


Montse Corrius 

University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia  
[montse.corrius@uvic.cat](mailto:montse.corrius@uvic.cat)

Eva Espasa 

University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia  
[eva.espasa@uvic.cat](mailto:eva.espasa@uvic.cat)

## Multilingualism, Music and Gendered Roles in *Unorthodox*<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Due to the current globalized migration, our society is becoming more and more multicultural and multilingual and this is reflected in audio-visual productions. Indeed, for De Bonis [2015: 53], “linguistic diversity is a vehicle for the audience to experience the globalisation of our world against which the plots of multilingual films are essentially based”. Series like *Narcos*, *Orange is the New Black*, or the miniseries *Unorthodox* have contributed to depicting intercultural encounters on digital platforms such as Netflix. According to De Bonis [*ibid.*], when these intercultural encounters are portrayed on the screen, multilingualism may express

---

<sup>1</sup> This study was carried out as part of the MUFiTAVi project funded by the Spanish Ministry for Science, Innovation and Universities, ref. PGC2018-099823-B-I00.

either conflict or confusion. The presence of (an)other language(s) in the source text (ST) different from L1, namely third language or L3 (as coined by Corrius 2008), might contribute, among other functions, to depicting diverse linguistic and cultural identities on the screen and might be rendered with a gamut of strategies. Corrius and Zabalbeascoa [2011] distinguish four types of third language: (1) a distinct, independent language (i.e., Spanish, French, Hebrew); (2) a language with significant internal variation capable of signaling more than one speech community represented within a text such as a dialect, a sociolect, a idiolect, etc., for example South American Spanish, Scottish English, English spoken with a French accent; (3) a representation of (a) real, living language(s) – as proposed by Delabastita [2010]; and (4) a constructed or invented language as the Cityspeak that appears in *Blade Runner* or the Na'vi language in *Avatar*. For Sebba [1997], the main difference between language and dialect (or any type of language variation) is social.

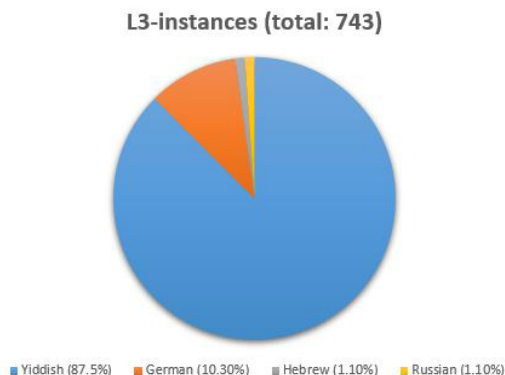
Following the research started by Trafilm, the MUFiTAVi project aims to describe the translation of multilingual series translated in Spain. As part of this project, we analyzed the functions of the third language in the miniseries *Unorthodox*.

*Unorthodox* tells the story of Esther Saphiro (Esty), a young Jewish woman who flees from her country, the USA, in order to leave her ultra-Orthodox community, with very strict rules and traditional gender roles. She is married to Yanky Shapiro, who strictly follows the Hasidic traditions of their community. This German-American miniseries contains four languages. We consider English as its main language (L1) because *Unorthodox* is aimed at mainstream Western audience, and Yiddish the most prominent third language (L3). Russian, Hebrew and German can also be heard on occasion throughout the series. According to Saval [2020], it is “the first original Netflix series that is primarily in Yiddish (with a smattering of Hebrew and English throughout)” [*ibid.*].

Through a multidisciplinary approach that combines translation studies and gender studies, this paper analyzes the interconnections between the gendered roles of the main characters and the functions of L3 in the series (Yiddish, German, Russian, and Hebrew) depicted through dialogues and songs, the connections between gender and languages, and to what extent these have been rendered verbally in subtitling, and non-verbally, through audiovisual representations, prominently as music.

## The Presence and Functions of L3 in the Series

*Unorthodox* is a very interesting multilingual audiovisual production insofar as the different languages on the screen not only represent a particular culture or identity but they are also associated with gender roles. Although diversity in *Unorthodox* is portrayed through visual and audible elements that can be seen or heard, the role of languages is very relevant because it helps depict the intercultural encounters in the series. Yiddish, which accounts for 87.5% of the 743 L3-instances analyzed, as aforementioned, is the most prominent L3 in the miniseries, whereas German accounts for 10.3%, and there is only a touch of Russian and Hebrew, which account for 1.1% of L3-instances each; these languages are important qualitatively, though, as we will see below. In the dubbed Spanish version, English as L1 is transferred to Spanish, except for a few instances that remain in English in the TT, thus becoming a new L3 (of the TT). The third languages in the ST are subtitled in Spanish in the TT version.



Apart from the frequency of each secondary language, as opposed to ‘primary language’ (the film main’s language of communication), to put it in Heiss [2004] words, each secondary language, namely third language, might have different functions in the text that should be taken into consideration when transferring them to the TT. These functions, first proposed for analysis in the Trafilm project, and later applied to the research carried out in the MUFiTAVi project, are: 1) character portrayal; 2) stereotype;

3) plot (twist), that is a shift in the story because of the third language; 4) theme; 5) comedy/humor; 6) dramatic effect, which refers to the dramatic impact of communication problems such as misunderstanding, prejudice or frustration among the characters; 7) suspense (the audience's lack of understanding of the third language may create suspense until they find out what's involved); 8) metaphorical (a metaphor of communication barriers); 9) signaling otherness; 10) signaling the villain; 11) showing tolerance; and 12) metalinguistic function [Corrius, Espasa *et al.* 2019: 154].

