

Elaine Espindola
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
elaespindola@yahoo.com

Maria Lúcia Vasconcellos
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
marialuciabv@gmail.com

Two facets in the subtitling process: Foreignisation and/or domestication procedures in unequal cultural encounters

Abstract: Concerning film, TV and video subtitling, countries in the globalized world can be broadly divided into two distinct blocks, namely, (i) subtitled countries, i.e. English-speaking countries and (ii) subtitling countries, i.e. non-English-speaking countries (Gottlieb, 1997). In the context of the inequalities of several levels existing between these two large blocks, subtitling practices become a matter of culture practice of political dimensions, embedded in a larger intercultural scenario. The present study investigates the treatment given to the culture-bound terms present in the subtitles of the films *Cidade de Deus* (2001) and of *Boys 'N the Hood* (1991) into the American and the Brazilian contexts respectively. This analysis starts from the hypotheses that (i) cultural elements are treated differently in subtitles depending on the direction of the translation, and (ii) the treatment given to culture-bound terms inevitably affects the way the two cultures involved are represented. The results obtained point to a tendency towards exclusion of the culture-bound terms in the subtitles of the Brazilian film whereas an opposite tendency is observed in the subtitles of the American film. Power differentials then are seen to play an important role in the context of culture representation in subtitling as a cultural practice.

Keywords: subtitling as social practice, domesticating vs. foreignizing strategies, culture-bound terms in translation.

Resumo: No que diz respeito a legendagem de cinema, TV e vídeo, os países do mundo globalizado podem ser divididos, de um modo geral, em dois blocos distintos, a saber, (i) países legendados, i.e. países que falam a língua inglesa; (ii) países legendadores, i.e. países que não falam a língua inglesa (Gottlieb, 1997). Considerando-se as desigualdades de vários níveis existentes

entre estes dois grandes blocos de países, a legendagem torna-se uma forma de prática cultural de dimensões políticas, implantada no cenário intercultural mais amplo. O presente estudo investiga o tratamento dado aos termos culturais presentes nas legendas dos filmes *Cidade de Deus* (2001) e *Boyz 'N the Hood* (1991) para os contextos americano e brasileiro respectivamente. Esta análise parte das hipóteses iniciais de que (i) elementos culturais tendem a ser representados ou adulterados nas legendas e (ii) o tratamento dado aos termos culturais inevitavelmente afeta a maneira como as duas culturas envolvidas são representadas. Os resultados obtidos apontam para um processo de exclusão dos termos culturais nas legendas do filme brasileiro, por outro lado uma tendência oposta é observada nas legendas do filme americano. Diferenciais de poder fazem um papel importante no contexto de representação cultural das legendas como prática cultural.

Palavras-chave: legendação como prática social, estratégias domesticadoras e estrangeirizadoras, termos culturalmente marcados em tradução.

1 Introduction

Researchers in the area of Translation Studies (TS) focusing on audiovisual translation have approached translations for films and TV programs emphasizing factors such as (i) the technical aspects involved in the activity (Luyken et al., 1991 and Dries, 1995), (ii) linguistic issues in terms of register variation (ibid) and (iii) the audiovisual environment present in subtitling (Nobre, 2002). In this scenario, subtitles are typically looked at in terms of the technical constraints which dictate many of subtitlers' decisions (for instance, spaces available for the number of characters and on the screen), the various methods of production, the number of qualified professionals involved in the activity (Luyken et al, 1991 and Dries, 1995), in terms of the translation of the spoken into the written mode of expression or "the condensing and transformation of dialogue between spoken and written language modes" (De Linde & Kay, 1999, p. 02) and in terms of the influence of other semiotic dimensions other than the linguistic aspects on the production of subtitles. Quality assessment is sometimes also investigated, being equated with the presence or absence of linguistic absurdities in subtitles.

Important as these studies are, they do not cover all the aspects deserving consideration in the study of subtitling. In fact, there is more to subtitling than technical and linguistic concerns as it involves the rendering of "cultural data" (Delabastita, 1990, p. 102) and reflects cultural and political inequalities arising from encounters between unequal participants. In this sense, subtitling can be seen as a social practice able to shape, maintain or resist and challenge the asymmetrical nature of such exchanges. In this sense, though all languages are said

to be equal in the sense that they respond to social and psychological needs of the human beings using them (Crystal, 1995, p. 06), they differ in respect to political inequalities inherent in linguistic and cultural encounters (Asad, 1986, p. 160). Along these lines, Vasconcellos (2004) discusses power differentials in translation in the context of globalization to emphasize the need to address global relations via translation directly in order to understand the effects of the hegemonic position English as the hegemonic language occupies in translational encounters.

In an attempt to address global relations as reflected in translation, this case study investigates issues of power and interests which sustain unequal encounters and are here manifested in the procedures emerging from subtitling practices, particularly those involving films circulating in both directions between in the Brazilian and American scenarios. Subtitling is here seen as a point of contact and as a culture procedure, where which different social practices meet in the shaping of oral and written exchange and by means of which 'the other' is represented. The study focuses on the rendering of cultural data along the lines suggested by Delabastita (1990) in an attempt to examine the treatment given to culture-bound terms in the encounter of two distinct languages and cultures via subtitling of two specific films in both directions, reflecting the mutual representation of 'otherness' potentially generated by subtitling procedures.

