

Methods in the Movies: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the ‘Magic’ of Language Learning

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Abstract: The current paper examines 21st century preoccupations with representing language learning and teaching episodes on the silver screen, and specifically examines the languages, methods and approaches (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000) consistently being showcased on current Hollywood’s screens. Evidence from over 30 recent Oscar-winning and blockbuster titles demonstrates a systematic preference for traditional language teaching methods, in particular a romanticization of the defunct, memorization-based methods of Grammar Translation, and the drill-based methodologies endemic to Audiolingualism. Additionally, the results of these teaching methodologies are consistently presented as resulting in immediate, effortless and ‘flawless’ language learning on the part of on-screen language learners. Why this seeming fetish for traditional language teaching methods on the part of Hollywood? —the subject of scrutiny of the current paper. This paper argues that scenes of language teaching and learning on the silver screen far from being innocuous filmic inclusions, function within a broader sociolinguistic framework (Fairclough 1992)—one of global Englishization. In short, foreign language learning, and by extension English learning is presented as easy. It is argued that by trivializing the effort required to learn languages, it is easier to license global monolingualization in the face of competing multilingualism—for one can without much effort ‘easily’ master other tongues as showcased on the silver screen. In the market-driven industry of transnational cinema-making (Wasser, 2005), Hollywood functions as a powerful purveyor of linguistic desire. By both spotlighting episodes of foreign language learning as well as overtly inscribing cinematic injunctions to learn English, Hollywood effectively panders to global multilingual audiences while also packaging filmic content in a manner most conducive to English-language learning. Hollywood’s creations it is argued function within a larger sociolinguistic role namely, the advertising of the teaching and learning of English world wide.

Keywords: Language Teaching Methods; Global English; Film; Hollywood

Introduction: Statement of Argument

The consistent spotlighting of multifarious scenes of language learning in a spate of recent Hollywood films prompts a close analysis of the agenda underpinning these filmic inclusions. After all, nothing in filmmaking is accidental since every minute of every scene involves a painstaking process of cinematic production. In spite of the plethora of scenes encoding the learning of other languages however, this paper contends that foreign language learning is *not* the ultimate message of Hollywood in the 21st century, but rather, serves as a tempting conduit for English language learning. The global imperative to speak English often occurs in the form of singular, coercive imperatives for English fluency—Speak English! — often visualized against a semiotic backdrop of overt force as in for instance: *The Assassination of Jesse James; Lonely Hearts; Rush Hour I* and most recently, the Oscar winner, *The Hurt Locker* respectively. In all

these examples, the message is intimidatingly asserted—a gunpoint assertion as *mis-en-scene* to: “Speak English!”

The current paper argues that on Hollywood’s current silver screens, audience members subjected to foreign tongues are simultaneously, overtly and consistently also reminded to: “Speak English!”—an injunction for example uttered 12 times (once even in Spanish), in the Oscar winner, *Vicky, Christina, Barcelona*—a film which while highlighting Spanish-speaking performances meticulously manages to encode a message of English language fluency—a global imperative for English code-switching [pun intended], which includes from among a list the following:

- “Here, you have to speak English. Please!”
- “In English. In English. When you are here, you have to speak English, all right?”
- “She’s the woman I live with, and you have to speak English around here. Please.”
- “Please, Please, Here in this house, speak English. That’s all I ask. Alright?”
- “Speak English!”
- “In English!”
- “Please don’t get upset. Please, and can you speak English?”
- “Speak English”
- “Maria Elena, speak English!”

We see a similar directive meted out in another Oscar contender, *Once*, where a Czech-speaking immigrant implores her mother with: “Try to speak a little English, Mama!” This imperative to speak English is also juxtaposed alongside a semiotic allusion to the inherent ‘power’ accorded foreign-speakers of English which is sometimes overtly referenced in films. Consider for instance, the following chance dialog which occurs between George Hogg, and an orphan child in the biographically inspired film, *The Children of Huang Shi*—a film keen on showcasing several episodes of English learning on the part of rural Chinese children—several scenes of which abound in the film.

Hogg: How is it that you speak English? [Asks of an orphaned boy]

Boy: I’m not a peasant like these others. I am Lin Shi Kai. My father is a government official.

By spotlighting the seeming facility of language acquisition—even if it is foreign language learning—current films prompt audiences towards both a desire and eventual need for English language learning. Hollywood films in the era of globalization it is argued fulfill a dual role: They reflect foreign language learning encounters while at the same time conflate filmic content in a manner most conducive to the learning of one particular language—English. It is no wonder then that films are becoming a key element of the language learning class worldwide (Knee, 2002; Winke, Gass and Sydorenko, 2010). The eventual imperative even in scenes of language learning, is not gaining fluency in other languages, but rather, a push towards mastery of English. The current paper examines the manner in which such scenes of language learning exist alongside scenes embedding an agenda privileging the learning of English. After all, validation in the form of compliments for emerging skills in English occur in profusion in films so that in the film, *Under the Same Moon* the protagonist tells her son at the very same time that she informs the audience: “I speak good English now” while in the film, *War*, one of the characters is overtly complimented with: “Your English is improving”.

For skeptics who do not see language learning as lucrative enough to warrant the spotlighting recently seen on the silver screen, consider the careful chronicling of global linguistic trends by researchers such as Graddol (2007), a researcher of the British Council, a non-profit organization whose profiteering is based on global English sales (Phillipson, 2003). Keen on mapping the linguistic competition to English from other fronts, Graddol (2007) painstakingly cites a list of global linguistic rivals at various points in his most recent book. He carefully notes for example that: “Mandarin and Spanish are challenging English in some territories for educational resources and policy attention” (15), and argues that as outsourcing languages, “Japanese, Spanish, French and German are already growing” (15). He further comments that in the United States monolingualism seems to be on the decline because according to him “Hispanification is bringing new linguistic realities and expectations” (19), and even goes so far as to cite what he sees as ‘alarming’ trends in new technologies claiming that: “While English isn’t becoming any less important on the Internet, other languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese, are becoming comparatively more important” (44). For Anglophiles like Graddol (2007), the decline of English on the internet is on the rise, a fact fastidiously forestalled by him in the following fear-mongering terms—“What began as an Anglophone phenomenon has rapidly become a multilingual affair” (Graddol, 2007: 45) he cautions readers. For researchers such as him, this ‘troubling’ trend signals that “The economic dominance of western economies which has existed since the industrial revolution is coming to an end” (Graddol, 2007: 40).