The most recurrent functions of L3-instances in *Unorthodox* are basically signaling otherness and character portrayal, representing 97.9% and 73.9% respectively of all conversations<sup>2</sup> analyzed. Needless to say, it is not surprising that these two functions are the most frequently found, as multilingualism has commonly been used to both describe cultural idiosyncrasy and as a means of characterization, by portraying the different social, cultural, and personal traits of characters. Other L3 functions, which are represented in *Unorthodox* in a much lesser degree, are: theme (5.2%), metalinguistic (2.1%), stereotype (1%). The use of a foreign language in the series has also been employed to cause a dramatic effect (2.08%), that is, a dramatic impact of communication barrier such as creating misunderstanding, frustration, prejudice, etc. among the characters. In this respect, De Bonis [2015: 53] has advocated that multilingualism can be used as a means for characters to emphasize their cultural and linguistic diversity, which may give rise to communicative problems that are generally hard to solve. For example, in a scene from Episode 1 (19:25), Esty enters a café in Germany and orders a coffee. When she is asked in German about the type of coffee she would like (flat, white or cappuccino), she simply answers "coffee." Then, the waiter goes on by uttering "American" (referring to the type of coffee), but Esty thinks he is talking about her and answers "Me?" Immediately, the waiter clarifies that he is talking about coffee.

Throughout the series the presence of code-switching, that is the blending of two separate languages [Sebba 1997], within a conversation is very recurrent, although the combination of languages is not always the same. We may find code-switching with two, three or four languages (i.e., between German and Russian; English and Yiddish; German, Hebrew and

<sup>2</sup> We understand 'conversation' as "the smallest possible unit that contains instances of L3 with enough pragmatic and contextual information" [Zabalbeascoa and Corrius, 2019: 80].

Yiddish, German, English and Yiddish, etc.). Apart from code-switching, the series also contains code alternation, that is, the use of two or more languages by the same speaker in different contexts [Thomason 2001: 136]; for example Esty speaks Yiddish when living in her ultra-Orthodox community in Williamsburg, but starts to speak German when she flees to Berlin; her mother, Leah, speaks Yiddish only when she is at work. Hence, it is worth mentioning that *Unorthodox* is very rich as far as the presence of the third language is concerned.

### The Gendered Role of Languages in the Series

Publications on gender issues in audiovisual translation flourished since the beginning of the 21st century as a result of the preceding studies in different fields. On the one hand, feminist theorization was rich in film studies in the 1960s and 1970s [see Binimelis 2015]. On the other, feminism and translation studies mainly has focused on written translation from the 1980s onward [see Godayol 2013] and from there, it moved on to the field of Audiovisual Translation in the 2000s [see Bartrina and Espasa 2012; Corrius, De Marco *et al.* 2016; Von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández 2018]. Translation involves reflecting on the use of language in audiovisual productions for the purposes of gender stereotyping. For De Marco [2006: 20], “stereotypes arise from the assumption that one group or one culture represents the ‘normal’ and is, therefore, assumed to be superior to other groups or cultures. In particular, gender stereotypes stem from the presupposition that men and women are two opposing categories: since men represent the norm, women are doomed to be the exception to this norm.”

This view of gender stereotypes, with a divide between “normal” and “deviant” behavior is at the heart of many sociocultural stereotypes. These can be reflected in individual behaviors, ways of thinking and characters’ roles, but they are as easily reflected in verbal language, too. In *Unorthodox*, the various third languages help visualize the different cultures. They have basically been used to depict the differing cultural backgrounds and identities in the series, which is set in two locations: Williamsburg (a neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, where the Hasidic Jewish community lives) and Berlin (a cosmopolitan and multicultural city in Europe). Each setting represents a different culture, which is shown both through non-verbal elements and verbal elements, i.e., languages.

If we analyze the role of languages in the series and focus on the main functions of each L3, as stated above, it is interesting to note that Yiddish has mostly been used to signal otherness and to portray the diverse characters that belong to the ultra-Orthodox community in Williamsburg, a community with very strict traditional roles and conservative gendered norms, which enforces segregation between men and women in public places [Kook and Harel-Shalev 2020]. So, the scenes that take place in this location or that are shown in flashbacks are basically in Yiddish, which helps construct the setting, background, culture, and identity of all Jewish characters that speak the language. However, this L3 has been thematized twice throughout the series, has once caused a dramatic effect, and on the other occasion Yiddish has a metalinguistic function. In brief, Yiddish is linked to the gendered traditions, rigid parameters, rules and values of Esty’s ultra-conservative Jewish community in Williamsburg.

The gendered traditions and strict rules of the Jewish ultra-Orthodox community embraces men as assertive, dominant and independent, and women as nurturing, obedient and sensitive. This is clearly shown through the characters that speak Yiddish: Yanky, Moishe (Yanky’s cousin), and his family in general. Esty might be included in this group during the first part of the series, when she is still with her husband in Williamsburg since she behaves as a traditional ultra-Orthodox woman, left with very little freedom and allowing her husband having the authority in family, hence following the traditional Hasidic way of life.

Let us look at a few examples to illustrate this point: In Example 1 below, Yanky’s family are talking about the arranged marriage, Esty accepts it and marries Yanky, but their life together does not seem to flow smoothly and all type of problems within the couple, including sexual, arise.

**Example 1. Arranged marriage**

TABLE 1. Arranged Marriage, Episode 2, 0:08:00

Original dialogue in Yiddish
Let’s wait till the Shapiros agree to the match, all right?

One of the most striking scenes as far as gender is concerned is when just before her wedding, we see Esty learning how to be a wife (Example 2) and how to have sexual intercourse, insofar as sex is prohibited

during adolescence and is reserved for marital life only. Religious norms oblige boys and girls to be separated from an early age and no sex education is provided at home or at school [Rockman 1995].