Along these lines, some relevant research was carried out by Medeiros (2003) exploring subtitling procedures in the light of Cultural Studies (CS) emphasizing subtitling as a cultural practice. As stated in the concluding section of her PhD dissertation, one limitation of her work was the concentration on subtitling of Brazilian films into the American context, which pointed to the need for further research into how subtitles, in both directions might differ in relation to the representations generated by subtitling procedures, to confirm or disconfirm the tendencies suggested by her findings: subtitlers are seen as culture mediators insofar as they are able to interfere in the representation of the other by means of abusing, foreignising and/or domesticating source cultural elements. This research is thus taking on where Medeiros' work has left off.

Two sets of subtitles in the two distinct contexts - a Brazilian film subtitled into English and an American film subtitled into Portuguese, namely *Cidade de Deus* and *Boyz 'N the Hood*, respectively - are compared as regards what is here called culture-bound terms. The study subscribes to Lewis's (1985) view of culture-bound terms as "knots of signification" (ibid, p. 271), that is, those particular items in the source

text that constitute a translation problem when it comes to decision-making as regards their representation in the target environment. Translating culture-bound terms in or out of subtitles is here seen a political act of cultural representation.

The following Research Questions (RQ) inform the investigation:

(RQ1) Where do culture-bound terms are translated into the Brazilian subtitles of *Boyz 'N the Hood*? Where do omissions occur?

(RQ2) Where do culture bound terms are translated into the American subtitles of *Cidade de Deus*? Where do omissions occur?

(RQ3) How may the translation choices made in the subtitling of the films reflect the asymmetrical relationship of the two cultures involved?

2 Theoretical Framework: Domesticating and foreignising procedures

According to Venuti's major work, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), translation of texts from one culture into another usually requires more than a simple choice of what gets translated or what does not, i.e. it requires a choice between two translation procedures, namely foreignisation and domestication. In any translation project, the initial decision between which procedure to adopt, either a domesticating or a foreignising one, may affect the whole translation process, leading either to a target text that is easily recognizable and thus readily accessible to the target readership, or to a text that constantly reminds target readers of cultural difference.

This entire issue of what procedure to adopt can be linked to questions of ethics. As Venuti himself claims, translations randomly or not end up as: "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text [i.e. domestication] or an ethnodeviant pressure on those [target-language] values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text [i.e. foreignisation]" (1995, p. 20). In other words, what values should be adhered to? Those of the source or those of the target culture conventions? An important aspect to raise is that, the translation of films (subtitles), in this specific case, can be influential in the "training" of the target-language readers and, as a consequence, in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures (Venuti, 1998, p. 67).

In the specific case of this research – film translation – cultural differences between source and target have to be taken into account. The subtitler adjusts the implicit otherness of the source text to fulfill

the intended target audience's expectations, which leads the translator to adopt, willingly or not, a domesticating procedure. However, if this is adopted, according to Venuti (ibid.), the translator/subtitled may become invisible and in an attempt to adapt the text to the local culture he ends up omitting significant traces that might be seen as other things by the target audience. In fact, the translator's effort to bring the source text's otherness, including social and political aspects, as close as possible to the target audience's background knowledge abandons all attempts to convey the healthy impact of the foreign culture strangeness.

Domesticating and foreignising practices are equated with two types of translation, namely transparent or resistant translation. In the former, "transparent discourse is perceived as mirroring the author, it values the foreign text as original, authentic, true and devalues the translated text as derivative, simulacral, false, forcing on translation the project of effacing its second-order status with a fluent procedure" (ibid, pp. 26-27). The latter, resistant translation, is "based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, it can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures" (ibid, p. 36). Resistant translation breaks the illusion of a transparent discourse in translation, promoting the representation of other realities so as to recognize linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts. The choice of how to represent the other, whether through a domesticating procedure and/or a foreignising one, is not context independent. Therefore, domesticating or foreignising subtitling may be dependent on contextual variables, which is taken into account in the examination of the subtitles in *Cidade de Deus* and *Boyz 'N the Hood*.

3 Data source and Analytical procedures

3.1 Data source

The two sets of subtitles under study are *Cidade de Deus* (CDD) (2001) – a Brazilian movie subtitled into American English – and *Boyz 'N the Hood* (BNH) (1991) – an American movie subtitled into Brazilian Portuguese.

Boyz 'N the Hood is a film written and directed by John Singleton in 1991. At the age of 23, Singleton wrote the script as part of his work as a film student at the University of Southern California (kcal9.com/apentertainment/entertainment_story_238195610.html). The film script is semi-autobiographical as well as cathartic (www.foxnews.com/

story/0,2933,96603,00.html). The film mixes differing issues happening in the African American community of South Los Angeles such as racism, teen pregnancy, violence and drug use.

The synopsis of the film says that John Singleton emerged from USC film school with his passionate script already written, and at age 23, he made the film that spawned a score of ghetto dramas. From the opening shot – a sign reading “Stop” – to the final message of “Increase the Peace” Singleton’s desire to galvanize his audience is clear. The violence destroying South Central Los Angeles is seen through the eyes of Tre Styles (Cuba Gooding Jr.), whose intelligence and common sense would be wasted in the ‘hood if not for his father, Furious (Laurence Fishburne), who imparts discipline and responsibility to his son. Tre’s friends aren’t so lucky, though, especially Doughboy (Ice Cube), who has been in and out of institutions since childhood and now sits on his porch with a forty in his hand and a pistol in his waistband. Singleton is ambitious enough to tackle a host of problems, from African-American business practices to the bias of the SAT test, but the real power of the film lies in the performances of its principals. Cuba Gooding, in his first role, does not let Tre come off like a goody two-shoes, while Ice Cube gives a tragic nobility to a young man who knows he is doomed (http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/boyz_n_the_hood/about.php).