Is it any wonder then that Hollywood will do its part in ensuring the linguistic dominance of English? As testament of the ubiquity of film globally, consider the following figures cited by Truchott (2002) who claims that: “The world market for cultural products is increasingly concentrated around Hollywood (50% of its revenue comes from abroad compared with scarcely 30% in 1980)” (18). The global thirst for language learning has been well chronicled (Rubdy and Saraceni, 2006). Stanley (2000) cites instances of free giveaways of *MovieTalk* in Italy “by tapping into Italians’ thirst to improve their English.” (4). So desperate is the world’s desire for English fluency in the view of Hollywood that countless scenes of English learning abound in recent films. In the film, *Cold Souls*, for example, so eager is a Russian woman, to improve her English that she is shown practicing from a tape in her car—a comedic scene which has her painstakingly repeating the following bizarre conflation of unrelated and discursively ‘useless’ English expressions as she drives her car on frigid frozen road in St Petersburg:

Tape: “The pleasure is mine”
Nina: The pleasure is mine. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “Could you measure me?”
Nina: Could you measure me. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “I part my hair on the left”
Nina: I part my hair on the left. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “Do I have appendicitis?”
Nina: Do I have appendicitis? [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “I am pregnant”
Nina: [looks sheepish, and does not repeat the expression]
Tape: “Take off your clothes.”

Nina: Take off your clothes. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “To the waist.”
Nina: To the waist [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “Yes, I am married.”
Nina: Yes, I am married. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “Flocculate.”
Nina: Flocculate. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]
Tape: “Peanut.”
Nina: Peanut. [Carefully practices the expression by repeating]

As further evidence, consider Taivalkoski-Shilov’s (2008) claim concerning the stringent linguistic controls currently exerted on translators in the Finnish, French and Russian renditions of the film *8 mile*—a biographical film about a global musical icon: Eminem—what she describes as external pressure to “keep some expressions in English” (250) in the dubbing/subtitling process. Consequently, it is no accident that the machinery of popular culture of which film is a key element includes episodes of language learning at the very same time that it carefully encodes filmic content pertaining to the prominence of English. Consider for example, the world’s most expensive, globally distributed film to date —*Avatar*— a film which seemingly innocuously spotlights the need to have a school to “teach English” to the Na’vi tribe of blue Pandorans, with comments such as “I *knew* this guy could speak English” levied out at a denizen of the forest people on the part of the protagonist, Jake. We see a similar declaration uttered at the outset of the action blockbuster *Hancock*, when a group of Tagalog speaking thugs magically begin to speak in English—a linguistic act prompting Hancock to jeer: “Oh, now you “Speaky Engly” huh? “Speaky Engly, now!”

Even in futuristic, 21st century productions like *Avatar* there is enough filmic evidence that the inhabitants of other planets, like the Pandorans need English in order to survive in a world dominated by what are referred to as the Sky People. The spatial metaphor of height for English speakers relative to the ground-level position of the Na’vi is anything but accidental. English, and not the artificial language of Na’vi has the ultimate power, and the film script is careful to point this out:

He looks up to see a FURY standing over him. A Fury who speaks English—accented, halting, angry English.

NEYTIRI: Don’t thank! You don’t thank for this! This is sad. Very sad, only.

JAKE: Okay, I’m sorry. Whatever I did—I’m sorry. She gestures at the bodies of the viperwolves.

NEYTIRI: All this is your fault! They did not need to die. (*Avatar*, 40)

We are reminded of Neytiri’s linguistic fluency in English encoded in the script in the following terms: “She pulls him upright. Shouts at him in English and Na’vi” (*Avatar*, 43). In line with this thematic agenda, audiences encounter several speakers of English among the Navi—a linguistic prowess unmatched at the other end. There are for example only two among the English-speaking sky people who seem to even want to learn Na’vi. Furthermore, episodes involving the learning of Na’vi are presented as tedious endeavors. Navi is carefully rendered as a language whose semantic system defies easy uptake—a linguistic system with an ‘exasperatingly’ different and difficult semantic coding—in short a different and ungraspable, Whorfian

worldview (Carroll, 1956). In the two scenes in which Jake is shown learning the language, the methodology is predictably Audiolingual (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

THIS THROWS US INTO A TEACHING MONTAGE:

JAKE AND NEYTIRI kneel together inside Hometree. Neytiri touches her lips with her fingertips.

JAKE: *Seyri*. [She touches her nose, her ears, her eyes in quick sequence].

JAKE: *Ontu, mikyun, nari*. (Avatar, 61)

Minutes later, the protagonist is shown engaged in more language practice—more frustrating learning, again carefully encoded in the film’s shooting script.

JAKE (V.O.): *Norm’s attitude has improved lately*. [NORM works with JAKE at the small table in the SHACK kitchen].

NORM: Thank you?

JAKE: *Ireiyo*. [Norm comically exaggerates the pronunciation].

NORM: *Irrrreiyo. Irrrreiyo*. You’ve gotta roll the R, r-r-r-oll it. [Norm makes Jake repeat the word, getting more frustrated].

JAKE (V.O.): *It’s good he’s back on board, but he thinks I’m a retard too*. (Avatar, 62)

The consequence for Jake, the protagonist of the film, is a firm and clear declaration that learning the artificial language of Na’vi was the least favorite of his activities. In his words: “The language is a bitch, but I figure it’s like field-stripping a weapon” (Avatar, 62). Jake openly sports a halting fluency in Na’vi, and on occasion flaunts this by asking for a translation during one of his most important speeches to the Pandorans. The message in this powerful 21st century Hollywood production is clear. Even in the fantastically futuristic science fiction world of tomorrow—even in a faraway planet of Blue Pandorans— fluency in English alone will get you by.

Of interest as well is an analysis of the pedagogical methods consistently displayed in the language learning spectacles recorded on the silver screen. Hollywood films, it is argued, consistently showcase a preference for traditional language learning methods over more current teaching pedagogies such as for example, *The Natural Method*, *The Lexical Method* or *Communicative Language Teaching* methodologies (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The current paper contends that screen-spotlighting of bilingual-based methods such as the now defunct method of *Grammar Translation* (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) assuages audience fears about first language loss, while at the same time satisfies mimetic phobias concerning the true complexity of language learning. Additionally, by spotlighting a bilingual learning process, visual English gets salient screen time alongside the language being ‘learned’—examples of which are analyzed below. It is further argued that the drills of *Audiolingualism*—another defunct but Hollywood revived and favored pedagogy—are cinematically spotlighted in movie after movie in a bid to subvert the true complexity of effort required in language learning (Brown, 2007). Consequently, by highlighting the communality of effort involved in language learning in and through the choral drills endemic to Audiolingualism, on the silver screen, language learning emerges as an effortless enterprise of rote memorization. In Hollywood, language learning is presented as a cheerful, solo or communal, choral linguistic act with immediate, potent linguistic results in terms of linguistic fluency. Furthermore, in Hollywood, language learning is instantaneous

rather than laborious—not the product of seven to twelve years of careful study and practice (Brown, 2007), but rather a mastery of magical fluency acquired within a few cinematic moments, and proudly showcased in a matter of a few scenes—a curious linguistic feat to which we now turn.

