

## Summary

This thesis presented, first, a theory-based attempt to develop a model for the analysis of language use in visual media in order to make film texts accessible to linguistic analysis, and secondly, a corpus-based investigation into language variation through processes of translation carried out on a diachronic corpus of English film texts and their German-dubbed versions.

The study started from the assumption that the role of the English language as a global lingua franca and prestige language, and the concurrent status of the Anglo-American culture as arbiter of mass-medial popular culture influences German communicative preferences such that German written texts and spoken discourse will display on their linguistic surface an imitation of English communicative conventions. Because translations from English into German are the most prominent interface between the German and English linguistic systems, it was assumed that an influence of English on German communicative conventions would be most marked in translations. It was further assumed that given a sufficient frequency of occurrence and widespread reception such an influence of English communicative conventions on the preferences of linguistic expression in German translations might eventually be carried over into original text production in German – a development which would leave the translation as the trigger for (register- and genre-specific) target language variation and possibly subsequent target language change.

Since it appeared unlikely that all kinds of translations would have sufficient spread and popular recognition to set off such a development in the first place, the investigation focused on the German-dubbed versions (i.e. translations) of American popular mainstream movie productions. Besides film being a mass medium, two other characteristics of film texts seemed to provide favorable preconditions for the imitation of English surface structures in the German translations: First, the unique textual constitution of a film text, i.e. the time constraint governing the co-occurrence of visual and verbal information, forces the German translational utterance to fit almost exactly the temporal interval of the original English utterance. Under these conditions, it was assumed, there would be restricted textual 'maneuver space' to add to, reorder or leave out parts of the information structure of the utterance in order to adapt the translation to German communicative norms (Chapter 2). Secondly, an influence of English communicative conventions on German ones appeared more likely to be evident in film translations than in other types of translation for historical reasons: The practice (in the sense of a routinized and standardized commercial business) of English-German film translations has been firmly established in Germany since the 1930s, German-dubbed American films have been dominating the German film market at least since the 1940s, and German-dubbed American films are generally understood to have played a prominent role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century bilateral socio-political history of Germany and the USA, since they were considered 'a window to the modern Western world' for the German audience (Chapter 3). This peculiar, culture-specific historical situation supported the assumption that a combination of routine and purpose on the part of the translation text producers and the institutions of which they are part might have lead to a certain leniency towards the linguistic expression of Anglophone communicative styles in the German translations.

As for the study of language use in visual media in general, it is prerequisite for the investigation of film texts (and their translations) to take into consideration the features which distinguish this text type from other kinds of language use, because the special characteristics of a text type are likely to bear upon its patterns of meaning construction and its ways of meaning communication. The defining characteristics of film are its multimodality (i.e. the combination of visual and verbal information in the construction of meaning) and the two levels of communication (diegetic (text-internal), extradiegetic (text-transcending)) on which meaning is constructed. Because no linguistic analysis of film texts and film translations ever included these defining characteristics in a systematic way, a new model of analysis was

developed (Chapter 6). This model for the qualitative analysis of language use in film facilitates the qualitative, form-and-function-in-context-oriented analysis of speech, writing and other occurrences of language in film. It is based on House's (1977/1997) model of translation quality assessment, and – for the first time – the systematic integration of theories and methodologies from linguistics, visual analysis and film theory under the overarching frame work of systemic-functional theory. The model allows systematic analytical access to communication in and via film. It includes a modeling of the interdependency of visual and verbal meaning (visual-verbal cohesion), which makes the constitutive multimodality of film texts accessible to linguistic analysis (Chapter 9).

The process of analysis was presented in an exemplary in-depth analysis of one face-to-face discourse in a film (Chapter 8). The analysis was intended as both a practical demonstration of the analytical procedure and an illustration of the analytical delicacy possible.

The investigation was carried out on a diachronic (1962 – 1999) corpus of English film texts and their German-dubbed versions. The analysis proceeded in two steps (Chapter 7). First, qualitative, synchronic analyses of all the texts comprising the corpus were carried out. In a second step, those features whose frequency of use and context of occurrence appeared to be changing over the years – i.e. the linguistic expression of visual-verbal cohesion – were once again considered from a diachronic contrastive perspective. In summary, the qualitative analyses of the corpus of film texts and translations yielded the following results (sections 8.2 and 9.2):

- English film texts and their German translations consistently differ in the linguistic expression of modality, cohesion and explicitness. Throughout the years, the German translations always use more lexicogrammatical items to lexicalize 1. the subjective attitudes of the speaker towards the proposition and the communicative task he/she is involved in; 2. the logico-semantic relations between propositions which, as a consequence, are more tightly braced by cause and effect relations and relations of chronological progression. 3. The expression of modality and cohesion is facilitated by a greater degree of referential explicitness and denotative precision.
- For the case of the linguistic expression of visual and verbal cohesion, it was found that while the older translations very often feature explicit verbal cohesive links with accompanying visual information, the more recent translations display less explicit reference to co-occurring visual information. Even though the translations still use more linguistically explicit reference to visual information than their English source texts, the decrease in the frequency of use suggests a trend towards a converging movement on the part of the German translations in the direction of the conventions of verbal reference to visual information found in the English texts.

With respect to an influence of the English source texts on the German translations and the question of a concomitant shift in German communicative preferences towards English ones, these results have been interpreted as follows (section 10.3):

- English source text-induced language variation in German translation texts is not evident as an English influence on the linguistic system of German such that the translated discourses show the same patterns of information structure or word order as their respective source texts, thereby violating German conventions of information structuring.

On the whole, the analyses have shown that the German translations display an adherence to typically German communicative conventions in regards to a preference for, for example, referential explicitness, interactional directness and situation-dependent, ad-hoc formulations, which are also evident in a variety of other spoken and written genres in German.

- However, consistently throughout the time frame investigated, the German translations show a more frequent and more explicit linguistic expression of the speaker's stance and the speaker's interpersonal involvement in the communicative encounter, which is untypical of German language use and the resultant communicative styles in most of the genres investigated in this respect so far. This comparatively pronounced interpersonal orientation of the German-dubbed discourses cannot be traced back to the presence of particular linguistic structures in the English source texts. The presence of linguistic markers of an interpersonal communicative orientation in the German translations is, thus, understood as an indication of an influence of English communicative conventions on German ones. This English influence materializes itself on the surface of the translated discourses in a use of indigenous German linguistic means which does not coincide with the one predicted for German by the dimensions of communicative differences between English and German (cf. section 4.3).
- Consequently, it was suggested that the idea of source text-induced language variation in translation texts may have to be broadened to include a notion of 'source-culture-induced language variation', as elusive as this notion at present must remain (cf. section 10.3 and 11.3). According to this idea, translations would be shaped by the presence of images and stereotypes of the source text's culture in the receiving culture and/or by the unalterable visual meanings of a film text which are iconic of the source text's culture – even in the translation. The presence of these source-cultural meanings would induce their linguistic expression in the translations and trigger the use of particular German linguistic means in order to create in the German translations the kind of interpersonal orientation which is, comparing German and English, primarily associated with English communicative styles.