## Example 2. How to be a wife

TABLE 2. *Arranged Marriage, Episode 2, 0:00:12*

Original dialogue in Yiddish
I'm here to teach you how to be a wife. The physical relationship between husband and wife is holy. Its purpose is to create a family, and family is everything. But how does it work? It's a basic physics. The man is the giver, the woman is the receiver. Understand? . . .

Esty has pain when she has sexual relationships with Yanky and this becomes a problem not only for the couple but also for Yanky's family. His mother asks Esty about it, insofar as Yanky reports to his mum each time they have sex (see Example 3).

## Example 3. Sexual relationships

TABLE 3. *Sexual Relationships, Episode 3, 0:04:36*

Original dialogue in Yiddish
Mother: So, you didn't finish again last night?
Esty: Yanky, told you?
Yanky: Of course, he tells me everything. I'm his mother.

Esty feels trapped in this strict culture and worried because she does not become pregnant. However, she agrees on playing the role of an ultra-Orthodox woman besides not feeling comfortable, so she keeps serving her husband as a good Hasidic wife. For the ultra-Orthodox community, "women and men were created differently by God and these differences serve the family, the community and humanity at large" [Kook and Harel-Shalev 2020].

In contrast, and as aforementioned, German is heard once Esty, struggling to break her cultural roots, flees to Berlin in search of freedom and leaves behind the constrictions of her life in Williamsburg. Esty uses German as a second language that is, not her native language. For Sebba [1997: 16], second languages are used for communicating with people

from the out-group (outside to community) in order to bridge a communicative gap with speakers of some other language. Germany represents Esty's freedom and her new way of life, and so does the language spoken in the country. The main function of German in the series is basically to show otherness, that is, to create the atmosphere of Germany and make the audience realize that the setting now is Berlin. As aforementioned, signaling otherness and character portrayal are also the main functions of Yiddish-instances, but the role of these two languages (Yiddish and German) is different because they represent the two opposed worlds and cultures: tradition and strict rules versus modernity and freedom. Whereas 100% of the Yiddish instances that signal otherness also portray character, only 40% of the German instances that signal otherness also portray character. As Yiddish, German has been thematized twice throughout the series: first (episode 1, min. 0.39.00) when Esty is talking to a woman from Yemen and explains her the similarities between Yiddish and German; again, in episode 2 (min. 0.19.12) when Yanky visits Esty's mother (Leah) in Berlin, he addresses to her in Yiddish but she tells him that the common language in that house is English. For Sebba [*ibid.*], English is a *language of wider communication*, and as it is "a language widely used over a relatively large geographical area," it is considered a *lingua franca* insofar as it is native only to some of its speakers. In the series, German has once caused a dramatic effect, causing misunderstanding when Esty is asking for a coffee in a coffee shop (see section 2 above) and on another occasion it has a metalinguistic function.

Hebrew is the language used for religious events. This language, which is not frequently heard in the series, is basically used to signal otherness and to help portray the Jewish characters in their traditional contexts. It reinforces some of the gendered traditions displayed by Hasidic characters. For example, when Moishe and Yanky are at the hotel room in Berlin and are about to pray, they cover a picture that shows a nude back of a woman. Just afterwards they start praying in Hebrew. The wedding ceremony shown in a flashback in chapter 2 is also in Hebrew.

Likewise, Russian is only heard on few occasions throughout the episodes. It can be heard in episode 2 (min. 06:51), spoken by a cleaning lady at the conservatory in Berlin who is telling Esty that she cannot sleep there. The cleaning lady keeps code-switching between Russian and German when addressing Esty. In episode 3, a few sentences in Russian are uttered by two women that Yanky and Moishe meet at a night club in Berlin. In

minute 19:10 we see Yanky with Trine (one of the Russian women) in a bedroom taking off their clothes. Again, in minute 21:15, we can also see Yanky in a room with a woman. Therefore, Russian is associated to female, presumably migrant, characters, in gendered marginalized tasks.

Although the series gained global popularity, the representation of this traditional and Hasidic world opposed to the good and cosmopolitan Berlin brought criticism to the production, too. For Greenberg [2021: 1-2], “among its shortcomings was a trafficking in simple hero and villain tropes, in which the traditional, Hasidic world was bad, grey, and heartless, and the secular world of Berlin was good and welcoming, all drenched in bright golden hues.”

If we focus on the dubbed Spanish translation, we will see that these third languages and their functions have been transferred to the target text. This language diversity helps depict the intercultural encounters and portray the different characters as it does in the ST. However, for the particular case of subtitling, the focus of our research, it is interesting to note that there is an overall linguistic standardization: no L3 has been transferred to the TT, so all third languages become invisible. Needless to say, the characters voice speaking in their language can be heard. According to de Higes-Andino [2014: 216], audiences “might detect the different languages spoken in the soundtrack,” if they understand those, but no typographical method, such as italics, is used to mark the presence of L3.

## Gender, Music and L3

In this section, we explore how multilingualism has been rendered in the translation of songs, given the thematic importance of music in *Unorthodox* and also its portrayal of gender issues. Within the Traftilm and Mufitavi projects, we considered the L3-instance as the unit of analysis, which may contain one or more L3 utterances in another language different from L1 or L2. For us, a song might also be considered an L3-instance, provided that this might be as short as a single word or as long as a set of L3 utterances, as might be the case of songs. Thus, we might envisage a song as a musicalized instance of L3.