Film as a Language Teaching Tool: Reasons

The thirst for language learning, in particular English language learning on a global level has existed for over a decade (Rubdy and Saraceni, 2006). According to Graddol (2007) “More people than ever want to learn English” (10), and furthermore: “English learners are increasing in number and decreasing in age” (Graddol, 2007: 10). Is it any wonder then, that in the Academy-award nominated film, *In Bruges*, the protagonist is said to inquire after a stranger: “Do you speak English?” Unwilling to accept her response of “No” he testily rejoinders with: “Ah! Yes you do. Everybody does.” A look at the language learning figures in 5 countries in Europe within the past decade seems to confirm this hasty generalization.

1999 study by the European commission (Stanley, 2000: 4).

2005-2006 (Source: 2006 European Commission Study).

78% of Dutch speak English
77% Swedes speak English
41% Germans speak English
30% French speak English
28% Italians speak English

87% of Dutch speak English
89% of Swedes speak English
56% Germans speak English
36% in France speak English
29% Italians speak English

Almost reiterating these figures we have the following dialog about English fluency in the recent film, *Five Fingers*:

Agent: You know Martjin, you speak very, very good English.

Martjin: I'm Dutch. We all speak good English.

Agent: Yes, but yours is better than most.

Martjin: And so is yours.

Agent: Thank you. I studied in Nigeria.

The last line in the dialog is anything but accidental. Nigeria because of the preponderance of its Pidgin English speakers (Ihemere, 2006) is indeed ranked third in the world's listing of English language speakers after the U.S. and India. The role of film in sustaining the mimetic desire for English has been well recorded by Patrikis (2000) who astutely observes: “If the language being learned is English, whether American, British, or Australian, there are few cultural forms as widely shared by its users (or as readily available to students) as Hollywood films (54).

Reiterating the global evanescence of English— even in multilingual Europe we have the following dyad in the Oscar nominated film, *In Bruges*, in which an angst-ridden Ray engages in the following linguistic tirade.

Ray: What am I gonna do, Ken? What am I gonna do?

Ken: Just keep movin' Keep on movin' Try not to think about it. Learn a new language, may be?

Ray [Exasperated and sarcastic] Sure. I can hardly do English. That's one thing I like about Europe, though. You don't have to learn any of their languages.

In support of this claim consider Stanley's (2000) report of the following personal ad placed in an Italian newspaper by a reader called Lina who pines: "Desperately seeking videocassette of 'Sense and Sensibility' or other rigorously British films" (4). Why this popularity of English-based films one may ask? Could it be because "Film as a subject matter readily engages the students and is therefore conducive to learning" (Knee, 2002: 377). According to some, films, fill in for schema-deficits—films create realities, and as Knee (2002) observes, "Few students will have visited the United States, and the impressions that they have of it will have come, by and large, from film and television shows" (377). Reiterating the sentiment, Thomsen and Krewani (2005) conclude: "After all, even if we are critical we love Hollywood. We owe much of our interior landscapes to the visions, the characters and the stories [—and this paper contends, language] of that most characteristic ingredient of American culture" (8).

Over a decade ago, Stanley (2000) reported on the extensive use of popular culture such as film in Italy as a language teaching tool—a pedagogical tool which officials claimed: "allows people to be entertained while they learn." (4). Why this pedagogic use of Hollywood? Seferoglu (2008) provides a compelling case as to why. According to him, "Films present intrinsically motivating linguistic and extralinguistic input through a dynamic medium" (2), a postulation also reiterated by Knee (2002) who correctly asserts that "By virtue of their global dispersion and popularity, Hollywood films possess an exceptional status among American texts circulating overseas" (377). We see a metalinguistic signalization (Bleichenbacher, 2008) of the power of film in well known productions such as the Oscar nominated film, *Once* in which a group of young immigrants overtly dialog about the power of media in teaching them English—a dialog whose inclusion in the film suffices as enough advertisement for Hollywood—as a conduit for not just any language learning, but English learning:

Scene: [Neighbors pile into an apartment to watch the only television in the building, and then tell the protagonist of the film the following in halting, stilted English]

Men: *Fair City* we love. We learn English from *Fair City*. [They proceed to repeat the canned utterances] *Are you pregnant? How are you man?* [laugh] *What is the hurry?* [All laugh].

Is it surprising then that, "[The US] claimed 70% of the film market in Europe in 1996 ... and 83% in Latin America and 50% in Japan." (Truchott, 2002: 18)? Reiterating the role of film in prompting English language learning via the conduit of Television sitcoms Stanley (2000) writes: "Beverly Hills 90210, starring Jason Priestly, is being used to teach Italians how to speak English" (4). Not everyone believes that the place of Hollywood films remains secure however. Graddol (2007) is keen to report on what he sees as some 'troubling' trends:

There is also much evidence that cultural flows are no longer as unidirectional as they used to be. Only a few years ago it was assumed that the world's media and entertainment would continue to be filled with US-originated audio-visual material projecting American cultural values around the world. Already that phase of globalisation is fading. (112)

Citing trends in other popular culture arenas Graddol (2007) concludes: “Two trends are apparent in international news: more global channels in English and new rival channels in other world languages” (46), and then proceeds to cite the following ‘unnerving’ linguistic facts:

Even France’s new global channel, due by the end of 2006, will broadcast in both French and English, following the successful bilingual model of the German international channel, *Deutsche Welle*. And a new pan-African news channel – using French and English – is planned. (Graddol, 2007: 47)

Other world languages, such as Spanish, French and Arabic, are also being adopted by the new media. (Graddol, 2007: 48)

– Wu Chinese, of which Shanghainese is the main urban variety, is one of the largest 10 languages in the world. (Graddol, 2007: 55)

With such a meticulous tracking of linguistic trends, we can see why language learning forms an integral part of the scenes on the silver screen, and why these inclusions have to be viewed not as neutral, innocuous sightings, but rather as episodes underpinning a larger agenda of linguistic exportation—multilinguistic cooption for the purpose of English exportation— to be precise. After all, the economic benefits of English exportation are enormous. One figure is powerful enough: “The English language teaching sector directly earns nearly £1.3 billion for the UK in invisible exports and other education related exports earn up to £10 billion a year more” (Graddol, 2007: 4).

This may also explain to some extent the recent spate of scenes in Hollywood films which overtly trivialize the effort involved in foreign language learning. In the film, *Yes Man*, for instance, the protagonist’s trajectory [played by the talented Jim Carey] into language acquisition involves a move from a halting repetition of Korean phrases in one scene after he declares; “Yes I do want to learn Korean” to a later scene of magical fluency in Korean— rendered to audiences in a comical scene in which his companion is both baffled and impressed with his fluency in this foreign tongue—all carefully and strategically subtitled in English for the audience to read along.