Cidade de Deus (2001), is based on the book written by Paulo Lins in 1997. It presents the war of the “carioca” slums in dispute for drug trafficking. The film, directed by Fernando Meirelles, shows the evolution of the traffic of drugs during the sixties, seventies and eighties. The most remarkable elements in the film, for this case study, lie on the real panorama of the dispute for power in drug traffic.

For a better understanding of the film’s context the synopsis is presented: The main character in *Cidade de Deus* is not a person, but is a place: Cidade de Deus, a poor housing project started in the 60’s that became one of the most dangerous places in Rio de Janeiro by the beginning of the 80’s. In order to tell the story of the place, the film tells us the stories of many of its inhabitants. But all is seen through the eyes of the narrator, Busca-Pé, a poor black kid too frail and scared to become an outlaw but also too smart to be content with an underpaid job. He grows up in a very violent environment. The odds are all against him. But he discovers he can see reality with a different eye: the eye of an artist. Eventually he becomes a professional photographer. That is his redemption. Buscapé is not the real protagonist of the film. He is not the one who makes the story move on. He is not the one who makes the decisions that will determine the main chain of events. Neverthe-

less, not only his life is attached to what happens in the story but it is also through his perspective of life that we understand the humanity of a world apparently condemned to endless violence (<http://cidadededeus.globo.com/>)¹.

The reasons for the choice of the two films constituting the object of investigation in this research can be explained as follows: (i) both films belong to a same genre, i.e., drama; (ii) the films were produced for video format; (iii) *Cidade de Deus* (2001) is a Brazilian movie subtitled into American English and *Boyz 'N the Hood*(1991) is an American movie subtitled into Brazilian Portuguese; (iv) although produced in a rather different historical period, both films deal with reality and the consequences faced by the inhabitants of lower-class suburbs, which is likely to give rise to a number of implications for the representation of culture-bound terms.

3.2 Analytical Procedures

The following steps and analytical procedures were used in the research:

- transcription or download of the subtitles and their original spoken dialogues;
- comparison of the source texts (spoken language), in both films, with their subtitles counterparts (written language) in the target text;
- analysis of culture-bound terms in the source text in terms of the categories devised for this study;
- gathering of the occurrences in categorized tables;
- analysis of technical constraints that may account for omission, reduction, explanation or substitution of cultural elements;
- examination of the extent to which rendering choices may have led to a foreignised or domesticated translation;
- and, finally, analysis of the extent to which the concepts of foreignisation/ domestication may explain the treatment given to the culture-bound terms in both directions.

The occurrences of culture-bound terms will be classified² according to the following categories devised for this study:

1. Toponyms: a place name, a geographical name, a proper name of locality, region, or some other part of Earth's surface or its natural

or artificial feature (<http://www.explainthat.info/to/toponym.html>);

2. Anthroponyms: ordinary and famous people's names and nicknames and names referring to regional background which acquire identification status;
3. Forms of entertainment: amusement or diversion including public performances or shows, it also encompasses hospitality provided, such as dinners, parties, business lunches, etc (<http://www.google.com.br/search?hl=pt-BR&q=def>);
4. Means of transportation: the facilities used for the movement of people and goods from one place to another; the term is derived from the Latin *trans* meaning across and *portare* meaning to carry (<http://www.explainthat.info/to/transportation.html>), such facilities are, many times, associated with specific cultures;
5. Fictional character: a person in a novel, play, or a film who is related to fiction, works of imagination;
6. Legal System: rules of conduct inherent in human nature and essential to or binding upon human society;
7. Local Institution: an organization that helps or serves people in a certain area - health, education, work, political, administrative, religious, artistic;
8. Measuring system: units used in the determination of the size, weight, speed, length, etc. of something in the different cultures;
9. Food and Drink: any solid or liquid substance that is used by human beings as a source of nourishment (www.cogsci.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/webwn);
10. Scholastic reference: related to school or studying;
11. Religious celebration: to do something special to mark a religious occasion;
12. Dialect: user-related variation, which determines speaker's status as regards social class, age, sex, education, etc. (Halliday, 1978, pp. 110-111).

4 Discussion of findings

It is argued in this research that, by force of the differences in political and cultural power, the two cultures in contact via translation

will tend to use different procedures in rendering foreign culture-bound terms. While subtitling into English will tend to domesticate the foreign text by assimilating it into the American cultural and linguistic environment, subtitling into Brazilian Portuguese will tend to retain some significant trace of the American cultural and linguistic values. It is also argued that assimilative practices – translating foreign texts into the target culture’s own terms – are associated with instances of domestication procedures, whereas foreignising is equated with forms of translation which expose target spectators to the disturbing experience of the “other”.

This section puts all these ideas to test, by analyzing a specific situation – the treatment given to culture bound terms in the subtitling of CDD into the American context and the treatment given to culture-bound terms in the subtitling of BNH into the Brazilian context. The results are compared and contrasted for the degree of acceptance of difference and maintenance of the contours of the foreign culture at stake.

4.1 Presentation of occurrences

In Appendix (1), the subtitling sets are presented in table format. The two first tables (Table 1 and 2), one for each film, present the sequence of the occurrences of the culture-bound terms as they appear in the films, which enables me and my readers to retrieve the entire amount of data gathered. It is important to state that the data composing these tables consist of segments of the subtitled films regarded as instances of culture-bound terms, according to the criteria established for the selection.