The connections between translation and music have been explored in pioneering works in the first decade of the new millennium [Mateo 2001; Gorrée 2005; Kaindle 2005; Low 2005; Desblache 2007; Susam-Sarajeva 2008]. The various challenges involved have been usefully summarized

in the following decade by Bosseaux [2011] and Mateo [2012], among others. Vocal music and audiovisual translation have been specifically explored by Bosseaux [2011], Desblache [2019], and Mateo [2019]. All these researches have favored a holistic analysis, where the verbal text interplays with non-verbal elements, both in the visual and aural codes. Besides, songs perform diverse roles in source- and target cultures. Therefore, attention needs to be paid to the importance of sociocultural contexts [Kaindl 2005].

A critical aspect in the translation of vocal music is the tension between words and music and their relative importance, in what have been called, respectively, logocentric versus musicocentric approaches. Under a logocentric focus, intelligibility is a priority, while singability is fostered in musicocentric approaches [Low 2005].

As regards the connections between song translation and multilingualism, Mateo has highlighted the relevance of sound: “heteroglossia makes us aware of the fact that sounds themselves may have meaning . . . , multilingualism in musical texts would [be] part of song’s materiality, frequently prevailing over the semantic content and becoming significant in itself” [Mateo 2019: 25]. This is in keeping with the material importance of sound in multilingualism and films, as studied by O’Sullivan [2011: 71-72].

Subtitling is an especially apt translation mode to convey the importance of sound. Subtitling of songs has been explored, among others, by Mateo [2019], and Díaz-Cintas and Remael [2020: 195-200]. More specifically, the decision as to when and how to subtitle songs shows the delicate balance between logocentric and musicocentric approaches. Most professional guidelines, such as Netflix’s, recommend subtitling plot-pertinent songs [Netflix Partner Help Center 2021: II.19], therefore favoring the text. However, it is important to take into account that subtitles are read while listening to music and lyrics. Therefore, rhythm needs also to be taken into account. Besides, songs “suggesting a mood or creating an atmosphere . . . must be given special attention” [Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2020: 196].

In *Unorthodox*, both logocentric and musicocentric priorities are at play, according to the function of music and language in the series. In the first part, set in the ultra-Orthodox Brooklyn neighborhood, the main function of music – and of third languages – is characterization of the Hasidic community. Hebrew songs appear in celebrations, such as Esty and Yanky’s wedding, and they are not subtitled. In the second part of the

series, set in Berlin, music acquires thematic and symbolic importance. Together with the German setting, it becomes a metaphor of freedom and subversion. “In music, often, you have to break the rules to make a masterpiece” (Ep. 2, 10:33), says Karim, the music teacher Esty meets at the conservatory. Other international music students sympathize with Esty’s need to break away from oppressive settings. In the words of Ahmed, “Imagine being a gay kid in Nigeria. A gay kid with a cello” (Ep. 2, 44:09). In this context, songs are subtitled or not depending on the specific function of each song. In the following pages, we will look at four examples of songs, their translation strategies, and their function in the series.

Example 4 below depicts a family scene where Esty is at home with her grandmother, listening to music.

#### Example 4. Music and Hasidism

TABLE 43. Music and Hasidism, Episode 1, 0:10:14-0:11:50

English subtitles (SDH) Original dialogue in Yiddish	Spanish subtitles
[Opera music playing] [Esty sings along] Esty: Babby? [opera music continues playing]	Esty: Babby.
Grandma: My father loved this song. <b>He</b> had a wonderful <b>voice</b> , Esty. Your great-grandpa. <b>All the men</b> in his family did.	Grandma: A mi padre le encantaba esta canción. Tenía una <b>voz</b> maravillosa, Esty. Tu bisabuelo. Todos los <b>hombres</b> de su familia la tenían.

<sup>3</sup> Emphasis is placed on elements that will be commented on later. Subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) have been included, to indicate the interaction between the song and the dialogue. However, since no indication of the music is explicitly given so far in the dialogue, this will not be analyzed yet.

Esty: In Hungary, before the war?	Esty: En Hungría, antes de la guerra.
Grandma: So many lost. But soon you'll have <b>children</b> of your own.	Grandma: Tantos muertos. Pero pronto tendrás tus propios hijos.
...	...
Esty's aunt: Grandpa will be home any minute.	Esty's aunt: El abuelo está a punto de llegar.
Esty: He's not here yet!	Esty: No está aquí.
Esty's aunt: So he'll hear <b>women singing</b> when he arrives? No.	Esty's aunt: ¿Quieres que oiga a <b>mujeres</b> <b>cantando</b> cuando llegue?

This scene is partially based on Deborah Feldman's autobiography:

If Zeidy isn't home, Bubby sings. . . . This one is a Viennese waltz, she tells me, or a Hungarian rhapsody. Tunes from her childhood, she says, her memories of Budapest. When Zeidy comes home, she stops the humming. I know women are not allowed to sing, but in front of family it is permitted. Still, Zeidy encourages singing only on Shabbos. Since the Temple was destroyed, he says, we shouldn't sing or listen to music unless it's a special occasion. Sometimes Bubby takes the old tape recorder that my father gave me and plays the cassette of my cousin's wedding music over and over, at a low volume so she can hear if someone's coming. She shuts it off at the merest sound of creaking in the hallway. . . . Only one of her sons inherited her voice, Bubby says. The rest are like their father. I tell her I was chosen for a solo in a school choir, that maybe I did inherit my strong, clear voice from her family. I want her to be proud of me [Feldman 2012: 12].