[A disgruntled shop assistant refuses to explain the workings of a wedding game]

Carl: It’s okay. I’ll talk to her. [Switches to perfect, fluent Korean]. Miss, is there something wrong?

Assistant: [In Korean] Yes. There is something wrong. Here I am sitting here all day long watching others getting engaged and married over and over again. It’s just not fair. How about me?

Carl: [Nods in empathy—clearly showing his comprehension of the Korean dialog]

Assistant: How about Soo Mi? When will my time come?

Carl: [In perfect, fluent Korean] Ahhh... I hear you. Soon your time is gonna come. [His companion does a double take at his linguistic fluency]. Do

you see the lady who came with me? She's my best friend's fiancée and she reaaaaally [exaggerates the word in Korean] hates my guts.

Assistant: [laughs]

Carl: You'd really be hooking me up if you helped make this fun for her. Let's get on the same team here. What do you say, Soo Mi?

Assistant: [In English] Okay.

Carl: [In perfect, fluent Korean] Let's go!

So fluent is Carl in Korean that he even mutters in Korean to his monolingual friend in a moment of excitement and forgetfulness—an expression which he dutifully translates for her into English. In Hollywood languages are acquired magically.

DVD Media: Reviewing The Pedagogical Possibilities

Consider the open declaration uttered in the film *The Kite Runner* on the part of a key character who says: “I'm trying to learn English. It's such a tricky language.” Hollywood's dual role of both including scenes of language learning as well as packaging filmic content in a manner most conducive for linguistic uptake on the part of global viewers learning English needs to be further examined.

After all, an increasing trend in language learning classes has been the use of film for English language learning (Zoreda, 2005). Films have been used to “lessen the anxiety often felt in language learning contexts, by allowing students to lower their guards (or “affective filters”) and be more receptive to the target language” (Knee, 2001: 145). The utility of filmic content as a teaching tool in and of itself in the second language learning has been extensively chronicled by numerous researchers. Some see films as the best exemplars of “authentic material” (Seferoglu, 2008: 1), and report on extensive uses of films to ‘develop’ English skills in numerous areas such as:

- Awareness of cultural issues and cross-cultural comparisons
- Knowledge of how language is used in different contexts
- Speaking skills and pronunciation
- Listening skills
- Fluency
- Vocabulary (Seferoglu, 2008: 5)

In line with this function, films are increasing including linguistic trivia about the structure of the English language as in the following query from the thriller, *Zodiac*, where we are quizzed on an obscure feature of the English spelling system: Jake Gyllenhaal's character prompts his partner with: “What's the most common double consonant in the English Language?”

Others have chronicled the numerous ways in which films have been used as pedagogical tools to develop among a list of skills: fluency in ESL reading and writing skills and vocabulary development (Hoffner, Baker and Quinn, 2008); “Intercultural reflection in language learning” (Zoreda, 2005: 61); critical thinking skills (Eken, 2003); knowledge of pragmatics (King, 2002); capable and confident language users (Patrikis, 2000); increased motivation (Ryan, 1998); heightened comprehension skills (Swaffer and Vlatten, 1997), and finally, enhanced listening

skills (Winke, Gass and Sydorenko, 2010) to list a few from a plethora of examples. The need to ‘study’ English, and at any age— forms a consistent echo on Hollywood’s screen as in the following speech acts taken from the film, *Smile* in which a father tells a friend that he is “Studying English” to which he gets the sly rejoinder: “You’re learning English at your age?”

What is increasingly being reported however is the utility of the particulars of DVD technology in the language learning class— in particular, the use of subtitles. DVD features: “allow for much grater versatility in the way feature films can be exploited i.e., closed captions” (Seferoglu, 2008: 1). (cf. Hoffner et. al 2008). Thomsen and Krewani (2005) speak to this “televisualization of film” (6). They cite compelling economic statistics of the economic profits stemming from this medium claiming that “50% of the revenues emerge from the video and DVD home market” (6); and point out that “in this respect the filmic experience is vanished in favor of the completely different involvement of watching TV” (6). Some researchers report on innovative ways in which they use close captions in their classrooms with Zoreda (2005) reporting that in her English classes in Mexico, for example, “The films are projected during session, with subtitles in English or close captions” (67)—a hark bark to what Stanley (2000) reported a decade ago—namely that “Europeans improve their English by watching Hollywood movies with the original soundtrack, accompanied by subtitles” (4). This “bimodal presentation of text and sound” report Winke, Gass and Sydorenko (2010) permits for a “better recognition and memory” (66) of learned Language on the part of learners. Another increasing tendency has been the filmic use of dialog repetition within films in a bid to permit a memorization of dialogs on the part of viewing audiences still learning English. Consider for example, the use of six iterative recountings—half a dozen recursive verbatim repetitions that is of the following dialog in the film, *Duplicity* that audience members are subjected to.

Ray: Remember me?

Claire: Uh...sure. Of course!

Ray: Long time...huh?

Claire: Um... Yes.

Ray: Gotcha!

Claire: I’m sorry, I just [...]

Ray: Just what?

Claire: I’m drawing a blank.

Ray: Nice try.

Claire: Excuse me?

Ray: A little professional courtesy would make this a lot less awkward.

Claire: How do I know you?

Ray: How do you know me? [in disbelief] Wow! That’s tough. That’s a strong play. Believe me I’ve spent a lot of time thinking what this would be like. Where we would be. What I’d say. What you’d say. But I never though you’d [...]

Claire: I’m terribly sorry.

Ray: You really want to go this way?

Claire: You clearly have me confused with someone else.

Ray: I don't know. I mean I'm not great with names. I should be, but I try. Faces. I'm definitely like a B, B-. What I'm good at; what I really excel at: People I've slept with. That's been a traditional area of strength for me.

Claire: Uh... Look! Seriously. I don't know who you think I am but [...]

Ray: You charm me, seduce me and screw me. Then you drug me and ransack my hotel room. And how sick is this—you know the last thing I remember before I passed out was how much I liked you.

This is perhaps one of the most potent filmic devices to date. After all, recursive visualization causes language to be “projected into a remembered past in the form of a memory of a visual memory—a memory of a memory” (Decapua, 2007: 71) (cf. Piaget, 1962), and we get at least 6 repetitions of canned utterances (Brown, 2006) in dialog form in *Duplicity*. In the visually rich, “star-possessed’ mixed medium of film” (Thomsen and Krewani, 2005: 6), this blending of : “visual, additive and dialog” repetition becomes a powerful pedagogical device for the memorization of catchy film phrases, a cottage industry in and of itself in the spread of global English (Payack, 2008). The iterations in this film lend credence to Decapua’s (2007) claim that “Language in film can be used to create, represent and manipulate reality” (70). What is particularly useful from a pedagogical point of view is the use of a global icon, Julia Roberts, to repeat the dialog at six points in the film. According to Zoreda (2005) “Icons are a part of the social imaginary of students” (66).

