



UNIVERSITÀ DI PARMA

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN

"Scienze filologico-letterarie, storico-filosofiche e artistiche"

CICLO XXXVIII

Sociolinguistic Variation and Audiovisual Accessibility:

Analysing Non-Standard English

in Subtitles for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) Audiences

Coordinatore:

Chiar.mo Prof. Italo Testa

Tutore:

Chiar.ma Prof.ssa Micòl Beseghi

Co-tutore:

Chiar.ma Prof.ssa Michela Canepari

Dottoranda: Francesca Illiano

Anni Accademici 2022/2023 – 2024/2025

*I don't know which option you should choose.
I could never advise you on that...
No matter what kind of wisdom dictates you the option you pick,
no one will be able to tell if it's right or wrong
until you arrive to some sort of outcome from your choice.*

Levi Ackermann, Attack on Titan

*What matters deafness of the ear,
when the mind hears?
The one true deafness,
the incurable deafness,
is that of the mind.*

Victor Hugo

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	9
<i>Chapter 1: Accessible Subtitling</i>	14
<i>1.1 Subtitles and AVT</i>	14
<i>1.2 Accessibility issues</i>	20
<i>1.3 SDH: history, definitions, and main features</i>	25
<i>1.3.1 Historical background</i>	25
<i>1.3.2 Definitions</i>	27
<i>1.3.3 Main features</i>	29
<i>1.4 Latest updates in subtitling</i>	37
<i>Chapter 2: Issues on Deafness</i>	41
<i>2.1 Medical specifications</i>	41
<i>2.2 Deafness in numbers in the UK</i>	52
<i>2.3 Cognitive implications in reading subtitles</i>	55
<i>2.3.1 A difference in codes</i>	55
<i>2.3.2 The eye-tracking technique</i>	60
<i>Chapter 3: Sociolinguistic Variation in SDH</i>	65
<i>3.1 Sociolinguistic perspectives</i>	65
<i>3.1.1 Sociolinguistic variation in audiovisual products</i>	65
<i>3.1.2 Sociolinguistic variation in Deaf communities</i>	72
<i>3.2 Research design</i>	76
<i>3.3 Methodology</i>	83
<i>3.3.1 Selecting streaming services</i>	83
<i>3.3.2 The building of LISA Corpus and the tagset</i>	86
<i>3.3.3 The making of the interview: minimising the Observer's Paradox in research with deaf participants</i>	114

<i>Chapter 4: LISA Corpus Data Analysis</i>	122
4.1 <i>Setting the lexical analysis and checking general frequencies</i>	122
4.2 <i>Analysis of the distribution of the SWR tag in LISA Corpus</i>	125
4.2.1 <i>Analysis of SWR collocates and semantic relations</i>	129
4.2.2 <i>Distribution of SWR per streaming platform</i>	135
4.3 <i>Analysis of the distribution of the SLG tag in LISA Corpus</i>	137
4.3.1 <i>Analysis of SLG collocates and semantic relations</i>	145
4.3.2 <i>Distribution of SLG per streaming platform</i>	151
4.4 <i>Analysis of the distribution of the DIAL tag in LISA Corpus</i>	154
4.4.1 <i>Analysis of DIAL collocates and semantic relations</i>	159
4.4.2 <i>Distribution of DIAL per streaming platform</i>	162
4.5 <i>Setting the syntactic analysis and checking frequencies</i>	163
4.5.1 <i>Analysis of the <MRK: inv> tag distribution in LISA Corpus</i>	165
4.5.2 <i>Analysis of the <MRK: cop> tag distribution in LISA Corpus</i>	171
4.5.3 <i>Analysis of the <MRK: agr> tag distribution in LISA Corpus</i>	176
4.5.4 <i>Analysis of the <MRK: form> tag distribution in LISA Corpus</i>	183
4.6 <i>General considerations on the analysis of non-standard variations</i>	188
<i>Chapter 5: The SDH Sub-Corpus</i>	191
5.1 <i>AppleTV+: Ted Lasso and Blitz</i>	191
5.1.1 <i>Ted Lasso: British English vs. American English</i>	192
5.1.2 <i>Blitz: Exploring social dynamics through language</i>	203
5.2 <i>Disney+: Wedding Season and Rye Lane</i>	212
5.2.1 <i>Wedding Season: some ‘Scottishness’ with standard SDH</i>	212
5.2.2 <i>Rye Lane: younger speakers in London</i>	220
5.3 <i>Netflix: Sex Education and The Beautiful Game</i>	229
5.3.1 <i>Sex Education: taboo language and genderlect in teenagers’ speech</i>	229
5.3.2 <i>The Beautiful Game: global variations and multilingualism</i>	239

5.4 Prime Video: The Grand Tour and Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit.....	248
5.4.1 The Grand Tour: <i>from variation to silence</i>	248
5.4.2 Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit: <i>pretending racism through language</i>	262
5.5 Final Considerations: <i>Tendencies, Criticalities, and Perspectives of Sociolinguistic Variation in the SVoD's SDH</i>	275
Chapter 6: Interview Data Analysis	281
6.1 Data Discussion	281
6.1.1 Questions on deafness.....	282
6.1.2 Sociolinguistic section	284
6.1.3 Linguistic competence section	285
6.1.4 Questions on SDH usage	286
6.1.5 Perception section.....	287
6.1.6 Reception section	290
Conclusions	306
I. Summary of the research study	306
II. Key findings and discussion	307
III. Strengths of the research study	309
IV. Limitations and justifications	310
i) The interview	310
ii) The corpus and the tagset.....	310
V. Research significance and contribution	312
VI. Future research directions	313
References	316
Web References	327
Filmography.....	334
Appendix	339

Introduction

The present study focuses on the linguistic quality of accessible subtitles for British programmes in the UK, examined from a sociolinguistic perspective through the creation of corpora. More specifically, this empirically oriented project explores the degree of linguistic coherence between subtitles and the spoken, colloquial English performed in audiovisual (AV) productions, with attention to sociolinguistic dimensions. The aim is to discuss the need for linguistic and stylistic improvements to ensure a fully accessible service, reduce discriminatory implications, and enhance AV entertainment for people with hearing loss.

Research into accessible subtitles represents a compelling field of analysis within Translation Studies, as it investigates the functionality of diamesic transposition – from oral to written – of AV multisemiotic texts (Perego, 2005). Subtitling for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing people (SDH) specifically revolves around two semiotic components: the visual-verbal channel (i.e., subtitles and other written text on screen) and the visual-non-verbal channel (i.e., images). Since acoustic components constitute an obstacle for the target audience, they must be entirely conveyed through the visual-verbal channel.

Research in sociolinguistics related to Deaf people has mainly focused on variation in British Sign Language (BSL), particularly at the lexical level, with only a few exceptions that address subtitling strategies at a deeper linguistic level (Ranzato, 2019; Zárate, 2021; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021). Such studies provide valuable insights into how sociolinguistic variation appears in Deaf communication and the extent to which it is represented in SDH. For instance, Schembri (2008) analyses BSL using variationist sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics to investigate vernacular use, linguistic change, and contact. His dataset aimed “to create a judgement sample of the deaf community rather than a strictly representative sample” (p. 165). This suggests that the presence of variation in a sign language reflects an awareness of spoken variationist features among d/Deaf individuals. Similarly, Stamp et al. (2015) provide evidence of how linguistic background influences Deaf signers, including those profoundly deaf since birth.

Neves (2005) also highlights this aspect, extending it beyond sign language users: “most hearing-impaired people [...] have been taken through educational programmes that allow them to interact within different groups” (p. 86). Comparable observations can be applied to the

diastratic dimension of language: even when significant social implications are not detected – e.g., in the production of number signs in the British Deaf community (Stamp et al., 2015), awareness of linguistic stratification may still occur, particularly when engaging with spoken language. For instance, Erting and Woodward (1979) identified elements of social stratification and interactional schemata in conversational strategies within the American Deaf community. However, using Halliday’s framework, the interpersonal function of communication appears to involve more diaphasic parameters, such as register and style, rather than strictly social class. Since AV products are based on dialogue and the plausibility of ‘spontaneous’ speech, examining the diaphasic continuum of non-standard British English varieties is essential to ensure the same plausibility is conveyed in subtitles for hearing-impaired viewers. Zárte (2021) briefly addresses this issue when discussing omissions in SDH, using the example of Catherine Tate’s character Lauren Cooper. Her personality and social status are effectively conveyed through a verbatim strategy, for example by transcribing the pronounced ‘bovered’ instead of the standard ‘bothered’.

Since this research focuses on SDH in the UK, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) offers a relevant example of how the service is delivered by public television. It was the first European national broadcaster to provide subtitles via the teletext decoding system in 1979 and the first to subtitle 100% of its national programming (Deaf History, 2020). The BBC also regularly updates its subtitling guidelines. These include recommendations for the treatment of sociolinguistic features. From a diatopic perspective, for instance, the BBC states: “Do not indicate accent as a matter of course, but only where it is relevant for the viewer’s understanding. [It] may well be relevant in lighter factual items” (BBC, 2022). It further advises: “Aim to give the viewer a flavour of the accent or dialect by spelling a few words phonetically and by including any unusual vocabulary or sentence construction that can be easily read” (*ibid.*), and to avoid correcting grammatical features that are characteristic of dialects. This illustrates a tension: while regional or urban varieties of British English are implicitly treated as ‘incorrect’, the BBC nonetheless seeks to ensure linguistic coherence.

Diasemiotic translation requires careful attention to preserve all information necessary for understanding the plot and, crucially, for accurately portraying characters through their register, style, or dialect. Characterisation should remain faithful to the director’s vision and adhere to the quality expected under Grice’s maxim of manner. However, these considerations are not the only motivation for investigating the sociolinguistic profile of subtitles. First, demands from Deaf associations for verbatim subtitles highlight the importance of preserving linguistic

features and avoiding a form of ‘censorship’ (OFCOM, 2005; Neves, 2005, 2008; Romero-Fresco, 2009), including non-standard elements. Moreover, recent complaints about the underrepresentation of regional British accents and dialects on the BBC (OFCOM, 2018a; 2018b) suggest a similar lack in SDH. This increases the relevance of investigating language typologies in subtitles from a variationist perspective.

Research on SDH has expanded in more recent times (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021), although it has primarily addressed technical aspects such as editing, condensation, and synchronisation (Díaz-Cintas, 2003, 2004; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007; Burnham et al., 2008; Szarkowska et al., 2016; Agulló and Matamala, 2019). Corpus-based studies in subtitling have also tended to focus on compression strategies (Vandeghinste and Sang, 2004). Limited work has explored the potential of corpora to support linguistic analysis of SDH or to contribute to the development of dedicated subtitle databases for synchronic and diachronic research.

The issue of linguistic coherence in SDH is also driven by the increasing number of people with hearing loss in the UK. Recent data show that 12 million people in the UK are registered as Deaf or hard of hearing (RNID, 2018a), one million more than in 2017 (Central Digital & Data Office, 2017; Hearing Link Services, 2022). In addition, 151,000 people in the UK are BSL users (Central Digital & Data Office, 2017; RNID, 2018b; Hearing Link Services, 2022), 87,000 of whom are Deaf (BDA, 2011). By 2035, an estimated 15.6 million people in the UK will be affected by hearing loss (Hearing Link Services, 2022), pointing to a clear diachronic increase.

Such statistics highlight the need for precise and context-sensitive subtitling practices, particularly with respect to linguistic coherence between spoken dialogue and written subtitles. Blogs and articles that gather the views of d/Deaf audiences are also significant for this research. For instance, The National (2021) reported complaints regarding lexical errors in the SDH of a popular series; similarly, several d/Deaf individuals’ blogs have expressed frustration with inadequate subtitling services, including instances where subtitles are absent altogether (Action on Hearing, 2015; Romero-Fresco, 2019; O’Dell, 2022). A striking case occurred in cinemas: the 2021 Marvel film *The Eternals* – which featured a Deaf superhero – was not subtitled in half of UK cinemas (National Deaf Children Society, 2021). These examples demonstrate that accessibility in SDH remains problematic at multiple levels.

The empirical analysis of this research will be conducted through corpus-driven methods. The *LISA Corpus* (Large Intralingual Subtitles for Accessibility) was compiled for this project,

gathering subtitles of British productions on streaming platforms, selected according to their sociolinguistic relevance. The aim is to create a monitor corpus to assess linguistic accessibility and, eventually, to support the development of an open-access SDH archive. The LancsBox X tool will be used to analyse the corpus. A specific tagset will also be developed to identify sociolinguistic variants in Labovian terms, across diatopic, diaphasic, and diastratic dimensions. Likely categories include colloquialisms, swear words, regionalisms, dialectal phonetic spellings, and syntactic structures commonly associated with non-standard English. Appropriate adjustments will be made to mitigate Zipf's law when focusing on content words.

A second strand of investigation consists of a written sociolinguistic interview to be administered to British deaf participants. This choice is motivated by accessibility concerns: a written format would ensure clarity for participants who may not rely on spoken English, and avoid potential misunderstandings that could arise in oral interviews. At the same time, it would preserve a degree of spontaneity, since participants will be invited to reflect freely on the questions and provide elaborated responses. They will be asked to comment on character portrayal and dialect detection, to evaluate the representation of slang or colloquialisms with non-standard linguistic features, and to share their perceptions of sociolinguistic strategies in subtitles compared with their own linguistic practices. This approach yields both evaluative and discursive responses, enriching the analysis of sociolinguistic quality in SDH.

Data analysis will be divided according to the two methodological tools. The tagged corpus will be analysed with a mixed-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative, to evaluate the frequency and representation of non-standard features in SDH. In more detail, a sub-corpus will be obtained by selecting specific productions from *LISA Corpus* which are of particular interest. This approach will facilitate an assessment of how character portrayal, scenario, and verisimilitude are preserved. The findings will be triangulated with the written interview results, which will be analysed by demographic variables such as age, gender (where disclosed), geographical area, employment, and education.

The main objectives of this research are (i) to identify strengths and weaknesses in British accessible subtitling practices on streaming services, (ii) to develop an initial SDH monitor corpus to support improvements in the linguistic quality of English AV programmes, and (iii) to obtain a direct response from the target audience.

Based on previous literature, it is expected that if variation is present and perceived in BSL – especially among signers with oral backgrounds or less severe hearing loss – then the

perception of sociolinguistic variation in spoken English should also be effective. Consequently, expectations can be formulated regarding the quality of subtitles in sociolinguistically marked AV productions. As Schembri (2008) investigated variation and change in BSL, a similar approach applied to subtitles could improve the experience of d/Deaf audiences by maintaining suspension of disbelief. In this sense, the general tendency seems to go towards the inclusion of variation in British English SDH, as also recommended by the BBC guidelines. Nevertheless, audience demand for higher linguistic quality remains strong. Creating a corpus of existing subtitles therefore provides an essential foundation for more precise linguistic analysis and for the design of improved subtitling practices.

The UK context provides the project with characteristics that make it suitable as a pilot study in SDH sociolinguistics. British English variation has been extensively studied (Trudgill, 1983, 1992, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2011; Crystal, 1995), offering robust parameters for investigation across geographical, social, and stylistic dimensions. At the same time, the manageable size of the d/Deaf population in the UK ensures a feasible but still meaningful field of research. This project can thus serve as training for future, larger-scale investigations, potentially extending to major audiovisual markets such as the USA.

The dissertation is divided into six chapters, according to thematic areas of investigation. Chapter 1 provides an overview of previous and ongoing research on SDH, focusing on composition, style, technical constraints, and accessibility issues. Chapter 2 discusses deafness from a medical perspective, outlining different degrees of hearing loss and their distribution both in Europe and, more specifically, the UK. Chapter 3 presents the research questions and the mixed methodology in detail. Chapter 4 reports the quantitative analysis of non-standard phenomena in *LISA Corpus*, from absolute frequencies to collocates, while Chapter 5 qualitatively explores a section of the corpus to provide an in-depth look at how these features are represented in SDH, divided per each platform. Finally, Chapter 6 analyses the results of the written interview with d/Deaf participants in the UK, focusing on their perception and reception of the linguistic quality of SDH on streaming platforms.

Accessible Subtitling

A Theoretical Approach

This chapter presents a literature review on subtitles, with a particular focus on audiovisual translation strategies employed in the context of subtitling for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) individuals. Furthermore, the chapter considers the legal aspects of accessibility, analysing specific articles of European legislation. The functional perspective of accessible subtitles is then considered, with a focus on research on strategies to render audiovisual productions more accessible to sensory disabled people. Furthermore, the historical background of the creation of SDH and their main technical characteristics are provided. The chapter concludes with an overview of the services in which accessible subtitles are employed.

1.1 Subtitles and AVT

In recent years, scientific research into Audiovisual Translation (AVT) is heading towards further insights into types and methodologies in which this discipline is established, thus increasing the overall attention, as well as the production within the field of Translation Studies (TS). Such a trend recalls the general massive production within audiovisual industry in the last decade, since the development of new multimodal tools has brought a wide range of multimedial material on the electronic devices at our disposal in any time. The idea of communicative engagement in audiovisual productions is deeply related to the interaction of the main components constituting this type of text, i.e., visual-verbal, visual-non-verbal, aural-verbal, and aural-non-verbal, as illustrated in Perego (2005). In the case of subtitling, Delabastita (1989) and Gottlieb (1997) refer to four semiotic channels, i.e., the image, music and sound effects, written text, and aural dialogues. In similar terms, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) highlight the necessity to align the multimedial features to specific technical constraints:

All subtitled programmes are made up of three main constituents: the spoken word, the image and the subtitles. The interaction of these three components, along with the viewer's ability to read both the images and the written text at a particular speed, and the actual size of the screen, determine the basic characteristics of the audiovisual medium. Subtitles must appear in

synchrony, with the images and dialogue [...], and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them” (p. 9).

To give some definitions, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) identify subtitling as a “translation practice that consists in presenting a written text” that transmits “the original dialogue exchanged among the various speakers, as well as all the other verbal information that is transmitted visually [...] and aurally” (*ibid.*). Chaume and Pappens (2021) offer a more synchrony-oriented definition:

[subtitles consist of] l’incorporation d’un texte écrit (le sous-titre) dans la langue cible à l’écran où est projeté un film dans sa version originale, afin que ces sous-titres coïncident avec les interventions des acteurs à l’écran (p. 33).

The reference to screen-text relationship is also mentioned by Gambier (2006), claiming that “looking at subtitled programs, it is as if one were reading the television” (p. 5). However, it is Gottlieb (1992) who firstly offered an overall characterisation of subtitling, which “can be defined as a (1) written, (2) additive, (3) immediate, (4) synchronous and (5) polymedial translation” (pp. 162-163). The written and the additive aspects of subtitling are what clarify its being a multisemiotic – and multimodal indeed – text, since two different channels are involved: visual and aural. Furthermore, the immediateness does not allow a subtitle to be read again during the transmission of the images, as Perego points out (2005):

Il tratto dell’immediatezza non consente l’eventuale rilettura delle parti di testo sfuggite agli occhi dello spettatore, che compaiono e scompaiono con la rapidità dei dialoghi e in concomitanza con le immagini filmiche, per cui la traduzione del sottotitolo è definita sincronica (p. 47).

The fact that a written textual element must be synchronous, inherent, and functional to the filmic images implies technical attention at some degree, other than linguistic. The BBC guidelines, for instance, indicate that a subtitle should be 37 cpl (characters per line) long, distributed on two lines maximum, at the bottom of the screen. This is determined by the necessity to read and understand the text properly while following the correspondent frames, as well as to not occupy a large portion of screen at the expense of the image. In terms of timing, Orletti (2016) reports that a subtitle should remain on screen within a timespan of two and seven seconds; BBC (2024) suggests “the recommended subtitle speed [to be] 160-180 words-per-

minute (WPM) or 0.33 to 0.375 second per word”. Baños and Díaz-Cintas (2018) indicate “a maximum of between 35 and 42 characters in the case of Latin-based alphabets, Arabic and Cyrillic languages” (p. 10) to be usually displayed at the bottom of the screen and centred. The authors also confirm the limit of 37 characters per line, since they can be “comfortably read in six seconds, which is known in the industry as the ‘6 second rule’” (p. 11). As far as synchronisation is concerned, the subtitle should follow not only the image, but also – and especially – the original dialogue in terms of utterance, prosody, and associated proxemic signs displayed by the actors. Chaume (2004) offers a detailed description of such codes, which are valid within the AVT area, but are here considered mainly as a subtitling constraint. In fact, he classifies codes depending on the reference channel – acoustic and visual, and on language itself. In the case of mobility codes, among which the author groups “proxemic signs, kinetic signs and the screen characters’ mouth articulation” (*ibid.*), specific attention should be given in the subtitling process:

In subtitling, when the translator is faced with several people (three or more) speaking at once, the distance of the characters from the camera could be the criterion for selecting which lines to put into subtitles. For example, when three or more characters speak simultaneously, the translator can only represent a maximum of two characters in each subtitle (a single line for each character). In these cases the selection approach can be to choose the speech of the person or persons nearest to the camera (and hence the spectator), given that they are probably placed there for a reason (a motivated choice) and that their position has to do with the relevance of what they are narrating (Chaume, 2004, par. 22).

Being all these technical constraints broadly shared (Orletti, 2016), linguistic strategies deserve specific attention. The respect of technical specifications implies the research for some strategies of condensation or text reduction to give the same message as the original in few lines of text. The adaptation of an aural source text into a written target text as a subtitle must consider three different operations, i.e., reduction, diamesic transformation, and translation (Perego, 2005, p. 73). With regard to reduction, time and space constraints are of crucial importance in the decision to condense and omit parts of the utterance that do not contribute essential information. To this, it must be added the respect of synchrony and of the natural timing in reading subtitles. In terms of diamesic transformation, it is important to keep in mind that subtitles are written texts and, as such, must follow grammatical rules. However, since they support oral utterances, they also preserve some of the unique speech characteristics of a

specific interaction, especially when it comes to include paralanguage. This creates a balanced textual format that rephrases speech with more direct and informative language. Perego (2005) highlights this aspect:

è bene che il sottotitolo raggiunga il giusto equilibrio tra il polo della rigidità, del controllo, della pianificazione, della chiarezza e della concisione tipiche dello scritto e il polo della flessibilità, della libertà, della ridondanza e dell'implicita tipiche del parlato (p. 91).

As regards translation in the field of subtitling, it is often customary to refer to Gottlieb's (1992) strategies, while considering various factors such as the source text, the genre of the audiovisual product, the target audience, the target language, and the culture in question. The strategies are illustrated below (p. 166):

1. *Expansion*: provide additional elements to the original text to make the source expression more comprehensible to the target audience.
2. *Paraphrase*: use linguistic expressions with the same level of expressiveness as the original utterance.
3. *Transfer*: decide for a faithful translation of the source utterance in both form and content.
4. *Imitation*: opt for formulae in the target language that are identical in both structure and wording to the source ones.
5. *Transcription*: render non-standard expressions of the source language using similar connotations in the target language.
6. *Dislocation*: the subtitle maintains the same expression as the original text to preserve its rhythm and imagery.
7. *Condensation*: use of a synthetic form compared to the original.
8. *Decimation*: reduce the amount of the original text in the subtitle, thus getting rid of non-essential words for the overall understanding.
9. *Deletion*: omit portions of the original text, including turns and sentences.
10. *Resignation*: avoid the transmission of the original message because it is considered untranslatable.

From this list it is clear that translation for subtitling is far from being an immediate and intuitive process; instead, it requires much more effort in transposing the same effect as in the original

version and asks for interpretation and creativity as well. In fact, audiovisual translation “carries the added factor of merging the visual with the verbal” (Bogucki, 2011, p. 12), in this case considering visual and verbal also in the written form; therefore, in order to maintain the suspension of disbelief necessary for this type of product, it is important to ensure that the subtitler offers a suitable correspondence between text and image. From this perspective, Bogucki (2011) and Orletti (2016) call for effective collaboration between translators and academic studies, so as to avoid translation problems. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) give the same idea of an adequate academic and practical knowledge within AVT: “the key to successful audiovisual translation research and practice is insight and understanding of the product and its expected function, combined with a desire to learn and willingness to adapt” (p. 7).

The awareness of diamesic differences in an audiovisual (AV) product is proper of all forms of subtitling, being interlingual and intralingual the most common ones. In the context of interlingual subtitling, Gottlieb’s strategies seem to be more applicable. The identified translation techniques, such as expansion or paraphrase, inherently involve a noticeable comparison between two different languages. Instead, intralingual subtitling, also defined same-language subtitling (Perego, 2005; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021), consists of a written transcription in the same language as the source one. Gottlieb (1992) defines it “vertical” (p. 163), meaning that the entire aural discourse is transcribed. However, this aspect depends on different factors. First, the target audience should represent a focus for this type of subtitling; consequently, the diamesic strategies should reflect its purpose of use. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) recognise that intralingual subtitles can be useful – and are actually used – by L2 learners, so as to learn grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. Furthermore, the fact that it is primarily a monolingual process raises a theoretical issue when regarding it as a type of translation (*ibid.*). Additionally, intralingual subtitling is intended for individuals with hearing impairments who desire to view the visual content of a programme in their native language or, at the very least, in a language with which they are familiar. Such subtitles are designated as Subtitles for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals (SDH). In contrast to standard subtitles, which typically offer a verbatim translation of spoken dialogue, SDH incorporates auditory cues, thereby providing a more comprehensive sensory experience for viewers with hearing impairments. It should be noted, however, that SDH can also be interlingual, as they can be applied to programmes in a different source language for viewers, both hearing and deaf or hard of hearing, who wish to view them with subtitles in their own language. In multicultural and multilingual societies, this form of subtitling is of paramount importance, as it ensures that

individuals have access to audiovisual content in any language, thereby facilitating inclusion and accessibility. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) discuss the concept of subtitling in relation to the dual function of interlingual SDH, which serves both as a translation tool and as an accessibility measure. The authors highlight the necessity for interlingual SDH to convey the linguistic content of the original dialogue while also including essential non-verbal audio information. This is to ensure that d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) viewers receive a comparable experience to hearing viewers. The complexity of this task necessitates that subtitlers possess a profound understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as the cultural nuances and the specific needs of the Deaf community. Matamala and Orero (2010) provides a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which interlingual subtitling for DHH audiences can enhance accessibility. The authors present case studies in which interlingual subtitling has been successfully implemented in multilingual countries such as Switzerland and Belgium. In these countries, audiovisual content is often subtitled in multiple languages to cater to diverse audiences. The research demonstrates that effective interlingual subtitling can facilitate access to a wider range of media content for aurally impaired individuals by bridging linguistic and sensory gaps. The present study considers subtitles in the context of intralingual communication, focusing on subtitles provided in the same language as the audio track.

Intralingual SDH, usually pre-recorded, includes further information regarding paralinguistic and extralinguistic features, as well as sound effects that cannot be perceived, or are hardly perceived, by people with aural impairments. Extensive literature has focused on SDH – or CC (close captioning) in US terminology – within AVT studies, especially regarding the functionality of accessible subtitling and the relationship with sign languages. In the case of subtitling functionality, investigation went through the reception deaf viewers have of subtitles, meaning the reading speed, linguistic comprehension, and cognitive implications (Romero-Fresco, 2018). In the case of sign languages, works of scholars considered the importance of a sign language interpreter as a further support to subtitled videos, as this would complete the reception of the message to the signing audience, who uses not only a verbal written language, but also – and especially – a non-verbal language in common interactions (Stone, 2022). This aspect is also linked to the demand for further inclusion of non-verbal communication within AV transmissions (Foss, 2014). In recent times, research has also focused on the relationship between creativity and emotions in SDH (Szarkowska et al., 2015; Romero-Fresco, 2015). This contributes to a wider concept of accessibility, which can be defined as the capacity of individuals with hearing impairments to engage with audiovisual

products in a manner that is meaningful to their enjoyment, to the same extent as hearing individuals.

1.2 Accessibility issues

Attention to inclusive audiovisual material for people living aural impairments opens some discussion on social and cultural accessibility regarding sensory disability. In terms of legislation, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) displays the right for people with physical, sensory, and cognitive impairments to access cultural events, locations, and materials without any barriers:

States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities: a) Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats; b) Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats; c) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance (Article 30, p. 22),

with specifications on promoting linguistic identity of Deaf communities (Article 24, p. 17), as well as culture: “Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture” (Article 30, p. 23).

With regards to the European scene, there has been an increased awareness of the accessibility of audiovisual products for people with disabilities since the establishment of the Year of the Disabled in 2003 (The European Year of People with Disabilities, 2003; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021); however, the first regulation the European Union established regarding accessible television broadcasting was the Directive 2007/65/EC, dated December 11th, 2007:

The right of persons with a disability and of the elderly to participate and be integrated in the social and cultural life of the Community is inextricably linked to the provision of accessible audiovisual media services. The means to achieve accessibility should include, but need not be limited to, sign language, subtitling, audio-description and easily understandable menu navigation (EUR-Lex, 2007).

It was followed by the Audiovisual Media Service Directive 2010/13/EU (AVMSD), dated March 10th, 2010, that disposed that “Member States shall encourage media service providers under their jurisdiction to ensure that their services are gradually made accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability” (EUR-Lex, 2010, Article 7). It was amended by the Directive 2018/1808 (EUR-Lex, 2018), that for the first time specified the way to provide accessible audiovisual services:

Accessibility requirements should be met through a progressive and continuous process, while taking into account the practical and unavoidable constraints that could prevent full accessibility, such as programmes or events broadcast in real time. In order to measure the progress that media service providers have made in making their services progressively accessible to people with visual or hearing disabilities, Member States should require media service providers established on their territory to report to them on a regular basis (22),

as well as the typologies of AVT services:

The means to achieve the accessibility of audiovisual media services under Directive 2010/13/EU should include, but need not be limited to, sign language, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, spoken subtitles, and audio description (23).

In more recent times, the European Union promoted quality of AVT services with the European Accessibility Act (EAA, Directive EU 2019/882), dated April 17th, 2019, specifying that:

the accessibility components (access services) of the audiovisual media services such as subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing, audio description, spoken subtitles and sign language interpretation are fully transmitted with adequate quality for accurate display, and synchronised with sound and video, while allowing for user control of their display and use (EUR-Lex, 2019, Section IV, b, ii).

In 2025, the EAA is planned to be updated in line with the European Commission's Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities during the 2021-2030 decade. This also applies to the audiovisual sector, where streaming services such as Netflix and Spotify are required to adhere to accessibility regulations (Domeij, 2024). The report of the Act's application in 2019-2022 period, published in January 2024, indeed specifies that the measures to improve accessibility for products and services as indicated in 2019 Directive must be fully applied by Member States

by July 28th, 2025 (European Commission, 2024). The audiovisual services to be implemented include “websites, online applications, set-top box-based and downloadable applications, mobile device-based services, [...] connected television services [and] electronic programme guides”. In addition, the European Union of the Deaf (EUD, 2024) website, a not-for-profit European non-Governmental organisation that represents deaf people in Europe, mentions services such as Amazon Video, Netflix, and Now TV as examples of streaming services that will be furtherly regulated by the next year.

With regards to the United Kingdom, it is widely acknowledged that the country has been prioritising the accessibility of television broadcasts for deaf users since 1979 using the Ceefax Teletext system, and promulgated the Communications Act (2003), which provided guidelines for the accessibility of services to people with sensory disabilities. On the same year, the national body responsible for monitoring audiovisual provision in this regard was formally founded, namely the Office of Communications (OFCOM). In 2017 the body has been recognised as facilitating an 80% increase in SDH and a 5% increase in sign language interpretation (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021). As Szarkowska (2020) highlights, the British OFCOM pays attention to subtitling quality, specifically regarding “synchronisation, speed of subtitling, non-speech information, layout, font, accuracy as well as maximum subtitle delay in live programmes” (p. 259). The annual report for the period 2022-2023 (OFCOM, 2023) signals some important adjustments on the way accessible services are provided:

People who are deaf, have hearing loss, are blind or partially sighted need to be able to access and enjoy TV programmes that are available to everybody. This is why broadcast ‘access services’, such as subtitles, audio description and signing, are supplied by broadcasters. [...] With the UK Government proposing accessibility requirements for on-demand programme services, such as Netflix and Disney+, we launched a review of our guidelines for broadcast accessibility, including specific guidance around on-demand (pp. 38-39).

OFCOM also mentions the UK’s Digital Economy Act of 2017 in terms of regulations for sensory disabled people’s access to ODPS (On-demand Programme Service). However, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People still reports some difficulties in the provision of accessible services for deaf and hard of hearing people in recent times. In 2023 it has been signalled that “the delivery of subtitles on some of the major channels is inconsistent across different platforms”, for instance “Channel 4’s on-demand service All4 achieved 0% subtitle provision on Sky Go, Now TV and Google Chromecast” and “ITV achieved [...] 0% on Sky

On-demand and YouView platforms” (RNID, 2023a). Moreover, the same year the national charity conducted a survey among people with hearing impairments in the UK, finding out that “97% of respondents had tried to watch a programme in the last year and found there were no subtitles” (RNID, 2023b, p. 5). 20 percent of respondents also declared that “they avoid watching programmes on that on-demand service anymore because of the bad experience” (p. 6), especially concerning Broadcast Video on-Demand (BVoD). A similar situation occurred for streaming Subscription Video on-Demand services (SVoD), such as Netflix and Prime Video, where some struggling in finding subtitles for the entire video catalogue is still detected. The legislations and the current situation on accessible subtitling in the UK suggest a commitment to a complete accessibility of audiovisual heritage for deaf and hard of hearing audiences. However, it may be beneficial to consider additional measures to ensure inclusivity, such as incorporating accessibility features into the script. Romero-Fresco (2013) introduces the concept of accessible filmmaking (AFM) as a methodology to promote inclusivity and accessibility for people with sensory disability. In his own words, AFM allows accessibility to enter “the production of audiovisual media [...] to provide access to content for people who cannot access or who have difficulty accessing it in its original form” (Romero-Fresco, 2019, pp. 5-6). This practice needs to be included within media accessibility (MA) studies, that involves access to media services and products for anyone, including sensory-impaired people. Greco (2018) illustrates the context in which accessibility is developing nowadays, i.e., a more universalist account of access with more proactive models and a user-centred approach.

In such a perspective, SDH for aurally impaired and AD (Audio Description) for blind people represent the main translation mediums through which concepts of accessibility of media can be put into practice. Projects recalling reception studies and linguistic issues have been thought for and with sensory-impaired audiences, e.g., DTV4ALL, involving deaf participants (Romero-Fresco, 2015). However, translation as a whole is still perceived as detached from the original production process in the AV field. Romero-Fresco (2020) argues that the idea behind AFM is that of making translation part of the industrial filming process and not a post-production addition, as well as promoting collaboration between translators and producers since the creation of the script. Remaining in the sphere of translation, AFM suggests another kind of intentionality than the attempt to remain hidden in favour of the image alone in the film:

The intention here is to tackle head on (and even embrace) the difference brought about by translation, which includes (1) acknowledging the difference between original and translated/accessible film versions, (2) identifying the effect it may have on the viewers' experience, (3) promoting a notion of film studies that can account for this difference in the analysis of film and especially (4) introducing a new collaborative filmmaking model that can consider translation early in the process in an attempt to bridge the gap between the experience of the different audiences (Romero-Fresco, 2020, p. 550).

The proposal here is to enhance the awareness in filmmakers of translation as a fundamental aspect of the fruition of audiovisual products for foreign audiences, L2 learners, and individuals with sensory impairments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) can be considered an appropriate framework within which to situate such a condition, given that it promotes human dignity and access. In this context, the concept of access to audiovisual material and the ability to experience and enjoy the same content as non-disabled individuals can be identified as the fundamental principles underlying the translation sectors of AFM and MA.

