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Subtitling Verbal Art

Verbal art, i.e. kinds of artistry and creativity, found in art and literature can also be found in the communication practices of everyday life. It has been suggested that there is no clear-cut distinction between 'literary' language and more everyday forms as linguistic creativity is not restricted to literary texts but is a common aspect of daily interaction. Moreover, artful language is functional and is used in a range of effects in interactions. This rather universal quality of language has been utilised widely in popular movie and television series scripts. Formal aspects of language –such as sound, rhythm, grammar and meaning– which draw attention to language itself making an utterance stand out and being perceived as clever or amusing, are sometimes considered to defy translation. Yet the wide practice of translating such linguistic phenomena and the reception of the subtitled product by viewers in different cultures indicate that subtitlers are often as creative as the script writers themselves. This paper seeks to explore the ways in which verbal art of seemingly mundane linguistic activities is transferred across languages. More specifically formal aspects of language such as 'pattern-reforming' and 'pattern-reinforcing' (Carter 1999) choices as well as social aspects of language use such as 'language crossing' (Rampton 1998) and/or 'double voicing' (Bakhtin 1935) will be studied and strategies and practices for their translation identified. Examples will be drawn from the Greek, French and Spanish subtitled versions of a number of popular English speaking television series. References Bakhtin, M. ([1935]1981), *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin, Texas. Carter, R (1999), 'Common language corpus, creativity and cognition', *Language and literature*, (8)3: 195-216. Rampton, B. (1998), 'Language crossing and the redefinition of reality' in: P. Auer, *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity*, London & New York.