From these scenes, audiences learn about music in the Satmar community, "a Hasidic sect known for its extreme religious conservatism and rigidly enforced gender roles" [Blake 2020: 9]. There we see the gendered public/private divide, according to which only men sing in public, whereas women sing only exceptionally, mostly in private occasions. The taste for music in women can only be nurtured and transferred to sons. The scene also highlights the importance of voice, in terms of sound quality, which

foretells the thematic importance voice will acquire later on, as illustrated in Example 5.

### Example 5. *Hebe deine Augen auf*

TABLE 5. *Hebe deine Augen auf*, Episode 3, 00:22:55

English subtitles (SDH) Original in German	Spanish subtitles
Girls choir conductor: We'll do Mendelssohn's "Hebe deine Augen auf" next, please.	Girls choir conductor: Cantaremos una de Mendelssohn: "Hebe deine Augen auf"

This scene takes place after Esty has realized that it will be difficult for her to obtain a scholarship to study piano in Berlin, given her lack of formal music training. While walking in the streets of Berlin, she hears the sound of a women's choir coming from a nearby church. She enters it to listen to their practice. The woman conductor announces, in German, the song they are singing next, Mendelssohn's *Hebe deine Augen auf*. The full song can be heard while Esty listens to it in the church, visibly moved, her eyes progressively filled with tears. It is not subtitled, probably to prioritize the mood and the importance of song at this moment in the narrative. The fact that the title is mentioned in the dialogue is consistent with the scene, a choir rehearsal, but is also relevant for audiences who can understand the words. The title of the piece, *Hebe deine Augen auf*, has been translated into English as *Lift Thine Eyes*.<sup>4</sup> These words will be translated non-verbally through images in this scene: Esty will be seen looking up, first in the church, and later at a bridge, from where she captures the reverberation of women's voices under it (Ep 3. 35). It is an epiphanic moment for Esty: she literally lifts up her eyes to listen to women's singing, in public. From this detail, spectators may deduce that this will give her the idea of presenting a song, and not a piano piece, at her audition to apply for a scholarship at the conservatory.

This leads us to the following example of L3-instance (see Example 6 below), where Esty sings *An die Musik* at her audition, after announcing the title of the song to the examining board. This song is subtitled, and its

<sup>4</sup> <[https://www.rundel.de/en/hebe\\_deine\\_augen\\_auf/a-1/6572](https://www.rundel.de/en/hebe_deine_augen_auf/a-1/6572)>, visited 14 March 2022.

lyrics are juxtaposed with a dialogue, also subtitled, taking place between Leah, Esty’s mother, who has come to listen to her, and Moishe, Yanky’s cousin, who intends to interrupt the audition and take Esty back to New York.

Example 6. *An die Musik*

TABLE 6. *An die Musik*, Episode 4, 34:30-35:15

English subtitles (SDH) Original in German	Spanish subtitles
["An die Musik by Schubert playing over piano] <b>Esty:</b> [in German] ♪ <i>You champion of art</i> ♪ ♪ <i>In how many awful hours</i> ♪ ♪ <i>Where I was snared up</i> ♪ ♪ <i>In life's vicious cycle</i> ♪ ♪ <i>All those wretched hours</i> ♪ ♪ <i>You have my heart...</i> ♪ <b>Leah:</b> [Leah in English] You won't mess this up for her. Understand me? [in German] ♪ <i>...into a better world</i> ♪ <b>Moishe:</b> [In Yiddish] She belongs with us. The baby, too. <b>Leah:</b> [in English] You're not the only one that can make threats. [in German] ♪ <i>...into a better world</i> ♪	<b>Esty:</b> <i>Oh, magnánimo arte</i> <i>En cuántas horas sombrías</i> <i>Cuando me atenaza</i> <i>El ciclo feroz de la vida</i> <i>Has inflamado mi corazón...</i> <b>Leah:</b> No dejaré que le estropees esto. ¿Me has entendido? [...]  <i>...hacia un mundo mejor</i> <b>Moishe:</b> Su sitio está con nosotros. El bebé, lo mismo. No eres el único que sabe amenazar. <i>...hacia un mundo mejor</i>

*An Die Musik*, D. 547, is a lied for voice and piano, by Franz Schubert, and its text is from a poem by Franz von Schober.<sup>5</sup> The subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing in English (SDH) have been reproduced here for different reasons: in the first place, to show that the music is specifically identified, even if it is also mentioned in the dialogue. This is in contrast with the first appearance of this song in the series (see Example 4 above), where its title is not mentioned in the dialogue and the SDH describe it

<sup>5</sup> <<https://musopen.org/music/1642-an-die-musik-d-547/>>, visited 14 March 2022.

as “opera” [*sic*]. Secondly, the SDH let us see the contrast between the dialogue and the music, which is identified through both the use of italics and also a musical symbol. Thirdly, SDH let us also see multilingualism at work, with the song in German, juxtaposed by dialogue in English and Yiddish. In the Spanish subtitles, there is no identification of the different languages at stake, since they are intended for general audiences, but the song is identified as such through the use of italics.

The lied is subtitled, according to the plot-relevance criterion. Here the words are certainly relevant for the story. The song is an ode to music and its transformative power. Music can change “awful hours” (“grauen Stunden”/“horas sombrías”). Such dark moments are exemplified through the tense dialogue between Esty’s mother and cousin outside the auditorium, which contrasts with the serene final notes and words of the song (“into a better world”/“hacia un mundo mejor”/“In eine beßre Welt”). The subtitles are not singable versions, since they are meant to be read, but given the fact that they are read whilst listening to the original music and words, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, the tone and register are solemn, in keeping with the source-text.