Considering reception studies and focusing on subtitles, AFM is also involved in how creative subtitling is experienced by deaf viewers. Such a different methodological – and intuitive in a way – approach in composing and providing subtitles “fulfil[s] both a linguistic and aesthetic function, responding to the specific qualities of an individual film” (Romero-Fresco, 2020, p. 552), as well as encourages the subtitler's creativity. While there is a clear emphasis on inclusivity in SDH from both a theoretical and ideological perspective, as well as from a technical standpoint, it is important to note that these subtitles may still lack certain inclusive strategies due to the typical constraints of subtitling, as mentioned before. According to the Accessible Filmmaking Guide, SDH show some failing in the inclusive description of sound effects, since they

- Distil and reduce complex soundscapes to single descriptions.
- Formalise sounds (reading a description of an accent or difficult speech patterns tends to look more formal than its corresponding audio).
- Equalise sounds (as the descriptions do not normally include variations in volume).
- Linearise sounds (as the descriptions are read consecutively, even if the sounds are simultaneous) (The Accessible Filmmaking Guide).

It is obvious that adaptation strategies must be included in the creation of SDH due to space and time restrictions; however, certain creative strategies may include more information on sound in the written text, as well as ease the reception of the written message also in relation to the image. As an example, Romero-Fresco (2020) reports Fox's 2016 analysis of the film *Joining the Dots* (Romero-Fresco, 2012) in terms of image and text reception using eye tracking. Three versions of the film were presented to participants: the image without subtitles, the image with subtitles inserted in post-distribution, and the image with subtitles included from the outset of the film's production. In this case, they appeared in proximity to the correspondent speaker. Results showed that the viewers' eye movements acted in a very similar way in the cases of the image alone and with creative subtitles since they were close to the character speaking, while more changes in eye movement were noticed with stylistically traditional subtitles, since the eyes had to move from the written text to the image and vice versa (Romero-Fresco, 2020, pp. 552-554). The presence of creative subtitles since the early stages of production therefore seems to "increase the viewers' suspension of disbelief, producing an enhanced sense of presence in the fictional world of the film" (Romero-Fresco, 2021, p. 504). The author also suggests that deaf viewers "seem to make up for their sometimes substandard reading skills with a particularly good visual perception and comprehension" (*ibid.*)¹. This may suggest that some creative strategies from a stylistic perspective may be applied also to SDH in order to provide a more inclusive service to deaf or hard of hearing people. In any case, traditional techniques in SDH composition are still the most common and still follow functional guidelines. They are shown in the section below.

1.3 SDH: history, definitions, and main features

1.3.1 Historical background

The beginnings of subtitling services for deaf people can be identified in 1947, when Emerson Romero, a Cuban American silent film deaf actor, devised a system of text-only frames to be inserted between scenes just as intertitles (Neves, 2005; Szarkowska, 2020). In a cinema in London in 1949, British producer J. Arthur Rank created a system where subtitles were etched on slides of glass to be inserted in and out of a projector in synchrony with the scene (Szarkowska, 2020). Here subtitles appeared on a small screen positioned at the lower left corner of the one showing images and bigger in size; hence the viewers had to move their sight

¹ Aspects regarding deaf people's reading capability in audiovisual texts will be discussed in §2.3.

from a screen to another (Boatner, 1981). Given these premises, the method was considered rather unsuccessful (*ibid.*). Immediately afterwards in Belgium subtitles were directly etched onto a final printed version of the film, of which the negative was created and then distributed in different copies (*ibid.*). It was in the US that much more attention was given to the production and distribution of subtitled films: in 1949 the fund-raising organisation Captioned Films for the Deaf (CFD) was founded by Clarence O'Connor and Edmund Burke Boatner. The main goal was “to demonstrate that the production of suitably captioned entertainment films was feasible” (Boatner, 1981, p. 6). The first films to be considered were those coming with the original script, so as to speed the process of condensation “into a language suitable for deaf viewers” (*ibid.*). However, major problems occurred due to timing: “We had to calculate the length of each caption, and insert it exactly so that it would extend only through the scene which it described, and not lap over into the next scene” (*ibid.*). Later on, a solution came from foreign distribution, as explained by Boatner himself:

I asked Mr. Goode if his company exported films to foreign countries, and he answered, “Yes. We export to nearly all of them.” I then asked if the captions were first written in English before being translated into the foreign language. Mr. Goode did not know, but offered to find out. [...] the producers did work out captions in English before translating them. This was the breakthrough that solved our captioning problem. From this point on, we worked directly from the captioned scripts written for foreign films. It still required someone experienced in the language limitations of the deaf to reword the captions, but now our captioner would know the exact length of the insertion and had only to maintain the same syllabic count (p. 7).

The success of the work enabled the association to secure government funding in 1959 – Public Law 85-905 – for the production and distribution of subtitled films for deaf individuals, with a particular focus on educational purposes (Szarkowska, 2020).

In 1972, the first captioning agency, namely Caption Center was established in Boston; on the same year, the first captioned TV programme, the cooking show *The French Chef* with Julia Child, broadcasted on PBS (Szarkowska, 2020), as well as *ABC World Tonight* with open captions (AI Media, 2023). That was also the year when BBC firstly announced the Ceefax Teletext service for subtitles’ provision in the UK, which officially started in 1979 with the documentary *Quietly in Switzerland* on deaf and hard of hearing children (Díaz-Cintas, 2010). In 1979 there was also the foundation of the National Captioning Institute (NCI) in America, which produced decoders box – that entered the market in 1980 – and, in 1989, specific

microchips for decoding captions directly into television sets (Szarkowska, 2020; Described and Captioned Media Program, n.d.). During the 1980s, SDH became widespread in Europe, especially in France, Italy, The Netherlands, Flemish-speaking Belgium, and West Germany, the latter being pivotal in live subtitling (Zárate, 2021). In 1986 the UK provided live subtitles using stenography for the first time, which became the main transmission technique during the 1990s. From that moment, subtitles were required for all broadcasting televisions in the country for at least a minimum percentage, as stated in the 1990 Broadcasting Act (*ibid.*). The 1990s have also been the decade where the DVD market started and, with it, the possibility to select a specific language for subtitles among a multilingual offer. From 2001, stenography was substituted by respeaking for live subtitling starting from the UK and then spreading to the rest of Europe. In the last decade, the rise of on-demand platforms, offering both streaming and downloading services of videos, has contributed to the growing popularity of subtitling. As a result, there has been an increase in the availability of subtitles for aurally impaired viewers in multiple languages, to accompany the expanding selection of films and TV series.

1.3.2 Definitions

According to Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021), SDH can be identified as

a practice that consists in presenting on screen a written text that accounts for the dialogue and its paralinguistic dimension, as well as for music, sounds and noises contained in the soundtrack, so that audiences with hearing impairments can access to audiovisual material. [...] Subtitlers thus convert into written text the dialogue exchanges heard in the soundtrack, indicating who is saying what and ideally incorporating all paralinguistic information that accompanies the actors' utterances and is relevant for the appreciation of the message: emphasis, ironic statements, tone, speech impediments, prosody, accents and use of FLs, among others (pp. 10, 12).

Similar specifications are shown in Neves (2021), underlying the target audience – or *viewers*, even better – being hearing impaired and requiring additional information on speakers, sound effects and music. On the same level, Perego (2005) lists three essential strategies for a correct construction of SDH:

- clear identification of characters;
- regular use of phonological metalanguage;
- adapting the rhythm of subtitle presentation (p. 64),

followed by Orletti (2016), who also mentions the necessity to report silences in subtitles if essential to the characterisation of the speaker and/or the scene.

Szarkowska (2020) mentions the terminological difference regarding this type of subtitles, i.e., SDH and Close Captioning (CC): “the former term is generally used in Europe, whereas the latter is common in the US, Canada and Australia” (p. 249). However, further specifications should be provided. First, the label CC underlines the choice of the single viewer to activate subtitles according to their necessities, in contrast to open captions, that are instead already impressed on the film and visible to anyone. Second, certain American ODPS such as AppleTV+ display both SDH and CC, which may generate some confusion in recognising the correct service. Third, it seems to be common to refer to intralingual subtitling for deaf and hard of hearing people with CC, while ‘subtitling’ remains for interlingual one (Szarkowska, 2020). Neves (2018) claims that the current definitions for accessible subtitles are still connected to the idea of disability, thus suggesting “enriched (responsive) subtitling” as a possible substitute so as to refer only to added acoustic information and flexibility in terms of distribution. Indeed, she specifies that:

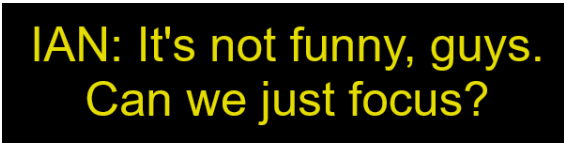
at a time when ‘enriched content’ and ‘responsive design’ have become core concepts in digital environments, using new terminology to refer to what has now become a totally different reality would strip the ‘old terms’ from their biased connotations, and speak for a convergent and user-centred reality in which subtitles are a part of a complex yet flexible multi-layered media landscape (p. 84).

In any case, the present work will use SDH as a reference label for subtitles for DHH people for three main reasons. Firstly, the research is conducted within the European landscape, since it investigates subtitles and accessibility in the UK; secondly, it poses attention to accessibility issues rather than to subtitles’ activation possibility; thirdly, SDH is preferred in academic settings, as is the case with the present dissertation. However, in a perspective where disability is still not perceived a mere social construct based on dichotomic comparison with the rest of the ‘healthy’ population, it may be appropriate to consider adjusting the current terminology. In addition, here the extended caption for SDH, i.e., *Subtitles for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing people*, do not include the definite article ‘the’ before ‘deaf’, since it could imply derogatory labelling; instead, it is followed by ‘people’, ‘viewers’, or ‘audience’ in an inclusive viewpoint.

1.3.3 Main features

As already observed, SDH requires the inclusion of more linguistic and metatextual elements than standard subtitling. Similarities can be noticed with the general scheme provided for standard subtitling; however, some aspects should be considered when dealing with deaf and hard of hearing viewers. As a result, the professional subtitler must pay close attention to capture essential information on intonation, accents, pauses, modalities of interaction between speakers and so on. The following paragraphs describe discourse functions and the relative typographic conventions typically used in SDH.

Starting from speaker identification, SDH usually display labels – also known as name tags – placed right before the utterance (Szarkowska, 2020; Zárate, 2021). The tags may be signalled using capital letters and/or delimited by square brackets; they can also be followed by a column, especially in absence of brackets. The examples below (Figures 1, 2, 3) are taken from Prime Video, Netflix, and Disney+ respectively:



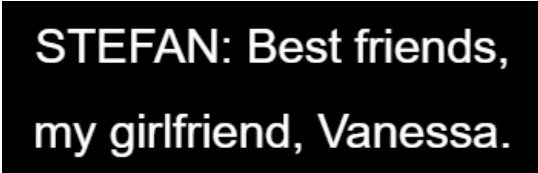
**IAN: It's not funny, guys.
Can we just focus?**

Figure 1: Upper case name tag with no brackets followed by a column. Source: Prime Video.



[woman 1] What are days for?

Figure 2: Lower case name tag between square brackets with no column. Source: Netflix.

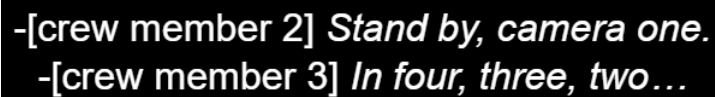


**STEFAN: Best friends,
my girlfriend, Vanessa.**

Figure 3: Upper case name tag without brackets and with column. Source: Disney+.

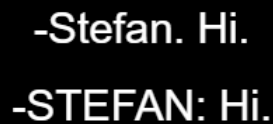
The generic use of capital letters and square brackets for labels has some cognitive implications, due to “the belief that readers can easily distinguish them from dialogue” (Zárate, 2021, p. 65). Speakers can be identified through colours, especially for television SDH, while in SVoDs some customisation is only possible for the whole subtitles. For instance, BBC recommends

that each colour should be reserved for each character or group of characters and kept during the entire film or series, so that deaf viewers can always identify the speakers easily. BBC also specifies the priority order: “white, yellow, cyan, and green” (BBC, 2024). On the other hand, in Italy colours’ relevance is as follows: white for the narrator/main character, cyan for the second one, green for the third, magenta for the fourth, and yellow for all other extra characters (Tucci, 2000, pp. 91-95). To indicate turn takings, dashes (–) and hyphens (-) are usually employed: they can either be followed by a space or not and may occur together with the name tag or not, this being the case when characters are not or little visible on screen (Figures 4, 5, 6):



-[crew member 2] Stand by, camera one.
-[crew member 3] In four, three, two...

Figure 4: Turn takings using hyphens with no space left. Both speakers are not visible on screen. Source: AppleTV+.



-Stefan. Hi.
-STEFAN: Hi.

Figure 5: Turn takings using hyphens with no space left. Only the second speaker is not visible on screen. Source: Disney+.



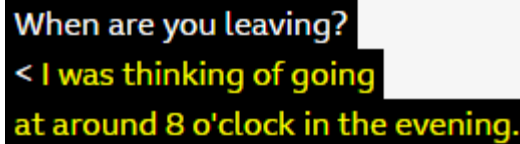
- What?
- Be reasonable.

Figure 6: Turn takings using hyphens with a space left. Both characters are clearly visible on screen. Source: Prime Video.

As regards dashes, it must be said that they are now considered as old-fashioned according to new BBC guidelines:

This is a legacy technique that is no longer used for new content (but may be present in files created before it was deprecated or sourced from outside the UK). Use colour to indicate a change of speaker (BBC, 2024).

In case of an off-screen voice, it is common to find arrows (< or >) preceding the name of the speaker; this is particularly valid for TV broadcasts (Figure 7):



When are you leaving?
< I was thinking of going
at around 8 o'clock in the evening.

Figure 7: Off screen voice according to BBC guidelines (BBC, 2024).

In SVoD, it is more common to find the utterance in italics for both off-screen utterances and inner thoughts (Figures 8, 9, 10):



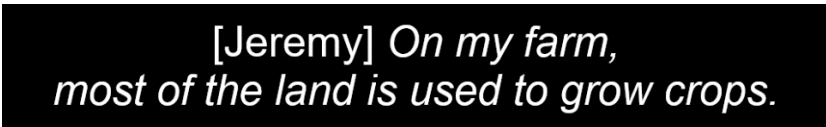
Where can we live but days?

Figure 8: Italics for inner thought. The character is not visible neither. Source: Netflix.



GIO: *That could be me one day.*

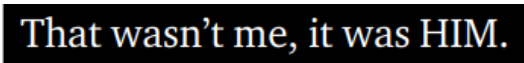
Figure 9: Off-screen voice with name tag, that do not use italics. Source: Disney+.



[Jeremy] *On my farm,
most of the land is used to grow crops.*

Figure 10: Off-screen voice with name tag between square brackets. Source: Prime Video.

As far as paralinguistic features are concerned, they include all “non-verbal vocal elements that may have communicative value and may need to be subtitled or captioned for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing audience” (Zárate, 2021, pp. 65-66). Starting from emphasis, SDH provides typographic strategies such as italics or upper cases. However, updated BBC guidelines state that in this case the use of italics “is an experimental option and should not be included for general use” (BBC, 2024). Below (Figure 11) there is an example of emphasis using upper case letters:



That wasn't me, it was HIM.

Figure 11: Example of upper case with emphasis (Zárate, 2021, p.68).

As regards emotions and attitudes, a common solution in SDH is to group the description of the mood within square or round brackets (Figures 12 and 13):



Figure 12: Emotion expressed with a label. Source: Netflix.

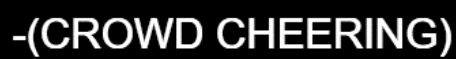


Figure 13: Intonation within round brackets. Here the label is uppercase. Source: Disney+.

The same typographic strategy is applied to other paralinguistic elements, such as accents and pronunciation (Figures 14 and 15),

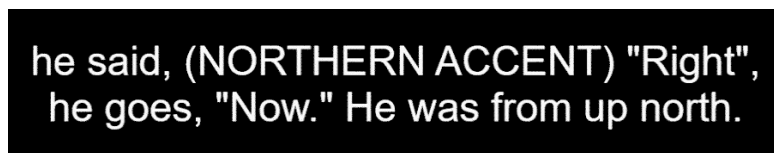


Figure 14: Label for accent specification between round brackets. Source: Prime Video.



Figure 15: Label for language identification between square brackets. Source: Netflix.

vocal non-verbal sounds (Zárate, 2021), which can also be referred to as extralinguistic features (Figure 16),



Figure 16: Label for vocal non-verbal sound. Source: Prime Video.

and sound effects (Figures 17, 18, 19):

[birds chirping and wings flapping]

Figure 17: Label including two sound effects. Source: Prime Video.

[CLICKING]

Figure 18: Label for sound effect. Source: Prime Video.

[electricity sparking, buzzing]

Figure 19: Label for sound effect. Source: Netflix.

which also include communication channel, which gives the idea of how audio can be distorted (Figure 20):

**MAN [ON RADIO]:
One. One.**

Figure 20: Label for channel of communication. Source: Prime Video.

Among paralinguistic features, pauses, hesitations, and silences represent essential non-verbal elements in terms of communication. SDH usually employs suspension dots, specifically three, and hyphens (--) with no space before the utterance's last word. The sequence below shows how such pauses may occur in SDH (Figures 21 and 22):

And if I ever did anything--

Figure 21: Example of hesitation with two hyphens. Source: AppleTV+.

that made you feel like that wasn't true...

Figure 22: Example of pause with suspension dots. Source: AppleTV+.

Hyphens – either single (Figure 23) or double (Figure 24) – are also the symbol used for stammering:

|– I am concentrating.

Figure 23: Single-hyphen stammering. Source: Prime Video.

|– I got you a coffee.

Figure 24: Double-hyphen stammering. Source: AppleTV+.

As regards music, it can be referred to in different ways according to the aim it represents in the scene. In case of background music, a detailed description may be provided as a label, usually between square brackets (Figure 25):

[somber music continues]

Figure 25: Description of music style as a label. Source: Netflix.

It can also be signalled with the title of the song, sometimes accompanied by the author's name, since it can be recognisable and may help emphasise the rhythm of the scene, as well as understand the plot, especially when lyrics are involved (Figures 26, 27, 28):

["Golden Star" playing]

Figure 26: Label for song including title between inverted commas. Source: AppleTV+.

[plays "Master of Puppets" by Metallica]

Figure 27: Label for music with both title in inverted commas and author. Source: Netflix.

**["Running Up That Hill"
by Kate Bush playing]**

Figure 28: Label for music with both title in inverted commas and author. Source: Netflix.

The previous examples also display the use of inverted commas for titles, as well as quotations as shown in Figure 13. In the case of lyrics, they are usually signalled with a quaver (♪), which can appear either at both the beginning and end of each subtitle (Figure 29),



Figure 29: Lyrics with quavers at the beginning and end of the subtitle. Source: Netflix.

or just at the beginning of each subtitle until the end of the song, when a second quaver appears at the end of the sentence (Figure 30), as illustrates Zárate (2021) with an example coming from the puppet show *A Christmas Carol*:

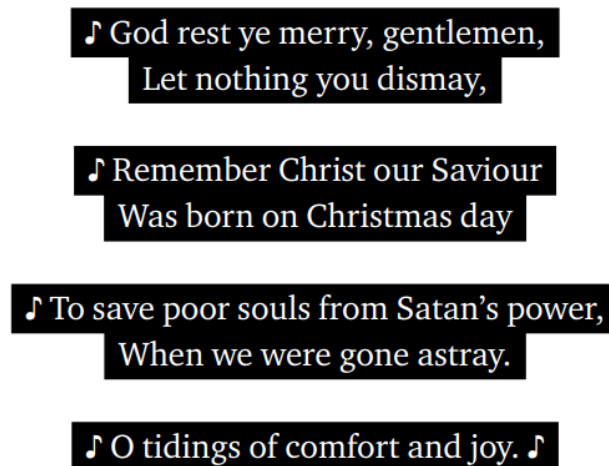


Figure 30: Example of quavers' use just at the beginning of each subtitle (Zárate, 2021, p. 70).

Quavers can also be used to signal the intro of a non-specified song (Figure 31); it depends on the subtitler's stylistic choice:



Figure 31: Indication of music with quavers. Source: Netflix.

In other cases, a hash mark (#) can be found (Figure 32):

These foolish things remind me of you

Figure 32: Lyrics signalled by hash marks (BBC, 2024).

As a final example, in order to ensure proper formatting, it is appropriate to correctly split long subtitles into two lines or two separate subtitles, respecting semantic and syntactic blocks. For instance, a sentence should look like this,

**This is an example
of correctly split subtitle.**

and not like this:

**This is an example of
correctly split subtitle.**

In the case of a comma, it should be included in the first line:

**This example has a comma,
as you notice.**

However, when writing subtitles, it is best to avoid using a comma at the end of a subtitle if the sentence continues in the next subtitle. This is because it may be misinterpreted as a comma, which could cause confusion for the reader (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021).

The typographic and orthographic solutions presented above demonstrate the different ways to clarify the semantic nuances behind each utterance and depict each speaker as well. These solutions are widely used in SVoD platforms and by the BBC, in accordance with their new guidelines. Furthermore, recent updates on subtitling production and its applications, from an accessibility perspective, are highlighted in the section below.

1.4 Latest updates in subtitling

Recent developments in technology can be detected in the way SDH is used and created. Szarkowska (2020) lists three important aspects technological changes can affect: “automation, customisation and innovation” (p. 261). Automation involves the utilization of ASR technology to produce subtitles on various platforms, including YouTube and Instagram. These subtitles can be activated as needed to enhance accessibility. Subsequently, post-editing is employed to further refine the semi-automatic subtitling process. As regards customisation, it refers to the possibility to adapt the graphic component and the speed of subtitles according to the user’s tastes and requisites. Among the innovations Szarkowska (2020) mentions Fox’s ‘integrated titles’ and Brown’s ‘dynamic’ subtitles which have a different position on the screen compared to the traditional one, being placed in the lower centre or on the left-hand side of the screen. Also, innovation can be determined by the upgraded tools usually employed in AVT.

In this perspective, Díaz-Cintas and Massidda (2019) describe the first practical impact the Internet had in accessible subtitling process. First of all, they mention over-the-top (OTT) services like Amazon Prime and Netflix as the main settings where localised content has increased and accessible AVT strategies have developed. Massidda (2022) highlights how the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic has furtherly accelerated the amount of subscriptions, as well as access to OTT platforms (Parnami and Jain, 2021). In the case of subtitles, brand-new software provides automatic functions regarding typing, synchronisation, backups, editing, file exportation and conversion, detection of linguistic errors, and quality control (p. 3). Such functionalities “helps subtitlers boost their productivity and reach high levels of consistency” (*ibid.*). The authors also mention the rise of open source (OS) software, i.e., having a source code that is freely modifiable by advanced users, especially when a bug occurs; some examples are Aegisub, DivXLand Media Subtitler, and Subtitle Edit, which are free and provide automatised support during subtitles composition. Below there is an example of how Aegisub version 3.2.2 looks when subtitles are created. It is possible to notice the spectrogram of the audio on the right with options for editing and reproduction; right below, space is reserved for writing and editing subtitles; on the left, the video appears with the new subtitle showing the selected graphic features; the section at the bottom displays TCR, cps, chosen style, and the text. On the toolbar, the ‘Subtitles’ section reveals access to various automated functions, such as ‘Translation assistant’ and ‘Spell checker’.

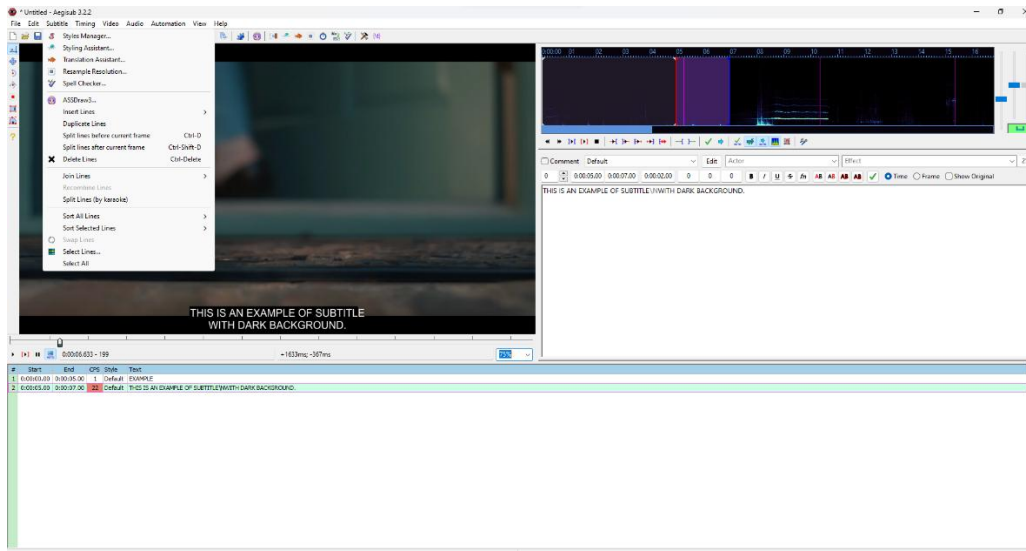


Figure 33: Screenshot of Aegisub OS software with 'Subtitle' options expanded.

Subtitle Edit version 3.6.10 also includes a search bar that can communicate directly with Google, Google Translate, or Free Dictionary within the 'Translate' bar, as well as an option for Netflix quality check of subtitles (Figure 34):

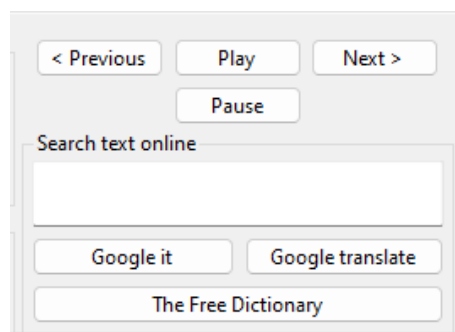


Figure 34: Screenshot of Subtitle Edit's bar to search text with Google.

The previous examples of “democratisation of technology” (Bolaños García-Escribano and Díaz-Cintas, 2020, p. 529) in their own way prove that the digital age has brought about challenges in AVT – and in all kinds of translation – due to the use of Translation Memory (TM), Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT), and Machine Translation (MT) as well. For instance, these instruments find prolific application in the audiovisual field, especially for those texts having “a high percentage of linguistic repetition”, since they “could speed up the subtitling process substantially” (p. 7). Moreover, CAT tools help detecting and preserving a character’s idiolect thanks to the integrated TM, that provides the most likely suitable translations that best suit for that character’s portrayal. Along with this, in the last few years the

rise and the general availability of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as GPT4 with Copilot or Meta's Llama, have profoundly changed the way AVT is thought of, produced, and used. In accessibility terms, Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) represents the most successful and widespread method to create live SDH through respeaking, which includes the vocal repetition of punctuation and the other typographic features. Nowadays this technique is also used for interlingual purposes: Díaz-Cintas and Massidda (2019) cite the European project Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access (ILSA) as an example of development of skills and tools to accomplish such a task.

The process leading to SDH creation supported by machine learning is what guides contemporary cloud-based platforms, which has rapidly evolved and become widespread within the audiovisual translation industry, and which is now adapting to the changing times by embracing remote access and flexible work arrangements:

The greatest accomplishment of this powerful technology is the possibility of computerizing the Web 2.0 by moving away from desktop-based software programs to cloud-based applications. In the field of AVT, web-based subtitling toolkits progressively turned media localization workflows into the decentralized ecosystems we use today (p. 28).

Indeed, digitalisation seems to have affected the workstation in a way that the chance to remotely intervene in the production of the same AVT project has boosted the increase of productivity, including work rhythm, finished translated material, interest from AV vendors, and money. Díaz-Cintas and Massidda (2019) mention ZOOsubs as the first online subtitling creation platform in 2009. Since then, this type of application has become an integral part of the subtitling translation process, both for corporations, such as Netflix with its Subtitle Originator, and for private individuals, including eCaption and Oona Subtitle Toolkit. As a final example, CaptionHub platform, which uses ASR for dialogue transcription, template creation, and in the editing phase, places accessible intralingual subtitling at its core.

Montagud et al. (2020) discuss accessibility in VR360 videos as a further technological approach within AVT studies. Concerning SDH, there is currently limited research available on how to provide accessible subtitling for individuals with deafness in immersive environments. From this perspective, the authors mention the EU H2020 Immersive Accessibility project (ImAc), which aims to carefully investigate how accessible AVT services such as SDH can be connected with interactive tools in the immersive environment (p. 14),

especially in terms of visualization, as to provide a full-enjoyable experience. Other innovations within the field of SDH come from comics and involve new approaches to creative descriptions of paralinguistic features and sound effects. In this sense Sala (2022) introduces the concept of ‘creative subtitles’, meaning “a new subtitling code based on comics’ visual language, in which subtitles are more visual and integrated within the image” (p. 78). This special SDH would use speech bubbles, changing sizes and fonts, a closer-to-speaker positioning instead of conventional labels, as well as colours for emotions and onomatopoeias. These alternatives aim at ensuring accessibility and engagement with the programme in a similar way to non-hearing-impaired viewers:

creative subtitling is not only aimed at providing full access to the meaning of the original text with all its nuances, but also to the enjoyment of the program. Their audience may not be able to hear, but they can feel and perceive. [...] The main objective of *creative* subtitles is to help d/Deaf viewers to grasp visually the message that is originally conveyed by aural means. They are aimed at creating the same effect their hearing peers perceive, so d/Deaf spectators receive the message in its entirety (pp. 78-79).

From these new methodologies and applications within AVT field it can be assumed that SDH will soon encounter new developments considering the speed updating technologies have been experiencing in the last decade. However, some challenges are still present, as “SDH often does little more than identify speakers or state that music can be heard” (Remael and Reviers, 2021, p. 275). Undoubtedly deeper studies on reception and perception of accessible subtitles by aurally impaired viewers would assure an effective development of tools and services for the overall improvement of their life quality. The next chapter will focus on deafness in more detail from both medical and social perspectives.

Issues on Deafness

Physiology and Percentages

This chapter will define deafness from a medical perspective in order to provide an overview of the condition as a form of disability. It will then proceed to describe deafness as a social phenomenon, including the relevant percentages and distribution of deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. This will be followed by figures regarding demographic data, after which the cognitive implications of reading by deaf people will be described. This will recall the fruition of subtitles as written texts with specific constraints. The objective of this study is to examine how deaf individuals cope with textual features in a bimodal bilingual context, with a focus on the use of experimental eye-tracking techniques.

2.1 Medical specifications

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines deafness as “loss or absence of hearing, because of a congenital condition or because of ageing, injury, a medical condition later in life, etc.” (OED, 2024). In a similar manner, the Cambridge English Dictionary (CED) defines deafness as “the quality of being unable to hear, either completely or partly” (CED, 2024). The Collins Dictionary is also in line with the above definitions, although it is somewhat less detailed: “[deafness is] the state or condition of being partially or totally unable to hear” (Collins Dictionary, 2024). The dictionary also points out the social implications related to deaf people in more recent times in terms of labelling: “deaf – often offensive (as collective noun; preceded by *the*) – *the deaf*” (*ibid.*). While these definitions are accurate, a medical perspective is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the physiological aspects of deafness. Medical and physiology textbooks and online resources offer a different interpretation of the definition of deafness. For instance, in the section for the general public, the Merck Manual (2022) uses the phrase “hearing loss and deafness” to provide information on the topic. However, the Manual does not provide a proper definition; instead, it immediately offers a contextualisation on the prevalence of deafness in the world and the types of deafness as the starting point. A similar approach is evident on the World Health Organization (WHO) website, which commences with the latest key fact section on hearing loss and an overview of the global distribution of deafness

before offering a conventional definition: “A person who is not able to hear as well as someone with normal hearing – hearing thresholds of 20 dB or better in both ears – is said to have hearing loss” (WHO, 2023).

The different approaches adopted by, respectively, dictionaries and specialised resources suggest a need for a comprehensive investigation of deafness in the present research that should include both medical and social aspects of deafness. Starting from the physiological description, below there is a representation of the human ear (Figure 35):

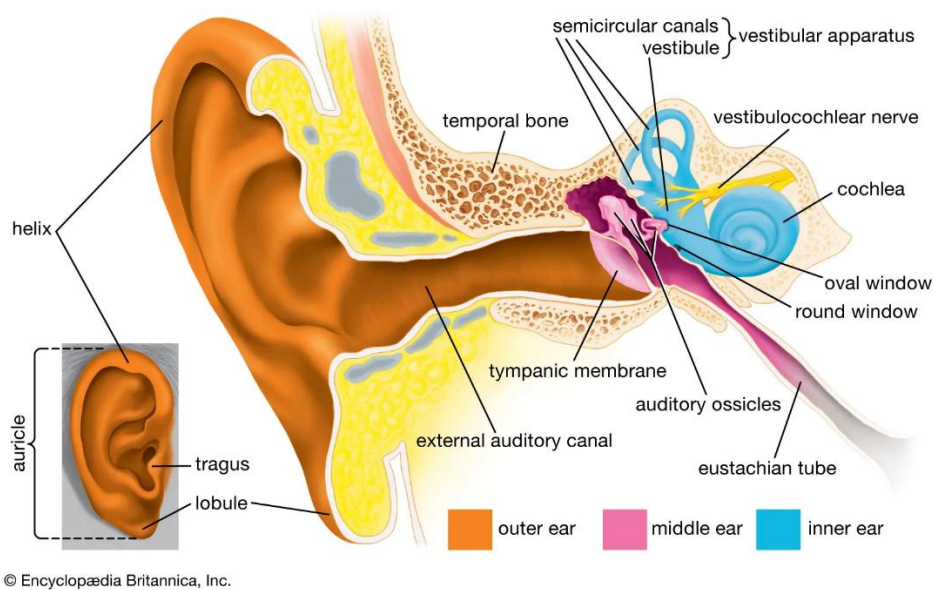


Figure 35: Anatomy of human ear (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2024).

It can be divided into three macro-sections: outer ear, middle ear, and inner ear. The process of hearing begins with the amplification of sounds in the outer ear, with frequencies between 3000 and 3500 Hz for a normal conversation (Berne and Levy, 2000, p. 163). Subsequently, sound waves pass through the eardrum and the ossicles, which are in the middle ear and include the anvil, stirrup, and hammer (Castano et al., 1995). These structures facilitate the transmission of sound waves to the cochlea, which is located in the inner ear. It is the cochlea, a liquid-filled channel with the form of a spiral, that is responsible for the transmission of electric impulses to the brain, which decodes sound frequencies (Stevens, 1998)².

² The present work will not discuss auditory physiology in deeper detail as it is beyond the scope of this research. For further insights on the functioning of human ear and its relation to speech reception, see Stevens (1998).

Deafness can take place in all parts of the ear. In external or middle ear, the issue regards a problematic conduction of sound waves, due to either some sort of blockage, or the malfunctioning of the ossicles, or even the rupture of the eardrum, for instance. This type is clinically defined as *conductive hearing loss* (Berne and Levy, 2000, p. 177). Deafness can also occur in cochlea, where hair cells – the actual responsible for the transmission of electric impulses – are damaged: in this case, hearing loss is defined as *sensorineural* (*ibid.*). To clarify such a difference, Zárate (2021) lists possible causes of deafness per type, here reported in the following table. In many cases sensorineural deafness is of a secondary nature, being caused by other illnesses:

Conductive deafness causes	Sensorineural deafness causes
<i>Cerumen obstruction (ear wax)</i>	<i>Presbycusis</i> (damaged hair cells, occurring with age progression)
<i>Otitis media with effusion (glue ear)</i> (middle ear filled with fluid)	<i>Noise-induced</i> (occurring with continuous exposure to louder sounds)
<i>Otitis media</i> (middle ear filled with fluid and then infected)	<i>Genetic predisposition</i>
<i>Otitis externa</i> (outer ear infected)	<i>Birth complications</i>
<i>Otosclerosis</i> (extra growth of bone in middle ear)	<i>Head injury</i>
<i>Cholesteatoma</i> (extra skin cells in middle ear)	<i>Viral infections</i>
<i>Collapse of eardrum onto the ossicles</i>	<i>Ménière's disease</i> (disorder affecting inner ear)
<i>Ossicles damage</i>	<i>Acoustic neuroma</i> (benign growth on or near auditory nerve)
<i>Perforation of eardrum</i>	<i>Meningitis</i>
<i>Bony lesions of ear canal</i>	<i>Encephalitis</i>
	<i>Multiple sclerosis</i>
	<i>Stroke</i>
	<i>Ototoxic drugs</i> (drugs used for cancer treatment but toxic to the ear)

Table 1: List of causes of conductive and sensorineural deafness (Zárate, 2021, pp. 25-27).