These Tables are presented in Appendix 2: appendix 2.1 for the instances of CDD and appendix 2.2 for the instances of BNH. The next step taken in the investigation of the treatment given to the culture-bound terms consists of a separate analysis of each instance in the body of the article but in relation to their tables of the [occurrences] categories.

The tables in Appendix 1 show that culture-bound terms happen with a similar frequency in the ST of the films (around thirty occurrences). It remains to be seen if – and to what extent – diversity is erased in the subtitles in both the peripheral and central films. Occurrences are analyzed against the background of the categories devised for this specific study.

The subtitles of CDD and BNH put Brazilian and American audiences in a closer relationship with each others’ culture helping them understand foreign plots and, hopefully, foreign values and beliefs.

Considering that the culture-bound terms identified in both films are not context free and that the practice of subtitling does not follow one unique way, I am now, after the description of the occurrences, in a position to discuss the treatment given to them in terms of the differences between the subtitles of the American film and those in the Brazilian film. As mentioned in Section 1, subtitles are here studied as cultural data representing the source countries they stand for. The initial hypothesis – culture-bound terms receive a different treatment in either direction – is here put to test.

4.2 A quantitative overview of the categories in *Cidade de Deus* and *Boyz 'N the Hood*

The culture-bound terms receiving a foreignising treatment are present in most of the instances identified in the American film translated into the Brazilian context. The very opposite happens when the subtitles of the Brazilian film are directed to the American audience: There are 18 occurrences of foreignisation in the subtitles of BNH, contrasting to only one (01) in the subtitles of CDD. The general overview of these occurrences are presented below³:

- 30 occurrences of culture-bound terms in the spoken dialogues of CDD
- 27 occurrences of culture-bound terms in the spoken dialogues BNH

Below is a picture of the overall situation in the subtitles of both films:

- 29 domesticated instances in the subtitles of CDD
- 11 domesticated instances in the subtitles of BNH
- 1 foreignised instance in the subtitles of CDD
- 18 foreignised instances in the subtitles of BNH

For purposes of facilitating the reading, domesticated occurrences are referred to as *d* instances and foreignising instances are referred to as *f* instances in the following listing, which shows the number of culture-bound terms in the spoken dialogues of the source films and gives – between brackets – information concerning the treatment given to them in the subtitles.

Categories in CDD

- 11 toponyms (10d - 1f)
- 7 anthroponyms (7d)
- 2 forms of entertainment (2d)
- 1 local institution (1d)
- 6 dialect (6d)
- 1 measuring system (1d)
- 1 means of transportation (1d)
- 1 Brazilian legal system (1d)

Categories in BNH

- 7 toponyms (7f)
- 3 anthroponyms (2f - 1d)
- 2 forms of entertainment (2d)
- 5 local institution (4f - 1d)
- 1 measuring system (1f)
- 1 means of transportation (1d)
- 2 food and drink (1f - 1d)
- 3 scholastic reference (3d)
- 4 fictional character (3f - 1d)
- 1 religious celebration (1d)

The next subsection discusses – from a qualitative perspective – the treatment given to culture-bound in both directions.

4.4 Omission in subtitling

The following discussion is carried out in a parallel fashion: comments are made regarding CDD and, in the sequence, similar comments are made concerning BNH. This procedure, I believe, might facilitate comparison and contrast.

In CDD, the omissions present in instances (3.2, 3.6, 4.3, 5.1) – Ilha Grande, boca do Jerry na 13, Pires, Flamengo – cannot be accounted for by technical constraints as regards the lack of space and time be-

cause investigation shows that there is time/space left on the screen for more items to be added. These technical constraints are not seen as the only factors operating behind the choice made for the renderings of the aforementioned instances: it is suggested that power inequalities between the two cultures involved might account for the procedures observed in the subtitling sets where the instances appear.

Filtering of information in order to make it readily accessible and not disturbing the sequence of the film plot for target viewers seems to be the reason behind the case of instance (3.2), where, the Brazilian culture-bound term – Ilha Grande – is replaced with a superordinate term – prison. Venuti (1992) calls attention to the “transparency” obtained with such a domesticating procedure. In the case of instance (4.3), it can be said that if the anthroponym Pires had been left in the subtitle it would not contribute to or influence on the overall comprehension of the sequence of the film; on the other hand, its presence as a foreignized occurrence could have contributed for an experience of the foreign and of diversity.

Despite the fact that the omissions in subtitle (3.6) – boca do Jerry na 13 – may be accountable for by technical constraints, a question still stands: what are the criteria for the selection of the items to be omitted? More than one term is translated out of the subtitle, but only one omission would satisfy spatial constraints in terms of character space number. This practice favored fluency. As for the occurrence (5.1) – flamengo – the subtitler simply leaves out the entire original dialogue not giving the audience any reference of the term, a choice that could be explainable by target viewers’ expectations and degree of acceptance of diversity, which is low.

In the other direction – USA → Brazil – some different factors could be observed. There was only one omission found in the subtitles analyses of BNH: (16.1 – Rabbit) is an occurrence that may be said to favor fluency since there was still some character space available for abusing the term. In occurrences such as (11.8, 17.2 and 14.3) – LA, soda and USC – subtitling space was still available for the culture-bound terms on surface and become more familiar to the TT spectator at the same time maintaining their foreign nature. In, for instance (14.2) – SC – there was enough character space available to explain what the letters stood for thus avoiding possible misunderstandings; this was not the case though. As a result, target audiences are not exposed to the challenging experience of the foreign. Exposure to the other would give the TT spectator a chance to become aware of the diversity of the source culture.