Just after Esty sings this lied, members of the examining board ask her about her choice of the song, and this leads to an explanation by Esty about the role of music in Hasidism, which complements the information after the first appearance of the song (see Example 4, above). There, the gendered roles in music were implicit. Here, they are made explicit for audiences unfamiliar to Hasidic custom.

### Example 7. Music and Hasidism explained

TABLE 7. Music and Hasidism Explained, 35:58 -36:44

English subtitles (SDH) Original in English	Spanish subtitles
Karim (music teacher): Can you tell us why you chose this song?	Karim (music teacher): ¿Por qué ha elegido esta canción?
Esty:	Esty:
My grandmother loved it.	Le gustaba a mi abuela.
It was our secret.	Era nuestro secreto.
Woman in examining board:	Woman in examining board:
Why a secret?	¿Por qué era un secreto?
[breathes nervously]	

Esty: I come from a community In Williamsburg, Brooklyn... Where <b>women are not allowed to sing in public.</b> Woman in examining board: Why not? <b>Esty:</b> <b>A woman performing loudly among men is considered to be immodest. Even seductive.</b>	Esty: Provengo de una comunidad en Williamsburg, Brooklyn... ...que <b>no permite a las mujeres cantar en público.</b> Woman in examining board: ¿Por qué? <b>Esty:</b> <b>Se considera indecorosa a una mujer que canta en voz alta en presencia de hombres. Incluso insinuante.</b>
--	--

Here, the private/public gender divide is emphasized, with sexual connotations added: singing in public by Hasidic women is considered seductive. Right after this, Esty is asked to sing another song, more apt for her mezzosoprano, instead of the soprano register in *An die Musik*. The SDH in this fragment introduce the tension of the scene by the inclusion of such subtitles as “[breathes nervously]” and, just before singing her final song, “[inhales deeply and exhales].”

Example 8. *Mi Bon Siach*

TABLE 8. *Mi Bon Siach*, Episode 4, 37:40-40:08<sup>6</sup>

English subtitles (SDH) Original in Hebrew	Spanish subtitles
[inhales deeply and exhales]	Æ
[sings in Yiddish]	

Here, the song is preceded by the subtitle “[sings in Yiddish].” Actually, the song *Mi Bon Siach* is not in Yiddish, but in Hebrew (מי בון שיח). It is a wedding song, which has been played before, at Esty and Yanky’s wedding, which, as mentioned in section 2 above, was delivered in Hebrew (a language linked to religion within the ultra-Orthodox community). Esther Zuckerman [2020:

<sup>6</sup> The song is available here: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLt6MxfNVmo>>, visited 14 March 2022.

12] provides the following explanation to show how Esty's song shows both her connection to and her rejection from tradition:

Then, in a strong chest voice, she starts to sing in Hebrew. The tune, which is never identified by name, is "Mi Bon Siach," heard at weddings when the bride and groom are under the chuppah. It's a melody that played when Esty and Yanky were getting married in the second episode, and Esty's choice of it resonates with both rebellion and irony. It's a song that should signify her bond to a man, but she's turning it into something that can extricate her from that bond, using a voice that she wouldn't have been able to use in her former world where women's singing is prohibited. . . . Yanky watches her from a corner of the auditorium as she performs what is both a rejection and embrace of her past [*ibid.*].

The full song is sung, and for its full duration, about two minutes, audiences have no access to the unsubtitled words, only to the effect of Esty's voice on her film audience, consisting of the examining board, fellow students, her mother, and Esty. Even if the ending of the series does not leave it clear whether she passes her audition, the audience is visibly moved by her performance, and her now powerful voice. Actress Shira Haas, who played Esty, says, "this scene was so meaningful for me, because it's literally about a girl finding her own voice" [Saval 2020]. Audiences witness how Esty literally finds her voice in a language related to her community, but in a new place, in an entirely different context. This is in keeping with a long tradition of Jewish literature which places "the curious young woman at the threshold between tradition and modernity, between religion and the secular" [Greenberg 2021: 2].

In this section we have seen the different roles of music in *Unorthodox*, which can be connected to the empowerment of the protagonist along the story. The following table (Table 9) summarizes these findings. We see how translation strategies (subtitling versus not subtitling) is connected to the function of the songs as L3-instances, diverse in different episodes, rather than to the specific language in which they are sung.

TABLE 9. Songs in *Unorthodox*: Function, Language and Translation

Song	Episode	Language	Function	Translation
An Die Musik (lied)	1	German	Characterization	No subtitling

Hebe deine Augen auf (women's chorus)	3	German	Characterization/ Plot twist	No subtitling
An Die Musik (lied)	4	German	Theme	Subtitled
Mi Bon Siach מי בון שיה	2	Hebrew	Characterization	No subtitling
Mi Bon Siach מי בון שיה	4	Hebrew	Characterization	No subtitling

## Conclusions

*Unorthodox* is a multilingual audiovisual production where the different languages on the screen help construct particular cultural and gendered identities. The role of third languages (L3) is very relevant in depicting the intercultural encounters in the series. Yiddish is the most prominent L3, with a presence of 87.5%, followed by German (10.3%), and a little Russian and Hebrew (1.1% of L3-instances each). The most recurrent functions of L3-instances in *Unorthodox* are basically signaling otherness and character portrayal, representing 97.9% and 73.9%, respectively, of all conversations (from the Traftilm Database) analyzed, although to a much lesser degree, they also have other functions: theme (5.2%), metalinguistic (2.1%), dramatic effect (2.08%), and stereotype (1%).