In addition to the causes and areas of the ear in which deafness can develop, hearing loss can also be classified according to other criteria, that in the present work are grouped in typology, degree, and features³. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gives the following classifications of deafness according to the previous indications. They are listed in the table below:

Typology	Degree	Features
<i>Conductive</i> (outer/middle ear)	<i>Mild</i> (not hearing only soft sounds)	<i>Unilateral or Bilateral</i> (one or both ears)
<i>Sensorineural</i> (inner ear/hearing nerve)	<i>Moderate</i> (not hearing up to normal speech)	<i>Pre-lingual or Post-lingual</i> (before or after language acquisition)
<i>Mixed</i> (both conductive and sensorineural)	<i>Severe</i> (not hearing up to some loud sounds)	<i>Symmetrical or Asymmetrical</i> (same or different type of hearing loss according to the ear)
<i>Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder</i> (inner ear/hearing nerve/brain)	<i>Profound</i> (not hearing also very loud sounds)	<i>Progressive or Sudden</i> (over time or occurred quickly)
		<i>Fluctuating or Stable</i> (changes over time or remains the same)
		<i>Congenital or Acquired/Delayed Onset</i> (at birth or later in life)

Table 2: Classification of hearing impairments (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023).

Furthermore, it is possible to present an overview of the extent of hearing loss in terms of degree using decibels⁴:

- Mild: between 20 and 40 dB
- Moderate: between 40 and 70 dB
- Severe: between 70 and 90 dB

³ These labels are based on personal interpretation of the types of hearing impairments, according to the list provided in table 2.

⁴ The range of decibels indicated signals the quietest sounds a person with the correspondent hearing loss can perceive.

- Profound: 90 dB and above (Maragna, 2008, p. 15).

Moreover, Maragna (2008) subdivides profound deafness in three more groups:

- Deafness with frequencies between 125 and 4000 Hertz at an intensity of 90 dB
- Deafness with frequencies between 125 and 2000 Hertz at an intensity of 90 dB and above
- Deafness with frequencies between 125 and 1000 Hertz at an intensity of more than 90 dB (pp. 15-16).

In order to provide a more all-encompassing analysis of hearing loss, it is necessary to include tinnitus among hearing impairments. It consists of noises such as “hissing, humming, buzzing, and whooshing” (RNID, 2024) that are not caused by external factors and are perceived as deeply annoying by the ear. Tinnitus may be either subjective, in presence of an aberrant auditory nerve activity, or objective, in presence of a physiologic process in the vicinity of the middle ear. In addition, different degrees of tinnitus can occur, all of which may negatively influence the quality of life of those affected.

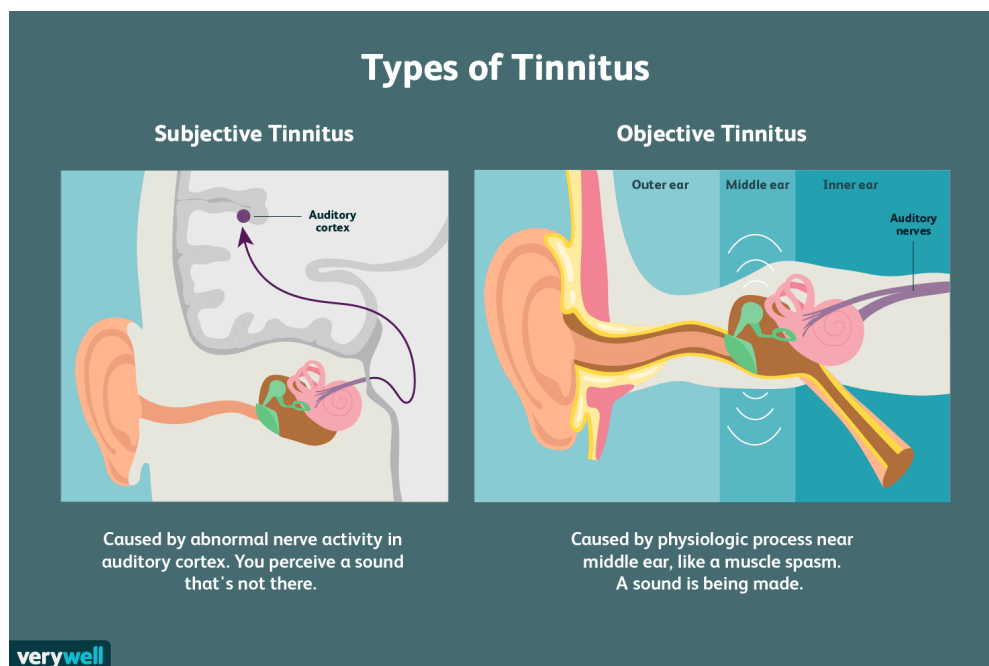


Figure 36: Illustrations of tinnitus types with a below description (Ferster, via Verywell Health, 2023).

In light of the aforementioned considerations, including tinnitus among hearing problems would provide a more inclusive view of the issue and would align this work with the approach already taken by charities such as the RNID in the UK.

As regards deafness treatments, in the case of profound deafness where conventional hearing aids are unsatisfactory, contemporary medicine contemplates the application of the cochlear implant. It consists of an electronic device that can stimulate the residual fibres of the auditory nerve by sending electrical signals, which will be perceived and decoded by the brain. The cochlear implant comprises both external and internal parts, the latter being implanted in the temporal bone (Maragna, 2008, pp. 55-56). In a nutshell, the cochlear implant requires surgical intervention. Instead, hearing aids are suitable for individuals with mild to moderate hearing loss since they are designed to amplify sound waves⁵. Furthermore, the use of hearing aids does not necessitate surgery.

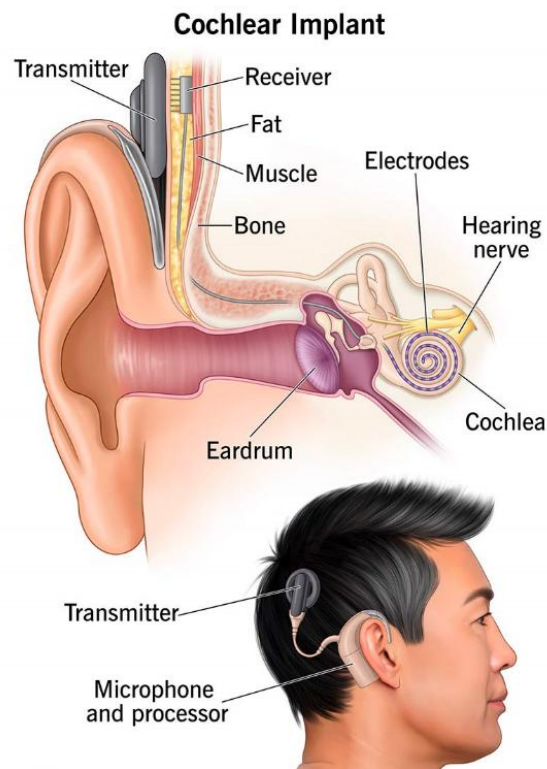


Figure 37: Functioning and positioning of the cochlear implant (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). The external components include a microphone attached to the ear cup and a processor, which receives and encodes signals from the microphone. The processor later sends those signals to the transmitter, which is in contact with the scalp through a magnet. Internally, an implanted receiver gets the signal from the transmitter and sends it to the electrodes inserted in the cochlea (Maragna, 2008).

⁵ This paper will not go into an in-depth description of the functioning of these technological devices. For a more detailed discussion on the subject, see the works of Maragna (2008), Popelka et al. (2016), and Litovsky et al. (2021), among many others.

Different Types of Hearing Aids

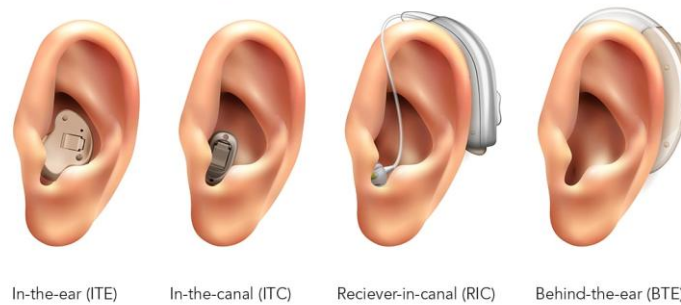


Figure 38: Four types of hearing aids, being distinct from cochlear implants in both application and functions. In order: In-the-ear (ITE) earmoulds are designed to fit snugly around the ear, with a small compartment holding the electronics attached to them; In-the-canal (ITC) aids are similar but smaller than ITE; Receiver-in-canal (RIC) aid is made up of a receiver placed within the ear canal and connected with a wire to the rest of the aid behind the ear; in Behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aid, the earmould is inside the ear and is connected with a tube to the rest of the aid behind the ear (The Hearing Solution Group, 2022).

It must be added that after the insertion of cochlear implants, logopaedic therapy is necessary, as explained by Maragna (2008):

L'intervento non dà la possibilità di sentire nello stesso modo in cui sentiamo noi udenti e implica necessariamente una terapia logopedica che può durare anche due anni. Gli stessi fautori dell'impianto cocleare ribadiscono la necessità che l'intervento venga fatto da un team multidisciplinare molto affiatato e competente, composto, oltre che dall'audiologo (o otorinolaringoiatra), da un neuropsichiatra, un tecnico del mappaggio, un logopedista e un audiometrista (p. 56).

It can be definitively stated that deafness encompasses a vast array of typologies, degrees, and conditions. Moreover, further distinctions should be specified when addressing to people having some degree of deafness, especially from a social perspective. With reference to Table 1, acquired or delayed onset deafness can be socially addressed and commonly recognised with the word 'deafened', which describes individuals who have lost most of their hearing later in life. 'Hard of hearing' is instead used to refer to individuals who have little hearing loss, indicating the degree of deafness, which is usually mild or moderate. Less specificities occur with the term 'hearing impaired', describing individuals with no distinction in the degree of hearing loss, as it does not differentiate between individuals with varying degrees of hearing

loss. Instead, an interesting distinction is made between the terms ‘deaf’ and ‘Deaf’. Those who are deaf, with a lowercase ‘d’, are individuals who have total hearing loss and may communicate orally and/or use sign language, while ‘Deaf’, with an uppercase ‘D’, refers to members of the Deaf community who are habitual signers (Hearing Link Services, 2022).

In this context, Russo Cardona and Volterra (2007) report 1992 research conducted by Johnson and Erting, who claim that a deaf person’s belonging to the Deaf community is defined according to three criteria. They include deafness as biological condition, ability to use sign language in appropriate ways and contexts, and degree of detachment from the hearing community, the latter depending on the difficulty to access social services and economic well-being. From this definition, three different groups of Deaf people can be determined:

2. A smaller nucleus of native signers, children of Deaf parents;
3. A broader category of deaf signers who have acquired sign language proficiency as a result of their interactions with other Deaf individuals in educational settings;
4. A group of hearing signers, who represent the interface between the Deaf community and the hearing world (Russo Cardona and Volterra, 2007, p. 39).

From the various definitions and classifications presented, it becomes evident that deafness is a multifaceted and challenging subject to define. This is particularly evident when considering its social implications, which often involve a complex interweaving of the concept of deafness as a disability. In a wider sense, the difference between medical and social disability models needs to be included in this scenario, so as to help clarify the matter.

The individual or medical model of disability assesses that disability is linked to medical knowledge in the sense that physical impairments generate limitations in the individual’s everyday life. It relies on the definition of disabled, which first appeared in 1948 National Assistance Act referring to “the blind, the partially sighted, the deaf, the hard of hearing, and the general classes of the physically handicapped” (Barnes and Mercer, 2010, chp. 2, sec. 2, par. 2). The main structure of this method is based on a tripartite classification, which starts from *impairment*, meaning “abnormalities of body structure and appearance and with organ or system function resulting from any cause” (WHO, 1980, p. 26), followed by *disability*, meaning “consequences of impairment in terms of functional performance and activity by the individual” (*ibid.*), and *handicap*, which means “disadvantages experienced by the individual as a result of impairments and disabilities” (*ibid.*). The interrelation among the three is shown in the scheme below (Figure 39):

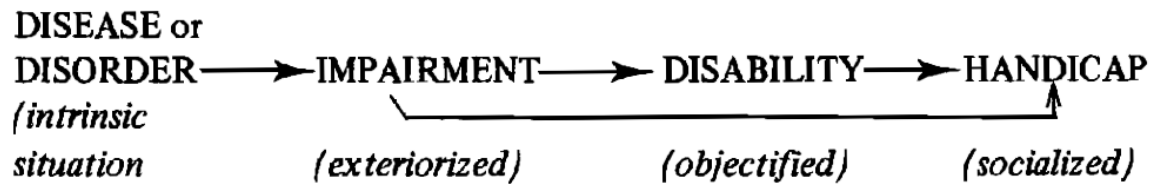


Figure 39: Outline of the medical model including the concepts of impairment, disability, and handicap (WHO, 1980, p. 30).

The outline makes it evident that the disease is intrinsic to the individual, and thus can be classified in different ways according to the perspective from which it is viewed. These perspectives include the disease as something that is externally visible or perceivable, something that is functionally related to habitual actions, or something that has social implications. However, such a model has the consequence of viewing the disabled person as someone ‘unproductive’ and ‘incapable’. The realisation of social discrimination necessitated an update to the medical model, namely the social model of disability, which originated in Great Britain in the context of the political and social movements that shaped the Western world in the 1960s. This is particularly relevant in the context of disability, now defined as:

the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream social activities (UPIAS, 1976, cited in Barnes and Mercer, 2010, chp. 2, sec. 4, par. 2).

It becomes clear that sociological analysis has played a pivotal role in the development of a social model of disability (Barton, 1996). Recently, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) has provided a sort of synthesis of the two preceding models, offering a biopsychosocial model. The perspective is hence shifted from disease to health, resulting in a classification of health components from a “biological, individual and social perspective” (WHO, 2001, p. 20). The relative schema, as presented in Barnes and Mercer (2010), illustrates that the individual's health and activities are interdependent, with both being deeply related to participatory attitudes and physical condition, as well as to environmental and personal factors (Figure 40):

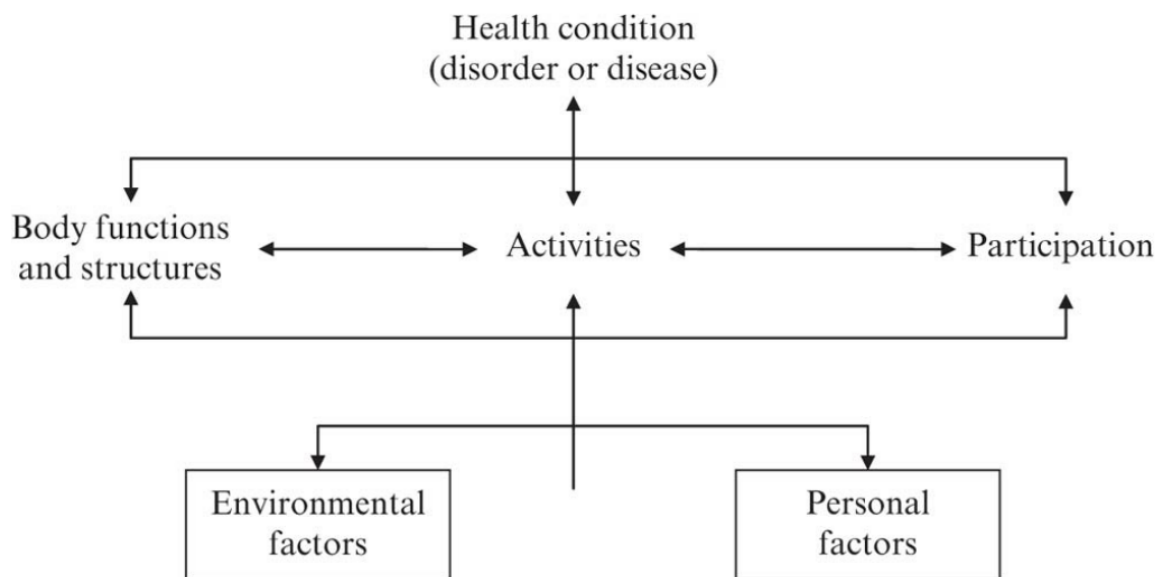


Figure 40: ICF components' interaction (Barnes and Mercer, 2010, chp. 2, sec. 1, par. 2).

Despite the logical consideration of deafness as included in the wider range of disabilities, which is sensory in nature, Deaf people have demonstrated little or no agreement with this labelling. For instance, the British Sense organisation has highlighted that some d/Deaf individuals do not associate the two concepts of deafness and disability, as they do not wish to “fix or cure their deafness” (Sense, 2024). This suggests the idea of disability as a form of illness. The organisation itself asserts that it espouses the social model of disability, which it views as a means of dismantling social barriers erected by those who are not disabled. Nevertheless, Sense emphasises the importance of personal choice in determining whether an individual considers themselves to be disabled. Other organisations adopt a similar perspective. For example, Terptree, a British company dealing with deaf employees and deaf customer experiences, contrasts the idea of deafness as a disability experienced by both deaf and Deaf people:

‘deaf’ individuals often acknowledge the label of ‘disabled’ because they understand that they face barriers daily, from communication challenges to risks at home like undetected leaks or fire alarms. They accept support from foundations, charities, and government bodies through allowances and benefits. ‘Deaf’ individuals, despite not identifying as disabled, are still eager to accept support from government entities, be it batteries for hearing aids, benefits, allowances, or free bus passes. Regardless of whether they are lowercase ‘deaf’ or uppercase ‘Deaf’, all working members of this community pay taxes and therefore should receive any necessary support (Terptree, 2024).

From an academic perspective, Zárate (2021) reports Deaf people's point of view, well aligned with the previous statements:

People belonging to the Deaf community do not consider deafness to be a disability and embrace the values upheld by the cultural model of Deafness. 'Why should anyone expect deaf people to deny their roots when every other cultural group proudly celebrates its traditions and history? Why stigmatize the speakers of a particular language as disabled?' enquire those belonging to the Deaf community (p. 21).

Deaf communities tend to adhere to the concept of disability as a social construct. This is also evident from the social model of disability presented earlier. Nevertheless, certain elements of the model are incompatible with the prevailing view that deafness is a condition that is unrelated to disability. Zárate (2021) provides some analysis of the problem:

The concept of disability being a social construct may be embraced by members of the Deaf community, but some of the notions advocated by the social model of disability – namely the view of deafness as an impairment or the focus on creating all-inclusive environments – are not shared. Members of the Deaf community would consider themselves as happily diverse and different rather than impaired or disabled (p. 22).

The above contradiction exemplifies the ongoing challenge in defining the concept of disability in accordance with contemporary social usage, particularly in relation to an 'invisible' type of condition as deafness is. Deafness, in contrast to visible disabilities, is frequently unnoticed and misunderstood, which complicates the process of addressing the specific needs of DHH individuals. This complexity is reflected in the varying degrees of hearing loss, communication preferences (such as the use of sign language versus oral communication), and cultural identities within the Deaf community. In light of the considerations outlined above, the present research will address these specificities in the interview, which will be administered to deaf individuals in the UK. The participants will be selected to represent a range of hearing loss severities, from profound to severe, as well as a variety of communication modes. The interview will be designed to capture these nuances by including questions about the participants' preferred modes of communication, their use of hearing aids or cochlear implants, and their cultural identification with their community. The primary objective is to ascertain whether there are any differences in the fruition of SDH according to the different typologies of deafness among the

respondents. For example, it will investigate whether individuals who primarily utilise sign language perceive subtitles differently from those who rely more heavily on lipreading or auditory support. Furthermore, the study will investigate the impact of factors such as the age of onset of deafness and the degree of hearing loss on the reception and efficacy of SDH.

Considering all these factors, it is therefore essential to take into account all forms of auditory impairment, recognising that SDH naturally address a heterogeneous group of aurally impaired viewers. This encompasses not only those who are congenitally deaf but also those who have acquired hearing loss at a later stage in life, which may impact their subtitle preferences and requirements in a manner that differs from the aforementioned group. For instance, older adults with age-related hearing loss may exhibit distinctive preferences and challenges in comparison to younger individuals who have been deaf since birth. The objective of this research is to adopt an inclusive approach in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how different subgroups within Deaf community or simply experiencing hearing loss engage with SDH. This will facilitate the development of subtitling practices that are more tailored and effective, and which accommodate the diverse needs of all aurally impaired viewers. This inclusive methodology is aligned with the principles set forth by the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF), which underscores the necessity of considering the full spectrum of disabilities and their impact on individual experiences and participation, in this case enjoyment of audiovisual products.

2.2 Deafness in numbers in the UK

In Europe approximately 190 million people are aurally impaired, which correspond to 20% of the whole population (World Health Organization, 2023). Specifically for the UK, deafness is recognised as “the second most common disability” (Hearing Link Services, 2024). In terms of numbers, the United Kingdom provides a detailed picture of the prevalence of deafness within its territory. The RNID charity illustrates updated figures and relative percentages of individuals with hearing impairments, divided by country:

One in five adults in the UK are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. 12 million adults in the UK are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. That is roughly 10.1 million people in England, 1 million people in Scotland, 610,000 people in Wales and 320,000 people in Northern Ireland. In the UK more than 40% of over 50s have hearing loss, rising to 70% of over 70s (RNID, 2024).

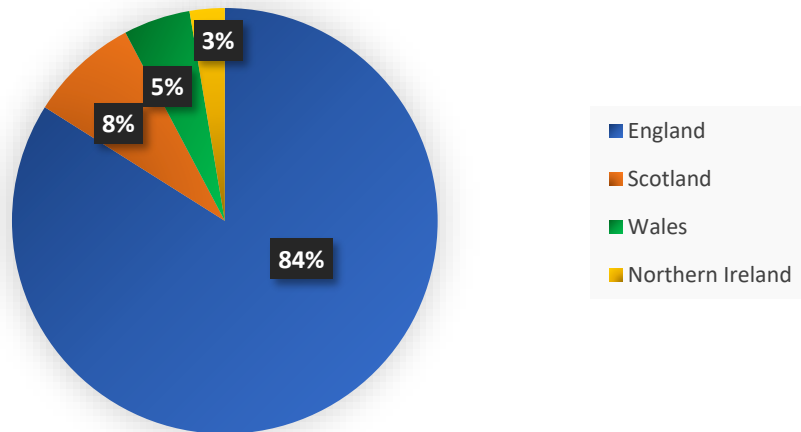
It is noticeable that the number of people affected by aural impairments has been increasing in last years. Indeed, 11 million adults had some form of deafness in 2017 (Zárate, 2021), i.e., one million less than the number censused in 2024. It is estimated that as many as 1.2 million adults in the UK are severely deaf, as they “would not be able to hear most conversational speech” (*ibid.*). Further recent data on the prevalence of deafness in the UK is provided by the charity Hearing Link Services:

1 in 5 of the UK adult population is affected by hearing loss. 8 million of these are aged 60 and over. 6.7 million could benefit from hearing aids but only about 2 million people use them. About 900,000 people are severely or profoundly deaf. About 12,000 people in the UK use cochlear implants. Many people with hearing loss also have tinnitus which affects 1 in 10 adults (Hearing Link Services, 2024).

For what concerns tinnitus, RNID (2024) specifies that over 7 million adults experience this hearing disorder in UK, which corresponds to 12.6% adults according to Bodytrak (2024). The number is likely to increase in 2028, becoming 7.7 million (Hear4u, n.d.). Predictions show further growth in the proportion of people with hearing impairments in the UK. In more detail, by the year 2035, it is estimated that there will be approximately 14.2 million adults in the United Kingdom with hearing loss greater than 25 dB HL⁶ (RNID, 2024), which means a growth of 2.2 million people – 18.33% – in 11 years. The estimate is even higher according to the charity called Enhance the UK, which indicates that by that year there will be 15.6 million people with deafness in the UK, presumably including the under-16 age group in the statistics (Enhance the UK, n.d.). Moreover, approximately 151,000 people in the country use British Sign Language (BSL) as their primary mode of communication (Hearing Link Services, 2024). The following graphs present a summary of some previously discussed information:

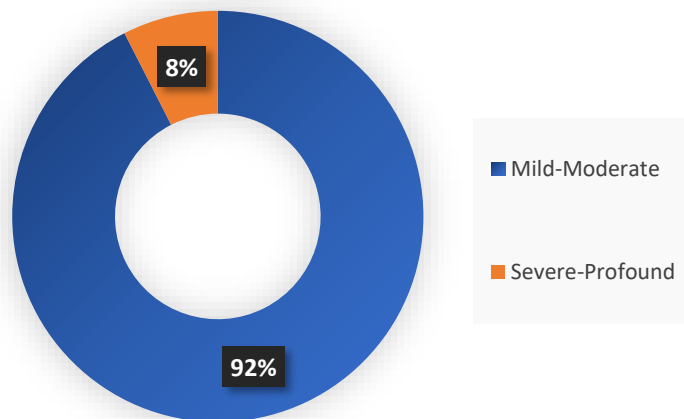
⁶ Hearing Level.

Hearing loss in UK - 17.82% of the population



Graph 1: Hearing loss distribution in UK's countries.

Hearing loss types



Graph 2: Percentages of hearing loss types in UK.

In terms of care strategies, the World Health Organization has determined three global goals to be achieved by 2030 for the prevention of ear-related diseases and hearing care, namely:

A 20% relative increase in the effective coverage of newborn hearing screening services [...], a 20% relative reduction in the prevalence of chronic ear diseases and unaddressed hearing loss in school-age children [...] [and] a 20% relative increase in the effective coverage of adults with hearing loss that use hearing technology (that is, hearing aids and implants) (World Health Organization, 2023).

The data previously mentioned effectively demonstrate the massive presence of people living aural impairments in the UK. Therefore, it becomes clear that accessibility services must be guaranteed to promote social inclusion. Indeed, the UK government website highlights the provision of SDH for deaf viewers: “Many people with hearing loss will rely on closed captioning (subtitles) to access audio-visual content such as TV and cinema programmes, advertisements, and social media videos” (Gov.uk, 2023). Moreover, an analogous punctuality is expected for SDH adequacy, especially from the point of view of linguistic coherence between what is written on subtitles and what is said by actors. However, it is necessary to investigate the cognitive aspects of subtitles’ fruition, as deaf viewers may encounter difficulties with written text, particularly in the case of marked linguistic features.

Some evidence of deaf people’s difficulty in reading and understanding a written text comes from British Deaf News, more specifically concerning reading skills recorded in schools. In fact, a significant proportion of deaf children continues to experience educational failure: according to government data analysed by the National Deaf Children’s Society, in 2019 only around 43% of deaf children in England reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by the end of primary school (Key Stage 2), compared with roughly 74% of children with no identified special educational needs⁷ (Lomax, 2019). According to the 2023 Educational Policy Institute report, six years later, in 2019, “the deaf children’s attainment gap⁸ was equivalent to 8.8 months of learning at key stage 1 (age seven), 12.0 months at key stage 2 (age eleven) and 17.5 months at key stage 4 (age sixteen)” (Hutchinson, 2023, p. 8). In fewer words, this means that, on average, deaf children experience a comparable attainment gap to that of socio-economically disadvantaged children by the age of sixteen (p. 43). This aspect predicts the occurrence of cognitive issues in the reading of written texts by individuals who are deaf.

2.3 Cognitive implications in reading subtitles

2.3.1 A difference in codes

The reading of subtitles by deaf or hard of hearing individuals may present linguistic-cognitive implications that differ from those of a hearing person. Maragna (2008) notes that language acquisition for a deaf child is slower than for a hearing child, as it is a learning process rather

⁷ Or SEN, now commonly found as SEND – Special Education Needs and Disabilities.

⁸ It is defined as “difference in attainment between deaf children and children with no recorded special needs” (Hutchinson, 2023, p. 8).

than a spontaneous acquisition (p. 63). In the lexical domain, this results in a restricted vocabulary and a difficulty in its comprehension. For instance, in cases of synonymy or polysemy, or jokes and banter in the pragmatic domain, the individual may find it challenging to understand the intended meaning due to the complex linguistic contexts where monoreferentiality is less contemplated (p. 64). These difficulties may persist into adulthood, even in individuals with a high cultural level. The reason for this can be found in the acquisition of certain linguistic skills through sound repetition, which the deaf child cannot draw on (*ibid.*). The phonological implication is indeed referred to as a competence:

Quello che riesce difficile comprendere a prima vista è come mai una persona sorda, che sa leggere correttamente un testo, non sia poi in grado di comprenderlo. Noi udenti tendiamo a identificare la competenza fonologica con la competenza semantica. Anche il paragone che spesso viene fatto per spiegare le difficoltà linguistiche dei sordi con la scarsa conoscenza di una lingua straniera non è del tutto corretto, perché un conto è possedere già la struttura linguistica in una lingua vocale, sia pure differente, e ben diverso è non averla affatto (p. 68).

The previous statement finds scientific evidence in the research of Mayberry (2010) and Bélanger and Rayner (2015). The authors analyse the modality employed by a deaf person when reading a verbal language text, which is likely to be based on a direct orthographic-semantic connection, in contrast to a hearing reader, who relies on the association between orthography and phonology:

Because deaf readers (skilled and less skilled) appear to bypass phonological codes [...], skilled deaf readers [seem to be] more “efficient” than hearing readers at processing written words within a single fixation. [This shows] that deaf readers have tighter connections between orthography and semantics, but also that they are extremely attuned to the visual-orthographic makeup of words and quickly detect precise word form, within a single fixation [...] or even while words are still in the parafovea⁹ (Bélanger and Rayner, 2015, p. 224).

When the subject of the language faculty related to deaf people is discussed, a comparison between the use of verbal language and the use of sign language is almost inevitable. This is because it is assumed that there are significant differences between the two that could somewhat affect the rapid comprehension of a written text. However, it is necessary to take a closer look

⁹ A region of the eye that surrounds the fovea. The fovea is the area of the retina with the highest visual acuity, where images are focused (Attardo and Pickering, 2023).

at the phenomenon of sign language structure. In this context, Russo Cardona and Volterra (2007) illustrate the levels and units of analysis of sign language. They identify similarities with verbal languages, such as the tracing of the double-articulation structure, which is composed of simpler and more complex units. However, they also identify substantial divergences, especially on how a sign is configured in both systems. For example, Stokoe (1960) identifies sign-related phoneme correspondents, which he terms ‘cheremes’. These are devoid of semantic value just as phonemes and are characterised by location, handshape, and movement, which he labels TAB (tabula), DEZ (designation), and SIG (signation), respectively¹⁰.

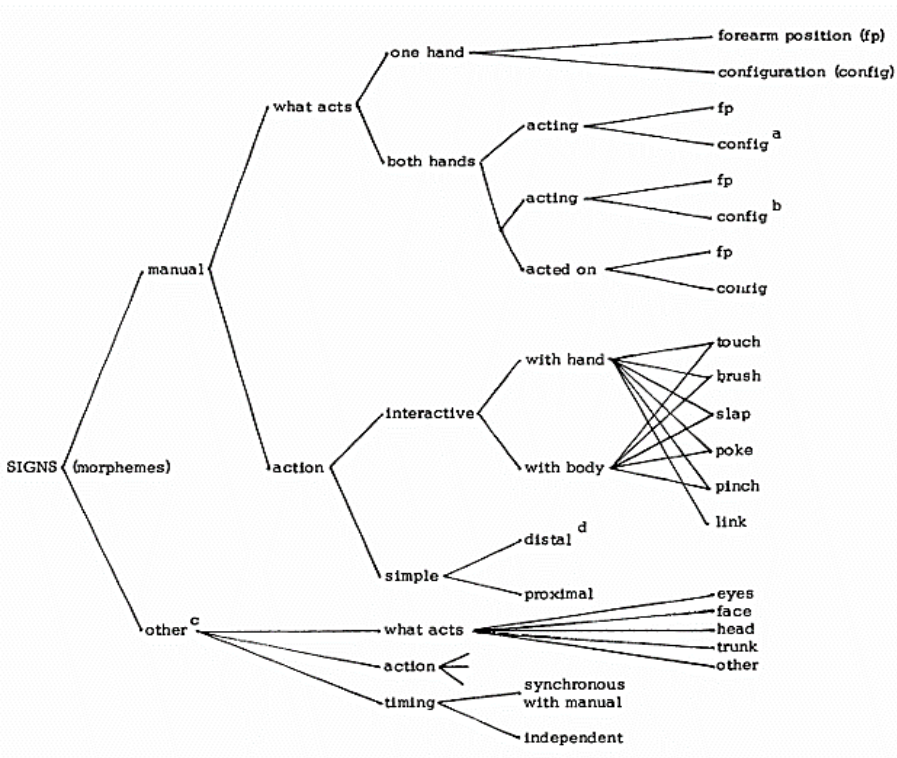


Figure 41: Graph illustrating the formational characteristics of sign language morphemes. The three parameters of tab, sig, and dez are here schematically represented (Stokoe, 1980, p. 376).

In practical terms, an example of location, handshape, and movement application in BSL is shown below (Figure 42):

¹⁰ To these, ORI (orientation), HA (hands arrangement), and nonmanual features must be included.

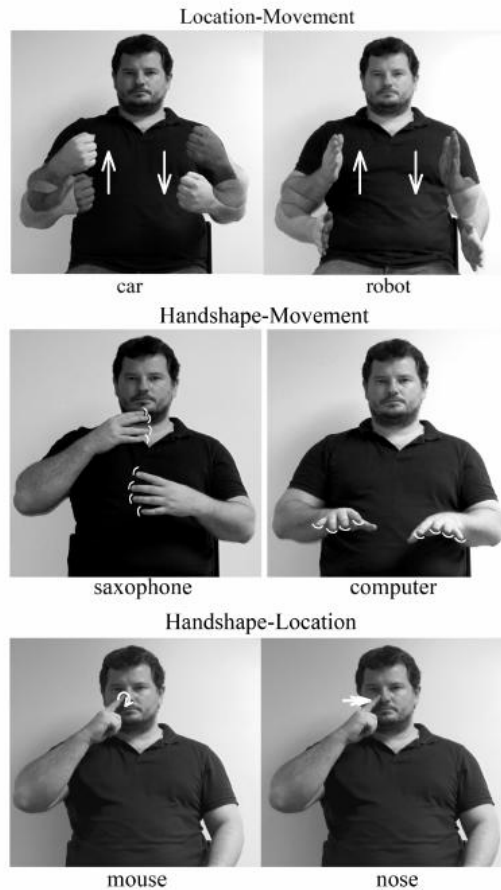


Figure 42: Some minimal pairs in BSL. The two hyphenated ‘cheremes’ signalling each pair indicate the invariant parameters of the signs (Thompson et al., 2013, p. 1451).

However, whereas in phonemes the sequential function is central, in cheremes simultaneity is the primary concern. Indeed, Stokoe (1980) stresses that:

In sign language the aspects (what acts, the action, and where) are themselves simultaneous or virtually so, but so are their features; e.g. “what acts” may be (right) forearm *horizontal* and *pronated*, fingers (all) *extended* and *spread*, etc. So described, this aspect includes features of hand configuration and of the so-called “parameter of orientation” (p. 370).

The peculiarities of sign language structure may suggest that the interpretation of a written text, which represents the expression of a vocal language, may present a first level of interpretative difficulty for deaf people. In this respect, further explanations come from morphology and syntax, since it is likely not to find inflection or concordances, in one case, and to have a different word order than verbal language, in the other. For instance, British Sign Language

(BSL) normally prefers the OSV word order instead of the typical English SVO one (Flynn, 2023). As Russo Cardona and Volterra (2007) state:

Ci troviamo dunque di fronte a una grammatica e a una sintassi fondate sulla modalità visivo-gestuale. Le maggiori differenze tra lingue dei segni e lingue vocali emergono proprio in aree grammaticali dove il rapporto con la modalità visivo-gestuale appare più forte (p. 78).