Subtitling set (12.3) makes use of the anthroponym “Malcolm Farrakhan”. Searches on the Internet provided information about these two people involved in the composite name used by the protagonist of the film: Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan. The former, in 1952 became a Minister and spokesman for the Nation of Islam (an organization from the Muslim religion) and in 1964 terminated his relationship with the Nation of Islam and died in 1965 gunned three times. The latter, Louis Farrakhan, moved to Boston in 1956 and became the Minister of Muhammad Temple No. 11 at the request of Malcolm X⁴ and both fought for African American rights. This becomes a contextual gap between both cultures and is left unfilled.

On the other direction, subtitles of CDD, the only occurrence of a foreignising translation occurs in the toponymic instance (3.11) when the character is lost and asks Buscapé where Bara is. In opposition to what happens in instance (12.3), the spectator here becomes aware of the fact that the character is looking for a place that belongs to the ST contextual environment due to the fact that he [the character] is riding a car and stops in the middle of nowhere to ask Buscapé for information. Foreignising the culture-bound term here keeping Brazilian traces for the American subtitles signals to the target audience that the Brazilian characters refer to their distant suburbs in a very particular way. As the data made evident, subtitling for the Brazilian audience consisted much more of foreignising procedures, which made the foreign extremely apparent to non-English speaking audiences.

The issue of foreignising or domesticating procedures has to be discussed within the context of reception of subtitles. The direction of the process affects the way such procedures are to be interpreted. In this sense, (blind) acceptance or rejection of the foreign other is differently interpreted, depending on the the position of the receiving culture in the cultural encounter provided by translation. As Aixelá reminds us,

Cultural asymmetry between two linguistic communities is necessarily reflected in the discourses of their members, with the potential opacity and unacceptability this may involve for the target cultural system. Thus, faced with the difference implied by the other, with a whole series of cultural signs capable of denying and/or questioning our own way of life, translation provides the receiving society with a wide range of strategies (Aixelá, 1996, P. 54).

What is at stake here is either acceptance of difference and/or maintenance of the foreign or rejection of difference and/or assimilation of the foreign into familiar terms. The analysis and discussion of

the subtitles of CDD and BNH have shown that the peripheral culture is subject to changes when exporting its cultural items to the central country via subtitling: Fluency seems to be inherent in Anglo-Saxon translations (Venuti, 1995, p. 23). On the other hand, there is a tendency to acceptance of difference on the part of the peripheral country, which can be perceived in the subtitles of BNH. This “acceptance” would merit closer attention, as the very asymmetrical relation between the two cultures in contact would suffice to account for the presence of American cultural realities in Brazilian subtitles.

In the context of the present work, where two asymmetrical cultures are in contact, maintenance of the contours of the foreign is conditioned by the status the culture occupies in the intercultural scenario. The force the central country occupies can be felt, in this study, in the subtitles of BNH where the massive presence of culture-bound terms implies a growing “familiarity” of the Brazilian society with the Anglo-Saxon reality. In the other direction – Brazil/USA –, subtitles are seen as elements that should not disturb American’s appreciation of foreign films.

If one considers – as the authors of this article do – film translation as a locus for intercultural relationship, it then follows that, target readers would benefit from experiencing – in the subtitles – the cultural differences which separate the two worlds portrayed in a film.

5 Final Remarks

This study was carried out from an interdisciplinary perspective in the sense that the matter of cultural representation through subtitling was investigated at the interface of Translation Studies and Cultural Studies. Each of these fields of studies provided tools to analyze data source from distinct perspectives. The most relevant concepts explored in this study were: Venuti’s notions of foreignisation and domestication (1995) realized in the TT. The problem posed was translated into the following research questions, which are now revisited:

(RQ1) Where do culture-bound terms are translated into the Brazilian subtitles of *Boyz ‘N the Hood*? Where do omissions occur?

(RQ2) Where do culture bound terms are translated into the American subtitles of *Cidade de Deus*? Where do omissions occur?

(RQ3): How may the translation choices made in the subtitling of the films reflect the asymmetrical relationship of the two cultures involved?

As regards RQ1, the subtitles of BNH received mainly a foreignising treatment: a great amount of the culture-bound terms, most

of them consisting of toponyms, anthroponyms and local institutions, were maintained allowing for a contact with culture specificity of the foreign, which sometimes may be seen as a drawback for the processing of certain terms. Omissions, however, were not a constant practice in the subtitles of the American film; only in the case of swear words present in the film dialogues. It can be said that the occurrences of culture-bound terms belonging to the central country are expected to be somehow familiar to the Brazilian audience.

In relation to RQ2, opposite findings emerged. The subtitles of CDD consisted mainly of domesticating procedures or omissions. Taking into account the fact that subtitling choices are not context independent, the culture-bound terms present in the subtitles for the American audience could not be seen as an obstacle for plot understanding. In both subtitled films, omission of swear words happened with similar frequency; however, if a target referent of similar representation was not available for substitution, the culture-bound term was omitted. This could be observed in the omission of toponyms, anthroponyms and forms of entertainment.

Concerning RQ3, I have attempted to highlight the fact that domestication practices usually under-represent the content of the culture-bound term. As for visibility of the cultural other through subtitles, the procedure may function as a stimulus for curiosity towards cultural diversity. Several occurrences, most of them consisting of toponyms, anthroponyms and local institutions, were kept in the subtitles of BNH and eliminated in the subtitles of CDD raising the unequal degree of visibility allowed for representation of culture specificity in the films. The Brazilian-Portuguese film culture as manifested in CDD was under-represented: domestication procedures and omissions of specific culture-bound terms resulted in a rather superficial picture of “Brazilianness” as portrayed in the film.