Consider for example the clever way in which English vocabulary items are taught to audiences in the following dyad which occurs between father and daughter in the film: *Smart People* where the ensuing dialog emerges about polysyllabic, obscure, SAT-sounding English vocabulary items—another learner and learning opportunity in English.

Lawrence: Now you can go home. Get some sleep so that you can get that perfect SAT score. [Begins to quiz her on words] Mercurial?

Vanessa: I learned that word in the 5th grade.

Lawrence: Fecundity.

Vanessa: English is my first language

Lawrence: Uxorious

Vanessa: That's appropriately obscure. Mind you, I know it. Overly fond of one's wife.

Lawrence: That's my girl!

David: I have a good one. Eft.

Vanessa: Let me ponder. Short in stature. Diminutive?

David: No. I'm sorry. Eft is a young newt.

Vanessa: They rarely put names on the SAT.

We see a similar ‘teaching’ of English vocabulary in a scene from the film, *Cold Souls*, where Nina, one of the characters shown to be practicing English from a tape in her car in a prior scene, asks for native speaker help—in the most inopportune of times—as she prepares to reinsert his soul.

[Paul is in the soul extraction machine, and Nina is shown puzzling over a manual]

Paul: Oh my god! Are you reading the manual?

- Nina: I-I-I only deal with extractions. It's in English. What does "Glaucoma" mean?
- Paul: What? Oh, it's a___ it's an optic nerve dieas___ [harsh whisper] What? Glaucoma! Jesus Christ! I'm not doing this!

The Ease of Language Learning: A Chronology of Examples

One of the most consistent pedagogic images in current Hollywood is the seeming ease of language learning. In the academy-award nominated film, *The Duchess*, Georgiana's mother is proud to point out her daughter's linguistic accomplishments with: "She is an accomplished lady of quality. She is fluent in French, Italian, Latin..."; while in the film, *Zoom*, Courtney Cox's character eagerly declares that she has an important book in five languages: "I have it in Japanese, German, Farsi, Hindi and Braille" she counts off on her fingers.

So easy, and so instantaneous is it to learn a language that in the Oscar nominated film, *Tropic Thunder*, Robert Downing Jr.'s character when prompted as to how he learned to speak Mandarin Chinese gives the following glib response:

Land of Silk and Money with Gong Li. Second Globe, Third Oscar. Prepped for that one by working in a Beijing textile factory for eight months.

In the polyglot-rich, film, *Youth without Youth*, we are given the following details of the success of language learning of the main character amid a soundtrack which synthesizes voice-overs in French and Mandarin:

- Dominic: I was hoping he would accept me as a student and he told me that if I didn't master Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Japanese, I would never become a great orientalist.
- Veronica: But didn't you tell him that you wanted to study only the Chinese language?
- Dominic: I did. I told him that I'd been studying Chinese for six months, six hours a day. He stepped up to the blackboard. He wrote some 20 characters on it and asked me to pronounce them one by one and then he told me to translate the passage. In order to master Chinese, one must have the memory of a mandarin, a photographic memory, a memory of a mandarin.

A few scenes later in a surrealist dream sequence, Dominic is told; "Little by little you've mastered Chinese, just as later you've discovered you've mastered other languages." A few scenes later we are again reminded of Dominic's linguistic flair for language learning in no uncertain terms: "When she asked you questions in Russian, Polish or German, you replied without difficulty in all those languages." The film, *Youth Without Youth* concludes with one last linguistic surprise—Dominic is egged on to comfort a woman whose language only he speaks: "You're the only one who can calm her and speak her language"—says his companion. The language that only he can supposedly speak happens to be ancient Sanskrit!

Language learning is also presented as a solo-learning endeavor in countless films, In the movie, *Dummy*, the protagonist is shown learning Yiddish from the *Idiot's Guide to Yiddish*, while Richard Gere in the film, *Nights in Rodanthe* is filmed pouring over a medical Spanish dictionary as he self-teaches himself Spanish. This same self-study of languages—of Italian for example, is

focused upon in the film *The Talented Mr. Ripley* where Matt Damon's character attempts to learn Italian from a phrase book on a sunny day at the beach. Capping this list is the film, *Transibberian*, where the protagonist, pulls out a travel phrase book as he attempts, [quite unsuccessfully] to practice his Russian in an attempt to tell a grouchy train attendant of a broken toilet. The parade of languages in Hollywood is often presented with value judgments about the languages being showcased, as in this dialog which occurs in a bedroom scene in the Oscar-winner, *The Reader*:

W: Do you learn languages?

M: Yes.

W: What languages?

M: Latin.

W: Say something in Latin.

M: [quotes Horace]

W: It's wonderful

M: Do you want some Greek? [Reads]

W: It's beautiful.

M: How can you tell? How do you know when you've no idea what it means?

W: What are you studying in German?

In fact, it is within this context that foreign language learning is consistently presented—as a facile act. In the film, *Five Fingers*, the protagonist who is able to follow a complex dialog in Arabic is quizzed by an agent with: “I thought you did not speak any Arabic” to which he responds with; “I picked up a few words from my girlfriend,” while in the Oscar-winner, *Syrianna*, one of the characters asks a young recruit to learn the language, and the camera swiftly pans to his attempts at mastery of written Arabic.

We see a similar highlighting of a language learning lesson steeped in the methodology of Total Physical Response (TPR) (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) in the film, *The Incredible Hulk* where The Hulk is subjected to the imperatives and action-based learning endemic to TPR in his uptake of Portuguese, the specifics of which are reproduced below. Once again, the subtitling of English on the screen, permits for English to be synchronized in the scene with Portuguese. It must be noted that in an earlier scene in the film the camera pans to the Hulk using what is labeled to be a “Compact Portuguese English dictionary” to practice his Portuguese while watching television. English it is argued is never far away whenever foreign languages are heard or being learnt on Hollywood's screens.

Instructor: [In Portuguese with English subtitles]. *Let's work on your breathing. Here...*
[Places his hand over his chest] Emotion. [In English] *Fear not good, so fear*
[switches back to Portuguese] *needs to be controlled.* [He proceeds to place his hand over his diaphragm and demonstrate some deep breathing techniques The Hulk has no problem imitating these actions, and does so]. *Use your diaphragm.*
[In Portuguese] [demonstrates and the Hulk imitates]. *The best way to control your anger is to control your body. Control your pulse.* [Proceeds to incite him to get him angry and then measures his pulse to see if he has understood how to control his breathing].