The articulatory modalities of sign language appear to support the hypothesis that the tendency of a deaf person to read a written text in a verbal language is dependent on the direct relationship between orthography and semantics, as previously discussed. A potential conclusion can be drawn from the notion of the visual iconicity of some signs in sign languages, as well as the act of imagination, which may be unconscious, whereby each parameter of a sign is discerned as if separate from one another (Stokoe, 1980). This bears resemblance to the identification of the word as composed of graphemes, which are also visual elements and can themselves have an iconic function. Indeed, deaf people “must simultaneously master the orthographic code that maps visual symbols onto meaning” (Traxler et al., 2014, p. 97). It should be noted, however, that in cases of bimodal bilingualism, i.e., the ability to proficiently use a sign language and a verbal language, there appears to be evidence of enhanced processing of complex syntactic structures in a vocal language. For instance, Traxler et al. (2014) demonstrate that there is no discernible difference in the way relative clauses are cognitively processed between bilingual bimodal deaf individuals, bilingual hearing individuals and monolingual hearing individuals. Piñar et al. (2017) also find similar evidence: “adult deaf readers rapidly detect and incorporate both syntactic and semantic cues during the online processing of relative clauses in English” considering that “the participants were bilingual in a signed and written language” (p. 991). However, the authors point out that this could depend on the literacy degree of participants, or on their personal experiences (Piñar et al., 2017).

Another study argues the same idea, emphasising that individuals who are Deaf and use sign language as their primary mode of communication are less proficient in reading than those who are deaf and use a verbal language through the use of hearing aids:

[Deaf signers show] good ability to process the visual information but on average they were not able to recall, process and understand the verbal information and the narrative, suggesting difficulties to read and/or to understand the information conveyed in the subtitles, more likely due to their overall poor reading comprehension (Miquel Iriarte, 2017, p. 227).

It is, however, essential to differentiate between the reading abilities of Deaf signers. Miquel Iriarte's (2017) work is worthy of further consideration in this context, as it highlights the relationship between d/Deaf signers' reading abilities and their educational backgrounds. Her findings indicate that d/Deaf signers who have been educated using "an exclusively oral approach with no sign language" (p. 93) exhibit a lower level of reading comprehension. Conversely, individuals who are bimodal bilingual d/Deaf tend to exhibit enhanced reading and comprehension abilities: "Reading proficiency in pre-lingual deaf could be more related to an early and steady acquisition of any modality of language than to the amount and intensity of oral or spoken training" (p. 97), hence referring to sign language. It can be assumed that deaf individuals who employed sign language later in education experience greater difficulty in reading. Conversely, those who have been signing since childhood also at school and are therefore bimodal bilingual demonstrate a similar pattern of processing vocal written language to hearing individuals. With reference to subtitling, the act of reading implies a rather different task than reading pre-printed text, as "there are cooccurring, competing stimuli presented in time-constrained situations" (Moran, 2012, p. 186). However, testing general reading skills still represents a valid starting point for d/Deaf viewers' subtitles reception.

2.3.2 The eye-tracking technique

The previously mentioned studies on both orthography-semantics connection and deaf signers' reading proficiency are based on the eye-tracking technique, which is indeed commonly used in reception studies of written texts within deafness issues. The functioning of modern eye tracking is well described by Attardo and Pickering (2023):

A source of light "illuminates" the eye. In many cases, infrared light (which cannot be perceived by the naked eye and is harmless) is used in addition to visible light. A camera records the image of the eye. Then, from the reflection of the light on the eye, we get the glint. From the infrared light illumination the pupil becomes clearly visible as a dark circle. [...] From the position of the center of the pupil and of the glint, it is possible to calculate the line of sight (gaze). [...] The eye tracker software performs all these calculations, and once the distance between the eyes and the computer screen is known, it can extrapolate at which point on the screen the user is directing their gaze (p. 3).

In reading, eye tracking has revealed that the movements of the eye are made through fixations, i.e., the staring on certain sections of the word, usually one for shorter words and two for longer

words, and saccades, i.e., the lines connecting fixations (p. 75). In simple terms, Schotter and Rayner (2012) identify fixations as the moments when eyes are stable, and saccades as the period when eyes move. A valid example is shown in the image below, taken from Kruger et al. (2015). In the picture, fixations are represented by the coloured dots, joined together by saccades, instead represented by lines (Figure 43):



Figure 43: Screenshot showing the movements of a deaf person's eyes reading verbatim subtitles in Polish (Kruger et al., 2015, p. 6).

Content words are usually the ones fixated, while function words, high-frequency words, short words, and highly predictable words are often skipped (Attardo and Pickering, 2023). If a sentence is not adequately processed or understood, regression saccades could occur. They consist of the eyes moving back to a previously fixated word to process it once more. Regression saccades can also be of corrective type if the position of the gaze is not optimal, as well as when the end of a sentence has been reached and the gaze goes back to the beginning. In the latter case the process is identified as a return sweep (p. 75). The overall duration of saccades is very brief: between 20 and 40 milliseconds (ms) according to Attardo and Pickering (2023), or 25 and 60 ms according to Schotter and Rayner (2012). It usually depends on the length of the characters involved. Instead, fixations last between 200 and 250 ms on average, which suggests the time to process and understand a word (Attardo and Pickering, 2023; Schotter and Rayner, 2012). In these terms, the so-called wrap-up effect plays a significant role: a pause always occurs after the reading of a sentence or a clause “to integrate its meaning” (p. 87).

When detecting graphemes, the eyes do not contemporarily fix the same letter; instead, they are focused on different letters. This condition, named fixation disparity (Howard, 2012), is

more pronounced in “beginning readers than skilled readers” (Schotter and Rayner, 2012, p. 86). Based on these premises, it is not to exclude that profoundly deaf people, whose literacy skills may encounter greater challenges than hearers, may experience such a condition while reading, since word comprehension is affected as long as fixation is. This difficulty is further compounded when considering the nature of subtitling. Indeed, when reading subtitles, the gaze is continuously directed back and forth not only within the subtitle’s line, but also between the text and the image, as shown in figure 41. Deaf individuals face particular challenges when it comes to this complex visual task. Their reading patterns and processing difficulties differ from those of hearing viewers, as already mentioned. For instance, an experiment conducted by Krejtz et al. (2016) on reading subtitles by eye tracking demonstrates that deaf participants fixated on function words for a longer duration than their hearing counterparts, which may be attributed to the necessity of recognising words in general. This tendency confirms the necessity for a greater cognitive effort to process both content and grammatical words, and consequently to understand subtitles. This is in contrast to the usual behaviour of function words, which are not typically fixated:

DHH participants tended to spend significantly more time on reading subtitles; they had longer FFDs¹¹ than the hearing for all word types, which may be an indication of slightly lower reading proficiency and may explain their lower comprehension scores. Longer dwell time is often taken as an indicator of difficulty in extracting information. [...] higher cognitive resources and processing effort are indicated by higher fixation duration, dwell time, and fixation count. Longer FFD may be a reflection of delayed or incorrect lexical identification, which is an early stage of text processing in reading. Therefore, correct identification of a word as either a function or content word is an important step in becoming a more proficient reader (p. 229).

There are actual differences in language acquisition and reading skills between hearing and deaf people since the latter often rely more on visual cues and may have different experiences with language development. Krejtz et al. (2016) indicate that simpler language or clearer segmentation could enhance comprehension by deaf viewers. Nevertheless, such suggestions go against the requests of the Deaf community, which ask for verbatim subtitles in order to understand the full context of the dialogues and to avoid any feelings of social exclusion. Some support also comes from the scientific field in this respect. Szarkowska et al. (2016) indeed

¹¹ First Fixation Duration.

show that the verbatim solution allows a slightly better comprehension of the subtitle content across all groups – DHH and hearing viewers – in intralingual SDH:

subtitle editing may contribute to people making more glances between the image and the subtitle text as they are constantly comparing both, possibly looking for (in)consistency, or perhaps as a result of such inconsistencies. [...] [E]dited subtitles [...] displayed relatively long [...] may have caused viewers to go back to the subtitle area after reading the subtitle and looking at the image (p. 198).

Zárate (2021) offers a similar perspective, particularly in light of the fact that the majority of aurally impaired individuals who use intralingual SDH have some degree of auditory access, even if it is limited:

unedited subtitles may validate what is being heard, while a mismatch between the audio and the subtitle at a comfortable reading speed may be more confusing, and therefore less effective, than a subtitle that has a higher reading speed but tallies with the audio (pp. 40-41).

Given that the correct extraction of the meaning of words is necessary for comprehension to extend to the rest of the proposition and, ultimately, to a “mental representation of what the sentences have conveyed to the hearer” (Attardo and Pickering, 2023, p. 74), the reception of the message may become challenging in the presence of uncommon spelling, complex linguistic varieties, or marked syntactic forms. In the case of deafness, these cognitive implications may be further amplified due to the previously discussed relationship between orthography and phonology. Additionally, deaf readers may require more time because of the wrap-up effect triggered by such linguistic patterns. Zárate (2021) supports this assertion by stating that “non-standard forms [...] may require a greater cognitive effort, which may slow down the reading process” (p. 46). However, if non-standard elements are crucial for accurately portraying characters, they should be faithfully represented in subtitles (*ibid.*). This hypothesis will play a significant role in the interview designed for deaf participants in the United Kingdom, which will be presented later in this study.

The following chapter will examine in greater depth perception and reception of English SDH by DHH viewers in the context of sociolinguistic variation, with reference to the British setting. After providing a theoretical overview of sociolinguistic research into variation in both

audiovisual products and sign language, research questions on SDH and non-standard features will be identified through the use of a mixed methodological approach.

Sociolinguistic Variation in SDH

A Study on Accessibility in SVoD Subtitles

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research design. It first outlines the research questions and challenges associated with the written transposition of linguistic variation in English SDH on streaming platforms, with a focus on accessibility for d/Deaf and HoH individuals. The discussion begins with an examination of sociolinguistic features in audiovisual products, followed by the analysis of variation within Deaf communities using BSL. The introduction seeks to frame how variation is perceived, negotiated, and enacted by Deaf people in both sign and verbal languages, considering the aural linguistic background they may develop in close social contexts. This perspective highlights the importance of accurately identifying transcribing verbatim sociolinguistically connoted words and phrases in SDH, given that variation is an inherent aspect of their social life. Such an approach may foster a stronger sense of identification and greater attachment with characters and storylines, thereby reducing the risk of exclusion from the viewing experience. Finally, a detailed description of the methodology adopted for the research is provided.

3.1 Sociolinguistic perspectives

3.1.1 Sociolinguistic variation in audiovisual products

The field of variationist sociolinguistics has historically concentrated on establishing a correlation between linguistic variation and a range of geographical and social variables, including age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity (Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1992, 2000, 2001; Berruto, 2011; Kerswill, 2009; Watson, 2009). The concept of variation here also implies the ties within social networks in speech communities and the subsequent linguistic contact (Weinreich, 1953; Milroy, 1987, 2002; Trudgill, 2000, 2010; Bergs, 2005; McEnery, 2009), despite being usually associated with interactional sociolinguistics. This approach is designed to facilitate the understanding of those factors that contribute to linguistic variation within different social contexts and groups. Given that society is a complex system, linguistic complexity, particularly in terms of sociolinguistic variables, is likely to be reflected in the way communicative acts are understood. Labov (1972) posits that when variation occurs, superficial

linguistic features are the most susceptible to acquiring social meaning, becoming proper variables. Consequently, each version of a variable will only be linked to a social group due to the way it is employed within that group. It can be assumed that sociolinguistics reflects a dynamic nature, in that it analyses the behaviour of individuals in their use of linguistic variation as a resource to construct and represent their social identity (Coupland, 2007). This perspective considers the more fluid and performative aspects of language use, reflecting a broader and more nuanced understanding of sociolinguistic phenomena along diaphasic, diatopic, diastratic, and, ultimately, diachronic dimensions.

Television programmes and films provide a valuable opportunity to observe the application of variationist sociolinguistics in practice. British audiovisual media frequently reflect and reinforce linguistic diversity, showcasing a range of regional dialects and sociolects. For instance, the popular television series *Peaky Blinders* incorporates the Birmingham dialect, thereby providing an authentic portrayal of early 20th-century working-class speech. Similarly, the television series *The Crown* features a range of accents, including those associated with the upper classes, which reflect the social stratification of British society. The same can be detected in *Downton Abbey*, a TV series featuring regional and social dialects which linguistically categorise each character, thus resulting in “the portrayal of a polyphonic ensemble which provides an ideal context for upper-class characters to stand out” (Ranzato, 2018, p. 210-211). Diastratic and diaphasic variations are also involved in the Netflix series *Sex Education*, which represents a valid example of how taboo language, bad language, and genderlect are employed for the purpose of identity formation and the establishment of social hierarchies within contemporary British youth groups.

The increasing prevalence of linguistic features in audiovisual productions, whether social or geolinguistic in nature, appears to convey the notion of verisimilitude (Ellender, 2015; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021) and characterisation (Beseghi, 2016), perhaps with greater clarity than was previously the case, that is, when public networks such as BBC exhibited a more uniformly standardised use of language (Coupland, 2014). For instance, Ellender (2015) mentions *Trainspotting* when discussing the relevance of employing East Central South Scots (or Scotch) dialect (Trudgill, 2003; Hughes et al., 2012; Scots Language Centre, 2024) in the film:

The characters’ Scottish accent is significant as it immediately enables them to be placed geographically and culturally. Their use of non-standard features of language and of drugs-related

vocabulary makes it known that they belong to a particular, alternative social group. [...] the linguistic variation apparent in *Trainspotting* is equally significant as it clearly flags up social and cultural differences between characters. [...] the language used by the characters in *Trainspotting* plays a crucial role in their characterization, in the depiction of their cultural belonging and in the construction of the film's narrative (Ellender, 2015, p. 20).

Within the context of dialect discourse, Ranzato (2021) enumerates six principal functions for which non-standard accents and dialects can be employed in audiovisual products. The initial four are derived from Kozloff (2000), while the final two are introduced by the author herself:

1. *Anchorage of the diegesis*: the use of non-standard accents can provide insight into the setting and the character's background, including their regional and social context.
2. *Adherence to the code of realism*: the use of non-standard accents serves to enhance the realism of dialogue, thereby rendering it more pertinent to contemporary social and political concerns.
3. *Opportunity for star turns*: the use of dialects affords actors the opportunity to exhibit their distinctive accent, which sometimes can be native.
4. *Exploitation of the resources of language*: sometimes non-standard accents are used in a way that is unnatural, even fake, to provide comedy.
5. *Part of sound aesthetics*: the use of an accented voice may be an integral aspect of the aural aesthetics of a film.
6. *Fitting into the mould of genre*: the use of non-standard accents allows for the creation of characters that align with the conventions of a specific film genre (Ranzato, 2021, p. 154).

In the context of variation in style and register regarding age group, the British television series *Skins* provides an illustrative example of the relevance of a sociolect in the portrayal of characters and the somewhat stereotypical depiction of British youngsters in the early 2000s. In fact, the series includes issues on “sex, substance abuse, psychological disorders, violence, and death” (Ranzato, 2015, p. 162), which are conveyed through linguistic peculiarities typical of the teenage language of the Noughties, i.e., of those belonging to the so-called Millennial generation. This aspect is even more stressed in the series due to the stereotypical nuance mentioned before, as it is possible to detect “hyperboles, affixations, dialect and slang words, and playful deformations” (p. 164) constantly all along the diaphasic continuum, without respecting role alignments among the participants in the conversation (Agha, 2007). However,

these stylistic examples show complete adherence to reality, thus confirming the idea of verisimilitude in audiovisual products (Díaz-Cintas, 2009).



*Figure 44: Example of bad language in Skins, Season 1, Episode 7 (Source: Netflix).
The expression here is used by the 17-year-old Michelle to her mother's husband.*

Not only is the representation of sociolinguistically connoted language structures relevant in terms of plot and characters' depiction but it may also pragmatically cause a change in the common use of language. The potential for viewers to identify with characters that closely resemble reality, due to the language used, indeed seems to be quite logical. In this respect, recent research indicates that media representation of dialects can influence public perceptions and linguistic attitudes. For instance, Stuart-Smith (2017) highlights the fact that television may help spreading marked linguistic features in both diastratic and diatopic perspectives, thus causing some sort of cross-regional influences of local dialects and some shifts in stylistic speech patterns. This situation may be caused by the level of familiarity audiences develop when watching a particular series, despite the appropriation usually occurs in specific communicative settings:

in more general terms, larger utterance chunks appropriated from the media belong to particular interactional contexts, doing specific social 'work' for their speakers as an integral part of the speakers' own discourse. In some senses they look as though, formally, they are taken from the media 'shelf' as part of a stylistic sociolinguistic 'bricolage' (Hebdige 1984) (Stuart-Smith, 2017, p. 9).

The influence of the media on social life and language use is also cited by Androutsopoulos (2014) through the concept of mediatization, which is used “for the critical analysis of interrelations between socio-cultural and media-communicative change” (p. 10), thereby “emphasiz[ing] the proliferation of media communication in all areas of social life” (*ibid.*). Androutsopoulos (2014) therefore considers the intricate interrelationship between media practices and community language practices, demonstrating how media both influences and is influenced by sociolinguistic norms and variations:

The interest in mass media, especially television, in the context of language change is grounded both in the social function of mass media and in properties of media language. [...] Variationist approaches to the media and language change do not examine media language, but rather operationalize media consumption, exposure or engagement as an independent variable (pp. 7-8),

and, with reference to audiovisual programmes:

[...] taking various genres and styles of media language into account can help to understand which patterns of media language might have an influence on audiences. For example, it is important to distinguish between standardized news language and the stylistically more varied usage in television genres such as soaps, reality shows or anime series (p. 8).

The incorporation of variational elements in television programmes and films serves to illustrate the pivotal role of the media in reflecting and influencing linguistic diversity in contemporary British society. As sociolinguistic research continues to evolve, it will undoubtedly contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between language and social life also considering the role of audiovisual products. Coupland (2014) discusses in a deeper level the connection between sociolinguistic change and media broadcast in the British environment. Specifically, the author uses the concept of “vernacularization” (p. 83), which refers to the growing prevalence and acceptance of non-standard language varieties in public and formal contexts. In the domain of British media, vernacularisation is evidenced by the incorporation of regional accents and dialects in television and radio, which have traditionally favoured standardised forms of British English, as previously mentioned. In this regard, Coupland (2014) cites examples such as the long-running soap opera *EastEnders* and BBC as key broadcaster, thus demonstrating that over time, these and other media outlets have increasingly incorporated a broader spectrum of accents, thus reflecting and promoting

linguistic diversity. Androutsopoulos (2012) highlights the role that sociolinguistic variation has in the construction of cinematic discourse, since: “cinematic discourse ought to figure large at this intersection due to its popularity as a site of sociolinguistic representation and its complexity as a multimodal semiotic artefact” (p. 139). Moreover, the author considers cinematic discourse “a legitimate area of sociolinguistic inquiry in its own right” (p. 143). Once more, the concept of linguistic prestige is evoked, which non-standard varieties may acquire as a consequence of their usage in audiovisual products and media in general. This results in a change in sociolinguistic terms:

[...] vernacularization (or destandardization in Kristiansen’s sense) as a sociolinguistic change will be most directly realized in the aspiration to allow previously “blocked” linguistic features, styles and genres to “pass the filter” into domains that have been the preserves of standardness. But it will also be reflected in changing norms and reflexive commentaries on usage; vernacular performances will be symbolically mediated into new contexts, and into popular consciousness (Coupland, 2014, p. 87).

Stuart-Smith et al. (2013) examine the impact of television on language change, with a particular focus on the Glaswegian dialect. The researchers investigate two linguistic features: TH-fronting (the use of [f] instead of /θ/ as in “think”) and L-vocalization (the use of a vowel sound instead of /l/ as in “milk”). These features, which are typically associated with London English, were found to be increasingly used in Glaswegian speech, particularly among inner-city adolescents. It is proposed that the high level of engagement with television series, such as *EastEnders*, a soap opera which portrays the social life of East End London inhabitants, may have some responsibility for the observed changes:

[...] our informants’ personal engagement with *EastEnders* is playing some kind of role in accelerating the diffusion of TH-fronting and L-vocalization in Glasgow. This is in line with Brandt’s (2000:2165) suggestion that broadcast media might be significant ‘in their function as a “medium”. Radio and television are taken as catalysts which act to increase, strengthen, accelerate and reinforce existing trends in language’. [...] engaging *EastEnders* may help accelerate the innovations because already present in Glaswegian, and at the same time some Glaswegian viewers may make implicit associations between the range of actual social meanings that these variants hold for them and the more stylized meanings represented on TV (Stuart-Smith et al., 2013, pp. 529-530).

With regard to the psychological engagement of the audience, which is in line with Keller's maxim of 'talk like others talk' (1994, p. 100), the extent to which overt or covert prestige in Labovian terms influences the linguistic accommodation and appropriation of a variety displayed in a television programme remains to be determined. Indeed, Trudgill (2014) posits that the influence of the media is more akin to a speculation, given that "would have led to more or less simultaneous innovation nationwide" (p. 218), rather than being limited to specific regional cases. The effective linguistic relevance of a widespread TV series seems to regard rather the speed of diffusion of phonetic features alike to be imitated, as the case of the 'London-like' accent adopted in Glasgow. However, more substantial changes are observed in the lexicon: "With lexical features like quotatives it is already obvious that media influence is crucial. People hear new words and phrases on the TV, and sometimes start using them themselves" (p. 220). Television programmes have been indeed identified as a significant factor in the propagation of inappropriate language. McEnery (2009) reports a letter from *The National Viewer and Listener* magazine in 1999 stating that "advertising jingles, catch-phrases [...] or 'bang, bang, you're dead' dialogue with bad language from the previous nights' TV programmes" (p. 567) is responsible for corrupting authentic communication and interaction among very young viewers. McEnery and Love (2018) cite a 2014 newsletter by Mediawatch-UK which states that the highest recorded percentage of viewers' complaints about disturbing content on British TV (i.e., 38%) concerns the use of offensive language (p. 498). These examples, as well as the previous ones presented in Stuart-Smith et al. (2013, 2017) and Androutsopoulos (2012, 2014) suggest some sort of necessity for adequacy in transposing marked, non-standard language in subtitles, despite the peculiarity of SDH. Nevertheless, considering the previously discussed differences in terms of deafness degrees, the importance of considering diamesic variation in the context of the presence of marked language should be emphasised.

As Coupland (2014) observes, the entertainment function appears to be the primary objective of media broadcast in the contemporary era. The utilisation of non-standard linguistic varieties "might suggest a general shift in broadcasting priorities and genre representation away from public service functions towards popular entertainment" (p. 90). This situation gives rise to the necessity of depicting common scenarios using common, spontaneous, and realistic verbal language as well. Research has indeed demonstrated that variation serves a fundamental role in character development and authenticity (Ellender, 2015; Ranzato, 2018; Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2021), and may also have some responsibility for changes in viewers' everyday speech.

In this respect, the exploitation of variation in audiovisual productions has two main consequences. Firstly, it might generate prestige around these varieties, which can sometimes suggest imitation by the viewers. Secondly, it raises awareness of linguistic diversity, prompting changes in audiovisual translation strategies when it comes to deal with non-standard features. The fruition of series and films replete with variation may result in the entry of such linguistic forms into the language typically used. This may also percolate into families with deaf individuals, thereby enhancing familiarity and somewhat increasing the employment of non-standard language. In the case of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, this may also be a crucial factor in the comprehension of non-standard written language.

Given the exploitation of sociolinguistic variation in audiovisual products such as British series like *Peaky Blinders*, *The Crown*, *EastEnders*, or *Sex Education*, it should be logical to maintain such variation in subtitles due to its significance. It is therefore important to ensure that marked linguistic nuances are preserved in subtitles at some degree. However, the situation for SDH is more critical, since they are designed for those who lack access to the audio cues. In fact, for deaf viewers, the same level of engagement and immersion as hearing viewers might be enhanced if these linguistic characteristics were transposed into subtitles, although this should be done in a way that does not overlook the most salient issues at the linguistic comprehension level, namely, unfamiliar spelling and orthography. In this respect, it has been demonstrated that deaf individuals encounter variation due to their verbal surroundings, including hearing family members and within sign languages themselves (Sutton-Spence et al., 1990; Schembri, 2008; Stamp et al., 2015; Branchini and Mantovan, 2022). BSL exhibits regional and social variations, underscoring the significance of reflecting such diversity in SDH; consequently, incorporating sociolinguistic variation in subtitles could provide a more enriching viewing experience for deaf audiences, in alignment with their natural exposure to language variation. The following section will examine the implications and practicalities of this approach in greater depth.

3.1.2 Sociolinguistic variation in Deaf communities

Most research in the field of sociolinguistics related to deafness currently focuses on the analysis of variation in sign language mostly on a lexical level. Such studies are beneficial in evaluating the presence of sociolinguistic variation in aurally impaired people's communication and, consequently, in determining the degree to which such variation is applied in SDH. For example, Schembri (2008) employs variationist sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics to

investigate any BSL vernacular and linguistic change and contact in a dataset. The main objective in this case is to create a sample of the Deaf community applying a lexical variable according to different regional contexts (p. 165). This dataset serves as the foundation for the analysis of number signs variants in BSL with a view to determining whether the British Deaf community is undergoing a process of levelling (Stamp et al., 2015). The results indicate that there has been a decline in the use of regional varieties for number signs variants. However, the research only considers the diatopic dimension, and despite this levelling, it demonstrates some degree of maintenance in terms of geolinguistic variation (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the existence of variation in sign languages indicates that deaf individuals are aware of linguistic variationist features present in spoken languages. In fact, Stamp et al. (2015) provide evidence that the linguistic background of deaf signers, including those who are profoundly deaf from birth, influences their linguistic choices. In more detail, the paper argues that different social groups may develop unique linguistic features, thus constituting specific sociolects; indeed, as with spoken language communities, socio-economic status can influence language use and variation within the Deaf community. Moreover, phonological variation is also inscribed within BSL structure, for instance in features such as the use of one or two hands for certain signs. Finally, there is language contact: BSL is influenced by contact with the surrounding spoken English language. This includes fingerspelling and loan signs from spoken English.

With regard to fingerspelling and variation linked to BSL, Sutton-Spence et al. (1990) already provided compelling evidence of significant regional variations and contemporary changes in fingerspelling among Deaf signers in the UK. Indeed, fingerspelling integrated in BSL¹² – as well as in other sign languages, such as LIS, i.e., Italian Sign Language – exhibits wide regional variation. This means that different regions of the UK have distinct fingerspelling styles and frequencies of use, influenced by both local signing traditions and community practices (*ibid.*).

¹² It must be clarified that fingerspelling and BSL are not the same thing. As signalled in Sutton-Spence et al. (1990), “although fingerspelling is used in conjunction with BSL and serves as a source for BSL signs that obey all the rules of the language, its status remains unclear. [...] Perhaps it is best to say that although fingerspelling is not signing, it does have its place within BSL, and there are times when BSL cannot do without it” (p. 315). Therefore, including fingerspelling to analyse variation in BSL is a valuable addition.



Figure 45: British manual alphabet used for fingerspelling (Sutton-Spence et al., 1990, p. 316, from Gallaudet Encyclopedia of Deaf People & Deafness, 1987).

Variation is not limited to regional background: differences in fingerspelling also deal with demographic factors, signers' usual mode of communication, or even its usage on television (*ibid.*).

Speaking of television, the influence of the media, including social networks, on the variation of BSL is also discussed in Stamp et al. (2014), which focuses on the analysis of a corpus of video recordings to ascertain the lexical varieties of BSL according to both diatopic and diachronic perspectives, thus addressing both generational gaps and regional origins. It is demonstrated once again that variation also occurs in a non-verbal language. The researchers identify the cause of BSL regional varieties in the historical developments of Deaf communities across the UK. This condition is mostly associated with the predominant role of schools for deaf people as a system of its own, which remains detached from other education settings. In fact, in the context of sign language, deaf children's schools usually play a significant role in the formation of regional varieties (Stamp et al., 2014; Branchini and Mantovan, 2022). Stamp et al. (2014) use the word 'school-lects' to indicate specific varieties of a sign language learned and passed on to younger generations of deaf signers at local schools:

Hearing parents are unlikely to know a sign language, and a deaf child may have limited access to the spoken language. Acquisition of a first language may thus be delayed for many deaf children [19–20]. Schools for deaf children, especially residential schools, have therefore long been associated with sign language transmission. [...] Because there was minimal interaction between schools and no standard or written form of BSL, these ‘school-lects’ continued to develop separately in each community [13]. It is believed that deaf school-leavers maintained the use of these school variants in the local community and they became the basis for current regional varieties of BSL (p. 2).

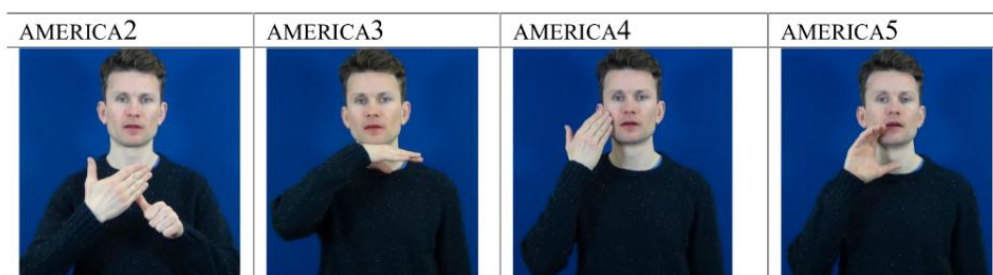


Figure 46: Four regional variants for the sign ‘America’ in BSL (Stamp et al., 2014, p. 2).

Further evidence of the presence of variation in BSL can be observed in the increased mobility of individuals and technological advances, which facilitate greater interaction between deaf individuals from different regions (Stamp et al., 2014). Nevertheless, this phenomenon may result in a reduction of regional variation, also due to the fact that specific centralised schools for deaf children are going to disappear, since students are being included in schools with their hearing classmates. Yet, it does serve to highlight differences in signs, particularly those of a lexical nature. Consequently, social, cultural, and geographical changes can be reflected in the variability of a sign, exactly as it happens with vocal languages. From a perceptual standpoint, Deaf communities identify themselves well according to a sociolect, which of course is a shared phenomenon that extends beyond sign language. It encompasses not only the sign language but also the verbal languages present in their linguistic and social background. The findings in Lucas et al. (2001) lend support to this proposition. They demonstrate that, just as is the case with spoken languages, sign languages exhibit sociolects that are influenced by “external constraints [such as] region, age, gender and socioeconomic level” (p. 65), with the addition of “parental audiological status, and the age at which the signer learned to sign (before or after age six)” (p. 81). Indeed, according to different diaphasic situations, for instance in presence of “a deaf friend [...], a hearing teacher, and in a practice situation” (*ibid.*), changes occur in signing

the same sentences. Therefore, the preservation of sociolects is of paramount importance for the identity and cohesion of Deaf communities. This aspect underscores the necessity to ensure the inclusion of variation in media such as audiovisual translation, in this case SDH, while upholding space-time constraints and being aware of the importance of the subject to be characterised.

To summarise, the variability in BSL highlights the dynamic nature of sign language, just as is the case with vocal languages, which are an undeniable part of the everyday lives of deaf people. Given the natural propensity to implement more of a variation than a standard in the common use of language even by deaf people, the need to accurately reflect linguistic nuances as far as possible also in subtitles towards overall accessibility becomes a necessity. In order to guarantee both linguistic and cultural appropriateness, subtitling strategies should thus allow the final product to align with the original dialogue, taking variations into account. It is therefore essential that this alignment is achieved to maintain the authenticity of the content and to ensure that DHH viewers receive an equivalent viewing experience to that of their hearing counterparts. The increasing acknowledgement of this necessity is exemplified by the establishment of guidelines and best practices by organisations such as the World Federation of the Deaf, which advocate for the provision of high-quality, contextually accurate subtitles that respect the linguistic diversity of Deaf communities (World Federation of the Deaf, 2014). It would be advisable to determine at which level broadcasting media or streaming services are achieving these goals in terms of accessible AVT, given their extensive use by the public. It is on the basis of this assumption that the present research has been developed. The following paragraph offers a detailed description of the project idea and development.

3.2 Research design

Since BSL demonstrates the employment of variation within Deaf communities, and variation is proved to be extensively used in series and films, the present research is concerned with the extent to which non-standard features of English are maintained in audiovisual productions, specifically on SVoD platforms, with an eye on the British environment. This study has two principal aims. The first objective is to identify how English SDH on streaming services preserve marked linguistic elements with a glance to a diachronic perspective, in comparison to the BBC subtitling guidelines on how to deal with non-standard English. Secondly, the study seeks to gain insight into how SDH in AV products having a massive use of variation are perceived and received by deaf viewers in the UK. The extant literature exposed in previous

chapters suggests that, in instances where variation in BSL is identified and there are indications of potential influences from a vocal linguistic background – particularly in signers with speaking families and less severe aural illnesses – the perception of a linguistic variety, whether geographical or stylistic, is demonstrably effective. It can be reasonably assumed that subtitles have the potential to enhance the overall quality of the viewing experience in the context of sociolinguistically connoted audiovisual productions. This is because, by definition, they are designed to facilitate the experience of DHH audiences, thereby increasing the likelihood of suspension of disbelief. The anticipated outcomes of this research indicate a proclivity towards fulfilling sociolinguistic variation in British English in SDH, as evidenced by the BBC guidelines presented in Chapter 1. Nevertheless, there is a continued need for more rigorous linguistic engagement with SDH from the perspective of Deaf communities.

It is imperative that character portrayal remains consistent with the original vision of the filmmaker, in accordance with the quality stipulations set forth by Grice’s maxim. Nevertheless, these are not the only factors that indicate the necessity for further investigation into the linguistic profile of subtitles. First and foremost, the demand for verbatim subtitles by various Deaf associations indicates a need for continuous attention to linguistic features. This is to ensure that the subtitling process does not result in a form of ‘censorship’ (OFCOM, 2005; Neves, 2005, 2008; Romero-Fresco, 2009), including the omission of elements that deviate from the standard linguistic norms. Furthermore, complaints about the limited representation of other British accents and dialects by the BBC, apart from London, still occur: “people want to see representation of the UK outside of its major cities, and especially London” (OFCOM, 2018b, p. 4), with some consequences in the depiction of identity: “The complexity of identity and the range of views from different people mean that improvement requires ongoing thinking on how best to connect with audiences” (*ibid.*). This alone piques the interest of further investigation into the language typology adopted in subtitles, at least from a variationist perspective, since it may suggest a similar situation with regard to SDH. It seems indeed prudent to consider the opinions of the target audience as expressed in blogs and articles to inform the present research, particularly given the increase in the number of people having aural impairments, as discussed in Chapter 2. For example, Young (2021) reports on *TheNational.scot* website that complaints have been lodged due to lexical errors in the SDH of the well-known Scottish BBC series *Guilt*, labelled as “unacceptable” (*ibid.*), potentially due to the challenge of identifying words spoken with a distinctive Scottish accent. Another example comes from a prominent blog managed by DHH individuals, which has recently acknowledged

the ongoing challenge of accessing adequate accessible AV services, particularly in relation to subtitles, which are not consistently available (Action on Hearing, 2015; Romero-Fresco, 2019; O'Dell, 2022). Film industry gives further evidence on the problematic situation that still persists in accessible subtitling. The 2021 Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) film *The Eternals*, which features a deaf superhero, was not provided with subtitles in half of UK cinemas, as already mentioned in the Introduction section (National Deaf Children Society, 2021). It thus appears that SDH accessibility remains a significant challenge at various levels. Limited to linguistic features, a study on the general appreciation of SDH distinctive linguistic quality, including the potential impact on deaf viewers' lipreading skills, would therefore be a worthwhile area of investigation.