The results obtained in the study of the subtitles of both films provide evidence to the argument that when two unbalanced cultures are involved, as is the case, power differentials play an important role in the representation of the other. As demonstrated, a tendency was found to exist as regards the exclusion of the culture-bound terms in the subtitles of the Brazilian film whereas an opposite tendency is observed in the subtitles of the American film. Power differentials then are seen to play an important role in the context of culture representation in subtitling as a cultural practice.

In view of this and considering the culture-bound terms composing the data source of this research as “textual knots of signification”

(Lewis, 1985, p. 271), it can be stated that foreignisation – or domestication – in subtitling, as in any other translation act, is subsumed under the inevitable intercultural interaction and confrontation inherent in translation.

Notes

1. For a view of the films' context see Appendix B, that includes the synopsis in Portuguese and an introduction for CDD.
2. The definitions of the categories were inspired by information in site at the World Wide Web and by definitions from The Newbury House Dictionary of American English (1996); the dialect category was inspired by Halliday 1978.
3. This study has a qualitative nature; however, there is always a certain quantitative turbulence when some procedures are preferred and a pattern emerges. This is why these figures are here presented.
4. This information was retrieved from the World Wide Web on December 10th. The sites read: <<http://www.cmgww.com/historic/malcolm/about/bio.htm>>, <<http://www.noi.org/mlfbio.htm>> and <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_ml355/is_26_97/ai_62685474>.

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APPENDIX

The following tables consist of segments of the original dialogues and their subtitled counterpart. Table 1 displays the occurrences in the Brazilian film and renderings of the culture-bound terms in the American subtitles. Table 2 shows the opposite direction.

Table 1: Culture-bound terms in CDD

	ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
01	Cidade de Deus	City of God
02	Buscapé	Rocket
	Thiago	Siago
	Cabeleira	Hairy
	Marrec	Naive / Goose
	Dadinho	Kid
	ZéPequeno	Little Ze
	DonaZélia	Donan Zel
	Grande	Big Guy
	Cenora	Red Head
	Bené	Benny
	Pereira	Perriera
	Mane Galinha	Knockout - Ned
	Manuel Machado	Manuel Massando
	Filé	Steak
03	Só que pra contar a história do Cabeleira eu preciso contar a história do Trio Ternura.	However, Hairy's story is connected to Mortes Trio's story.
04	Bora Cabelera! - Segurar esses caboclo, bora!	Come Hairy!
05	Caralho! Dinheiro a pampa, ahahaha!	Lots of money here!
06	Charuto preto vindo da macumba quer falar merda... hahaha	Look who's talking!
07	Rangel, Pires, chega comigo vamo nessa!	Rantzel, come with me.
08	O bandido não pagou os samangos e morreu numa cela lá na Ilha Grande.	(...) but he did not have to. Big Guy died in a jail. (omission of Ilha Grande)
09	Desde quando roubar preto ladrão é crime?	Since when is it a crime to steal from niggers and robbers?
10	Já falei que o negócio é cocaína. Isso que é tóchico de verdade.	If we talk about dope we talk about coke!
11	Aí, se tu tiver afim mesmo posso ir lá na Boca do Neginho buscar um pra você.	If you want I can find a joint at Blackies
12	Eu podia ir direito no cafô dos Apês e conseguir um bagulho responsa por um preço honesto.	I would go to the big ones to buy good stuff.
13	Um dos assaltantes mais procurados do Rio de Janeiro.	One of the most dangerous robbers in Rio.
14	Ó o corcel dele.	Look at the race.
15	Porquê Suncê fica ns encruza da Cidade de Deus onde Deus num ta?	Why do you live in the City of God that God has fogotten?

16	Acordou cedo e tomou logo a boca do Jerry Adriani, na 13.	One morning he took over Adriani's gang.
17	Ele só não tomou a boca do Cenora no 15, por que era amigo do Bené.	He did not harm Red Head since he was Bennie's friends.
18	Até a estrada do Catonho e a gente volta.	Till the bus.
19	Aí, onde tu comprou esse tênis? Comprei lá em Madureira.	Where did you buy the triners from? From the neighborhood.
20	Calça quanto? -39/40.	Shoe number? Turn around.
21	Essa camisa também? Essa comprei lá na Zona Sul. - Maneira.	And the shirt? - From the City.
22	(...) tem jogo do flamengo mais tarde ta ligado!	(omission of the film speech in subtitle format - omission of flamengo)
23	Eu arrumei um emprego de fiscal numa loja do Macro, uma hora da Cidade de Deus.	I found a job in a supermarket.
24	Fui pra rua sem FGTS e sem indenização.	I did not get a dime.
25	Dá uma força aí, to perdido, comé que eu faço pra chegar na Barra?	I am lost. How do I get to Bara?
26	Naquele momento eu pensei: "Esse paulista vai dançar"	"That guy from Sao Paulo was unlucky", I thought.
27	Porque nenhum paulista pode ser legal pra caramba.	Everybody from Sao Paulo is a nasty piece of work.
28	Gosta deles? So apaixonado por mpb, tu gosta?	Awesome Singer. I like music. Do you?
29	Aí paulista, tu é legal pra caramba heim, mermão. Valeu Carioca... eheheheh...	For a guy from Sao Paulo you're cool.
30	Vou morar num sítio fumar maconha o dia inteiro ta ligado. Escutar Raul Seixas.	I'll live in a farm, I'll smoke pot, and listen to rock.

