has revealed that although it is possible to use lexical choices to demonstrate an informal register employed by characters, the greatest challenge presented by the subtitling of the genre is representing the efficient and purposeful use of the *banlieue* sociolect by the characters presented on screen in the subtitled version. The resulting effect is that the subtitled versions of the films may not fully present all aspects of the political nature of the films as social commentaries on the lifestyle and social situation of the *banlieusards*. The risk of false semiotic cohesion and cultural homogenisation in the case of a dialect-for-sociolect approach where *banlieue* cinema is concerned highlights the challenges of translating the *langage de banlieue*, and here, translatability is returned to. Although the subtitlers of these films ultimately made them accessible to a non-French-speaking viewer, and even indicated the non-standard and, at times,

multilingual nature of the dialogue, there is an element of linguistic protest which cannot be rendered into English without recourse to linguistic practises of another culture. Indeed, the primary issue is that the *banlieue* sociolect is so rooted in its socio-cultural context, and the resistance and identity it marks, that standardising the linguistic variety in translation does not allow for the transfer of socio-political messages, but a dialect-for-dialect approach, this thesis has demonstrated, is not appropriate either. Thus, it can be confirmed that though these films *have been* translated, there is an aspect of the *langage de banlieue* which is, as Jäckel said, untranslatable.

Appendices

Information Sheet for Professional Subtitlers

Subtitling the Banlieue: Analysing and Establishing Strategies for the Subtitling of French Banlieue Cinema

About the Researcher

My name is Hannah Silvester. I am a PhD Candidate in Translation Studies at the University of Glasgow. Before beginning my PhD, I obtained a BA in French with Hispanic Studies, and an MA in Screen Translation at the University of Sheffield. I then worked for a year as a *lectrice d'anglais* at Aix-Marseille Université, and as a *hotesse d'accueil* at the *Festival d'Aix* during the summer.

I have always had an interest in French film, and became interested in subtitling early on in my University studies. I wrote my MA dissertation on subtitling banlieue film, and decided to continue this research at PhD level, with a view to proposing strategies for the subtitling into English of French banlieue film.

How do you fit in?

I would like to draw on your knowledge and experience, as a professional subtitler working in 'the real world' in order to propose subtitling strategies which are feasible given the conditions in which you work. I want to combine this with a number of case studies of English subtitles for banlieue film, and theory from Translation Studies and AVT, in order to develop a 'taxonomy of issues' presented by the subtitling of banlieue film, as well as a set of norms which appear to result in successful translation solutions. I would then propose a set of strategies, or a 'toolkit' which addresses the issues raised in the taxonomy, and includes those norms which seem to work well. The aim is for the toolkit to provide a set of strategies on which the subtitler may draw, in order to produce English subtitles which do not level out the *langage de banlieue* in the Source Language dialogue, and which manage to convey (to some extent) the socio-political messages presented within many banlieue films.

Your input would primarily be in the form of an email interview. However, any additional material you could provide would be most gratefully received, particularly in the form of notes relating to any projects you have been involved in, or any additional insight or information you can provide with regards the subtitling process. I would appreciate any involvement, however great or small, and if you feel you can only respond to part of the email interview, then please do so as partial responses will also be useful. Your responses will not be made anonymous, unless you explicitly ask me to do so. Any information I collect during this project will be stored on password protected devices. Please be aware that this material may be used in future research projects, and in publications, both in print and online.

If you have any questions at any stage, please feel free to get in touch with me at h.silvester.1@research.gla.ac.uk, or +44 (0) 7943875855. My supervisor is Dr Georgina Collins, Lecturer in Translation Studies: georgina.collins@glasgow.ac.uk.

Subtitler Questionnaire

Subtitling the *Banlieue*: Written Questionnaire for Professional Subtitlers

1. What is your background as a linguist and subtitler? (i.e. how many years of experience, qualifications, time spent in France, native language/languages)
2. How are you normally given subtitling work? Do you have to bid for jobs, or are you approached by an agency or the production company?
3. How many films have you subtitled, which you believe could be described as '*banlieue*' films? Please name them, if possible.
4. What information is included in your brief? Are you usually told whether to use British or American English, or advised on any other strategies?
5. What sort of time scale do you work on? How long do you have to subtitle a banlieue film? Roughly how many minutes can you subtitle a day? In an ideal world, would you be given more time to work on a film?
6. What would you say are the main difficulties of subtitling banlieue films?
7. Briefly describe the work flow you use. Is there anything you might suggest to improve this?
8. What sort of resources do you draw on? Do you use online slang dictionaries, for example, or have you developed your own extensive dictionary?
9. How do you keep up to date with developments in the language?
10. Do you ever use 'incorrect' syntax in a subtitle to reflect linguistic errors in the dialogue of the characters?
11. What would you say are the main 'strategies' you use to deal with subtitling the difficult language presented in banlieue films? If you had complete control over the final product, would your strategies be different?
12. In your experience, are your subtitles ever changed without consultation with you? What are your thoughts on this?

Any final comments you would like to make:

Follow-up Questions

1. Do you always work with a copy of the film, or are you ever asked to write subtitles for a film of which you only have the dialogue list?
2. Do you use subtitling software? If so, which one? Do you usually/sometimes/always/never do your own spotting?
3. Have you seen the 'Code of Good Subtitling Practice'¹ which is endorsed by ESIST?² Do you use this, or any other guidelines/codes in your subtitling work? If so, which ones?³
4. What reading speed do you generally aim for in your subtitles?
5. Do you stick to any maximum or minimum display times for your subtitles?
6. Many subtitlers have indicated that they are often asked to subtitle *banlieue* films into 'mid-atlantic English' – how do you feel about that?
7. Do you often attend a *simulation* with the director/producer, or does this only happen in some cases?
8. Thinking about the *banlieue* films you have worked on (or those featuring a lot of slang/youth language), would you say that the director/production company/whoever commissions the translation often has an understanding of/is sympathetic to the linguistic and cultural challenges presented by the subtitling of such films?
9. Where would you say your 'loyalty' lies when translating *banlieue* films? Are you aiming to be faithful to the director's message? To the requirements of the person commissioning the work? To the characters, the Target Audience, or to your own 'reading' of the film?

¹ The 'Code of Practice' can be viewed at:

http://www.esist.org/ESIST%20Subtitling%20code_files/Code%20of%20Good%20Subtitling%20Practice_en.pdf

² European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (<http://www.esist.org/Index.htm>)

³ I'd be really grateful if you could send me a copy of any codes/guides you do refer to.

Consent Form

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Glasgow, College of Arts Research Ethics Committee

I understand that Hannah Silvester
(name of researcher)

is collecting data in the form of
email interview responses

for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

Please see the attached information sheet.

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed by the contributor: _____ Date: _____

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