The linguistic analysis of existing SDH would be facilitated through the creation of a dataset that would gather all words composing subtitles. The creation of a corpus would therefore be fundamental in setting a less time-consuming work, with the purpose of storing data containing potentially distinctive SDH in terms of sociolinguistic variation in British English. However, this constitutes another issue, since the use of corpora in subtitling analysis has never been focused on interlingual transposition of British variation in detail, but rather on interlingual subtitles, with reference to sociolinguistic features in a broader sense (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007, 2021; the *OpenSubtitles corpus*, 2018), cultural references (Pedersen, 2011), and usual norms and conventions such as sentence compression, “with the intention to automatically generate subtitles for the deaf from transcripts of a television program” (Vandeghinste and Sang, 2004, p. 231), or segmentation and deletion (Kalantzi, 2009). The limited investigation into the potential of corpora to support similar studies, as well as the service itself, indicates that, apart from the selected papers discussed in Chapter 1, the subject has not been extensively explored. Moreover, there appears to be no intention to create an official database of intralingual accessible subtitles for the purposes of synchronic and diachronic linguistic analysis, in order to explore potential changes in verbatim transposition of variation. The creation of a new corpus comprising existing subtitles would indeed facilitate a timelier linguistic analysis and facilitate the development of more attention regarding how to create sociolinguistically connoted subtitles for analogous genres.

Considering the previous statements, the present research tries to answer to specific questions, which are here divided according to different categories: representation of non-standard English in SDH, deaf viewers' perception and comprehension of SDH, impact on character portrayal and plot understanding, and challenges and best practices.

Regarding the linguistic representation of non-standard English in SDH on SVoD, the following research questions must be addressed:

1. How accurately are non-standard English features represented in SDH on streaming platforms?
2. What are the prevalent practices and inconsistencies in the translation of non-standard English into SDH?

The questions seek to identify the transposition strategies employed to represent non-standard features in the written mode, in accordance with the typical constraints inherent to subtitling and the BBC guidelines, as illustrated in Chapter 1. The BBC guidelines are presented here as an illustrative example of the typical approaches to the rendering of distinctive linguistic features in subtitles for television. It should be noted that the subtitles of actual BBC programmes will not form part of the subsequent analysis. The aim is to ascertain whether there are any strategies of over-standardisation that could potentially disrupt the plot and character portrayals. The data derived from the SDH corpus will facilitate the elucidation of these questions, with the specific details to be provided in the next section. The results will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

With regard to deaf viewers' perception and comprehension of SDH, the research questions are as follows:

3. How do DHH audiences perceive the accuracy and effectiveness of SDH that include non-standard English?
4. To what extent do English SDH affect the viewer's comprehension and appreciation of audiovisual content, both related to plot and character interactions?

The objective here is to ascertain the extent of general and specific comprehension of pivotal plot elements and character portrayals as originally intended by the authors, in a manner analogous to how hearing viewers experience such content. An interview will be conducted to a sample of deaf individuals in the UK in order to gather empirical data. The findings of this investigation will be presented and analysed in Chapter 6.

For what the impact of character portrayal and plot comprehension is concerned, this will be examined in greater detail with reference to a small, selected portion of the data presented in Chapter 5, which is dedicated to qualitative analysis. The following research question will be addressed:

5. How does the representation of non-standard English in SDH give impact on the portrayal of characters and their socio-cultural backgrounds?

Finally, regarding challenges and best practices, which will be examined subsequently, the following questions can be identified:

6. What might be the principal challenges in accurately representing non-standard English in SDH?
7. What are the optimal practices for enhancing the quality and accessibility of SDH subtitles?

As this thesis is not primarily concerned with proposing practical solutions to the challenges of subtitling in non-standard linguistic settings, but rather with analysing the degree of maintenance of English varieties in accessible subtitles according to their perception and reception by deaf viewers, this aspect will be briefly mentioned in the conclusions.

After determining the most crucial questions around which this research revolves, as well as the main problems regarding academic studies on accessible subtitling, specificities on the reasons why British English has been selected as the main variation for this research needs to be given. As Ranzato (2016) notes, dialectal variation is prevalent in British adaptations of television series, since British television has a longstanding tradition of conveying dialectal realities:

British television [...] has long been known for its penchant for dialects and for the audience's appreciation of the «foregrounded banality» (Richardson 2010: 48) of series of every genre showcasing a range of leading characters with marked regional accents. This has arguably been more and more true since the social turn which substantially changed the attitude towards people speaking with an accent in Britain. The perception of regional varieties of English in the UK is at the centre of a sociological change that [...] took place in the middle of the twentieth century in England, giving dialects an overt prestige which they only enjoyed covertly in earlier times (p. 8).

It is evident that linguistic variation in British English provides a fertile ground for an in-depth sociolinguistic investigation. This is evident from numerous seminal studies conducted by linguists such as Peter Trudgill and David Crystal. Trudgill's extensive research on dialects and sociolects has demonstrated the complex interrelationships between social class, region, and speech style. Similarly, David Crystal's contributions to the understanding of the stylistic and functional diversity of English are encapsulated in his works. In addition to geographical variations, Crystal's exploration of linguistic diversity encompasses stylistic shifts that occur in different social contexts and media. For instance, Crystal's (2018) examination of conversational English can inform the development of subtitles that accurately reflect informal spoken language, thereby enhancing the authenticity and relatability of subtitles for viewers. Therefore, these studies provide a practical foundation for investigating the representation of non-standard English in SDH.

The decision to situate the study in a British context is not merely a consequence of the linguistic richness and extensive use of variation in audiovisual products. It is important to acknowledge that conducting a study that encompasses the reception of sociolinguistic representation in SDH by deaf viewers would undoubtedly present the typical significant challenges of previous sociolinguistic research, particularly given the 'limited' number of individuals who would be willing to participate in the interview. For example, sociolinguists frequently encounter difficulties in the recruitment of participants for dialect surveys, as observed by Milroy (1987) with reference to social networks in Belfast. To surmount these obstacles, it is necessary to devise innovative recruitment strategies, such as utilising online platforms or engaging with community organisations that can facilitate participant involvement. This condition would serve as an appropriate training ground for future projects in larger areas and involving larger-scale audiovisual productions, such as those in the USA. The United States, with its vast and diverse population, offers a broader spectrum of linguistic variation for study, as illustrated by Wolfram and Schilling (2016), whose research focused on variation in American English and its representations in media. More specifically, the authors underline the necessity of accurately portraying linguistic diversity to circumvent stereotypes and guarantee inclusivity. The process of addressing the intricacies of British English variation in SDH and participant recruitment in the context of the current research hence offers a valuable opportunity to gain experience that can be subsequently applied to the design and implementation of larger-scale studies. As an example, the management and analysis of a smaller, more concentrated corpus of subtitles in British English could potentially serve as a training ground for handling

extensive datasets from American English AV productions, which are considerably more prolific than their British counterparts. Furthermore, this option may open to more effective questionnaires and engagement strategies in the research field, thus ensuring higher participation rates and richer data for sociolinguistic analysis.

In order to define the linguistic features and structures that will constitute the core of the research, the primary grammatical characteristics that define standard linguistic conventions are derived primarily from Culpeper et al. (2018), as it provides the most up-to-date indications on English grammar. This includes a comprehensive illustration of the structural elements that constitute standard English, while also identifying and delineating the nuances of variation that emerge at different linguistic levels. In particular, Katamba (2018) on morphological structure, Leech (2018a, 2018b, 2018c) on the standard composition of phrases, clauses, and sentences and Kerswill and Culpeper (2018) on standard English features are drawn upon in order to gain the understanding of the standard structures and standardisation related to English. Collins and Hollo's (2010) and Hilpert's (2014) grammatical studies are also considered in this perspective. In contrast, variation is examined with the aid of Watson (2018), Kerswill (2018), Sunderland (2018), Baker (2018), and McEnery and Love (2018), here associated with sociolinguistic patterns examined in Trudgill (2000, 2001, 2011).

Considering all the previous explanations on sociolinguistics in both audiovisual translation and Deaf communities and the importance of variation from a social perspective, the study is anticipated to underline the significance of contextually aligned subtitles in safeguarding the cultural and social nuances of the source material. It is therefore crucial to bear in mind that subtitles not only could serve as accurate translations but also reflect the sociolects and idiolects present in the original dialogue. To illustrate, characters from disparate social backgrounds or regions should be represented in the subtitles in a manner that accurately reflects their distinctive linguistic styles. This can prove particularly challenging in the context of multilingual productions (Parini, 2015), yet it is of considerable importance for the authenticity of the material and the level of viewer engagement (Díaz-Cintas, 2011). The anticipated outcomes of this research are thus to obtain a corpus of existing SDH on SVoD platforms with all sociolinguistic features signalled through specific tags. This operation will facilitate enhanced data analysis from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Furthermore, the alignment with the well-known technical standards established by companies such as the BBC will be considered, as well as the option to ensure that the analysed SDH would address the linguistic and cultural requirements of DHH viewers. The intention of this approach is to make

an additional contribution to the creation of an audiovisual media landscape that is more inclusive and accessible, and which allows aurally impaired viewers to engage fully with and enjoy the content they are consuming. More specifically, the present research is concerned with SDH on on-demand platforms, which are currently the most widely used tools for accessing such AV content. The use of streaming services is indeed now significantly widespread, and it would be interesting to investigate the extent to which subtitles are accessible from the perspective of linguistic adherence and alignment with the varieties used.

3.3 Methodology

The methodology deployed in this study can be classified as a mixed-method approach. The initial phase of the work concerns the composition of the SDH corpus – namely *LISA Corpus (Large Intralingual Subtitles for Accessibility)*, which is determined according to the markedness of productions on four different SVoD platforms. Subsequently, a quantitative analysis of non-standard elements within the corpus is planned. These elements are identified through the development of a bespoke tagset for the sociolinguistic investigation. Subsequently, a qualitative analysis is conducted considering only a portion of the main corpus, whereby the identified features will be compared with the original speech. A qualitative approach is also planned for the analysis of responses to a written sociolinguistic interview on the perception and reception of SDH on the four most popular SVoDs in the UK. This interview will be carried out with deaf people in the UK.

3.3.1 Selecting streaming services

The choice of streaming platforms from which accessible subtitles can be extracted was based on two key factors: firstly, the extensive catalogue of titles with closed subtitles; and secondly, the large catchment area they have. As documented in a report dated 3 August 2023 by OFCOM, “UK homes subscribe to all three streaming giants – Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney+” for a total amount of £5.2 million spent for subscription. Additionally, according to data from Statista (2024), these platforms are ranked first in terms of diffusion in the UK in 2024, with AppleTV+ placed fourth:

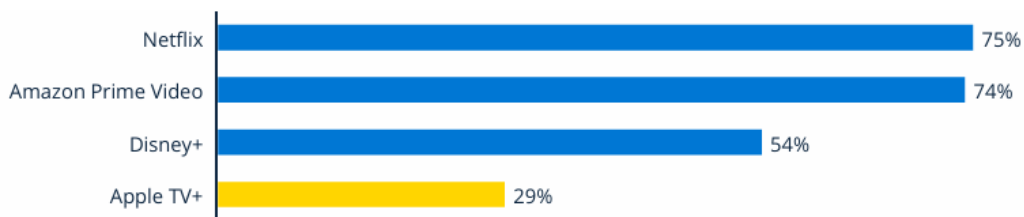


Figure 47: Screenshot from Statista report on AppleTV+ usage in the UK compared to other platforms (Statista, 2024).

Despite the lower percentage in comparison to the other platforms, AppleTV+ continues to provide audiovisual productions that encourage subscribers to engage with the platform. In this regard, it is important to note that the selection of these platforms is based on the average subtitled products they offer for deaf customers. A rapid examination of programmes on all four platforms indeed suggests that each of the services offers approximately 90% of its content in subtitled format, a figure that merits particular attention considering the need for accessibility for individuals with hearing impairments. It is noteworthy that all four on-demand streaming services demonstrate a commitment to ensuring accessibility. It is evidenced by the dedicated sections on their official websites that provide comprehensive guidance on the technical features and customisation settings of SDH from both the perspective of the translator and the user. To illustrate, Netflix has designated a particular section within its Timed Text Style Guide page for subtitling and captioning, although the content is primarily oriented towards US English. Nevertheless, the general norms and conventions can be considered valid for English in a broader sense. Furthermore, the nuances of variation and non-standard language become even more evident in this context:

Transcription of the source language should follow the word choice and sentence order of the spoken dialect. Slang and other dialectal features should be transcribed accurately and authentically. [...] When creating SDH for non-US titles, follow speech closely (e.g. do not change “Mum” to “Mom” or “arse” to “ass”, always transcribe as per the audio). (Netflix Partner Help Center, 2024).

Amazon Prime Video also demonstrates a comparable commitment to accessibility, as evidenced by the following statement: “If you have both captions and subtitles available for a title, we prefer to receive Closed Captions/SDH to improve the viewing experience for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing” (Prime Video direct, 2024). As regards Disney+, despite the limited customisation options available on the platform (Disney+ Help Centre, 2024), it also demonstrates some degree of commitment to ensuring accessibility for individuals

with sensory disabilities. Similarly, AppleTV+ offers a comprehensive range of accessibility features within the Apple TV application, accompanied by detailed instructions on the utilisation of SDH and the associated activation process.: “The Apple TV app supports closed captioning, so those who are deaf or hard of hearing can fully enjoy new TV episodes and thousands of movies” (Apple Support, 2024). It can thus be stated that the four SVoD platforms provide a concrete scenario in which the linguistic quality of SDH can be investigated, with a view to non-standard British English features. In any case, it is at least possible to identify stylistic features that distinguish each platform, which can represent a valuable initial contribution to the field. The similarities and differences observed in each SVoD platform were indeed taken into consideration when selecting the most appropriate ones for the present study.

Starting from Prime Video, subtitles are positioned in the third sector of the screen, at the bottom and centred. The default font is sans serif, white, and on a black background with slight transparency. The style may be modified according to a limited set of criteria, including the choice of font colour (white or yellow) and background transparency. On occasion, hyphens are employed to indicate that a subtitle comprises two turns of phrase, with the character’s name presented in capital letters. Furthermore, the name is also present when the character is not framed, sometimes enclosed in square brackets, and at other times not. Parentheses are also used to label sound effects. It is notable that each product adheres to a bespoke style in the rendering of extralinguistic elements, resulting in a lack of uniformity in the subtitling process on the platform. Additionally, a considerable number of subtitles are frequently presented on three or four lines, occupying a larger portion of the screen and making both reading for the user and synchronisation during production a challenging endeavour.

As regards Netflix, it can be observed that SDH are presented in the final third of the screen, situated in the centre. The default font is white with bold formatting. It lacks a black background but exhibits slight shading around each graphic element. The subtitles seem to be of a slightly larger font size than on other platforms, except for Amazon, which makes them relatively easy to read. Paralinguistic and extralinguistic elements are indicated in square brackets, written in lower case, and turns of phrase are always preceded by dashes. It would appear that the subtitling style is consistent across all productions in the catalogue. In terms of the distribution of the text on the screen, it is limited to a maximum of two lines.

In Disney+, the SDH are positioned centrally on the screen and are located in the lower third of the screen, as for other platforms. However, they are relatively small, which makes them

challenging to read. It seems plausible to suggest that this aspect is related to the thickness of the lateral margins delimiting the text, which is more considerable than on other platforms. The subtitles are then presented on a completely black background devoid of transparency and in a white, relatively thin sans serif font. Given their smaller size, they occupy a relatively limited portion of the screen and are distributed across a maximum of two lines. This suggests the possibility of either a graphical choice or the application of condensing strategies that reduce the number of words displayed.

Lastly, in AppleTV+ SDH are once again positioned in the bottom third of the screen, with a black background that allows for slight transparency and a smaller font size than that used for Prime Video, but slightly larger than that used for Disney+. Additionally, paralinguistic and extralinguistic elements are placed in square brackets and written in lower case, as are the names of the characters involved in turn takings, indicated by the hyphen. From a stylistic standpoint, there is a uniformity in the provision of subtitles, leaving the customisation of settings as the only room for change, as is the case with all other platforms.

In light of the general similarity of the graphical rendering of SDH, as well as the previously explored focus on how such platforms are attentive in setting an accessible subtitling for a deaf audience, and their prevalence in the UK, the present SVoDs proved an ideal choice for ensuring uniformity in the collection of SDH for the corpus. The objective was to ascertain their representativeness at an early stage of the selection process, which will be furtherly determined in the choice of titles to be included in the corpus.

3.3.2 The building of LISA Corpus and the tagset

The four platforms were found to be largely aligned regarding the provision of technical specifications and methods of customisation of SDH. This aspect led to the investigation into the intralingual strategies adopted by each service in accordance with British English. Productions have been selected on an individual basis. In total, 76 titles were chosen, 19 from each platform, including series, documentaries, and films. However, ensuring an equal number of productions per genre for all SVoDs presented certain challenges. It seems that the platforms do not offer a range of British English-language significant products divided per genre that is perfectly superimposable in terms of quantity. In any case, I added what they propose in catalogue to guarantee representativeness at least from a linguistic perspective. The main

purpose in this phase is indeed setting an SDH database that may function as a means to analyse linguistic features. The audiovisual products were selected according to the following criteria:

- the presence of linguistic markedness;
- the presence of non-standard expressions;
- sociolinguistically connoted language according to diaphasic, diastratic, and diatopic dimensions;
- British productions or productions with British actors, in order to limit interest within Anglo-Saxon linguistic boundaries.

The selected programmes are listed in the table below¹³:

			
Peaky Blinders (4S, 2016-2022)	Good Omens (1S, 2019)	Ted Lasso (3S, 2020-2023)	The Responder (1S, 2022)
Sex Education (4S, 2019-2023)	Fleabag (2S, 2016-2019)	Trying (3S, 2020-2022)	The Beatles - Get Back (S1, 2021)
Inside Man (1S, 2022)	Borat Subsequent Moviefilm (film, 2020)	Long Way Up (1S, 2020)	Pistol (S1, 2022)
The A List (2S, 2018-2021)	Truth Seekers (1S, 2020)	The Completely Made- Up Adventures of Dick Turpin (1S, 2024)	Tolkien (film, 2019)
The End of the F***ing World (2S, 2017-2019)	Doctor Who (2S, 2016-2018)	Slow Horses (1S, 2022)	Rye Lane (film, 2023)

¹³ For each series, the year of production of the season or individual episodes/specials included in the corpus is indicated in the table. It should be noted that as of October 2025, some productions are no longer available on the specified streaming platform. Subtitles for these productions were collected and analysed between 2022 and 2024 and have been left in their original state. It should also be noted that some series do not include the most recent seasons, due to the already substantial amount of data gathered for this study.

The Beautiful Game (film, 2024)	I, Daniel Blake (film, 2017)	Blitz (film, 2024)	Extraordinary (2S, 2023)
Dated and Related (1S, 2022)	Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit (show, 2019)	Suspicion (1S, 2022)	Artemis Fowl (film, 2020)
Top Boy (2S, 2019-2021)	The Grand Tour (5S, 2017-2022)	The Essex Serpent (1S, 2022)	Welcome to Wrexham (3S, 2022-2023)
Zero Chill (1S, 2021)	Sherlock (1S, 2018)	Watch the Sound with Mark Ronson (1S, 2021)	Kingsman: The Golden Circle (film, 2017)
After Life (2S, 2019-2021)	Mammals (1S, 2022)	Shantaram (1S, 2022)	Bohemian Rhapsody (film, 2018)
At Home with the Furrys (1S, 2023)	Yesterday (film, 2019)	Raymond & Ray (film, 2022)	Save our Squad with David Beckham (1S, 2022)
Man Like Mobeen (3S, 2017-22)	Fisherman's Friends: One and All (film, 2022)	Bad Sisters (1S, 2022)	This is Going to Hurt (1S, 2022)
Glow Up (4S, 2020-2023)	The Devil's Hour (1S, 2022)	Still Up (1S, 2023)	Wedding Season (1S, 2022)
Cuckoo (3S, 2016-2019)	Dead in a Week (Or Your Money Back) (film, 2018)	Departure (3S, 2020-2023)	Black Narcissus (1S, 2020)
Lovesick (2S, 2016-2018)	Blithe Spirit (film, 2020)	Servant (4S, 2019-2023)	The Lodge (2S, 2016-2019)
Still Game (3S, 2017-2019)	Get Duked! (film, 2019)	Youngers (2S, 2013-2014)	Baptiste (2S, 2019-2021)
Crashing (UK) (1S, 2016)	The Honeymoon (film, 2022)	Becoming You (1S, 2020)	White House Farm (1S, 2020)
White Gold (2S, 2017-2019)	Clarkson's Farm (2S, 2021-2023)	Hijack (1S, 2023)	The Accident (1S, 2019)
Rocks (film, 2019)	The Outlaws (2S, 2021-2022)	Criminal Record (1S, 2024)	The A Word (3S, 2016-2020)

Table 3: List of programmes with seasons and years of release used for LISA Corpus divided per streaming platform.

At this stage, all subtitles were transcribed manually. The total duration of the overall transcription work was distributed over a period of seven months approximately. The entire *LISA Corpus* thus obtained is composed of 3,769,636 tokens (43,300 types) and encompasses productions from 2016 to 2024. The only exception is AppleTV+, which also includes a series broadcast from 2013 to 2014, as there were no further significant productions on this platform during the selected period. In view of the considerable number of words yielded, the whole corpus will be used for quantitative analysis only, since the qualitative one will focus on a selection of few representative titles from a sub-corpus obtained from *LISA Corpus*. The sub-corpus will be composed with the objective of maintaining a consistent subtitled duration across all platforms. This approach ensures that the resulting sub-corpus is balanced and representative of accessible subtitling in relation to English language variation. Consequently, the transcription of the original dialogue from the programmes to be included in the sub-corpus started at this stage, enabling a stylistic and linguistic comparison with the corresponding SDH.

To facilitate both quantitative and qualitative analysis and to develop new computational methodologies for linguistic investigation, a sociolinguistic tagset was developed as follows:

- SWR for vulgar, swear words, or taboo expressions
- MRK for syntactically marked phrases and sentences
- DIAL for dialect expressions or spelling recalling accent features
- SLG for slang and jargon, interjections, colloquialisms, and improper, incorrect or commonly misused English terms (e.g., misconstructions, hypercorrections).

To increase the efficiency of the labelling phase, the Name Entity Recognition (NER) task was taken into consideration, since it consists in tagging lexical expressions according to their entity, for instance ‘person’, ‘location’, ‘date’, and ‘organisation’. In this case, the general idea was to identify brand-new labels according to sociolinguistic features and treat them as proper entities. More specifically, the tags should have been positioned after the significant word according to a TSV visualisation, i.e., separated from the word by a TAB, so that the final corpus would have been distributed with words on a single line, one by one. To be more precise, IOB format was initially selected to complete tagging, since it is particularly well suited to labelling multi-word expressions¹⁴. As part of this approach, the MATTER cycle was used to structure the labelling

¹⁴ The IOB tagging process follows these steps: the initial element of a multi-word expression is assigned the tag B-, representing ‘Beginning’. This is followed by the incorporation of the corresponding sociolinguistic tag.

process (Pustejovsky and Stubbs, 2012). It included defining a theoretical model, creating the initial annotated dataset, training a machine learning model, testing, evaluating and revising the output. The Stanford Conditional Random Field (CRF) was initially considered as the primary tool for model building, given its use in NER tasks. In fact, CRFs are often used for NER tasks, since they model the conditional probability of a sequence of labels, which is useful in cases where context is investigated. To adopt this machine-learning technique, a gold standard of 78,696 tokens (approximately 19,000 words per SVoD) was manually tagged to serve as a baseline training dataset for the model. This tagging process followed the IOB format and incorporated sociolinguistic tags to help refine the model:

166	We	PP	O	we-d
167	<g/>			
168	re	VBP	O	be-v
169	hairy	JJ	O	hairy-j
170	bastards	NNS	B-SWR	bastard-n
171	<g/>			
172	.	SENT	O	.-x
173	</s>			
174	<s>			
175	Have	VHP	O	have-v
176	a	DT	O	a-x
177	look	NN	O	look-n
178	at	IN	O	at-i
179	her	PP	O	her-d
180	<g/>			
181	.	SENT	O	.-x
182	</s>			
183	<s>			
184	This	DT	O	this-x
185	hairy	JJ	O	hairy-j
186	fucking	VVG	B-SWR	fuck-v
187	fella	NN	B-SLG	fella-n
188	<g/>			
189	.	SENT	O	.-x
190	</s>			
191	<s>			
192	Sorry	RB	O	sorry-a
193	<g/>			
194	,	,	O	,-x
195	him	PP	O	him-d
196	<g/>			
197	,	,	O	,-x
198	whatever	WDT	O	whatever-x
199	it	PP	O	it-d
200	is	VBZ	O	be-v
201	<g/>			
202	.	SENT	O	.-x

Figure 48: Screenshot of part of the gold standard in .tsv, showing SWR and SLG tags. Part-of-speech tags (POS) and lemmas (i.e., a combination of lemma and pos tag) can also be noticed.

However, significant problems arose during implementation. Debugging challenges, particularly in converting special character text files to the CONLL format required for NER,

Single-word expressions are tagged in this way. For the second element of the expression and all the subsequent ones, the tag I-, standing for ‘Inside’, is used. This is followed by the same sociolinguistic tag as the first element. All elements not marked as sociolinguistic are tagged with O-, standing for ‘Outside’. This also indicates the end of the significant lexical unit.

and the time-consuming nature of data preparation and annotation made it clear that continuing with the Stanford CRF was increasingly impractical. In addition, the limited number of multi-word expressions available meant that the benefits of using an IOB tagging scheme with a CRF model did not justify the complexity involved. It also became clear that tagging marked syntactic structures with a dedicated syntactic tag, rather than treating them as multi-word expressions to be tagged word by word, would be a more efficient and effective approach. Given these challenges, it became clear that a move to a more flexible and efficient solution was necessary.

Ultimately, I shifted to Python, which offered more efficient handling of the task, better flexibility for adjustments, and less time investment compared to the cumbersome Stanford CRF setup. This transition allowed for a more straightforward approach to tagging and handling complex linguistic data, significantly improving both the process and the outcomes¹⁵. Python was implemented here with AI support, i.e., Copilot, which demonstrates greater flexibility and is more in line with the objectives of the present work. More specifically, the software selected was Visual Studio Code (VS Code), version 1.93.1, which uses Python programming language through Pylance, the language server for Python, and is supported by an AI pair programmer, i.e., GitHub Copilot, which can redefine a prompt to reduce the number of errors in the script.

To tag an English-language corpus using Python, even with a specially created tagset, it is essential to adhere to a series of fundamental steps. The following section outlines the process in a step-by-step manner:

1. Preparing the environment. This involves installing the necessary libraries, which include “spaCy” for natural language processing (POS tagging, tokenisation, etc.) and “re”, which is Python’s standard library for manipulating regular expressions. The latter is optional, but it can be used for manipulating specific texts.
2. Defining Custom Tagset. Here an *ad-hoc* tag list based on analysis criteria must be created.
3. Importing the Corpus. If the corpus is in a text or CSV file, it can be imported into Python. In this case, the corpus needs to be distributed in a .txt file, so it must be imported using a code like this:

¹⁵ It must be said that the present work is not intended to be a purely computational linguistic analysis project, but rather a study on translation using corpus linguistic tools. Therefore, the use of Python is more appropriate for the moment.

```
with open('file.txt', 'r', encoding='utf-8') as file:  
    corpus = file.read()
```

4. Tokenisation and Text Analysis. SpaCy is preferred in this case to tokenize text and apply grammatical analysis.
5. Applying Tagset to the Corpus. To apply tags, either regular expressions (re) or spaCy's morphosyntactic analysis can be employed according to the specific task.

The simultaneous use of spaCy and regular expressions for the same script would facilitate the identification and categorisation of specific new tagsets, as is the case here. More specifically, regular expressions (regex, the “re” in point 1) are a highly effective and convenient way of performing pattern-based text searches and modifications. They allow the identification of repeating patterns within a given string, including specific words, letters, numbers or sequences. Therefore, the conditions under which regular expressions can be used include instances of words or sequences that adhere to a predefined structure. Regular expressions can then be used to make changes to a prompt, such as replacing words or phrases (e.g. adding tags to swear words), giving a significant advantage in the level of accuracy of the final script. However, regular expressions can have difficulty understanding the grammar and syntax of natural language. They are also unable to tell whether a given word is being used as a verb or a noun, or to identify the syntactic structure of a sentence. The inability to process complex patterns represents a significant challenge. Indeed, in the event of a pattern becoming exceedingly complex, the creation and upkeep of regular expressions may prove challenging, potentially leading to ineffectiveness. Instead, spaCy goes far beyond simple pattern matching. It is capable of analysing text at morphosyntactic and lexical levels and offers many advanced features such as tokenisation or Syntactic Parsing. These abilities make spaCy particularly useful to accomplish complex linguistic analysis, such as grammatical tagging and the identification of word relations and entities. For both libraries, it is necessary to install and then import them through the commands

```
import spaCy
```

and

```
import re.
```

Going back to VS Code, it can be defined as a software application that allows the creation and editing of Python scripts. Consequently, the commands mentioned above can be entered in the

main window of the project. To start the programme, it is sufficient to select 'File' from the main menu, then 'New File', and finally 'Python File'. At this point, the user may either request a prompt from the built-in AI or input a code manually. To provide additional assistance with future tasks, the NLTK (Natural Language Tool Kit) library has also been installed and imported, when necessary, with the same 'import' command.

Nevertheless, the spaCy tool has been the most frequently used because of its practical utility. In any case, all libraries were installed using the Python package manager, Pip, a tool used for installing and managing Python libraries and packages that are not included in the standard library. Once the necessary libraries have been run, the tokenisation process through 'Punkt' tokenizer was automatically initiated, thus ensuring the availability of the necessary prompts. At this stage, I proceeded to define prompts in order to categorise words according to the previously established tag sets, namely SWR, SLG, and DIAL. The MRK tag will be described later, as it was applied in a distinct manner. It must be said that first attempts of tagging prompts were made using only one .txt file as input, namely the *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* SDH, since this programme contains many examples of bad language, slang, foreign and dialect words, and marked syntax. Ultimately, I decided to normalise the corpus after the tokenization process. In fact, while tokenization breaks text into individual words or subwords, normalization ensures consistency, correctness, and standardization across the corpus. Tokenization may introduce inconsistencies in word segmentation, especially with contractions, punctuation, and special characters. Also, if sociolinguistic annotations (_SWR, _DIAL, _SLG) are used, normalization ensures uniform formatting. Normalization post-tokenization is thus crucial for improving accuracy in linguistic analysis, machine learning models, and sociolinguistic studies.

Starting with bad language, I used the NLTK extension called 'better_profanity' to have a list of bad words and taboo expressions that have been recorded in English and could be immediately used in Python. In this way, the script would have been able to read all the words included in this vocabulary and make a match with the relative occurrences in the corpus. The prompt indeed consisted in tagging with _SWR a copy of the corpus, i.e., the Paul Chowdhry's show for now, each time a bad word from the vocabulary was found in it. The resulting script was as follows:

```

1 import nltk
2 import re
3 from better_profanity import profanity
4 nltk.download('punkt')
5 nltk.download('averaged_perceptron_tagger')
6 from nltk.tokenize import word_tokenize
7 from nltk.tag import pos_tag
8
9 # Define the custom tags
10 custom_tags = {
11     "SHIT": "SWR",
12     "BITCH": "SWR",
13     "fuck": "SWR",
14     "whore": "SWR",
15     "bastard": "SWR",
16     "cunt": "SWR",
17     "asshole": "SWR"
18 }
19
20 # Load the corpus
21 corpus_path = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Chowdhry.txt"
22 with open(corpus_path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as file:
23     corpus = file.read()
24
25 # Tokenize and tag the corpus
26 tokens = word_tokenize(corpus)
27 tagged_tokens = pos_tag(tokens)
28
29 # Apply custom tags
30 def apply_custom_tags(word, tag):
31     word_upper = word.upper()
32     if re.match(r"^(fuck.*)", word, re.IGNORECASE):
33         return (word, "SWR")
34     if profanity.contains_profanity(word):
35         return (word, "SWR")
36     return (word, custom_tags.get(word_upper, tag))
37
38 tagged_tokens = [apply_custom_tags(word, tag) for word, tag in tagged_tokens]
39
40 # Save the tagged corpus
41 tagged_corpus_path = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\TAGGED_CORPUS.txt"
42 with open(tagged_corpus_path, 'w', encoding='utf-8') as file:
43     for word, tag in tagged_tokens:
44         file.write(f"{word} [{tag}] ")
45
46 print("Tagged corpus saved successfully.")

```

Figure 49: Script to tag bad words in VS Code with the support of 'better_profanity' NLTK extension.

The script has been partially integrated by the Copilot AI included in the programme. For instance, it has been used to add further examples for the purpose of defining the custom tags. Furthermore, the Copilot AI has given the input to tag the text with POS tags; however, it could also substitute such tags with SWR in instances where profanity is encountered without any further specification in the script itself. This task has thus been successfully achieved, as the new tag was correctly attached to bad language expressions without missing other significant words. The results were stored in a duplicate of the original text file called 'TAGGED_CORPUS.txt', which was previously created in the same directory as the Python script and specified as the output path. It is also possible to avoid creating a dedicated text file before running the script and instead include the creation of this file directly within the script. This approach requires the insertion of a command at the beginning of the script (e.g., `import os`¹⁶). In a later moment I decided to get rid of the POS tags to focus better on custom tags, as well as because they would be probably automatically applied during the uploading phase of

¹⁶ The 'os' module can indeed manage files and directories, including the creation, renaming, moving, and deletion of files or folders. In the scripts I created for tagging purposes, it was employed to create new .txt files in which instances of the application of customised tags were saved.

the corpus in the corpus analysis software. After having checked the functioning of the trial file, I worked on the whole definitive sub-folders, one time per each:

```
1 import nltk
2 import re
3 import os
4 from better_profanity import profanity
5 import chardet
6
7 # Download necessary NLTK data files
8 nltk.download('punkt')
9
10 from nltk.tokenize import word_tokenize
11
12 # Define the custom tags
13 custom_tags = {
14     "SHIT": "SWR",
15     "BITCH": "SWR",
16     "fuck": "SWR",
17     "whore": "SWR",
18     "bastard": "SWR",
19     "cunt": "SWR",
20     "asshole": "SWR"
21 }
22
23 # Input and output directories
24 input_dir = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus Raw\Prime Video Normalized"
25 output_dir = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus Normalized Tagged\Prime Video Normalized Tagged1"
26
27 # Create the output directory if it doesn't exist
28 if not os.path.exists(output_dir):
29     os.makedirs(output_dir)
30
31 # For each .txt file in the input directory
32 for filename in os.listdir(input_dir):
33     if filename.endswith('.txt'):
34         input_file_path = os.path.join(input_dir, filename)
35         output_file_path = os.path.join(output_dir, filename)
36
37         # Detect file encoding
38         with open(input_file_path, 'rb') as rawdata:
39             result = chardet.detect(rawdata.read(100000))
40             file_encoding = result['encoding']
41             print(f'Processing '{filename}' with detected encoding: {file_encoding}')
42
43         # Load the content of the file
44         with open(input_file_path, 'r', encoding=file_encoding, errors='replace') as file:
45             corpus = file.read()
```

Figure 50: Script for the application of *_SWR* tag to a sub-folder.

The tagging of slang, jargon, colloquial terms and interjections, and their general gathering through different sources represented the most time-consuming, yet intriguing process. Initially, an attempt was made to identify the terms in the same .txt trial file by directly querying Copilot to evaluate its capabilities. The prompt was:

Try to identify words in the corpus 'Chowdhry.txt' that seem to be non-standard English. For instance, the word 'innit' is colloquial and non-standard. Give me a complete list of such words in a separate .txt file in the same path. please show me the words in a vertical list.