Table 2: Culture-bound terms in BNH

	ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
01	I'm from Crenshaw Mafia!	Sou da máfia de Crenshaw!
02	And so that's why we celebrate Thanksgiving (...)	E por isso que temos o Dia de Ação de Graças.
03	If there is I betcha the Hulk could whip his ass.	Mas, aposto que o Hulk bate nele.
04	Look like Freddy Kruger got'em.	Parece que Freddy pegou ele.
05	Who he think you is? Kunta Kinte?	Ele acha que você é o Kunta Kinte?
06	(...) you so skinny you can hola hoop thru a cherrio!	É tão magro que passa no meio de uma rosquinha!
07	I heard you was like Mister G. Q. smooth now. You working over at the Fox Hills Mall?	Ouvi que virou mauricinho agora! Trabalhando no shopping?
08	He go to Washington?	Ele vai ao Washington?
09	There was a group of females rolled up in a Rabbit.	Apareceu um grupo de garotas.
10	(...) body was 'bomin' like right outta Jet centerfold o something.	Parecia ter saído de um pôster de revista.
11	Guess what, man? Recruiter from SC's coming over tonight.	O examinador da S.C. vem hoje.
12	I'm from USC.	Da USC.
13	Can I get you something to drink? Coffee? Water? Soda?	Quer beber algo? Café, água, soda?
14	Yes I remember that. That was a good game. You picked up two hundred and seventy-six yards that game, huh.	Ganhou 276 jardas naquele jogo, não é?

15	That was against Banning, my junior year.	Nós contra Banning. Meu primeiro ano.
16	I'm just asking, because you know, there's a strong possibility that you won't go into the NFL right after college.	Só estou perguntando, porque há muitas chances...de que você não se torne jogador profissional.
17	All you have to do is take the SAT test.	Só tem de fazer o teste de aptidão.
18	The Streets Race on Florence?	As corridas de rua em Florence?
19	So basically you have a 2.3 overall G.P.A. according to the classes we require.	Então você tem uma média de 2.3 nas matérias que pedimos.
20	(...) got us walking in muthafucking Comptom and all.	Só queria nos levar para a porra do Compton!
21	What are y'all two Amos'n Andy? Are you Step and his Fetchies?	Quem são vocês, o gordo e o Magro?Ou são os dois papagaios?
22	It didn't even become a problem until it started showing up in places like Iowa and Wall Street (...)	Virou problema após aparecer em Iowa e em Wall Street.
23	You don't see gun stores in no muthafucking Beverly-a-fuck-Hills.	Se for a Beverly Hills, não verá nada disso.
24	Sun, moon, stars, quasars, nigga sound like Elroy Jetson.	Sol, lua, estrelas, quasares...parece o Elroy Jetson falando!
25	Your Pop is like muthafucking Malcolm Farrakhan!	Seu pai parece o Malcolm Farrakhan, porra!
26	I want to get out of L.A. what's wrong?	Vou cair fora de L.A.
27	(..) naw you probably a Rollin' Sixties, huh?!	Não deve ser dos Rolling Sixties.

Table 3: Toponyms in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
3.1. Cidade de Deus	City of God
3.2. O bandido não pagou os samangos e morreu numa cela lá na Ilha Grande.	...but he did not have to. Big Guy died in jail (omission of Ilha Grande in the TT)
3.3. Aí, se tu tiver afim mesmo posso ir lá na Boca do Nequinho buscar um pra você.	If you want I can find a joint at Blackies
3.4. Eu podia ir direto no cafô dos Apês e conseguir um bagulho responsa por um preço honesto.	I would go to the big ones to buy good stuff.
3.5. Um dos assalantantes mais procurados do Rio de Janeiro.	One of the most dangerous robbers in Rio.
3.6. Acordou cedo e tomou logo a boca do Jerry Adriani, na 13.	One morning he took over Adriani's gang.
3.7. Ele só não tomou a boca do Cenora no 15, por que era amigo do Bené.	He did not harm Red Head since he was Bennie's friends.
3.8. Até a estrada do Catonho e a gente volta.	Till the bus.
3.9. Aí, onde tu comprou esse tênis? Comprei lá em Madureira.	Where did you buy the triners from? From the neighborhood.
3.10.Essa camisa também? Essa comprei lá na Zona Sul. - Maneira.	And the shirt? - From the City.
3.11.Dá uma força aí, to perdidão,omé que eu faço pra chegar na Barra?	I am lost. How do I get to Bara?

Table 4: Anthroponyms in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
4.1. Buscapé Thiago Cabeleira Marreco Dadinho Zé Pequeno Dona Zélia Grande Cenora Bené Pereira Mane Galinha Manuel Machado Filé	Rocket Siago Hairy Naive / Goose Kid Little Ze Donan Zel Big Guy Red Head Benny Perriera Knockout - Ned Manuel Massando Steak
4.2. Só que pra contar a história do Cabeleira eu preciso contar a história do Trio Ternura.	However, Hairy's story is connected to Mortes Trio's story.
4.3. Rangel, Pires, chega comigo vamo nessa!	Rantzel, come with me.
4.4. Naquele momento eu pensei: "Esse paulista vai dançar"	"That guy from Sao Paulo was unlucky", I thought.
4.5. Porque nenhum paulista pode ser legal pra caramba.	Everybody from Sao Paulo is a nasty piece of work.
4.6. Aí paulista, tu é legal pra caramba heim, mermão. Valeu Carioca... eheheheh...	For a guy from Sao Paulo you're cool.
4.7. Vou morar num sítio fumar maconha o dia inteiro ta ligado. Escutar Raul Seixas.	I'll live in a farm, I'll smoke pot, and listen to rock.