Yiddish is mostly used to signal otherness and to portray the diverse characters that belong to the ultra-Orthodox community. The main function of German is also to show otherness, in creating an atmosphere of Germany. Although both Yiddish and German are used for character portrayal and signaling otherness, their role is different in that they represent two opposed worlds and cultures: tradition and strict rules versus modernity and freedom, a binary opposition that has actually been criticized [Greenberg 2021: 1-2]. Hebrew is used for ceremonies, prayers and songs, and it portrays Jewish characters in their traditional contexts. *Unorthodox* is rich in L3 use and different languages in the series play different gendered and narrative roles. Russian, Hebrew, and German, even if they are not quantitatively prominent, are qualitatively significant, especially in songs.

The translation of songs in this multilingual series poses specific challenges. It firstly shows the relative importance of conveying the word or the music. Both musicocentric and logocentric approaches to song translation are at work in *Unorthodox*. Subtitling strategies also depend on the specific function of songs as L3-instances in the narrative. The same song

can be treated differently at different points in the narrative, as dialogue L3-instances can be transferred to the target text on a number of ways. Other challenges are the specification of the type of music (lied vs. opera) or language (Yiddish vs. Hebrew) in subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing. In subtitles for general audiences, by contrast, the presence of L3 is not marked in the subtitles, as it is not marked in the subtitling of dialogues; therefore language diversity can be hidden for audiences not identifying the various languages in the series. The identification of language in the final Hebrew song in the series can be relevant in conveying the protagonist connection to her community. Even if Esty is empowered as a woman through, literally, finding her voice, the fact that this voice sings in Hebrew shows that even if characters depart from specific roles, they can subvert them in new places.

## REFERENCES

- Bartrina, F., Espasa, E. (2012), “Panorama desde el puente: Tres lustros de investigación y docencia en TAV y estudios de género”, [in:] Juan José Martínez Sierra, ed. *Reflexiones sobre la traducción audiovisual: Tres espectros, tres momentos*, Universitat de València, Valencia.
- Binimelis, M. (2015), “Perspectivas teóricas en torno a la representación de las mujeres en el cine: Una breve aproximación histórica”, *Secuencias: Revista de historia del cine*. 42: 9-34, <https://doi.org/10.15366/secuencias2016.42.001>.
- Blake, M. (2020), “Netflix’s ‘Unorthodox’ Went to Remarkable Lengths to Get Hasidic Jewish Customs Right”, *Los Angeles Times*, [online] <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/tv/story/2020-04-07/unorthodox-netflix-hasidic-jewish-customs>, visited 30 November 2021.
- Bosseaux, C. (2011), “The Translation of Song”, [in:] Kirsten Malmkjær, Kevin Windle, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Corrius, M. (2008), *Translating Multilingual Audiovisual Texts: Priorities and Restrictions: Implications and Applications*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona.
- Corrius, M., De Marco, M., Espasa, E. (2016), “Situated Learning and Situated Knowledge: Gender, Translating Audiovisual Adverts and Professional Responsibility”, *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*. 10(1): 59-75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399x.2016.1154343>.

- Corrius, M., Espasa, E., Zabalbeascoa, P. (2019), "The Multilingual Text: A Challenge for Audio Description", [in:] Montse Corrius, Eva Espasa, Patrick Zabalbeascoa, eds. *Translating Audiovisuals in a Kaleidoscope of Languages*, Peter Lang, Berlin.
- Corrius, M., Zabalbeascoa, P. (2011), "Language Variation in Source Texts and Their Translations", *Target*. 23(1): 113-130, <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.23.1.07zab>.
- De Bonis, G. (2015), "Translating Multilingualism in Film: A Case Study on Le Concert", *New Voices in Translation Studies*. 12: 50-71.
- De Marco, M. (2006), "Multiple Portrayals in Cinematographic and Audiovisual Translation Discourse", [in:] Mary Carroll, Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast, Sandra Nauert, eds. *Audiovisual Translation Scenarios: Conference Proceedings*, MuTra, Copenhagen.
- Delabastita, D. (2010), "Language, Comedy and Translation in the BBC Sitcom 'Allo, 'Allo!", [in:] Delia Chiaro, ed. *Translation, Humour and the Media: Translation and Humour*, Vol. 2, Continuum, London.
- Desblache, L. (2007), "Music to My Ears, but Words to My Eyes? Text, Opera and Their Audiences", *Linguistica Antverpiensia. New Series: Themes in Translation Studies*. 6: 155-170, <https://doi.org/10.52034/lanstts.v6i.185>.
- Desblache, L. (2019), *Music and Translation: New Mediations in the Digital Age*, Springer, London, <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-54965-5>.
- Díaz Cintas, J., Remael, A. (2020), *Subtitling: Concepts and Practices*, Routledge, London.
- Feldman, D. (2012), *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots*, Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Godayol, P. (2013), "Gender and Translation", [in:] Carmen Millán, Francesca Bartrina, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*, Routledge, London.
- Gorlée, D.L. (2005), *Song and Significance: Virtues and Vices of Vocal Translation*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401201544>.
- Greenberg, L.H. (2021), *Curious Daughters: Language, Literacy, and Jewish Female Desire in German and Yiddish Literature from 1793 to 1916*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Duke University, Chapel Hill.
- Heiss, C. (2004), "Dubbing Multilingual Films: A New Challenge?", *Meta*. 49(1): 208-220, <https://doi.org/10.7202/009035ar>.
- Higes-Andino de, I. (2014), "The Translation of Multilingual Films: Modes, Strategies, Constraints and Manipulation in the Spanish Translations of It's a Free World...", *Linguistica Antverpiensia. New Series: Themes in Translation Studies*. 13: 211-231, <https://doi.org/10.52034/lanstts.v13i.47>.