This scene successfully shows the ability of the Hulk to follow along. The popularity of TPR among language teachers—specifically with elements of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) is cited by Wilbur (2007) as the most popular methodological model in L2 training programs (86). The seeming ease of language learning is once again overtly asserted in the film, *Indiana Jones: The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* where audience members are regaled with the following incidental details as to how Indiana Jones learned to speak Quechua—a story triggered by his son seeing him speaking to the ‘natives’ at a market.

Son: I took Spanish and I didn’t understand a word of that. What was it?

Jones: Quechua, local Incan dialect.

Son: Where did you learn that one?

Jones: Long story.

Son: I got time

Jones: I rode with Poncho Villa. A couple of his guys spoke it.

Son: Bullshit! Poncho Vila?

Jones: You asked. Technically, I was kidnapped.

The message in this global blockbuster is clear. You can learn a new language even in captivity! Jones’ linguistic abilities are again highlighted when he is tested by a rival who looking at a map says “Here! *Suno*. The Portuguese word for “sleep” to which Jones responds with: “Yes. Good. Exactly.”

In the film *Flirting with Forty* a French women seeking desperate help for a son who has been stung by a jellyfish utters: “I am sorry [In French]—I don’t speak English very well [in English].” She is assisted by the protagonists of the story who we are apprised both speak French. We soon learn that one party supposedly learned the language over a year and the other easily made the transition from high-school French to graduate school French.

Jackie: So where did you learn to speak French?

Kyle: I spent a year surfing in France. You?

Jackie: I took it in high school. Then, I went to the Sorbonne in Paris for grad school in design.

Eager to show off the French-speaking skills of her boyfriend, Jackie later tells her friends: “Kyle is a surf instructor who speaks French” and then reiterates this linguistic talent to the audience again with: “Did I tell you he speaks French?” This same Hollywood obsession for French fluency is asserted in the film, *Elegy*, where the protagonist generously divulges details about his successful son—the doctor—among whose many assets are that he “speaks passable French”. In the film, *I served The King of England*, we are given a careful dialog repetition scene in which a young girl carefully practices her French phonetics and phraseology by mere on-screen repetition.

Sporting her talents in French fluency a young girl in the film, *Smart People* tells her Christmas dinner party the following:

Vanessa: Actually, I downloaded the recipe from the internet. I translated it from old French. It dates all the way back to Louis XIV. And he was the one that actually decided dishes should be served in courses, because before that, it was served as this big pile of food.

Every ready to critique Vanessa, her brother cajoles her with the following: “May be you messed up the translation and that’s why it tastes like burnt tires.” Not all languages however get the same adoration on Hollywood’s screens.

If French is ‘easily’ learned, Mandarin is presented as a language with an inscrutable tonal system. Consider for example the following dyad which takes place in the film, *The Children of Huang Shi* where the protagonist attempting to practice some of his emerging Mandarin with a general is diplomatically told to go to the city of Huang Shi where he would have the opportunity to “work on your Chinese while you are convalescing.” Hogg responds with something in mandarin to which he gets the following response:

General: Very Good

Hogg: Did you understand it?

General: I certainly did. You said, “Let me introduce myself. I am a Pumpkin.

It must be noted that to make a similar linguistic point of the pedagogical perplexity embedded in any mastery of mandarin, Hogg is reminded that when he attempts to pronounce the Chinese name, *Huangsheng Chen*, his interlocutor’s displeasure at the atrocious pronunciation is overt: “Call me Jack, why don’t you”—he offers. As an aside, in the film, *Vicky Christina Barcelona*, the linguiscism (Phillipson, 2003) against Mandarin is overtly asserted in the form of an unwarranted comment on the part of Maria, the femme fatale of the movie who smugly declares [in Spanish] after hearing a few mandarin words: ‘If you ask me, Chinese sounds strident. It’s like a drill to the head. You ever hear them in the kitchen of a Chinese restaurant? It’s so unpleasant.’ In contrast, in the film, *The Children of Huang Shi*, English meets a different fate. In several scenes, children are photographed happily and chorally repeating the English words: “student” “teacher”; “dog”; “chair” and “cat” as well as learn English numbers, as they eagerly practice learning English.

It is not just living languages that are presented as relatively easy to master but dead languages as well. Consider the language decrypting scene that occurs in the film, *Indiana Jones: Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* in which Indiana Jones’ linguistic prowess is magical to say the least, and carefully spotlighted in the following dyad which takes place in his library as he mulls over an ancient cipher, while audience members are indirectly reminded of his fluency in Mayan [in addition, to of course Quechua, Spanish and Portuguese]! We are made to marvel at his instantaneous language learning abilities. In fact, in the following scene he manages to decipher a code within a matter of seconds.

Son: Who is that?

Jones: Francisco de Orellan the conquistador. Remember the guy who got lost looking for the skull. And just as I thought: Koihoma!

Son: What’s that?

Jones: It’s an extinct Latin American language. Pre-Columbian syllabic base. See. Diagonal stresses on the ideograms. Definitely Koihoma.

Son: You speak it?

Jones: Nobody speaks it. It hasn’t been heard aloud in 3000 years. I might be able to read a bit though if I walk it through Mayan first.

Son: You know for an old man, you ain’t bad in a fight. How old are you? 80?

Jones: [shoots him a look]. Thanks a lot! It's a riddle! Leave it to Ox to write a riddle in a dead language. [Recites the message quickly] "Follow the lines in the earth only gods can read which lead to Orellana's cradle guarded by the living dead."

Geoglyphs. Giant ancient drawings carved into the desert floor in Peru.

What better proof does one need of the ease of language learning than this? It is not just the realm of fiction but also the genre of the documentary which seems eager to underscore this seeming facility of language learning. In the docu-drama: *Where in the World is Osama Laden*, we are also presented with the following scene where Morgan Spurlock, spoofing an Indiana Jones expedition, prepares to find Osama Bin Laden by beefing up both his body and brain muscles—linguistic muscles to be precise— by hiring a language tutor. Audience members are privy to the scene:

Teacher: I want you to get used to the sound of the language. [Says the following phoneme [Kh] [exaggerates the pharyngeal plosive sound qualities]

Morgan: [Repeats it]

Teacher: [Impressed] Oh Good! Wow!

Language Learning is also presented as a cheerful, fun-filled endeavor. Consider, for example, the 15 second reprieve audience members are given in the Oscar winner, *Juno* of a Spanish class where the protagonist is handed a handmade postcard with the English words, "Greetings from Barcelona" carefully spotlighted for audiences, and set to a dreamy Spanish soundtrack.

In the recent global blockbuster, *Avatar*, the protagonist, Jake is shown to magically acquire Na'vi, an artificial language within a matter of a few scenes—a fact carefully encoded in the filmic script in the following terms:

[He speaks haltingly, but with feeling, in Na'vi].