The output was a new text file with a list of words that the AI interpreted as slang. Despite it did not include all words effectively marked according to low register and style, as well as some false positives and repetitions, the AI managed to gather some expressions correctly (Table 4):

Bad-bad (3 times)	Bruv (2 times)	Cocks (2 times)
Dick (2 times)	Ding-ding (2 times)	Fuck (2 times)
Fuckesh	Fucking (2 times)	Gay(s) (3 times)
Kill	Paki	Arsehole
Bastard	Bitch	Bullshit
Cunt	Fat	Fucked
Fucked-up	Fucker	Hell
Innit	Kill	Messages
Pissed	Prick	Pussy
Sex	Shit	Shithole
Shitting	Sound	Sucking
Tit	Wanker	

Table 4: List of terms identified as slang by Copilot.

It can be stated with certainty that profanity is the most recognisable category for AI, given that it is grouped in pre-existing libraries, used with great frequency. Given their typical usage in informal contexts, it is reasonable to conclude that Copilot still categorises them as colloquialisms. Nevertheless, such terms have already been assigned a specific tag and will therefore not be included in the SLG. It is also noteworthy that the term “gay” has been identified as a colloquialism, potentially due to its frequent usage in everyday speech¹⁷. It is worth noting that the expressions ‘bad-bad’ and ‘ding-ding’, which often occur together in the text, are interpreted as slang terms, possibly due to their spelling and, of course, their rare, if not non-existent, presence in other corpora. They can be assumed to be idiolectal expressions written *ad hoc* for the show and are therefore retained for the present research. However, these terms will be included in the dialect tagging set as they mock the Punjabi accent and are indeed significant within the diatopic variation. I also found that the words ‘wanna’ and ‘gonna’ still appear split into two morphemes, perhaps due to the way POS tagging works, therefore I indicated in the script that such words should be rejoined. To ensure accuracy and avoid tagging elements that belong to SWR, I included the ‘better_profanity’ library again, so that the script would have skipped tagging bad language. Below there is a portion of the script to tag the trial file, with a view to libraries uploaded and custom tags applied:

¹⁷ A further investigation into the motivation behind this attribution will not be discussed in the present work.

```

3 from better_profanity import profanity
4 nltk.download('punkt')
5 nltk.download('averaged_perceptron_tagger')
6 from nltk.tokenize import word_tokenize
7 from nltk.tag import pos_tag
8
9 # Define the custom tags
10 custom_tags = {
11     "GONNA": "SLG",
12     "KINDA": "SLG",
13     "BRUV": "SLG",
14     "INNIT": "SLG",
15     "TIT": "SLG",
16     "WANKER": "SLG"
17 }
18
19 # Load the list of non-standard words from the file
20 non_standard_words_path = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\non_standard_words.txt"
21 with open(non_standard_words_path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as file:
22     non_standard_words = set(word.strip().lower() for word in file.readlines())
23
24 # Load the corpus
25 corpus_path = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Chowdhry.txt"
26 with open(corpus_path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as file:
27     corpus = file.read()
28
29 # Tokenize and tag the corpus
30 tokens = word_tokenize(corpus)
31 tagged_tokens = pos_tag(tokens)
32
33 # Apply custom tags and identify non-standard words
34 non_standard_found = set()
35
36 def apply_custom_tags(word, tag):
37     word_lower = word.lower()
38     word_upper = word.upper()
39     if re.match(r"^(bruv).*", word, re.IGNORECASE):
40         non_standard_found.add(word)
41         return (word, "SLG")
42     if re.match(r"^(innit).*", word, re.IGNORECASE):
43         non_standard_found.add(word)
44         return (word, "SLG")
45     if re.match(r"^(tit).*", word, re.IGNORECASE):
46         non_standard_found.add(word)

```

Figure 51: Portion of script to tag SLG features in the .txt trial file.

Nevertheless, this approach seemed to lack a sufficient level of specificity to encompass the entire corpus, which prompted further development of the script.

I first created a list of terms that could be considered colloquial in British English, named ‘colloquialisms.txt’. I also collected some words and terms from Urban Dictionary, i.e., the online dictionary reporting informal expressions in English, paying attention to include only significant terms in British English, and I stored them in a Python file already prepared for the matching phase. Furthermore, I included the keywords list of the spoken part of the British National Corpus (BNC) 2014, downloaded from Sketch Engine and saved in .csv format, only selecting terms that match with the criteria of being jargon, colloquialism, slang, and interjections. Finally, to be inclusive, I opted for online research of such features by directly investigating the British English version of Wiktionary, the online, open-content dictionary powered by the open-source software MediaWiki. However, the script suffered continuous errors, mainly due to time-out and time-sleep settings¹⁸, which led to a looping lack of

¹⁸ The Python script typically incorporates time-out and time-sleep settings when addressing online requests. In particular, the specified time-out period for the current script was set to five seconds. This means that, if a request

responses. To solve the problem, I tried to run the script entirely with offline tools by downloading the Wiktionary XML Dump¹⁹ through the dumps.wikimedia.org page, selecting the latest version of 'enwiktionary' for English, and getting the .bz2 compressed file. Unfortunately, this attempt also proved problematic during the parsing procedure of the output in Python, due to the massive dimension of the XML file. I finally opted for the insertion in the script of the direct URL to the Wiktionary category 'English_slang' to be immediately parsed with 'BeautifulSoup'²⁰, as well as the indication to gather only those entries having 'British' in the definition. Given that the new iteration of the script had once again a direct link to the Internet, I reintroduced the one-second time delay for generating queries. After that, all definitions were stored in a .txt file named 'british_slang_words.txt'. The same was done for other colloquialisms, non-standard forms, such as hypercorrections and misconstructions, but not for interjections, since they are presumably more diffused in spoken language on a large scale and are likely to be reported in the BNC spoken list. In this way, I could have included the final Wiktionary file offline in the script. To help fasten the process and avoid the risk of bugging, I gathered all words from the various lists into a single .txt file, named 'SLG_list.txt', which also includes interjections. Considering the different origins of the various slang and colloquialisms files, the final list was then checked through a Python script that removes possible duplicates and leaves just one occurrence of the interested words. The result was a file containing 4,653 different non-standard, informal expressions in British English. To reduce possible ambiguities in the tag application and to fasten the process as well, I used the trial file that was already tagged per _SWR, so as to check the behaviour of the script in encountering a different tag. Since the final result was appropriate, the methodology was applied also to the rest of the folders. A portion of the final script is shown below:

for online word processing takes longer than the designated time, the script will skip that word and prevent any potential issues. The time-sleep was instead set at one second, thereby including a delay between each request. This was implemented to prevent the server from becoming overloaded, to comply with the frequency limits on the number of requests that many APIs impose, and to avoid the blocking of the IP address from which the requests originate.

¹⁹ An XML Dump is defined as a comprehensive copy of data from a database or website, exported in XML format. In the Wiktionary case, it encompasses a range of information, including definitions, etymologies, grammatical details, and other metadata.

²⁰ 'BeautifulSoup' is a Python library that is usually used for web scraping. It obtains data from XML and HTML files by creating a parse tree directly from the page source code.

```

1 import os
2 import re
3 from better_profanity import profanity
4 from networkx import is_path
5 import chardet
6
7 # Paths
8 reference_file_path = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\SLG_list.txt"
9 input_directory = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus Normalized Tagged\Prime Video Normalized Tagged1"
10 output_directory = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus Normalized Tagged\Prime Video Normalized Tagged2"
11
12 # Load reference library (convert all words to lowercase for case-insensitive matching)
13 with open(reference_file_path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as file:
14     reference_library = set(line.strip().lower() for line in file)
15
16 # Ensure output directory exists
17 os.makedirs(output_directory, exist_ok=True)
18
19 # Process each file in the input directory
20 for filename in os.listdir(input_directory):
21     input_file_path = os.path.join(input_directory, filename)
22     output_file_path = os.path.join(output_directory, filename)
23
24     with open(input_file_path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as infile, open(output_file_path, 'w', encoding='utf-8') as outfile:
25         for line in infile:
26             words = line.split()
27             tagged_words = []
28
29             for word in words:
30                 # Remove punctuation and convert to lowercase
31                 clean_word = re.sub(r'\W+', '', word).lower()
32
33                 # Use better_profanity as a stop list: if the word is a profanity, ignore it
34                 if profanity.contains_profanity(clean_word):
35                     tagged_words.append(word) # Keep the original word unchanged
36                 elif clean_word in reference_library:
37                     tagged_words.append(f"{word}_SLG")
38                 else:
39                     tagged_words.append(word)
40
41             # Write each processed line immediately (preserving original line breaks)
42             outfile.write(' '.join(tagged_words) + '\n')
43
44 print("Tagging completed successfully!")

```

Figure 52: Script to tag SLG elements in AppleTV+ sub-corpus.

Tagging dialects and accents was the most challenging of the lexical tasks. To accomplish this task, I used the ‘spell checker’ library, as it is likely that a dialect or accent feature, at least if it is not a proper lexical item, would be rendered with an uncommon spelling. So, I decided to start with this characterisation first. In the script I included some practical examples in order to give some guidance to the script itself. Since .txt trial file has specific written renderings of accent features, such as ‘wideo’ to mock Indian English, I selected it as a prototypical pattern of how a word with an unusual spelling, but still recognisable, should look like. I also included the ‘better_profanity’ extension to avoid tagging swear words as dialect. However, some problems occurred. First, the script identified punctuation as non-standard spelling; second, it also included contraction forms among elements to be tagged, especially with demonstrative pronouns. Therefore, I tried to fix these issues by inserting a command to skip those elements from tagging, including a code line to signal uppercase versions of contractions. However, this situation suggested to add further specifications in the script for better precision. I thus gathered dialectal expressions from Wiktionary once again through an API rapid checking, obtaining another list of words in .txt format. A similar procedure was applied for specific websites and online resources for dialect terms: the *Freeland Cockney-English Dictionary*, retrievable on the web, Crowley’s *The Liverpool English Dictionary* (2017), used in its digitalised version, *the*

Tourdemanc Mancunian Dictionary, also found on the web, the online *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*, selecting only the ‘modern’ section, and *Showell’s Dictionary of Birmingham* (2024), digitalised as well. I also included by hand some terms from Chinn and Thorne’s *Proper Brummie - A Dictionary of Birmingham Words and Phrases* (2003). The results were collected in three .txt files so as not to make the script more demanding. Ultimately, I decided to lemmatise the dialect lists, so to create a dictionary where each lemma maps to its morphological forms. If a term has a peculiar spelling, the script will keep it in its original form. This way, unique dialect-specific expressions were kept. The same occurred for multi-word expressions. The final version was hence set, provided that the trial file, now tagged with both `_SWR` and `_SLG`, produced the correct output:

```

1 import os
2 import re
3 import spacy
4 from better_profanity import profanity
5
6 # --- CONFIGURATION ---
7 INPUT_FOLDER = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus Normalized Tagged\Prime Video Normalized Tagged2"
8 OUTPUT_FOLDER = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus Normalized Tagged\Prime Video Normalized Tagged3"
9 DIALECT_LIBRARY_FILES = [
10     r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Expanded_Dialect_Libraries\dialects.new_expanded.txt",
11     r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Expanded_Dialect_Libraries\dialects_wiki_filtered_expanded.txt",
12     r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Expanded_Dialect_Libraries\cockney_words_expanded.txt"
13 ]
14
15 # Load spaCy English model for POS tagging
16 nlp = spacy.load("en_core_web_sm")
17
18 # Contractions to skip
19 contractions = set([
20     "i've", "don't", "doesn't", "can't", "won't", "isn't", "aren't", "wasn't", "weren't",
21     "hasn't", "haven't", "hadn't", "wouldn't", "shouldn't", "couldn't", "mustn't", "shan't",
22     "mightn't", "needn't", "let's", "that's", "who's", "what's", "where's", "when's", "why's",
23     "how's", "i'm", "you're", "he's", "she's", "it's", "we're", "they're", "i'll", "you'll",
24     "he'll", "she'll", "it'll", "we'll", "they'll", "i'd", "you'd", "he'd", "she'd", "we'd",
25     "they'd", "wanna", "gonna", "n't", "m", "re", "d", "ve", "s", "ll",
26     "that'll", "there'll", "here's", "where'll", "when'll", "why'll", "what'll", "how'll", "who'll",
27     "everyone's", "someone's", "somebody's", "nobody's", "anybody's", "everybody's", "it'll", "that'd",
28     "this'd", "who'd", "what'd", "where'd", "when'd", "why'd", "how'd", "who'd've", "what'd've",
29     "where'd've", "when'd've", "why'd've", "how'd've", "who'll've", "what'll've", "where'll've",
30     "when'll've", "why'll've", "how'll've", "oughtn't", "how're", "what're"
31 ])
32
33 # Add uppercase versions of contractions
34 contractions.update({c.capitalize() for c in contractions})
35
36 # --- HELPER FUNCTIONS ---
37
38 def load_dialect_terms(file_paths):
39     """ Load expanded dialect terms from specified files and return a set of lowercase terms. """
40     terms = set()
41     for file_path in file_paths:
42         try:
43             with open(file_path, "r", encoding="utf-8") as f:
44                 lines = f.readlines()
45                 terms.update(line.strip().lower() for line in lines if line.strip())
46         except Exception as e:
47             print(f"Error reading dialect library file {file_path}: {e}")
48     return terms

```

Figure 53: Portion of *DIAL* script with examples of dialect words to include and contractions and interjections to skip. File paths to use as libraries are also visible.

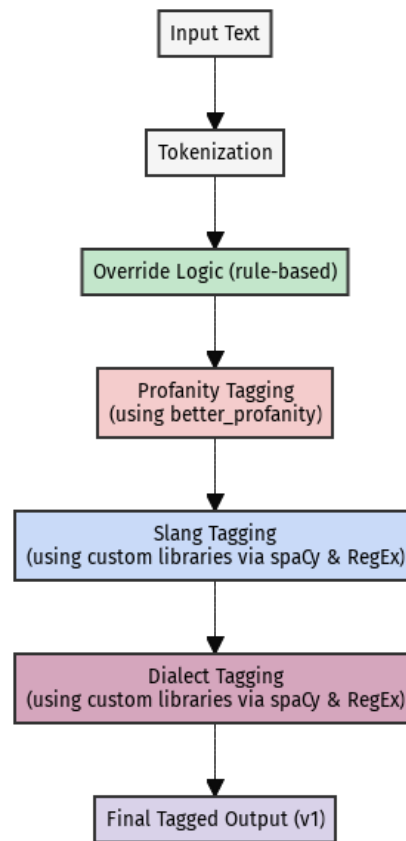


Figure 54: Flowchart of the lexical tagging process using the override logic (custom libraries).

To validate the outputs of the lexical tasks, I manually checked the results by searching for all potential combinations of sociolinguistic lexical patterns among those considered. However, due to the huge amount of data, a further method was later applied to enhance the accuracy of sociolinguistic tagging, disambiguate the sense of non-standard words, and reduce both false positives and false negatives. I developed a hybrid model for tag disambiguation in such a non-standard language context by integrating different methods. The first one is called DistilBERT (created by Hugging Face in 2019 and derived from BERT – Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers, but lighter), which is a deep learning model which analyses words in both left and right contexts simultaneously. This model can assign different importance weights to words in a sentence, therefore spotting semantic differences in word sense disambiguation (WSD)²¹. Since BERT’s computational cost is extremely high, making it challenging for large-scale corpus validation on standard computing hardware, DistilBERT was

²¹ Traditional rule-based WSD methods, such as the Lesk algorithm, rely on static dictionary definitions and are prone to errors in ambiguous cases, particularly when a word has multiple meanings depending on dialectal or standard English usage. DistilBERT is a more advanced option that uses deep contextual information to understand how words are used in real language.

introduced as a lighter and faster alternative, retaining 97% of BERT’s performance while requiring significantly fewer resources (Sanh et al., 2020). Since DistilBERT works better with its internal tokenization, the text was de-tokenized from the previous NLTK method and re-tokenized accordingly.

```
import torch
from transformers import DistilBertTokenizer, DistilBertForSequenceClassification
import time
import pandas as pd
import numpy as np
import re
from typing import List, Dict, Union, Tuple
from collections import Counter
import argparse
import spacy
from spacy.lang.en import English
```

Figure 55: Inclusion of DistilBERT in the Python script for lexical tagging. It can be noticed that spaCy is added later.

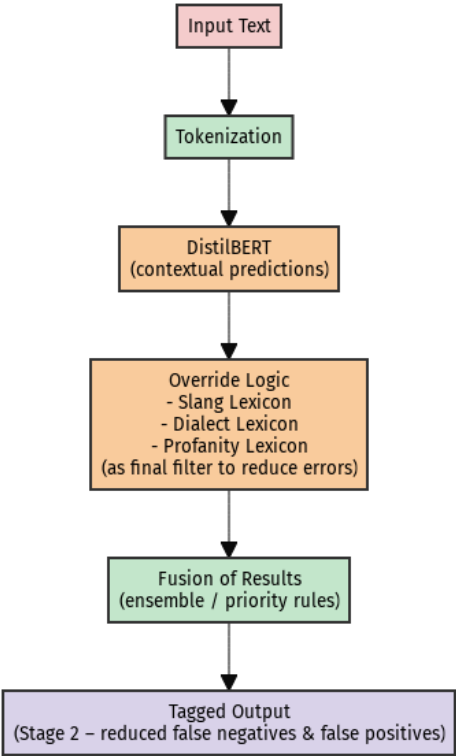


Figure 56: Flowchart of the tagging process with the addition of DistilBERT.

However, DistilBERT alone may fail to adequately resolve ambiguities given the complexity of the task. Natural language, especially when it involves non-standard phenomena, poses

additional challenges for computational identification. For this reason, the model was hybridised with rule-based logic and external resources in order to strengthen its disambiguation capacity.

The second method is the Graph Neural Network (GNN). It is a neural network specifically designed to work on structured graph data. This means that the information is represented as nodes connected by arcs, which make them communicate²². The primary goal is to get both the local contextual information and the global relationships between tokens. In a traditional Transformer setup, the model primarily focuses on the context local to each token, which may not be sufficient when dealing with the high ambiguity inherent in non-standard or informal language²³. By integrating a GNN, the model is able to look at the entire sentence, or even across sentences, by propagating information among connected tokens. This helps to reinforce semantic correlations that might be lost when considering only the immediate context.

After the model produces its predictions, the override logic based on external reference libraries is applied. Specifically, the slang word list and the dialect libraries previously made through APIs were used to check each token. If a token matches an entry in these reference sets, its tag is set to `_SLG` or `_DIAL` accordingly. This additional step is crucial for correcting errors that may arise from ambiguous tokens, e.g., when ‘me’ is mistakenly interpreted as a standard form, although it actually represents the marked variant of ‘my’, or where proper names like ‘Kate’ or ‘Dave’ appear in slang contexts.

²² In a GNN, each node updates its representation through a process known as ‘message passing’. This involves collecting and aggregating ‘messages’ from neighbouring nodes. The model is able to capture not only the local characteristics of each node, but also the relationships and global structure of the graph. This approach makes GNNs particularly effective in tasks such as classifying nodes, predicting relationships between nodes, and the overall representation of entire graphs, rendering them a powerful tool for data that do not follow a regular structure.

²³ Lesk algorithm, originally proposed by Michael Lesk in 1986, is a method for word meaning disambiguation (Word Sense Disambiguation). It works by comparing the definitions (or glosses) of the possible meanings of a word with the context in which the word appears. In practice, for each word sense, the algorithm calculates the number of words in common between the sense definition and the surrounding context. The sense with the greatest degree of lexical overlap is selected as the correct one.

```

import os, re, json, random
from pathlib import Path
from collections import Counter, defaultdict

import torch
import torch.nn as nn
import torch.nn.functional as F
from torch.utils.data import Dataset, DataLoader

from transformers import AutoTokenizer, AutoModel, get_linear_schedule_with_warmup
from better_profanity import profanity

try:
    from torch_geometric.nn import GCNConv
except Exception as e:
    raise RuntimeError("Install torch-geometric for your PyTorch version.") from e

# ===== CONFIG =====
CONFIG = {
    "HF_MODEL": "distilbert-base-uncased",
    "DEVICE": "cuda" if torch.cuda.is_available() else "cpu",
    "SEED": 42,

```

Figure 57: Screenshot from Python script including GNN with override logic. In more detail, the GNN is imported through 'torch', which is a library built for writing and training a Graph Neural Network. The NLTK library 'better_profanity' is uploaded at the end.

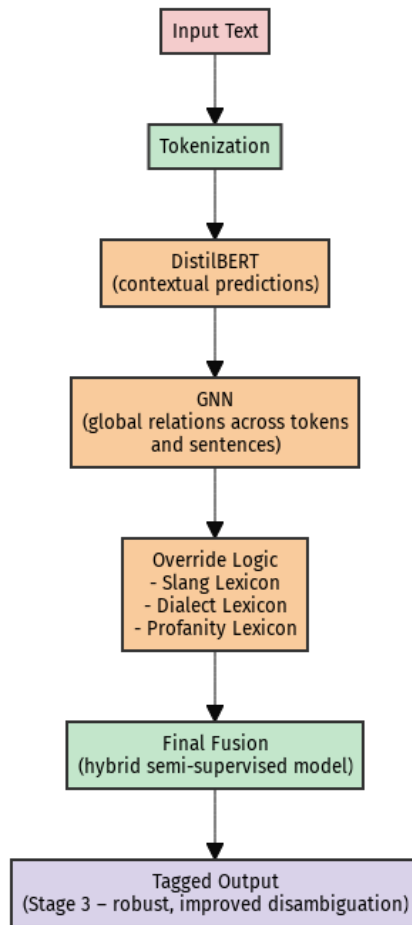


Figure 58: Final pipeline for lexical tagging. The GNN is introduced as second neural network.

After running all the dedicated Python scripts, the final output consisted of text files in which each token was correctly labelled according to the combined predictions of the hybrid model and the external reference checks. This approach not only reduces false negatives but also significantly improves disambiguation accuracy compared with DistilBERT alone or rule-based methods such as Lesk, which may produce overly rigid assignments or fail to capture the nuances of informal language. In essence, the system leverages the deep contextual representations of a Transformer, the global relational modelling of a GNN, and the corrective power of external lexical resources to provide a robust, semi-supervised solution for tag disambiguation in complex linguistic scenarios.

Now turning to marked syntactic features, this task was kept separate from the others since it dealt with the analysis of sentences and phrases, as opposite to single unities such as words and multi-word expressions. I focused on four different tasks according to four different marked syntactic strategies that do not belong to standard English. These features are:

- Lack of inversion in questions;
- Absence of copula in copular sentences;
- Lack of subject-verb agreement;
- Compound verb forms missing the auxiliary.

Since this is a syntactic analysis, I adopted the typical opening and closing XML tag structure with the trigger sentence in between. Each MRK tag has a further tag for the specific typology. The result was:

- `<MRK: inv>{sent.text.strip()}</MRK: inv>` for the lack of inversion;
- `<MRK: cop>{sent.text.strip()}</MRK: cop>` for the absence of copula;
- `<MRK: agr>{sent.text.strip()}</MRK: agr>` for the lack of agreement;
- `<MRK: form>{sent.text.strip()}</MRK: form>` for no-auxiliary compound forms.

To minimise false positives and negatives given the task's complexity, I first tested the script on a version of the Prime Video sub-corpus that was pre-annotated with dependency tags, which provided a larger dataset for analysis. These annotations enabled the script to focus exclusively on syntactically marked sentences, offering valuable grammatical information, such as subject-verb dependencies and omissions, that helps signal when a subject and its verb do not agree or when the copula is omitted in an otherwise copular sentence, for instance. Based on these

experiments, I later developed the final versions for each folder. The first tagging process regarded the inversion issue, which is shown below:

```

1 import os
2 import spacy
3 import chardet
4
5 # Load spaCy English model
6 nlp = spacy.load('en_core_web_sm')
7
8 def is_question_without_inversion(doc):
9     """
10     Checks if the sentence is a question without inversion.
11     """
12     text = doc.text.strip()
13     if not text.endswith('?'):
14         return False
15
16     # Check if the first token is a wh-word; if so, it's a wh-question and should not be tagged
17     wh_words = {'what', 'when', 'where', 'who', 'whom', 'whose', 'why', 'how', 'which'}
18     first_token = doc[0].text.lower()
19     first_token_clean = first_token.split("'")[0] # Handle contractions like "What's", "Who's"
20     if first_token_clean in wh_words:
21         return False
22
23     # Identify subjects and auxiliary verbs
24     subjects = [token for token in doc if token.dep_ in ('nsubj', 'nsubjpass')]
25     aux_verbs = [token for token in doc if token.dep_ == 'aux']
26
27     if not subjects or not aux_verbs:
28         return False
29
30     subject = subjects[0]
31     aux = aux_verbs[0]
32
33     # Check if subject comes before auxiliary verb (no inversion)
34     if subject.i < aux.i:
35         # Confirm that the auxiliary verb is linked to the main verb
36         root_verbs = [token for token in doc if token.dep_ == 'ROOT' and token.pos_ == 'VERB']
37         if root_verbs:
38             root = root_verbs[0]
39             # Check if aux is before root
40             if aux.i < root.i:
41                 return True
42
43     return False
44
45 def is_question_tag(doc):
46     """
47     Checks if the sentence contains a question tag.
48     """
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74 def process_files(input_dir, output_dir):
75     if not os.path.exists(output_dir):
76         os.makedirs(output_dir)
77
78     # Iterate over all .txt files in the input directory
79     for filename in os.listdir(input_dir):
80         if filename.endswith('.txt'):
81             input_file = os.path.join(input_dir, filename)
82             output_file = os.path.join(output_dir, filename)
83
84             # Detect file encoding
85             with open(input_file, 'rb') as f:
86                 rawdata = f.read(100000) # Read a portion of the file
87                 result = chardet.detect(rawdata)
88                 encoding = result['encoding']
89                 confidence = result['confidence']
90                 print(f"Detected encoding for '{filename}': {encoding} (Confidence: {confidence})")
91
92             if encoding is None:
93                 encoding = 'utf-8' # Fallback to utf-8 if encoding is not detected
94
95             try:
96                 with open(input_file, 'r', encoding=encoding, errors='replace') as file:
97                     content = file.read()
98             except UnicodeDecodeError:
99                 # If decoding fails, try a different encoding or use 'latin1'
100                 print(f"UnicodeDecodeError when reading '{filename}' with encoding '{encoding}'. Trying 'latin1'.")
101                 with open(input_file, 'r', encoding='latin1', errors='replace') as file:
102                     content = file.read()
103
104             # Split content into sentences using spaCy
105             doc = nlp(content)
106             updated_lines = []
107             for sent in doc.sents:
108                 if is_question_without_inversion(sent) or is_question_tag(sent):
109                     # Wrap the sentence with <MRK: inv> tags
110                     updated_line = f"<MRK: inv>{sent.text.strip()}</MRK: inv>"
111                 else:
112                     updated_line = sent.text.strip()
113                 updated_lines.append(updated_line)
114
115             # Join the updated lines with spaces
116             processed_content = ' '.join(updated_lines)
117
118             with open(output_file, 'w', encoding='utf-8') as file:
119                 file.write(processed_content)
120
121             print(f"Processed file: {filename}")

```

Figure 59: Portions of the script for no inversion in questions. The first image shows the section checking for nouns and auxiliaries' standard positioning. In the second image, both file encoding and spaCy's use are displayed.

The script asks for identification of a pattern ‘subject + verb +?’, excluding tag questions and wh- questions. Through spaCy and NLTK libraries, it managed to accomplish the task well, despite some false positives still occurring.

The task on absence of copula caused some identification problems to pre-existing libraries on English. First, I asked Copilot to create a script that can detect and tag copular sentences with no copula in them through this prompt:

Identify all sentences that do not have copula where it is supposed to occur, for instance as in sentences “you crazy” or “you smart”, that should instead be “you are crazy” and “you are smart”.

The script should follow a similar pattern:

```
for i, word in enumerate(words):
    if i < len(words) - 1 and words[i + 1].lower() not in [
        'am', 'is', 'are', 'was', 'were', 'be', 'being', 'been'
    ]:
        if word.islower() and word.isalpha() and words[i + 1].islower()
        and words[i + 1].isalpha():
            print("<MRK: cop>")
```

However, Copilot’s script failed in accomplishing the task, since the script tagged every single sentence of the Chowdhry.txt trial file. At this point, I added more information on how to identify copular structures to make the script more precise, i.e., the correct presence of the verb “to be”, either contracted or not, with an adjective following. However, the result showed many false positives. A further specification consisted in not looking at just ‘subject-adjective’ pattern, but also focusing on either the adjective being the predicate of the sentence or checking for potential prepositions that are used in noun clauses before meeting the actual verb (e.g., “the man on the Moon [verb]” instead of “the man is on the Moon”). Also, I included further specifications on copular sentences with possible compounds (e.g., “you nice and kind”), as well as the presence of vocatives that may be mistaken as copular sentences without a copula, since their structure do not include a verb. To let these indications be properly applied, I uploaded spaCy library, since it is particularly useful for parsing and tagging on a sentence level. With these further indications, the script managed to successfully tag the .txt trial file and then, each streaming platform folder:

```

5 # Load the English NLP model
6 nlp = spacy.load('en_core_web_sm')
7
8 # List of copular contractions
9 copular_contractions = {"i'm", "you're", "he's", "she's", "it's", "we're", "they're"}
10
11 # Function to identify sentences with missing copulas and tag them
12 def find_missing_copula(text):
13     doc = nlp(text)
14     results = []
15
16     for sent in doc.sents:
17         sentence_text = sent.text.strip()
18         sentence_lower = sentence_text.lower()
19
20         # Skip sentences that contain a copular contraction
21         if any(contraction in sentence_lower for contraction in copular_contractions):
22             results.append(sentence_text)
23             continue
24
25         # Identify verbs in the sentence (excluding forms of 'be')
26         verbs = [token for token in sent if (token.pos_ == 'VERB' or token.pos_ == 'AUX') and token.lemma != 'be']
27
28         # If there are any verbs other than 'be', do not tag the sentence
29         if verbs:
30             results.append(sentence_text)
31             continue
32
33         # If the sentence contains a form of 'be', it's not missing a copula
34         if any(token.lemma == 'be' for token in sent):
35             results.append(sentence_text)
36             continue
37
38         # Identify subject
39         subjects = [token for token in sent if token.dep_ in ('nsubj', 'nsubjpass')]
40
41         # Identify root
42         roots = [token for token in sent if token.dep_ == 'ROOT']
43
44         # If the root is an adjective or noun, and there is a subject, possible missing copula
45         if subjects and roots:
46             root_token = roots[0]
47             if root_token.pos_ in ('ADJ', 'NOUN'):
48                 # Possible missing copula
49                 marked_sentence = f"<MRK: cop>{sentence_text}</MRK: cop>"
50                 results.append(marked_sentence)
51                 continue

```

Figure 60: A portion of the script on absence of copula. Here the definition of copular sentences and the identification of syntactic structures missing copula are displayed.

The lack of subject and verb agreement appeared to be the less problematic aspect of the identification process at first glance, given the expectations of such a task. However, the opposite was in fact the case, mainly due to the high presence of false positives after a rapid manual check of results. The initial version of the script should have only identified instances where the subject and verb in a sentence were not in agreement and applied the <MRK: agr>sentence</MRK: agr> tag in such cases. To parse the sentences and identify subjects and verbs, spaCy was once again included. In this manner, the system would have identified discrepancies in agreement based on established patterns, such as those involving singular and plural subjects and verbs. Consequently, the initial detections exclusively encompassed mismatches based on POS tags, such as NN (singular noun) vs. VBP (plural verb), NNS (plural noun) vs. VBZ (singular verb), and the identification of contractions. In the case of an agreement error, the sentence was to be tagged accordingly. The second version included the detection of auxiliaries in wh- questions, both contracted and non-contracted. This was followed by a request to check for the subject of the sentence and verify the concordance, as well as the indication of a special case that should not be tagged, i.e., 'ain't'. Although the latter indication was successful, the former resulted in an output that was still not precise, showing

various false negatives (e.g., “Where’s all the Musalmans?”; “When I were growing up...”). Following the incorporation of practical examples into the script, it became evident that the VS Code had encountered a system bug, since it resulted in an unresponsive loop.

At this point, I consulted OpenAI ChatGPT-4o with Canvas²⁴, an implementation for script development, with a view to devising an alternative script based on a similar prompt. The new script was simplified by listing any instance of discordance between subject and verb, including contractions. Subsequently, I tested the new script, and this time the task was successfully accomplished. It was then extended to all four sub-corpora, resulting in the figure below:

```
16 def get_subject_number(subject):
17     if subject.lower_ == 'i':
18         return 'first_person_singular'
19     elif subject.lower_ in ('we', 'they'):
20         return 'plural'
21     elif subject.lower_ in ('he', 'she', 'it'):
22         return 'singular'
23     elif subject.pos_ == 'PRON':
24         return None # Other pronouns like 'you'
25     elif subject.pos_ == 'PROPN':
26         return 'singular' # Assume proper nouns are singular
27     elif subject.tag_ in ('NN', 'NNP'):
28         return 'singular'
29     elif subject.tag_ in ('NNS', 'NNPS'):
30         return 'plural'
31     else:
32         return None
33
34 def should_tag_sentence(sentence_doc):
35     # For each verb in the sentence
36     for verb in [token for token in sentence_doc if token.pos_ in ('VERB', 'AUX')]:
37         # Check if the verb is in present tense
38         if verb.tag_ in ('VBZ', 'VBP'):
39             # Find subjects connected to the verb
40             subjects = [child for child in verb.children if child.dep_ in ('nsubj', 'nsubjpass')]
41             for subject in subjects:
42                 subject_number = get_subject_number(subject)
43                 verb_form = verb.tag_
44
45                 if subject_number == 'plural':
46                     if verb_form == 'VBZ':
47                         # Plural subject with verb ending in -s (incorrect)
48                         return True
49                 elif subject_number == 'singular':
50                     if verb_form == 'VBP':
51                         # Singular subject with verb not ending in -s (incorrect)
52                         return True
53                 elif subject_number == 'first_person_singular':
54                     if verb_form == 'VBZ':
55                         # 'I' with verb ending in -s (incorrect)
56                         return True
57             return False
58
59 def detect_and_tag_sentences(text):
60     doc = nlp(text)
61     tokens = list(doc)
62     idx = 0
63     output = ''
```

Figure 61: Portion of script to disclose subject-verb agreement missing.

The final MRK task consisted in detecting and tagging no-auxiliary compound forms. I once again used spaCy to parse sentences having this marked structure. As the complexity of the task

²⁴ The consultation was conducted in October 2024 (GPT-4o with Canvas was the most recent release at that time). Additional cross-checks were performed in August 2025 with GPT-5 in combination with Manus AI.

could suggest, many false negatives occurred. It must be said that handling multiple token conditions in spaCy might be preventing the script from detecting the desired cases effectively. Instead of using spaCy to parse and tag each sentence, I applied a more direct pattern-based processing to each line of text. This way, the focus switched on straightforward Regex pattern matching, which indeed facilitated the identification of the syntactic structure. This approach streamlines processing and allows the specific pattern to be matched without relying on token tags. In addition, the script now processes each line as a discrete entity. This eliminates the need for sentence splitting with an NLP model and instead allows the entire line to be comprehensively scanned for errors. A further issue arose regarding the identification of false positives. The script was excessively rigorous in its deletion of potential false positives, resulting in the removal of all valid instances. Consequently, I opted for the deletion of the module and for running the script once more. This approach proved more effective this time. After that, I managed to tag all sub-corpora with the current script, which is as follows:

```
1 import spacy
2 import re
3 import os
4
5 # Load the spaCy English model
6 nlp = spacy.load('en_core_web_sm')
7
8 # Paths to input and output directories
9 input_dir = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus COPILOT_TAGGED\Prime Video COPILOT_TAGGED"
10 output_dir = r"C:\Users\illia\Desktop\copilot script\Corpus COPILOT_TAGGED4.4\Prime Video COPILOT_TAGGED4.4"
11
12 # Ensure the output directory exists
13 os.makedirs(output_dir, exist_ok=True)
14
15 # List of auxiliary verbs that commonly require a past participle
16 aux_verbs = ['had', 'have', 'has', 'was', 'were', 'been']
17
```

Figure 62: A portion of the script for <MRK: form> tag.