Table 5: Forms of entertainment in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
5.1. (...) tem jogo do flamengo mais tarde ta ligado!	(omission of the film speech in subtitle format - omission of flamengo)
5.2. Gosta deles? So apaixonado por mpb, tu gosta?	Awesome Singer. I like music. Do you?

Table 6: Local institution instances in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
6.1. Eu arrumei um emprego de fiscal numa loja do Macro, uma hora da Cidade de Deus.	I found a job in a supermarket.

Table 7: Dialect in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
7.1. Bora Cabelera! - Segurar esses caboclo, bora!	Come Hairy!
7.2. Caralho! Dinheiro a pampa, ahahaha!	Lots of money here!
7.3. Charuto preto vindo da macumba quer falar merda... hahaha	Look who's talking!

7.4. Desde quando roubar preto ladrão é crime?	Since when is it a crime to steal from niggers and robbers?
7.5. Já falei que o negócio é cocaína. Isso que é tóxico de verdade.	If we talk about dope we talk about coke!
7.6. Porquê Suncê fica ns encruza da Cidade de Deus onde Deus num ta?	Why do you live in the City of God that God has forgotten?

Table 8: Measuring System in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
8.1 Calça quanto? -39/40.	Shoe number? Turn around.

Table 9: Means of transportation in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
9.1. Ô o corcel dele.	Look at the race.

Table 10: Brazilian Legal System in CDD

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN PORTUGUESE	ENGLISH SUBTITLES
10.1. Fui pra rua sem FGTS e sem indenização.	I did not get a dime.

Table 11: Toponyms in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
11.1. I'm from Crenshaw Mafia!	Sou da máfia de Crenshaw!
11.2. The Streets Race on Florence?	As corridas de rua em Florence?
11.3. (...) got us walking in muthafucking Comptom and all.	Só queria nos levar para a porra do Compton!
11.4. It didn't even become a problem until it started showing up in places like Iowa and Wall Street (...)	Virou problema após aparecer em Iowa e em Wall Street.
11.5. You don't see gun stores in no muthafucking Beverly-a-fuck-Hills.	Se for a Beverly Hills, não verá nada disso.
11.6. I want to get out of L.A. what's wrong?	Vou cair for a de L.A.
11.7. (...) naw you probably a Rollin' Sixties, huh?!	Não deve ser dos Rolling Sixties.

Table 12: Anthroponym in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
12.1. Who he think you is? Kunta Kinte?	Ele acha que você é o Kunta Kinte?
12.2. I heard you was like Mister G. Q. smooth now. You working over at the Fox Hills Mall?	Ouvi que virou mauricinho agora!Trabalhando no shopping?
12.3. Your Pop is like muthafucking Malcolm Farrakhan!	Seu pai parece o Malcolm Farrakhan, porra!

Table 13: Forms of entertainment in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
13.1. I'm just asking, because you know, there's a strong possibility that you won't go into the NFL right after college.	Só estou perguntando, porque há muitas chances...de que você não se torne jogador profissional.

13.2. (...) body was 'bomin' like right outta Jet centerfold o something.	Parecia ter saído de um pôster de revista.
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Table 14: Local Institution in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
14.1. I heard you was like Mister G. Q. smooth now. You working over at the Fox Hills Mall?	Ouvi que virou mauricinho agora!Trabalhando no shopping?
14.2. He go to Washington?	Ele vai ao Washington?
14.3. Guess what, man? Recruiter from SC's coming over tonight.	O examinador da S.C. vem hoje.
14.4. I'm from USC.	Da USC.
14.5. That was against Banning, my junior year.	Nós contra Banning. Meu primeiro ano.

Table 15: Measuring System in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
15.1. Yes I remember that. That was a good game. You picked up two hundred and seventy-six yards that game, huh.	Ganhou 276 jardas naquele jogo, não é?

Table 16: Means of transportation in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
16.1. There was a group of females rolled up in a Rabbit.	Apareceu um grupo de garotas.

Table 17: Food and Drink in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
17.1. (...) you so skinny you can hola hoop thru a cherrio!	É tão magro que passa no meio de uma rosquinha!
17.2. Can I get you something to drink? Coffee? Water? Soda?	Quer beber algo? Café, água, soda?

Table 18: Scholastic reference in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
18.1. All you have to do is take the SAT test.	Só tem de fazer o teste de aptidão.
18.2. That was against Banning, my junior year.	Nós contra Banning. Meu primeiro ano.
18.3. So basically you have a 2.3 overall G.P.A. according to the classes we require.	Então você tem uma média de 2.3 nas matérias que pedimos.

Table 19: Fictional characters in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
19.1. If there is I betcha the Hulk could whip his ass.	Mas, aposto que o Hulk bate nele.
19.2. Look like Freddy Kruger got'em.	Parece que Freddy pegou ele.
19.3. What are y'all two Amos'n Andy? Are you Step and his Fetchies?	Quem são vocês, o gordo e o Magro?Ou são os dois papagaios?
19.4. Sun, moon, stars, quasars, nigga sound like Elroy Jetson.	Sol, lua, estrelas, quasares...parece o Elroy Jetson falando!

Table 20: Religious celebration in BNH

ORIGINAL FILM SPEECH IN ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE SUBTITLES
20.1. And so that's why we celebrate Thanksgiving (...)	E por isso que temos o Dia de Ação de Graças.