JAKE: (Na'vi)

I See you Brother, and thank you. Your spirit goes with Eywa, your body stays behind to become part of the People.

NEYTIRI: watches with approval.

NEYTIRI: A clean kill. You are ready. (*Avatar*, 67)

Predictably, Jake is presented as having acquired fluent Na'vi—enough to give a speech in the language in front of an audience.

The entire clan is gathered, with Eytukan and Mo'at presiding. Jake looks around, feeling the gaze of the People upon him. He steels himself, and speaks in clear Na'vi --

JAKE: (subtitled) *Eytukan, I have something to say, to everyone.*

EYTUKAN: (subtitled) *Speak, Jakesully.*

JAKE: (subtitled) *A great evil is upon us. The Sky People are coming to destroy Hometree. They will be here soon.*

A murmur of fear and anger goes through the crowd.

JAKE: (subtitled) *You have to leave, or you will die.*

MO'AT: Are you certain of this?

JAKE: They sent me here to learn your ways. So one day I could bring this message, and you would believe it.

NEYTIRI: What are you saying, Jake? You knew this would happen? He is unable to meet her eyes. (*Avatar*, 105)

Looking at Grammar Translation in the Movies

No other method on the silver screen sees such reoccurrence as the elements of the methodology of Grammar Translation (Richards, and Rodgers, 2001) This method's efficacy in triggering linguistic fluency is carefully spotlighted in scene after scene either in oral or written form as for example in this scene taken from the film, *The Japanese Story*, where via several careful, and overt correction scenes of his grammar, the learner finally responds to Toni Collete's character with: "Thank you for teaching me better English."

Often, the episodes of foreign language inclusion permit for a perfect segue into English as in the following conversation which occurs in the global blockbuster, *Angels and Demons*, where the academic Robert Langdon, played by Tom Hanks, is ever so eager to tell Vitoria of the place of English in Europe's past at the very instant that she engages in a 'grammar translation' moment with Latin.

Vitoria: Do you need help with the Latin?
Robert: Sure. [She begins to translate, and Robert seeing something on the page exclaims]. There's a watermark! And there's a line of text. It's in English!
Vitoria: English? Why English?
Robert: English wasn't used in the Vatican. It was too polluted. It was free-thinking. It was the language of radicals like Shakespeare and Chaucer.

This 'accidentally on purpose' claim that English is for the "free-thinking"—and "radicals" of the world is anything but innocuous. The utility of the Grammar Translation method in offering cinematic space for English occurs in the film, *Smart People*, where audiences are provided with a 'running' translation of a barely audible Spanish Telenova episode which occurs in Spanish:

Vanessa: Lupita is crying over Pedro, who is being abused by Manuel.
Chuck: She's going to leave Manuel you know. He's such a machismo. She's going to move in with Diego. He's really handsome and built. If your Spanish were better, you would see all of that.

We see a similar showcasing of a blend of Grammar translation and the Army Method (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) in the film *Windtalkers*, where both English and Navajo are simultaneously used. It is crucial to note that in the first language teaching scene in the film, the young recruits practice the English translation equivalents of the army terms, and we the audience, are given sufficient evidence of the visual English equivalents:

[In class, practicing vocabulary]
Teacher: Who can give me the code word for "tank"? Come on... You boys wanna be codetalkers. Show me some brains. Think! What do we call a tank?
Recruit: [In Navajo] *Chadagahi*. [Camera carefully pans to a poster board with the English word "tortoise" underneath it].
Teacher: Tortoise. Good. [Points to another picture]. "Artillery". Code word? [Two hands go up to compete for the answer] In code—Private Whitehorse.
Whitehorse: [In Navajo] *Bealdohtsolani* [camera carefully pans to a poster board with the English words "artillery" and "many big guns" highlighted].
Teacher: Very Good!

This language scene shows language learning to be a cheerful, competitive act of camaraderie among students. Also important is the visual focus on English vocabulary items in the learning process, even though the language supposedly being practiced is Navajo. We see a similar highlighting of visual and verbal English in another language practice scene in the same movie where the young recruits practice a high-tension scenario where they are expected to transcribe orders.

- Officer: TBX hasn't got the range of the TBX so you may need a relay to get your transmission to a command post. What it really comes down to is speed and accuracy under pressure. Transcribe now! [Switches on a radio with a muffled message in Navajo, and starts a stopwatch]
- Whitehorse: [Begins his transcription in English with the camera carefully spotlighting his English transcription. He then triumphantly hands his transcription note over to the teacher much to the surprise of his fellow classmates, and even recounts the message [in English] from memory]
Request fire support. We have target at 11 niner. Baker 15. Pull box with heavy machine. Fire at will. [Finishes his oral recitation]
- Friend: [jokingly sneers] Beginner's Luck!

The Place of the Berlitz Method and Audiolingualism in Film

Another favorite method consistently showcased in recent films through both visual and verbal means is the Berlitz Method (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), which in the acclaimed film, *Revolutionary Road*, is even carefully photographed juxtaposed to a global icon—Leonardo DiCaprio—shown to be learning French from a book prominently photographed with the title: *Berlitz French for Travelers*. In the film, *The Children of Huang Shi*, the protagonist George Hogg, played by global icon, Jonathan Rhys Myers, remarks of a young nationalist: “You didn't learn your English at Berlitz, if I may say so.” to which the he gets the response “West point”.

In a bid to synchronize both English and the language being spotlighted we encounter several scenes of both formal and informal drills in foreign languages. In the film, *Elegy*, for example we encounter the following dialog:

- Consuela: Excuse me Professor, but your Spanish is awful.
David: Will you teach me?
Consuela: Yeah, I'll teach you. I'll teach you *mănaana*
David: [carefully repeating] *mănaana*

The utility of drills in learning a language are again spotlighted in the final scene in the comedy, *Fun with Dick and Jane*. Here the message seems to be clear. Learning a language is easy and fun—even a child can teach it. In this final scene both Dick and Jane are shown to cheerfully and chorally repeat after their five-year old son, the Spanish equivalents of phrases that he teaches them from the back of the car as they go for a drive:

- Son: [In English] Look at our beautiful family!
Parents: Look at our beautiful family! [Recite in Spanish for practice]
Son: [In English] My name is Dick Harper
Parents: My name is Dick Harper [Recite in Spanish for practice]

Solo repetition of linguistic expressions forms the highlight of a scene in the bromance comedy, *Wedding Weekend*, where one of the characters is shown parroting to a tape in his car the equivalent of the following expressions: “The grass needs more water” which he dutifully repeats in Spanish; followed by the expression: “The plants are getting dry” only to be interrupted by a phone call in which the following conversation ensues:

Friend: [Overhearing the tape in Spanish in the car] Did a Spanish woman just say something about trimming her bush?