To validate the outputs of the syntactic tasks, I conducted a comprehensive search in the corpus for all potential combinations of marked syntactic patterns among those considered. In this way, I managed to manually tag those sentences still identified by the scripts as false negatives. However, as happened for the lexical tagging, further refinements were applied. The approach adopted for the lexical tags, i.e. DistilBERT and GNN, was therefore used, with the already tagged corpus being provided as training data for the system to recognise such marked sentence structures. For these tasks I created a script to merge all tags, so that each .txt file in every single streaming platform subfolder would have had all four tags according to each syntactic typology.

The following flowchart provides a visual representation of the tagging process, delineating the sequence of steps involved. The tagging of swear words is displayed as the first step, which represents the most straightforward task. The scheme then progresses to the following steps,

until reaching the quality check phase. The vertical arrows indicate the direction of progression, with each output serving as the input for the subsequent step.

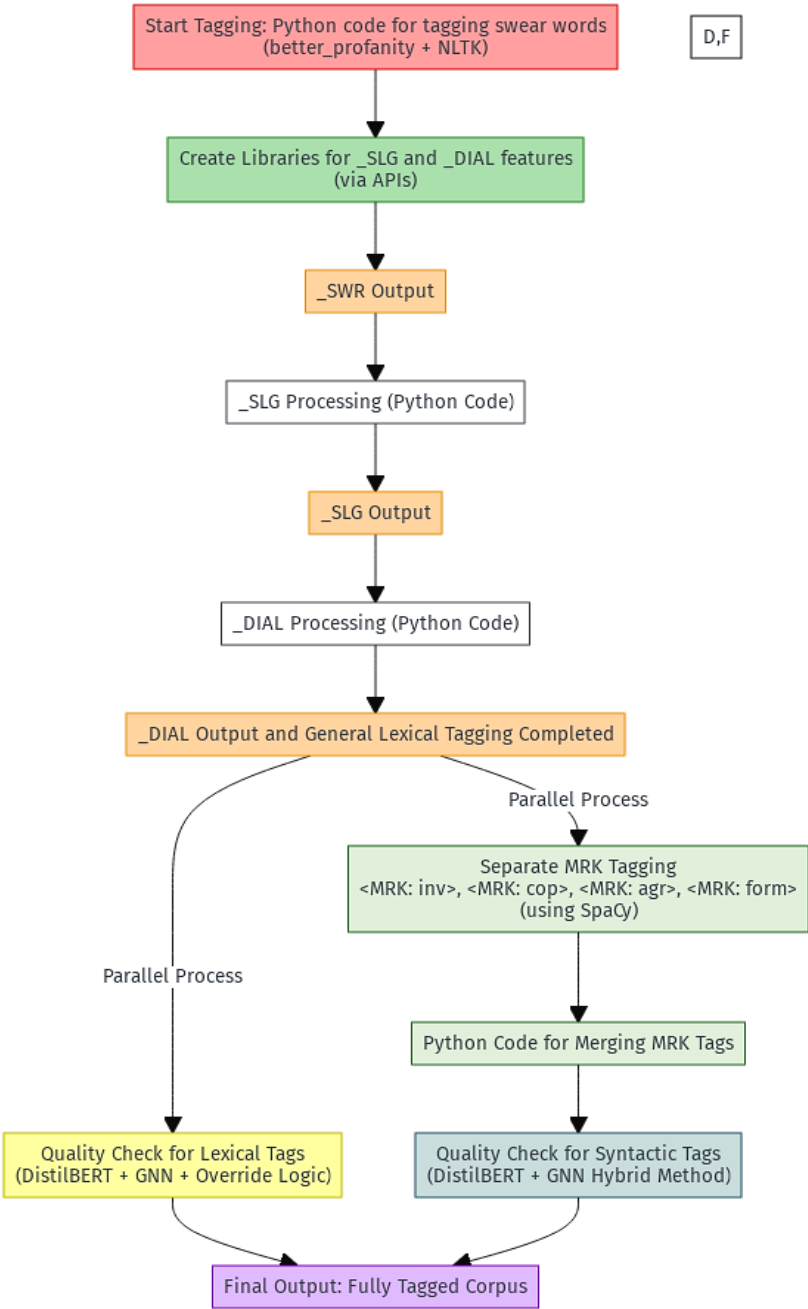


Figure 63: Flowchart of the corpus tagging process. The D and F letters in the little white square on the right-hand side at the top of the chart signal the intermediate steps.

The final version of the tagged corpus was then uploaded to LincsBox X, version 5.0.3, the software for corpus analysis developed by Lancaster University and available for free download from the dedicated website. The tool already provides the user with several reference corpora:

in this case, the BNC2014 was selected. The software is effective at recognising custom tags and is fast at processing the corpus, despite the multiple implementations if compared to the previous versions. In addition, LancsBox X makes it possible to compare two or more different corpora or sub-corpora in a single screen, thanks to the possibility of separating the display. In this way, two or more different results for the same query can be easily shown. Moreover, the search bar allows users to input tags without additional symbols. The system recognises tags and shows associated words, focusing on lexicon. In practice, only the word associated with the requested tag is displayed as a contextual node in the KWIC (Key Words In Context) screen, without interfering with the display of words to be analysed. In any case, it is possible to disclose tags in the KWIC screen by flagging the dedicated option in the menu. The same can be applied to queries for grammatical constructions or patterns. For instance, the user can search for the syntactic structure “SUBJECT VERB ADJECTIVE” by simply typing the query in the search bar.

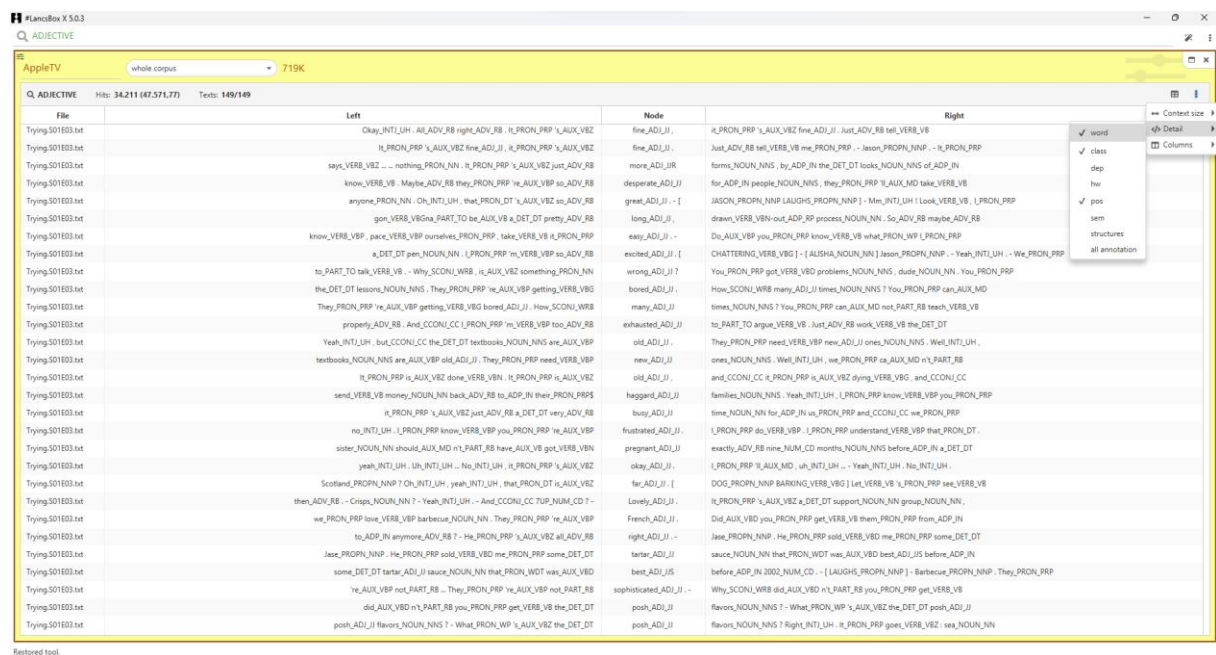


Figure 64: LancsBox X KWIC visualisation with both POS and CLASS flagged in the menu on the right-hand side. The query displayed here finds all adjectives in the corpus.

Although these implementations suggest that the search for marked syntactic structures could easily have been addressed without developing a specific tagging script, it was more useful to develop it from scratch, since it is not obvious that the query would have been well interpreted and executed, nor that all marked forms would have been recognised. In addition, the scripts thus created allow the tagged corpus to be uploaded to various tools that do not normally have

such tagging processes implemented. In addition, the tool can tag the corpus not only with POS, but also with semantic tagging, using PyMUSAS²⁵. This feature can help in the possible identification of words according to their meaning, thus supporting sociolinguistic research. Finally, the tool already parses text using spaCy, which is in line with the general tagging process adopted so far.

LancsBox X is thought to investigate also the portion of corpus designed for the qualitative analysis. As previously stated in this section, the sub-corpus is being selected from *LISA Corpus* to ensure the qualitative analysis is conducted on a smaller number of tokens. It is composed of one series and one film per streaming platform. The list of selected AV productions, divided per platform, is provided below:

- AppleTV+: *Ted Lasso* (comedy TV series, three seasons) and *Blitz* (drama film). Significant for the presence of bad language, diatopic varieties, and marked syntactic forms;
- Disney+: *Wedding Season* (comedy TV series, one season) and *Rye Lane* (comedy film). Significant for diatopic variation, colloquialisms, and marked syntactic forms;
- Netflix: *Sex Education* (comedy TV series, four seasons) and *The Beautiful Game* (comedy film). Significant for youngsters' jargon, taboo expressions, colloquialisms, and marked syntactic forms;
- Prime Video: *The Grand Tour* (documentary TV series, five seasons) and *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* (stand-up comedy show, in film format). Significant for vulgar and taboo language, slang, interjections, and marked syntactic forms.

As seen by the rapid description of the language used, these titles have been selected in terms of representativeness of sociolinguistic variation in British English according to the different features considered here. It is also worth to notice that they all present occurrences of marked syntax, thus demonstrating its being versatile and widely used when emulating spontaneous speech.

²⁵ PyMUSAS is a library in Python that tags a text according to semantics. It uses the UCREL Semantic Analysis System, developed by the University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language (UCREL) at Lancaster University.

3.3.3 *The making of the interview: minimising the Observer's Paradox in research with deaf participants*

The methodological approach provided in the present research comprises different levels of empirical analysis that also go beyond corpora and revolves around the community itself that is the main addressee of the research. To engage d/Deaf participants in the UK, a comprehensive sociolinguistic interview protocol was designed to investigate how they perceive and receive the linguistic quality of accessible intralingual subtitles on streaming platforms²⁶. In this case, the written interview was selected as the most suitable mode of investigation, as it combines features of the written survey – “in which researchers more or less directly elicit information on linguistic features, patterns, and interrelations” (Schilling, 2013) – with those of the oral interview, which usually takes longer and elicits spoken responses (*ibid.*). In order to preserve a degree of spontaneity, the protocol includes both sociolinguistic and personal background sections, as well as video clips that emulate spontaneous speech. Watching these clips and answering related questions can elicit more natural reactions. Written interviews, frequently administered via paper questionnaires or online platforms, allow interviewees to reflect and respond more thoughtfully, thereby mitigating the observer effect that can influence responses in oral interview settings. Within the domain of sociolinguistics, written interviews are especially advantageous when engaging with communities where written language may serve as a complementary or substitute mode for spoken communication, as is the case for d/Deaf people. Moreover, the use of written formats enables greater standardisation of the data collected, while still allowing for open-ended and qualitative responses that can be analysed in depth.

The interview project, created between March and April 2024, is entitled *Perception and Reception of SDH (Subtitles for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Viewers) on streaming services (SVoD)* and follows the structure of is comprised of five sections. The first two sections pertain to demographic and sociolinguistic parameters: here participants are asked about their family background, their work, their education, their level and type of deafness, as well as the language they use in different diastatic and diaphasic contexts. The third section investigates linguistic competence on Standard British English, BSL, and other languages or varieties. The fourth section concerns the perception of general accessible subtitling on TV and streaming services, including those that have not been selected for this research. In this part, respondents are invited

²⁶ The integral version of the interview questions can be found in the appendix of the present thesis.

to indicate the extent to which they perceive the subtitles to align with the original product, drawing on their auditory perception of the audio track, lip movements, or contextual cues. The last section addresses the reception of actual SDH on the four platforms investigated here with practical examples. Indeed, this section presents brief video excerpts, with an average duration of approximately one minute, that are significant in terms of variation. It then solicits feedback on the overall comprehension of the correspondent SDH, as well as their stylistic representation and the visual formats in which they are presented. The clips were selected from the following programmes: AppleTV+'s *Ted Lasso*, Prime Video's *The Grand Tour*, Disney+'s *Wedding Season*, and Netflix's *Sex Education*²⁷. Such series propose examples from all categories included in this study, so as to investigate them also according to deaf participants' perspective.

Starting from *Ted Lasso*, the selected clip is taken from Season 2, Episode 8 (*Man City*), from minute 36:43 to minute 37:26, and it places significant emphasis on the use of both British slang and Mancunian accent in a rather tense atmosphere. However, the SDH display a typical American English spelling, thus being in contrast with the character who is talking, despite his strong accent and his high-sounding, inappropriate behaviour:



Figure 65: Screenshot from *Ted Lasso*'s clip for the interview.

The Grand Tour also offers different examples of diatopic variation, as well as bad language. The selected clip comes from Season 1, Episode 13 (*Past v Future*), from minute 31:03 to minute 32:10, and it displays a rather pacy and uncomfortable situation. The use of the standard language is hence disinhibited in favour of accentual peculiarities. However, once again the

²⁷ A complete transcription of the dialogues from the scenes will be displayed in Chapter 6, which is dedicated to analysing the responses from the interview.

SDH seem not to display such switch. Below there is an example of how the situation looks like:



Figure 66: Screenshot from the selected clip in *The Grand Tour*.

Wedding Season mostly focuses on Scottish English and swear words. The selected clip is taken from Season 1, Episode 1, from minute 24:34 to 26:05. Here a police inspector, while questioning a suspect, gets some shocking news, thus switching to his Scottish accent. Despite the SDH keeps swear words, it does not align to accent:

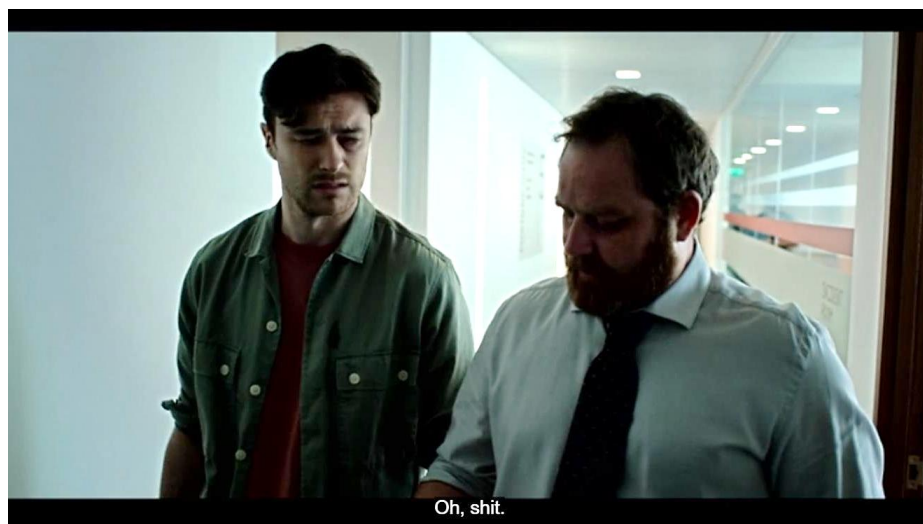


Figure 67: Screenshot from *Wedding Season*'s clip.

Sex Education uses a vast array of youngsters' jargon and gender-specific language, namely genderlect, in addition to vulgar expressions pertaining to the sexual sphere. The selected clip

is taken from Season 1, Episode 1, from minute 24:01 to minute 25:06. The SDH here seem to be adherent to speech, however some condensation strategies occur.



Figure 68: Screenshot from the Sex Education selected clip.

It is important to note that all four examples exhibit distinct syntactic forms, which clearly demonstrate that despite being the least exposed linguistic level to variation (Berruto, 2011), syntax still shows uniformity in being employed according to less standardised strategies in spontaneous speech.

The four videos are included within the list of questions through a Google Drive link, obtained from the conversion of the recorded clips using Microsoft Clipchamp software, and then pasted in the dedicated section of the Google Form. After watching the videos, respondents should answer to these questions, some of which relate to a specific clip:

- Are the subtitles comfortable to read? (for all platforms)
- Can you spot any dialect or accent from the subtitles? (for Prime Video, Disney+, and AppleTV+)
- Where is Seamus from, in your opinion? How do you know it? (for Prime Video)
- Do you think language here is very informal? Or even strong? (for Netflix)
- Can you spot any sentence reduction here? (for Netflix)
- Do subtitles show extra-linguistic elements well? For example, stumbles, interruptions... (for Disney+)
- Is the character using British English or American English? (for AppleTV+)

- How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing? (for all platforms).

The questions so composed should enhance autonomous evaluation of the SDH readability and clarity and ask for possible general improvements.

Having previously outlined the structure and content of the questions for the interview, it is necessary to clarify that it was the result of a combination of two distinct sociolinguistic methods derived from typical questionnaire settings. It partially follows the structure presented in the appendix of *Le Lingue del Piemonte* (Allasino et al., 2007), as it is particularly illustrative for the composition of written sociolinguistic investigation; Bianchi, Eugeni, and Grandioso (2020) were also referenced, as their work addresses the way in which deaf children perceive and receive both verbatim and edited subtitles and is more interview-focused. Despite the present investigation is of a structured, written type, thus not encountering the usual conditions posed by sociolinguistic Labovian axioms for speech analysis (i.e., shifts in style, attention to one's own speech, or vernacular), some methodological problems still may occur, especially regarding formality and individuality. As regards formality, Labov states that "in the main body of an interview, where information is requested and supplied, we would not expect to find the vernacular used" (1972, p. 209), thus implying some sort of attention to formality during speech. Instead, as regards the individual interview, "[it is] the only way to obtain sufficient good data on the speech of any one person" (*ibid.*), thus necessarily being planned and guided.

Although the above axioms are related to the so-called Observer's Paradox (Labov, 1972), which means "observ[ing] the way people use language when they are not being observed" (p. 61) and are hence mostly associated with rapid and anonymous interviews, similar issues may also arise in the context of structured or semi-structured written questions, where the interviewer does not attempt to avoid detection. Indeed, it can be argued that the use of excessive formality in the responses, both in terms of language and attitude, can potentially compromise the authenticity of the investigation. Additionally, due to the autonomous nature of the investigation, respondents may be inclined to maintain focus on the questions posed at the expense of spontaneity. In a similar case where the respondents participate autonomously, without further guidance from the analyst, there may be both an excessive focus on how to answer, as if some 'judgement' is expected, and a lack of spontaneous responses. This can be particularly true when respondents are asked to identify linguistically complex elements that may be poorly received and to suggest appropriate alternatives. Furthermore, the involvement

of DHH participants in this study may give rise to specific issues that are distinctive to their experience. For example, the level of criticism of certain editing strategies that are still in use in SDH for both TV and SVoD may vary according to each deaf individual, but it should nevertheless provide a more direct and uncensored way of giving responses and suggestions. This led to the conclusion that a similar strategy might be an appropriate means of investigating the linguistic quality of SDH and thus minimising the Observer's Paradox among members of Deaf communities. In any case, it is crucial to set the questions at a diaphasic level that does not prevent spontaneous and authentic answers, but which does prevent the possibility of giving answers that are only perceived as 'socially desirable'.

Apart from the paradox, another crucial factor is the language used for the interview, since it is distributed in the written form. It seems probable that the participants will be proficient in written English, although studies on the cognitive aspects of reading by a d/Deaf person, as presented in Chapter 2, suggest that there may be some challenges. Given that Deaf communities typically use sign language for communication, it is evident that a version of the interview in British Sign Language (BSL) would be highly beneficial. However, this option still represents a limit for the present work, mainly due to the lack of funds and the highly involving process of identifying a valid BSL interpreter. At the moment, to overcome this obstacle, I worked on the interview protocol mainly by adopting a syntactic style in questions that is straightforward, comprising a greater proportion of parataxis than hypotaxis, and an unmarked lexicon. This approach is designed to facilitate general comprehension of the questions, particularly for those deaf participants who still experience difficulties in reading and understanding written English. In line with this objective, I incorporated open-response sections into the sociolinguistic, perception, and reception sections. This strategy should allow respondents the necessary space to record their opinions in a style of their own choosing.

Additionally, the fact that the interview has been designed by an individual who is clearly not a member of the community – and comes from another country – may result in a certain degree of reluctance among respondents to engage with the questions. To encourage contribution, a few strategies have been adopted. The first one has already been addressed at some degree: as it pertains to SDH, the interview revolves around a subject that is typically of significant importance within the context of accessibility, and which often elicits a strong response by DHH AV users. Furthermore, I ensured anonymity by including the following statement at the outset of the interview module: "The interview is asynchronous and anonymous. No personal sensitive data will be requested". In this way, I tried to set the

condition to be as natural as possible, suggesting that there will be no form of personal evaluation. A further strategy is the use of Google Forms as a platform for the sharing of the questions. As a well-known and widely used tool, it can facilitate the creation of a secure and user-friendly virtual environment. Ultimately, after careful consideration, I opted to limit the number of participants, taking into account the extensive number of questions and the time required to provide precise and thoughtful responses. This decision allowed me to design an interview that is finely tuned for qualitative analysis, ensuring rich and in-depth data collection. Moreover, this focused approach creates some foundation for a possible future expansion of the present study into a larger-scale survey among Deaf communities in the UK. Such an expansion could be readily adapted into BSL, thereby enhancing accessibility and inclusivity for a wider range of participants.

It seems reasonable to assume that these strategies will enable circumvention of the Observer's Paradox in both its conventional manifestations as a problem of speech analysis, which can be overcome through the use of written forms, and as a potential issue that may still arise in structured surveys. Examining the sociodemographic aspects of each participant, the degree of perception of SDH and their reception from a linguistic perspective will enable the delineation of a general tendency in the experience of accessible subtitling when dealing with variation in spontaneous speech, despite being just emulated. It is also important to adopt an individual approach to the interview according to Labov's methodological postulate, as each person is an individual with their own social context and their own perception of language use in and for society. In this context, two of the sixteen axioms of sociolinguistics, as proposed by Berruto (2011), are particularly illustrative:

“11) possono avere rilevanza/valore/significato sociale fatti ed aspetti di tutti i livelli di analisi della lingua, dall'organizzazione generale del discorso (testualità) a tratti subsistemici [...]; 12) l'attività linguistica può costituire anche un atto di identità, mediante il quale il parlante si definisce/si riconosce come appartenente ad un certo gruppo e si colloca in una qualche misura in una posizione determinata all'interno di una società. Corollario di ciò è che attraverso il comportamento linguistico ogni individuo parlante fornisce mediamente informazioni sulla propria collocazione nella società (p. 54).

It can be stated that the empirical approach is an optimal method for ensuring the accurate observation of objective data, namely those pertaining to direct linguistic and social *activities*²⁸, as well as inferring subjective data, that is to say, linguistic and social *structures*²⁹, which are instead not directly observable (Berruto, 2011). A comparable investigation would thus be applicable to the context of audiovisual products, as they guarantee plausibility through the implementation of realistic linguistic choices in realistic social contexts. In this case, the research aims to be beneficial by considering how a Deaf community perceives such plausibility, given that they relate to SDH as the main mode of obtaining linguistic information.

²⁸ Italics used for emphasis here.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

LISA Corpus Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis of Non-Standard Language

The present chapter investigates in detail the language composing *LISA Corpus* from a quantitative perspective. It examines the frequency of non-standard words, already divided per tag, the distribution among the four platforms, and a discussion on the most frequent instances for each sociolinguistic category. The necessary instruments to accomplish data investigation involve the use of the corpus analysis tool LancsBox X and the related functionalities, starting with the visualisation of the key words in context (KWIC), frequency, and rank each word has. From this, a contextualisation of the most interesting sociolinguistic items is provided.

4.1 Setting the lexical analysis and checking general frequencies

The corpus under investigation consists of 796 text files, which have been divided per streaming platform into four dedicated sub-corpora³⁰. The investigation focuses on the frequency and distribution of two sets of custom annotation tags: three lexical tags, i.e., *_SWR (swear words and taboo language), *_SLG (slang, colloquialisms, and interjections), and *_DIAL (dialectal expressions and accent transpositions), and four syntactic tags, i.e., <MRK: inv> (absence of inversion in questions), <MRK: cop> (absence of copula in copular sentences), <MRK: agr> (subject-verb agreement errors), and <MRK: form> (compound verb forms missing the auxiliary).

The corpus was processed using LancsBox X, which provided automatic annotation for part-of-speech, semantic class, and syntactic dependency, while preserving the original sociolinguistic tags embedded in the data. Once automatic tagging was completed, a custom script was employed to systematically extract and count the occurrences of each lexical and syntactic tag across all files. For every file, the frequencies of each tag were recorded and summary statistics including mean, median, minimum, and maximum values were calculated.

³⁰ As signalled in Chapter 3, some of the series included in the present study are no longer in the catalogue of the streaming platform or have been included in another platform's catalogue. However, the SDH analysed here will continue to refer to the versions still listed on previous platforms.

This methodology allowed for the identification of both central tendencies and variation in tag distribution.

Although the corpus is subdivided into various sub-corpora, at first the present analysis considers the dataset as a whole in order to provide a general perspective on tag frequencies and patterns. In a second moment, the distribution of each tag per platform is discussed. Importantly, all tokens were retained in the analysis, including high-frequency function words; no stop list was applied. While this results in frequency distributions that conform to Zipf's Law³¹, the choice was made to ensure methodological transparency and to maximise the potential for unexpected findings or patterns that might otherwise remain undetected.

The first phase of the quantitative analysis focused on examining the absolute and relative frequencies of the three lexical tags of interest³². The data collected on the entire corpus (a total of ~ 4 million tokens) show a markedly uneven distribution between the three categories:

- The SLG tag is the most frequent of all, with 156,151 occurrences, with a relative frequency of almost 40,000 occurrences per million words. This extremely high value, together with 100% coverage in texts, indicates that colloquial register, idiomatic expressions, and interjections are structural elements across the corpus.
- By contrast, the SWR tag shows a much lower frequency of 25,880 occurrences (around 6,700 occurrences per million words) in 97.8% of the texts. This distribution suggests that almost all the texts in the corpus contain at least one instance of the use of strong terms.
- The DIAL tag is the least frequent, with 2,331 occurrences and a coverage range of less than 40%. Although the overall frequency is lower than the other two tags, it is relevant to note that 98.6% of the texts contain at least one dialectal variety marker.

³¹ The Zipf's Law is an empirical principle in linguistics which posits that the frequency of a word is inversely proportional to its rank in a corpus ($F = 1/R$, where F stands for frequency and R for rank). In other words, the most common words – typically function words such as articles, prepositions, and conjunctions – dominate the top ranks.

³² It is important to emphasise that the quantitative data discussed are the result of semi-supervised annotation process involving a deep learning model specifically trained for SWR, SLG, DIAL, and MRK tag recognition, the latter being analysed later in this chapter. Despite the model's high overall accuracy, there is an inevitable margin of error, particularly due to false negatives. Based on an empirical assessment, it is estimated that the effective coverage of tags may remain around 89% in the most complex or ambiguous cases, particularly for rarer or polysemous phenomena. This percentage was calculated using a sample of 20 manually corrected texts per platform. Consequently, the reported frequencies should be considered a conservative estimate, which may underestimate the true incidence of the linguistic phenomena under investigation. A similar situation was observed with the MRK tags, which presented additional challenges in terms of training the deep learning model and incorporating them into the corpus.

From a quantitative point of view, the data clearly show how the colloquial register and the use of slang represent the most distinctive feature of the corpus. These findings confirm the widespread presence of sociolinguistic features in the corpus (over 97% for all tags), reflecting authentic, varied dialogue, and contemporary subtitling practices.

From a statistical perspective, the analysis of relative frequencies shows that colloquial/slang expressions (SLG) are about 6 times more frequent than vulgar expressions (SWR) and almost 20 times more frequent than dialectal elements (DIAL). This quantitative imbalance is indicative of the challenges associated with the transcription of elements that lack standardisation, e.g., dialect and accent, which complicates the identification of uniform and recognisable transcriptions on a broader scale. Should the colloquial tag encompass a more extensive array of words and expressions belonging to the informal language, which is readily identifiable as the most prevalent in linguistic communication, vernacular expressions would be employed with less frequency, thus justifying their less incisive frequency. However, the wide distribution of the SWR tag in the corpus appears to align with the general acceptance of taboo language in audiovisual translation, including subtitles, in comparison to other languages such as Italian, which shows less tolerance in writing ‘bad language’.

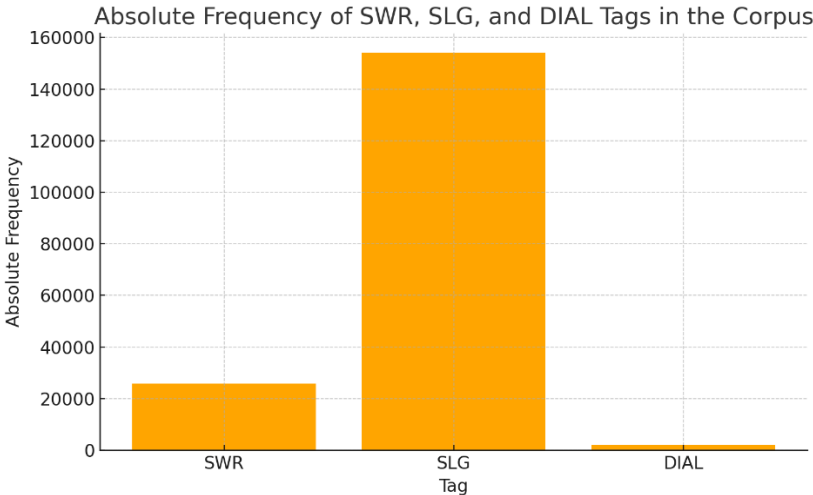


Figure 69: Graph showing the absolute frequencies of each lexical tag in LISA Corpus.

More detailed data regarding each specific tag will be illustrated in the sections below.

4.2 Analysis of the distribution of the SWR tag in *LISA Corpus*

An in-depth analysis of the SWR tag within *LISA Corpus* reveals some interesting quantitative and qualitative dynamics. Taboo expressions are widespread, with strong language present in nearly all filmic dialogues and, evidently, SDH.

File	Left	Node	Right
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	gem_NN_DT1.1 Oh_SIG_UJ299 he_VB_A3+ quick_J_N3.8+ Oh_SIG_NNP_299	God_SWR_NNP_299	come_VB_M1 on_PP_25 [Anastasia_NNP_299] What_WP_Z8 he_VBP_A3+
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	of_PP_Z3 with_IN_23 a_DT_25 major_J_A11.1+ ding_SIG_VBN_299	ding_SWR_NNP_299	Week_NN_T1.3 one_CD_N1 she_PP_Z99 gives_VBZ_A5.4+ so_PP_A5.4+
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	is_VBZ_A3+ [music_NN_K2 ceceston_NNS_K2] Ophelia_NNP_299 Ding_SIG_NNP_299	ding_SWR_NNP_299	darling_NN_E3+ s2mf [applause_NN_E3+ r3.2+] Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8 God_SWR_NNP_299
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	ding_SWR_NNP_299 darling_NN_E2+ s2mf [applause_NN_E3+ r3.2+] Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	Ophelia_NNP_299 s2mf [applause_NN_E3+ r3.2+] Thank_VBP_A5.4+ you_PP_Z8 A5.4+
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	them_PP_Z8 he_VBZ_A3+ truly_VB_A5.2+ astonishing_J_X2.6+ Ding_NNS_299	ding_SWR_NNP_299	applause_NN_E2+ r3.2+ Going_VB0_M1 in_PP_Z3 to_IN_23 this_DT_M6
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	eyebrows_NNS_B1 [PRP_Z8mf invented_VBD_X2.1 eyebrows_NNS_B1 for_IN_23	God_SWR_NNP_299	s_POS_25 take_NN_A2.2 [PRP_Z8mf started_VBD_T2+ a_DT_25
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	recognize_VB_A5.4+ hm_PP_A5.4+ [screaming_VBG_Q2.2] Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	Hey_SIG_NNP_299 guys_SIG_VBN_299 PUNCT PUNCT Makeup_NNP_B4
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	you_PP_Z8mf wing_VBP_A5.4+ it_PP_A5.4+ Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	Val_NNP_Z1mf [Eve_NNP_Z1H laughs_VBZ_E4.1+ r3.2+] PUNCT s_VBZ_25
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	have_VB_A8+ gone_VBN_M1 PUNCT PUNCT ding_SIG_VBN_299	ding_SWR_NNS_299	laughs_VBZ_E4.1+ r3.2+ And_CC_Z3 also_RB_N5+ he_PP_Z8mf s_VBZ_25
Welcome To Wrexham.C	to_IN_23 Wrexham_NNP_Z2 like_UH_E2+ what_WP_Z8 the_DT_25	fuck_SWR_NNP_299	REPORTER_NN_Q4.2 s2mf it_PP_Z8 seems_VBZ_A8 Rob_SIG_NNP_299 Ryan_NNP_Z1mf
Welcome To Wrexham.C	SINGER_RB_K2 s2mf [singing_VBG_Q4.6+] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5 a_DT_25	motherfucking_SWR_NN_299	beast_NN_L2mf SINGER_NN_K2 s2mf [singing_VBG_Q4.6+] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5
Welcome To Wrexham.C	SINGER_NN_K2 s2mf [singing_VBG_Q4.6+] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5 a_DT_25	motherfucking_SWR_NN_299	beast_NN_L2mf SINGER_NN_K2 s2mf [singing_VBG_Q4.6+] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5
Welcome To Wrexham.C	SINGER_NN_K2 s2mf [singing_VBG_Q4.6+] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5 a_DT_25	motherfucking_SWR_NN_299	beast_NN_L2mf [cheering_VBG_Q2.2] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5 a_DT_25
Welcome To Wrexham.C	beast_NN_L2mf [cheering_VBG_Q2.2] LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5 a_DT_25	motherfucking_SWR_NN_299	beast_NN_L2mf SPORTSCASTER_NN_299 By_IN_25 the_DT_25 keeper_NN_L2 s2mf
Welcome To Wrexham.C	want_VB_X7+ problems_NNS_A12 LPRP_Z8mf m_VBP_Z5 a_DT_25	motherfucking_SWR_NN_299	beast_NN_L2mf You_PP_Z8mf do_VBP_S1.1.3+ r3.2+ want_VB_X7+
Welcome To Wrexham.C	cheering_VBG_Q2.2 SINGER_RB_K2 s2mf [singing_VBG_Q4.6+] World_NNP_W1 of_IN_25	shit_SWR_NN_299	this_DT_M6 world_NN_W1 of_IN_25 shit_SWR_NNP_299 Do_VBP_S1.1.3+ r3.2+ want_VB_X7+ to_TO_25 live_VB_34
Welcome To Wrexham.C	of_IN_25 shit_SWR_NNP_299 this_DT_M6 world_NN_W1 of_IN_25	shit_SWR_NN_299	Do_VBP_S1.1.3+ r3.2+ want_VB_X7+ to_TO_25 live_VB_34
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	[PRP_Z8mf head_VBD_A5.4+ it_PP_A5.4+ Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	[PRP_Z8mf head_VBD_A5.4+ it_PP_A5.4+ so_PP_Z8 much_RB_A13.3
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	an_DT_23 eyelash_NN_B1 curler_NN_B4 successfully_RB_XB.2+ LPRP_Z8mf	drunk_SWR_VBP_299	that_IN_23 in_PP_Z8 PRP_Z8mf literally_RB_A13.2 want_VBP_X7+
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	a_DT_25 time_NN_T1 penalty_NN_Q2.1 [Val_NNP_Z1mf Ding_SIG_NNP_299	ding_SWR_NNS_299	applause_NN_E2+ r3.2+ cheering_VBG_Q2.2 For_IN_25 your_PP_Z8 final_J_N4
Welcome To Wrexham.C	forever_RB_T2+ + + in_IN_25 this_DT_M6 world_NN_W1 of_IN_25	shit_SWR_NN_299	RYAN_NNP_299 Hayden_NNP_299 head_VBZ_A5.4+ it_PP_A5.4+ in_PP_Z5
Welcome To Wrexham.C	bringing_VBG_A5.4+ hm_PP_A5.4+ in_PP_Z5 OLLIE_NNP_299 LPRP_Z8mf	fuckin_SWR_RB_299	scored_VBN_K5 on_IN_23 Tuesday_NNP_T1.3 and_CC_Z3 they_PP_Z8mf
Welcome To Wrexham.C	whole_NN_A5.1+ it_PP_Z8 VEB_A8+ just_RB_A14 been_VBN_A3+	shit_SWR_NN_299	the_DT_T1.3 whole_JI_T1.3 time_NN_T1.3 So_RB_Z5 we_PP_Z8
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	needs_VBZ_S6+ no_DT_28 introduction_NN_T2+ Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	Stacey_NNP_299 With_IN_23 just_RB_A14 under_IN_23 an_DT_25
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	more_RB_A13.3 that_DT_S1.2 way_NN_S1.2 Tick_DIAL_UJ_299 Ding_SIG_NNP_299	ding_SWR_NNS_299	Dominic_NNP_Z1mf and_CC_Z3 Val_NNP_Z1mf PRP_Z8 VEB_A8+
GlowUp.S02E08_normal	face_NN_B1 OR_IN_23 elimination_NN_A8+ Well_UH_Z4 thank_VB_S1.2.4+	God_SWR_NNP_299	[PRP_Z8mf just_RB_A14 by_VBP_X8+ and_CC_Z3 VEB_A5.4+
Longwayup.S01E04_no	much_JI_N5+ of_IN_23 it_PP_Z8 Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	Look_VB_A8 at_IN_A1.1.1 it_PP_A1.1.1 at_DT_A13.2 Ewan_NNP_Z1mf
Longwayup.S01E04_no	face_NN_B1 lights_VBZ_W2 up_PP_Z5 Oh_SIG_UJ_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	it_PP_Z8 was_VBD_A3+ so_PP_Z8 nice_JI_Q4.2+ to_TO_25
The grand tour.S02E04	ROARS_NNS_T1.3 THRES_NNP_M3 SCREECHING_VBG_X2.2+ Oh_SIG_NNP_299 my_PP_Z8	God_SWR_NNP_299	This_DT_A13.3 is_VBZ_A3+ breath_NN_B1 taking_NN_A8+ The_DT_25

Figure 70: First display of `_SWR` occurrences in the KWIC screen.