- Kaindl, K. (2005), "The Plurisemiotics of Pop Song Translation: Words, Music, Voice and Image", [in:] Dinda L. Gorlée, ed. *Song and Significance: Virtues and Vices of Vocal Translation*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401201544\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401201544_009).
- Kook, R.B., Harel-Shalev, A. (2020), "Patriarchal Norms, Practices and Changing Gendered Power Relations – Narratives of Ultra-Orthodox Women in Israel", *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. 28(7): 975-998, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2020.1762546>.
- Low, P. (2005), "The Pentathlon Approach to Translating Songs", [in:] Dinda L. Gorlée, ed. *Song and Significance: Virtues and Vices of Vocal Translation*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401201544\\_007](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401201544_007).
- Mateo, M. (2001), "Performing Musical Texts in a Target Language: The Case of Spain", *Across Languages and Cultures*. 2(1): 31-50, <https://doi.org/10.1556/acr.2.2001.1.3>.
- Mateo, M. (2012), "Music and Translation", [in:] Yves Gambier, Luc van Doorslaer, eds. *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Vol. 3, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam.
- Mateo, M. (2019), "Multilingualism in Stage and Film Musicals: Varying Choices in Various Translation Modes and Contexts", [in:] Montse Corrius, Eva Espasa, Patrick Zabalbeascoa, eds. *Translating Audiovisuals in a Kaleidoscope of Languages*, Peter Lang, Berlin.
- Netflix Partner Help Center (2021), "English Timed Text Style Guide" [guidelines for subtitling], *Netflix*, [online] <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/217350977-English-Timed-Text-Style-Guide>, visited 30 November 2021.
- O'Sullivan, C. (2011), *Translating Popular Film*, Springer, London, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230317543>.
- Rockman, H. (1995), "Sexual Behaviour among Ultra-Orthodox Jews: A Review of Laws and Guidelines", [in:] Jonathan Magonet, ed. *Jewish Explorations of Sexuality*, Berghahn Books, Oxford.
- Saval, M. (2020), "'Unorthodox' Star Shira Haas Brings Yiddish, Hassidic Judaism and Contemporary German Culture to Netflix", *Variety*, [online] <https://variety.com/2020/tv/features/unorthodox-shira-haas-yiddish-hassidic-judaism-contemporary-german-culture-netflix-audiences-1203543816/>, visited 30 November 2021.
- Sebba, M. (1997), *Contact Languages: Pidgins and Creoles*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London.

- Susam-Sarajeva, Ş., ed. (2008), "Translation and Music", *The Translator*. 14(2): 187-200.
- Thomason, S. (2001), *Language Contact: An Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press Ltd, Edinburgh.
- Von Flotow, L., Josephy-Hernández, D. (2018), "Gender in Audiovisual Translation Studies: Advocating for Gender Awareness", [in:] Luis Pérez-González, ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation*, Routledge, London, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315717166-19>.
- Zabalbeascoa, P., Corrius, M. (2019), "Conversation as a Unit of Film Analysis: Databases of L3 Translation and Audiovisual Samples of Multilingualism", *MonTI. Special Issue: Multilingüismo y representación de las identidades en textos audiovisuales*. 4: 57-85, <https://doi.org/10.6035/MonTI.2019.ne4.2>.
- Zuckerman, E. (2020), "How the Ending of Netflix's 'Unorthodox' Depicts an Astonishing Act of Rebellion", *Thrillist*, [online] <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/netflix-unorthodox-ending-explained>, visited 30 November 2021.

## Projects

- The MUFiTAVi project (2019-2022) on the translation of multilingual TV series in video on demand platforms (PGC2018-099823-B-I00).
- The TRAFILM project (2015-2018). The Translation of Multilingual Films in Spain (FFI2014-55952-P).

## Audiovisual Productions

- Brancato, C., Bernard, C., Miro, D. (2015), *Narcos*, USA/Columbia.
- Cameron, J. (2009), *Avatar*, USA/UK.
- Karolinski, A., Winger, A., Schrader, M. (2020), *Unorthodox* (Spanish subtitles by Emma Carballal Haire), Germany.
- Kohan, J. (2013), *Orange is the New Black*, USA.
- Scott, R. (1982), *Blade Runner*, Hongkong/USA/UK.

## ABSTRACT

Through a multidisciplinary approach that combines translation studies and gender studies, this paper analyzes multilingualism in the series *Unorthodox* (Netflix 2020). We examine the presence and functions of

multilingualism and how dialogues and music help construct the different identities and gendered roles in the series.

*Unorthodox* tells the story of Esther Saphiro (Esty), a young Jewish woman who flees from her country and leaves her ultra-Orthodox community, with very strict rules and traditional gender roles. We explore the connections between the gendered roles of the main characters, their cultural or social contexts, and, especially, the role of third languages in the series (Yiddish, German, Russian, and Hebrew). As it is a German-American production, we consider English as its main language (L1) because the story is directed to mainstream Western audiences.

The role of third languages (L3) is very relevant in depicting the intercultural encounters in the series. Yiddish is the most prominent L3 followed by German and a little Russian and Hebrew. The most recurrent functions of L3-instances are signaling otherness and character portrayal, where Yiddish and German are used. Hebrew is used for ceremonies, prayers and songs, and it portrays Jewish characters in their traditional contexts.

We pay special attention to songs, as rich L3 instances, where there is interaction of L3 function, gender significance, translation strategies, and narrative roles. The translation of songs shows the relative importance of conveying the word or the music. Finally, the identification of third languages is not marked in the subtitling of either songs or dialogues; therefore, language diversity can be hindered for audiences not discriminating between the various languages.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, third language (L3), gender, songs, audio-visual translation, *Unorthodox*