Jake: I’m trying to learn Spanish so I can talk to my friggin’ gardeners!

That one can learn Spanish on a drive is carefully coded in these films. Language can be learned from tapes. Consider the following claim made in the film, *Surrender Dorothy*, about her daughter’s Japanese fluency culled from tape practice. “Look at all these language tapes” declares Diane Keaton’s character to both audience and speech partner alike. Another example comes from the film, *Because I said So*, where the protagonist played by Mandy Moore painstakingly practices Italian with the aid of a phrasebook referenced by her boyfriend.

With all this solo and choral repeating and chiming carefully spotlighted in film after film, Hollywood’s message is loud and clear: Practice makes perfect—a claim which clutters the screen space of several movies—two examples of which are reproduced below, one from the serialized film, *The Company*, and the other from the Oscar contender, *Eastern Promises*. In the former, the heroine, still practicing her English confesses to her companion: “I lust to practice my English, Yevgeny” while in the latter, a voice-over of a deceased Russian immigrant girl carefully informs listening audiences that: “I’m also practicing my English.” The allusion to practice is verbalized in the film, *Before the Rains*, when the female protagonist early in the film worriedly confesses that “My English is not very good” to which she gets the rejoinder from her mistress that “May be you should practice more”. Magically, a few scenes, later, she gets compliments on her English fluency as verbalized below:

Mistress: And your English is much improved.

Maid: T.K. and I— we only speak in English now.

This same message is carefully threaded into the thematic fabric of the Humanist Realist film (Lim, 2009), *Sugar*, where having been told that the protagonist “doesn’t speak any English” the film opens with a cheerful, communal, choral English language learning scene with the following dialog which also encodes a message about English language learning—that it comes with practice and it’s up to the learner.

Teacher: “Your Performance...”

Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]

Teacher: in the mound...

Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]

Teacher: is not as good...

Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]

Teacher: as last year.

Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]

Teacher: What is the problem?

Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]

Teacher: I don't know ...
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]
Teacher: I want to give you a chance
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]
Teacher: It's up to you
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]
Teacher: It's up to you
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]
Teacher: Thank you
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]
Teacher: I'll do my best.
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]
Teacher: I'll do my best.
Students: [happily, chorally repeat as a group]

By the film's conclusion, we are told of main character's accomplishment in English fluency in no uncertain terms. His host mother proudly compliments him with: "You know, your English is very good now Miguel." For viewers, the message is clear—English can be successfully acquired by anyone who aims to "do they're best"—to borrow an opening line from the film.

Concluding Remarks

Wasser (2005) claims Hollywood has gone transnational—that "Hollywood is booming, while the American film industry weakens" (63)—a clever allusion to the workings of globalized filmmaking—a planetary-wide enterprise in which films have to "earn well in all markets throughout the world in order to justify production" (67). It is sociolinguistic theorizations such as this which most effectively account for the plethora of language learning episodes currently cluttering Hollywood's silver screens. After all "what the U.S. wants, the world wants" (Wasser, 2005: 65)—seems to be the guiding motto of Hollywood. If what Wildman and Siwek (1988) observed two decades ago still remains true namely, that the global might of Hollywood is in fact a consequence of the planet's familiarity with the English language—what Wasser (2005) poignantly calls "the affluence of the English-speaking audience which justifies large scale American productions" (65), it makes perfect economic sense as to how Hollywood works—how indeed Hollywood is both a product of and a conduit towards global English fluency—a means to an end as well as an end itself. It becomes easier for instance to see how and why global Hollywood seeks to both maintain its appeal to old linguistic markets, but at the same time actively strives to recruit new English speakers—an astute linguistic attempt at being wedded to old linguistic allies while wooing new linguistic alliances. Wasser (2005) notes for example that "Since the English-speaking audience is the richest global language group, there has been a concerted effort to shoot films, even with multinational casts and crews, in English" (67), further claiming that the "transnationalization of Hollywood contributes to a global monoculture" (69). This paper contends that monoculturalization works best in and through monolingualization—Englishization—a visual harbinger semiotically rendered in the film, *I Served the King of England* in powerful visual form as: "English Spoken Here"—prominently showcased on a café door for audiences to see.

The consistent attempt at spotlighting foreign language learning in a bid to trigger a complementary desire for English language learning makes pedagogical sense in Hollywood. If global Englishization is indeed the eventual outcome of these multifarious polyglot screen renditions—after all, Wasser (2005) claims “movies are an advertisement” (69)—is it any wonder then why on the silver screen foreign language learning in general, but English learning in particular continues to be presented as a ‘magical’ enterprise [pun intended]?

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6 The Sociolinguistics of Language: Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Volume II, Ralph Fasold. 7 The Language of Children and Adolescents: The Acquisition of Communicative Competence, Suzanne Romaine. 8 Language, the Sexes and Society, Philip M. Smith. 9 The Language of Advertising, Torben Vestergaard and Kim Schröder. 10 Dialects in Contact, Peter Trudgill. Lesley Milroy and Matthew Gordon deal with the history of sociolinguistic methodology, modern methods in fieldwork and data collection, recent approaches to the handling of data, and the relevance of social categories, social relationships and social practices. Once again, we know which book to refer our students to with gratitude and confidence. Peter Trudgill. Preface. Sociolinguistics is the study of the connection between language and society and the way people use language in different social situations. It ranges greatly in depth and detail, from the study of dialects across a given region to the analysis of the way men and women speak to each other in certain situations. The basic premise of sociolinguistics is that language is variable and ever-changing. As a result, language is not uniform or constant. For example, historical sociolinguists have studied the use and frequency of the pronoun *thou* in dated documents and found that its replacement with the word *you* is correlated with changes in class structure in 16th and 17th century England. For example, the primary language in the United States is English. People who live in Teachers of advanced EAL learners can conceive of films as repositories of largely authentic spoken discourse within realized sociocultural contexts. Aken (2003) describes a 14-week film-for-English course where students focused on sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of spoken English and argues that such an approach, grounded in realistic speaking, contributes to autonomy. King (2002) writes, "the realism of movies provides a wealth of contextualised linguistic and paralinguistic terms and expressions, authentic cross-cultural information" (p. 510). Tutors with an interest in the sociolinguistic aspects of speaking can focus on far more than speech act theory in exploiting film. An analysis of sociolinguistics fields. Bits of slang used in the body of formal language serve the purpose of attracting the attention of the viewers by means of hilarity, the idea being to laugh and learn. In the context of film, this approach assumes the edutainment mode of communication that simultaneously entertains and educate. It is a persuasive strategy to convince the people to listen, learn and maybe change their risky sexual behaviors that might expose them to the deadly pandemic. Code-switching from one language to another serves different communication purposes. When used by two people it could be a way of claiming simi