The analysis started by typing “*`_SWR`”³³ into the query bar of LancsBox X’s KIWC section, as illustrated in Figure 67. In this way, the occurrences of the tag and its associated token were displayed instantaneously on a single screen.

Despite the overall distribution of the tag throughout the corpus, the distribution of occurrences is by no means homogeneous throughout the single texts. For instance, the subtitles for the Amazon Prime Video film *The Honeymoon* (2022) documents up to 227 instances of SWR, while other texts exhibit a significantly lower occurrence of taboo expressions, with as few as one documented instance. The mean value is approximately 33.2 occurrences per file; however, the median value (26) indicates that half of the texts have SWR below this threshold.

This internal variability reinforces the hypothesis that the presence of vulgarity is contingent not only on the genre and nature of the product – for example, action films and comedies – but also on the adaptation and localisation strategies implemented by the subtitlers. For instance, the film previously mentioned is a romantic comedy with elements of adventure, in which one

³³ The addition of an asterisk before the tag indicates any string of characters, e.g., word, occurring before the tag. In this way, the complete list of tokens with the tag attached to them is displayed in the KWIC section in decreasing order of frequency.

of the primary characters, Bav – portrayed by British actor and comedian Asim Chaudhry – performs a distinct idiolect characterised by the use of strong language. Instead, in a TV show such as *The Grand Tour* – despite having 1,465 occurrences of the tag SWR – instances of certain swear words in the original dialogue are reported as [BEEP], whether or not they are actually beeped. The most relevant example is the lemma ‘fuck’, which never recurs in the show’s SDH, while other swearing does:

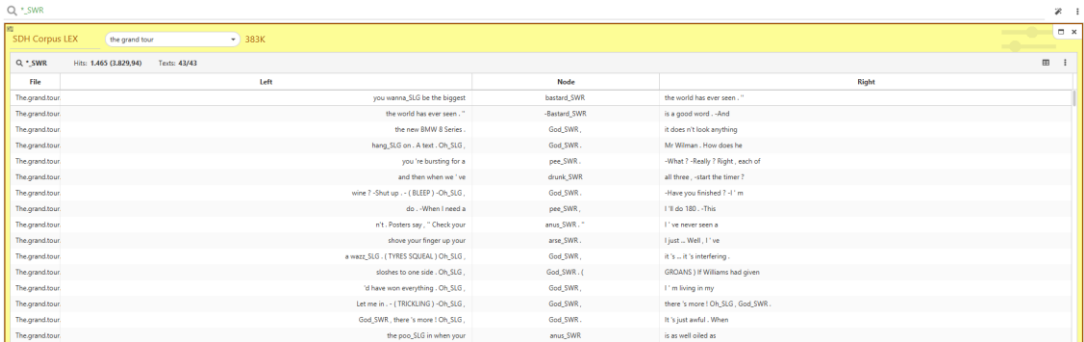


Figure 71: Portion of SWR occurrences in The Grand Tour.

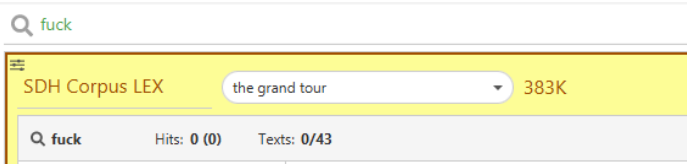


Figure 72: Results of the query for ‘fuck’ in The Grand Tour.

This heterogeneous distribution is represented below:

File	SWR Occurrences
<i>The Honeymoon</i> (romantic comedy, 2022, Prime Video)	227
<i>Get Duked!</i> (black comedy, 2019, Prime Video)	193
<i>Welcome to Wrexham</i> – S03E03 (documentary TV series, 2022-, Disney+)	171
<i>Kingsman The Golden Circle</i> (spy action comedy, 2017, Disney+)	164
<i>Pistol</i> – S01E05 (musical drama TV miniseries, 2022, Disney+)	160

Table 5: The five SDH texts with the most SWR occurrences.

Instead, the five files with the fewest occurrences are:

File	SWR Occurrences
<i>The Lodge</i> – S02E06 (musical drama TV series, 2016, Disney+)	1
<i>Becoming You</i> – S01E02 (documentary TV series, 2020, AppleTV+)	1
<i>The Lodge</i> – S02E13 (musical drama TV series, 2016, Disney+)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S02E05 (teen thriller TV series, 2018, Netflix)	1
<i>Zero Chill</i> – S01E09 (teen drama TV series, 2021, Netflix)	1

Table 6: Five SDH texts with the least SWR occurrences.

It is noteworthy, though unsurprising, that products with few swear words are targeted at teenagers, for whom such language is limited.

A closer reading of the words marked as SWR reveals that a small group of terms dominate the lexical landscape, with a clear predominance of a few recurring items. The following table illustrates the ten most frequent words, distinguishing between upper- and lower-case:

Word	Occurrences
God	3,859
fucking	3,429
shit	1,886
fuck	1,877
Fuck	1,167
hell	1,172
kill	879
sex	649
Shit	564
Fucking	511

Table 7: The ten most frequent swear words in LISA Corpus.

The lexical analysis can be further deepened with an extended table showing other SWR terms frequent in the corpus:

Word	Freq.	Word	Freq.	Word	Freq.	Word	Freq.
damn	488	bastard	308	crap	254	prick	106
ass	212	bitch	211	bloody	172		
Jesus	153	balls	122	cock	117		

Table 8: Other SWR-tagged words in the corpus, in order of frequency.

From the perspectives of lexical productivity and communicative centrality, the lemma ‘fuck’ is of particular interest. When all inflected and capitalised forms are considered, the total number of occurrences is 6,984. This finding indicates that a significant proportion of the words marked as SWR (exactly 26.3%) are derived from the lexeme ‘fuck’ thereby underscoring its pivotal function in the contemporary English vernacular lexicon within the AV domain. This prominence is not an accident but is indicative of the great pragmatic versatility of the lemma, which is used both as a direct insult and as an expressive noun, verb, adjective, or interjection.

Distribution of the lemma "fuck" within all SWR occurrences

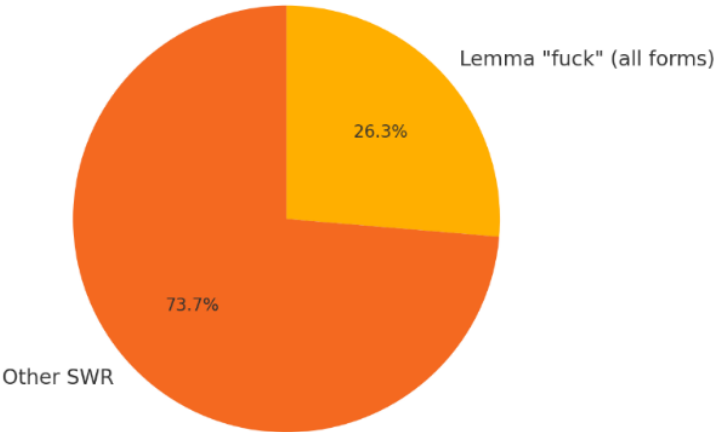


Figure 73: Graph on the general distribution of the lemma ‘fuck’.

The following table provides a statistical overview of the salient points:

Statistics	Values
Total occurrences of SWR	25,880
Files having at least one SWR	780 / 796
Maximum number of SWR in one file	227 (<i>The Honeymoon</i> , film)
Minimum number of SWR in one file	1 (<i>The Lodge</i> – S02E06, TV series)
Mean value of SWR per file having the tag	33.2
Median value of SWR per file	26
Occurrences of lemma ‘fuck’	6,984
% of total SWR (lemma ‘fuck’)	26.3%
Most frequent SWR word	God (3,859)

Table 9: General statistics on SWR frequencies.

4.2.1 Analysis of SWR collocates and semantic relations

As regards the analysis per collocates, the use of swear words frequently occurs in conjunction with a range of terms. They encompass both neutral and emotionally or thematically charged vocabulary. The most frequent collocates include common words (e.g., ‘pick’, ‘after’, ‘good’, ‘sure’), numerals, pronouns, as well as other informal and dialectal elements. Some collocates reveal recurring grammatical patterns (e.g., personal pronouns, modal verbs, intensifiers) emphasising the emphatic, expressive, and often interactional function of swear words also in SDH. Moreover, the collocates containing SWR, i.e., other swear words that appear in the context of a SWR, reveals accumulation phenomena of taboo terms (e.g., the sequence ‘fuck shit’, ‘bloody hell’, ‘fucking bastard’). These strategies serve to reinforce the emotional tone or expressive intensity and are well transmitted into the written mode.

Analysing the top list of collocates, two typical combinations emerge:

- Compound insults and intensifiers: sequences adding up other swear words or taboo expressions are rather frequent (‘stupid bitch’, ‘fucking idiot’, ‘fat ass’), confirming the tendency to reinforce the insult by accumulation;

The graph indicates that the lemma ‘shit’, with its 2,450 total occurrences (around 632.7 per million) and the number of texts in which it is present (538/796), is indeed thirty times more frequent than ‘shite’, whose occurrences are 21.0 per million and is found in 55 texts out of 796. In terms of richness, ‘shit’ has 3,281 total collocates, 447 of which having a relevant threshold, while ‘shite’ has only 329 total collocates, with only four of them having a relevant threshold. Among those relevant collocations, ‘shit’ occurs with itself perhaps because of a repetition of the word during the same conversation – for instance, as a Q&A situation (logDice³⁴ 12.0³⁵).

Other collocates can be classified as:

- Intensification: ‘holy’ (9.0), ‘piece’ (9.0);
- Swearing: ‘fuck’ (9.4), ‘fucking’ (9.3), ‘hell’ (7.7), ‘damn’ (7.3);
- Discourse markers and interjections: ‘oh’ (10.1), ‘ah’ (8.6), ‘hey’ (8.1); ‘sorry’ (8.3).

As regards ‘shite’, the collocations are rather ambiguous. Apart from the repetition as in the case of ‘shit’, the collocates are ‘nining’ (11.2), ‘armor’ (11.1), and ‘talk’ (6.7), with the latter being the only identifiable pattern of conversation. The two odds ones out, i.e., ‘nining’ and ‘armor’, both occur in the series *Ted Lasso*, more specifically in Season 3, Episodes 3 and 5:

[...] It’s what? / [stammers] / A green matchbook. / How lovely. / Sorry, who cares about a green matchbook? / [shushes, stammers] / Now I can hear something. / *Shite!*³⁶ / Oh, for God’s sake. / [stammering] / No, just one at a time, please. / I -- *Shite* in wh-- / *Shite* in nin-- / Sh-- / Oh... [stammering] / ... yeah, *shite in nining armor*. / “A *shite in nining armor*”? / -[sighs] Does that mean something to you? -Yes, it does mean something to me. / It means you’re even more batshit crazy than I-- / Shut up, I can hear something else. (*Ted Lasso*, S03E03).

[...] So I grabbed that rapsCALLION by the collar, and I said, / “Hey, we didn't ask you to be famous.” / And took a quick ussie of the three of us and emailed it to her-- her dad’s nurse. / Made his day. My *shite in nining armor*. / What? / [chuckles] / I just-- / What did you say? / -

³⁴ The logDice measure is a statistic method used for the identification of co-occurrences, thus identifying collocations and expressing their strength.

³⁵ From now on, the number included in next round brackets in this section signals the logDice related to the collocate, without mentioning it directly.

³⁶ My italics.

You jumbled your words there a bit. - [stammers, chuckles] / What did you-- / You just said, "shite in nining armor"? / Yeah. I-- I meant to say "knight in shining armor." I just-- / [stammers] One of me brain farts. / [laughs]. (*Ted Lasso*, S03E05).

As evidenced by the excerpts, the collocates are associated with humorous scenes in which the phrase "knight in shining armour" has undergone a phenomenon of spoonerism³⁷ and is not connected to a specific register or diatopic variation. However, due to the specificity of the scene, the mistake is retained in SDH, thus contributing to the visual recognition of such a form that, indeed, implied the acknowledgement of this specific form in everyday conversations and thus generated humour.

Looking at statistical information, the highest logDice and Mutual Information (MI)³⁸ are often found in collocations between less frequent swear words or very specific combinations (e.g., 'pimp' occurring next to other taboo words, or infrequent complex insults). This condition indicates that, although less common, certain combinations are strongly characteristic of informal, low register language. The context surrounding the word 'pimp' is displayed in the screenshot below:

▼	Node	
told me there was a	pimp_SWR	in East London who sold
kids , Lizzie , eh_SLG ? Hmm_SLG ? This	pimp_SWR	was blackmailing a senior member
very wealthy man . - Now this	pimp_SWR	is lying in a ditch_SLG ,
the same way about this	pimp_SWR	as we did . He was
I call it ``	Pimp_SWR	on Fire . " - You look great ,
are P - I - M - P !	PIMP_SWR ? [IN HIGH VOICE] : Pimp_SWR ! Pimp_SWR ! [
P ! PIMP_SWR ? [IN HIGH VOICE] :	Pimp_SWR !	Pimp_SWR ! [IN AFRICAN ACCENT] : I
PIMP_SWR ? [IN HIGH VOICE] : Pimp_SWR !	Pimp_SWR ! [IN AFRICAN ACCENT] : I will
Ha_SLG ! You are like a	pimp_SWR .	And not the cool Snoop
should I call him your	pimp_SWR , -	literally just blurted out . - Yeah_SLG ,
was sitting on Gary the	Pimp_SWR	's couch at nine o'clock
a prostitute_SWR . - No . - Like a	pimp_SWR . -	No , no , she 's like
who we call ``	Pimp_SWR " ,	when a teach came in

Figure 75: Occurrences of 'pimp' classified as SWR.

³⁷ A 'spoonerism' is a linguistic lapsus consisting in switching the position of syllables or phonemes – usually the first ones – of two or more words occurring sequentially. Since the human brain pre-processes words before pronouncing them, in this case it 'anticipates' those phones expected to arrive later, thus creating a mix with the ones occurring at the beginning.

³⁸ Mutual Information score (MI) "expresses the extent to which words co-occur compared to the number of times they appear separately" (SketchEngine Glossary, n.d.).

Conversely, functional or very common words may have high frequencies but fewer exclusive associations (lower logDice and MI) because they appear in other many different contexts (e.g., ‘[...] a fuck’, ‘fuck you’). This aspect reflects the behaviour of what identified by the Zipf’s Law mentioned above in relation to data dispersion.

Regarding pragmatic and semantic aspects, the combinations observed can perform various functions, some of which have been briefly discussed above. The use of swear words and intensifiers in combination (e.g., ‘fucking hell’ or ‘bloody hell’) serves to reinforce the emotional reaction (anger, surprise, disgust), thereby functioning as a release of tension in dialogues and rendering speech more realistic. Instead, direct insult and verbal aggression are rendered through juxtapositions such as ‘fucking idiot’, ‘bastard bitch’, or ‘shithead’, which are typical of confrontations, fights, or high-tension scenes.

In addition, the use of self-deprecation and self-mockery is evident in certain sequences, such as in sentences or phrases like ‘I’m such a dumbass’. Also, taboo and religion are involved, since expressions like ‘God’, ‘Jesus’, ‘hell’, and other emotive terms (e.g., ‘Oh my God’ or the already cited ‘bloody hell’) falls into the religious semantic sphere and serves to stress astonishment, anger, exasperation, often in a non-literal but rather emphatic manner.

The discussion on semantics provides further insight into how swearing is used in relation to meaning. The table below shows the association usually occurring between the SWR tag and the LancsBox X semantic tags associated to the correspondent word³⁹:

#	Semantic Tag	Occurrences	%	USAS macro-domain
1	E3	1,220	26%	Violence/aggression
2	X2.2	950	20%	Discourse markers
3	S2	785	17%	People: male
4	G2	530	11%	Entertainment, sports
5	E1	400	9%	General emotion
6	A1.1.2	210	4%	Size: small/large
7	L2	170	3%	Living creatures
8	S4	150	3%	People: family
9	M1	130	3%	Movement/action

³⁹ The semantic tags have been obtained through the PyMUSAS semantic tagger, as already specified in Chapter 3. The complete list of semantic tags and the associated meaning will be displayed in the appendix.

10	B2-	90	2%	Physical state
----	-----	----	----	----------------

Table 10: Semantic tags mostly associated to SWR.

SWR is most often associated with specific semantic domains, which reveal several key aspects of their function in SDH:

- Expression and emotional outlet: the predominance of the E3 domain reflects the role of swearing as a vehicle for strong emotions (anger, frustration, surprise). In SDH, the translation of these forms serves to reproduce the emotional charge of the original dialogue, maintaining the communicative impact even in the written mode. Examples from the corpus are: “I don’t give a fuck about it”; “You little shit!”; “This is fucking crazy”.
- Social interaction and identity construction: associations with S2/S4 (male acquaintances, family) show how swearing is often a means of constructing and negotiating power relations, intimacy, or distance between characters. Insults directed at specific individuals reinforce group dynamics, family roles, or social positioning within the narrative. The fact that the people being addressed with bad epithets are essentially male is rather remarkable. Examples from the corpus are: “You stupid bastard!”, “That prick lied to me”; “He’s a real dick”.
- Discursive pragmatics: the high frequency of X2.2 (discourse markers) confirms that many swear words also function as discursive markers: ‘fuck’, ‘shit’, or ‘damn’ can be used as interludes, exclamations, or to mark changes in tone within the conversation. This use stresses the oral and realistic character of SDH. Examples from the corpus are: “Well, fuck, what now?”; “Oh shit, here we go again”; “Ah, damn, missed it”.

It is evident that these perspectives provide further justification for the behaviours of the collocates previously delineated.

The distribution and combination of swear words, as well as their semantic spheres of use confirm that SWRs are deeply embedded in spontaneous speech sequences, between pronoun, verb and object, or as isolated interjections (‘Fuck!’, ‘Shit!’). All the sequences described before contributing to lower the register and increase the possibility to find them in combination with other non-standard expressions during speech. This justifies the inclusion of swear words in the analysis of non-standard English in SDH. It can be thus stated that SDH are effective in marking

emotional charge, creating effects of comedy, establishing communicative realism, and accomplishing derogatory purposes, without necessarily investigate the degree of maintenance of bad language in comparison to original dialogues.

4.2.2 *Distribution of SWR per streaming platform*

The analysis of total occurrences per streaming service shows that Netflix is the platform with the highest amount of SWR in SDH (a total of 9,257), followed by AppleTV+ (5,966), Disney+ (5,523), and Prime Video (5,134), which have similar values. The mean value of the occurrences of SWR per each text is high on all platforms, with a peak of 36.7 on Netflix, followed by Prime Video, Disney+, and AppleTV+. The density and variety of taboo terms confirm the trend towards realistic dialogue and informal registers, even in accessible subtitles. The table below reports precise mean values per each platform, together with the effective number of texts containing the tag, as well as the most frequent node considered as token and therefore not lemmatised.

Platform	SWR Occurrences	Number of Texts (SDH)	Mean SWR/text	Node = most frequent SWR token (occurrences)
AppleTV+	5,966	218	27.4	God (1.026)
Disney+	5,523	159	34.7	fucking (1.015)
Netflix	9,257	258	35.9	fucking (1.277)
Prime Video	5,134	143	35.9	God (975)

Table 11: *Distribution of SWR per platform.*

The data presented in the above table reveal two tendencies. On AppleTV+ and Prime Video, the most frequent SWR token is ‘God’, reflecting a trend towards the use of religious exclamations as strong and socially accepted interjections, typical of British speech, often with an emphatic or surprise function. Conversely, on Netflix and Disney+, the token ‘fucking’ represents the most frequently used form of profanity. This figure suggests a greater presence of taboo and direct language, not only as an insult but also as a ‘filler’, in line with products aimed at a more adult audience or characterised by very realistic dialogue – which indeed

represents a criterion during the selection phase of the corpus. It is noteworthy that the presence of taboo expressions even on platforms conventionally regarded as ‘family friendly’ (e.g., Disney+) underscores an emphasis on the reproduction of authentic speech and the diversification of audiovisual genres, as well as a rather verbatim option in SDH composition.

The following table displays the ten most prevalent SWR types and their corresponding rankings on each streaming platform:

Lemma	AppleTV+	Disney+	Netflix	Prime Video
fuck	1,711	2,066	2,881	840
god	1,070	691	1,209	1,074
shit	669	599	902	493
hell	266	252	321	420
kill	229	150	235	338
sex	81	134	463	89
stupid	115	120	161	160
dick	254	30	120	65
bastard	42	57	202	71
piss	51	84	84	37

Table 12: Ten most prevalent SWR types per platform.

In comparison with the most prevalent SWR token, it is the lemma ‘fuck’ that occupies the highest ranks of occurrence of SWR types across three of the four streaming platforms, with Prime Video being the sole exception. Religious exclamations such as ‘God’ and ‘hell’ remain pervasive, particularly on streaming platforms such as Netflix and Prime Video. The use of vocabulary pertaining to sexuality (e.g., ‘fuck’, ‘dick’, ‘sex’), violence (e.g., ‘kill’, ‘bastard’), mild insults (e.g., ‘stupid’, ‘piss’) and other strong expressions serves to confirm the variety and richness of the taboo lexicon. The graph below provides a visual representation of the results previously discussed.

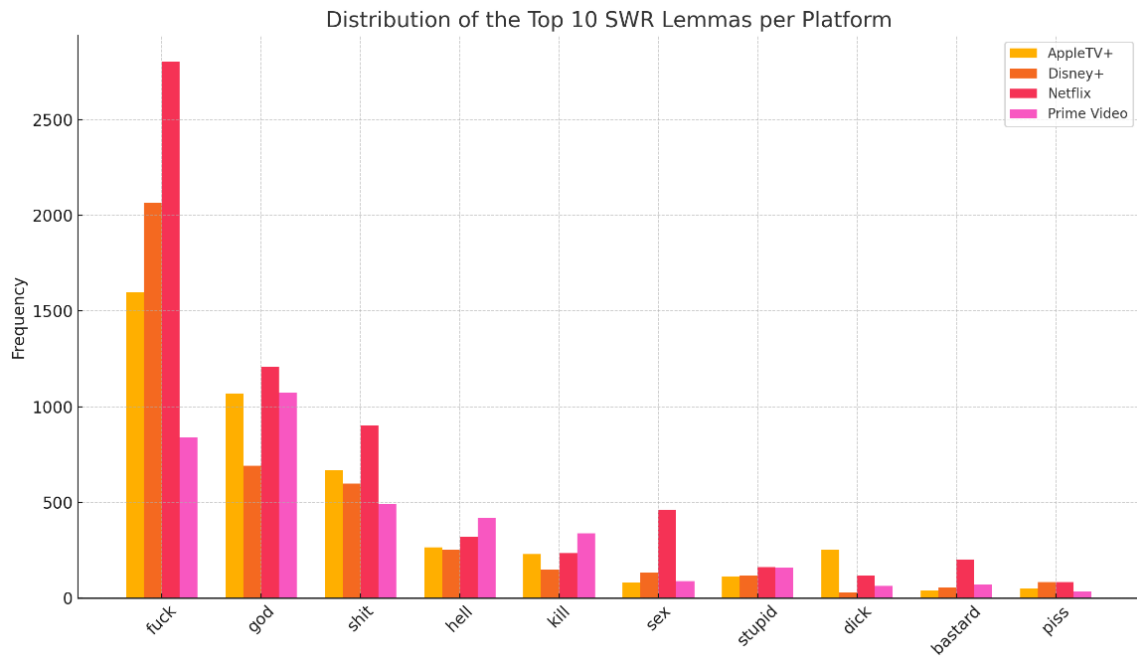


Figure 76: Graph on the distribution of the most frequent SWR types (lemmas) per streaming platform.

4.3 Analysis of the distribution of the SLG tag in LISA Corpus

As with the previous tags, a KWIC query was performed:

File	Left	Node	Right
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	jealous of the new boyfriend ..	ya_SLG -	dee_SLG - ya_SLG - dee_SLG - yada . Anyway .
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	of the new boyfriend .. ya_SLG -	dee_SLG -	ya_SLG - dee_SLG - yada . Anyway . I
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	the new boyfriend .. ya_SLG - dee_SLG -	ya_SLG -	dee_SLG - yada . Anyway . I think
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	new boyfriend .. ya_SLG - dee_SLG - ya_SLG -	dee_SLG -	yada . Anyway . I think we
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	I am going to go	hi_SLG	the el bano and them
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	with him ? - I think so ,	yeah_SLG .	Me and Anthony , too . - Yay_SLG I -
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	yeah_SLG . Me and Anthony , too . -	Yay_SLG I -	Yay_SLG I THEY LAUGH FREELY : Yay_SLG I
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	Me and Anthony , too . - Yay_SLG I -	Yay_SLG I	THEY LAUGH FREELY : Yay_SLG I Jesus ,
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	Yay_SLG I - Yay_SLG I THEY LAUGH FREELY :	Yay_SLG I	Jesus , there you are ! Listen .
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	's not ... I KNEW something	freaky_SLG	was going on . I KNEW
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	not ! She 's not even ..	oh_SLG .	dear ! ? I was sailing
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	River Jordan - / DOOR SLAMS	G'day_SLG ?	FOOTSTEPS G'day_SLG ? Why do you
Crashing.uk.S01E05.nv	/ DOOR SLAMS G'day_SLG ? FOOTSTEPS	G'day_SLG ?	Why do you think !
The.a.word.S01E06.no	We both know that 's	bollocks_SLG -	you said it was . Yeah_SLG .
The.a.word.S01E06.no	bollocks_SLG - you said it was .	Yeah_SLG .	it was , but ... there 's
The.a.word.S01E06.no	done nothing wrong now . Joe	ran_SLG	off . He would n't hurt
The.a.word.S01E06.no	He would n't hurt a	fly_SLG I	You KNOW that , do you ?
The.a.word.S01E06.no	Trust your feelings enough to	bet_SLG	Joe 's life on 'em_SLG ?
The.a.word.S01E06.no	bet_SLG Joe 's life on '	em_SLG ?	Maurice ? Maurice , you ca n't
The.a.word.S01E06.no	back of my hand . You	lot_SLG	can all go whistling into
The.a.word.S01E06.no	n't really think that . Maurice !	Oh_SLG .	does n't she ? Well , I
The.a.word.S01E06.no	hear anything , anything at all .	Yeah_SLG .	of course , I will , course .
The.a.word.S01E06.no	's on the spectrum . Good .	yeah_SLG .	that 's great . Right , come
The.a.word.S01E06.no	great . Right , come on , then .	Hang_SLG	on , hang_SLG on . It 's
The.a.word.S01E06.no	come on , then . Hang_SLG on ,	hang_SLG	on . It 's just boys
The.a.word.S01E06.no	internet , always on the internet .	Yeah_SLG .	exactly . Exactly , just like what
The.a.word.S01E06.no	like what Luke and his	mate_SLG	are writing about you . That
The.a.word.S01E06.no	Dad , I 'm going to	kick_SLG	his arse_SWR from here to
The.a.word.S01E06.no	have we known each other ,	pal_SLG ?	I told him to stay

Figure 77: Results of the query "'*_SLG'" in the corpus.

At first glance, the SLG category stands out as one of the richest and most complex in the corpus because it covers a broad range of phenomena, including slang expressions, jargon, colloquialisms, and interjections. However, grouping all these items under the same tag

introduces a degree of ambiguity. For example, very different features – such as common informal discourse markers (‘yeah’, ‘okay’), simple interjections (‘uh’, ‘um’, ‘ah’, ‘hey’), and genuine slang or jargon words (‘gonna’, ‘wanna’, ‘mate’, ‘stuff’, ‘bae’) – are all coded as SLG.

This methodological choice aims to capture informal language use broadly, reflecting both diaphasic variation (style/register) and diastratic variation (social group), partially overlapping with the phenomena already identified through swear words.

To provide a clearer picture, the analysis is therefore conducted on two levels:

- SLG ‘pragmatic/wide’: all occurrences, including discursive signals and interjections.
- SLG ‘content word/real slang’: only actual colloquial/jargon/slang vocabulary, excluding discursive signals and interjections.

Considering such specificities, the analysis of ‘wide’ SLG occurrences is first provided. A related table on general statistics is shown below:

Statistics	Values
Total occurrences of SLG	156,151
Files having at least one SLG	796 / 796
Maximum number of SLG in a file	1,156 (<i>Yesterday</i> , film)
Minimum number of SLG in a file	29 (<i>The Essex Serpent</i> – S01E06, TV series)
Mean value SLG per file having the tag	197.4
Median value SLG per file	179

Table 13: General statistics on SLG frequencies.

Analysis of the distribution reveals that all texts in the corpus contain at least one SLG occurrence, indicating a widespread presence of colloquial and oral language. However, the distribution is not perfectly homogeneous. In fact, the SDH of the musical comedy film *Yesterday* exhibits the maximum absolute value of 1,156 SLG tags, while the SDH of Season 1, Episode 6 of the series *The Essex Serpent* displays a significantly lower value of 29. The mean value is approximately 200 SLG tags per file. However, the median value of 179 indicates that half of the texts contains fewer than 180 SLGs and the other half contains more. This

suggests that some AV products have subtitles that are particularly rich in SLG (outliers)⁴⁰, while others are more restrained.

Looking at the words in more detail, a table of the ten most frequent SLG words is provided:

Lemma	Occurrences
yeah	21,333
oh	17,989
okay	8,183
gonna	7,745
uh	4,860
hey	4,497
um	3,412
lot	2,563
wanna	2,486
ah	1,828

Table 14: Most frequent SLG lemmas in general.

The top 10 results demonstrate that the majority of SLG occurrences are discursive signals, conversational feedback markers, and exclamations typical of spontaneous speech. A large number of occurrences for the exclamation ‘yeah’ is also notable. These elements are pivotal in facilitating interaction, as they serve to introduce the discourse (“Hey, can you hear me?”), express assent (“Okay, I’m gonna show you...”, “Yeah, that’s right”), doubt (“Um, let me think...”), surprise (“Ah! I’m taller than you!”), empathy (“Oh, sorry...”), or simply fill pauses during speech. The high frequency of occurrences indicates both the desire and necessity of SDH to provide not only the literal information but also the atmosphere and circumstances of authentic speech.

⁴⁰ In statistics, an outlier is an irregular, distant, sometimes unexpected value in a set of data. In this case, a restricted set of files contains a much higher concentration of SLGs compared to the majority of files.

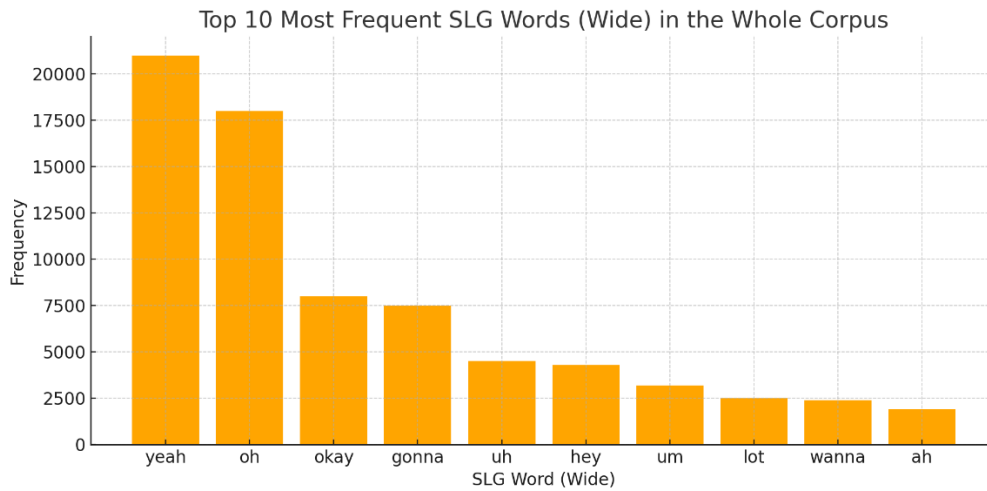


Figure 78: Graph on the frequency of all the SLG tag throughout the corpus.

The five SDH containing the majority of SLG tag, including interjections and colloquial discourse markers is provided in the table below:

File	SLG Occurrences
<i>Yesterday</i> (musical romantic comedy, 2019, Prime Video)	1,156
<i>The Beatles: Get Back</i> – S01E02 (documentary TV miniseries, 2021, Disney+)	1,098
<i>The Beatles: Get Back</i> – S01E03 (documentary TV miniseries, 2021, Disney+)	932
<i>Rye Lane</i> (romantic comedy, 2023, Disney+)	909
<i>The Beatles: Get Back</i> – S01E01 (documentary TV miniseries, 2021, Disney+)	768

Table 15: Top five SDH files with the most SLG occurrences in general.

To be comprehensive, below there is a list of five files in which the SLG tag is less frequently used:

File	SLG Occurrences
<i>The Essex Serpent</i> – S01E06 (gothic romance period drama TV miniseries, AppleTV+)	29
<i>Baptiste</i> – S02E03 (mystery drama TV series Disney+)	36

<i>The Essex Serpent</i> – S01E05 (gothic romance period drama TV miniseries, AppleTV+)	38
<i>Servant</i> – S04E06 (psychological horror TV series, AppleTV+)	41
<i>The A List</i> – S01E13 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	44

Table 16: The five SDH files with the least occurrences of SLG in general.

These titles, characterised by a rather ‘controlled’ dialogue, include episodes of mystery or drama series such as *The Essex Serpent*, *Baptiste*, and *Servant*. The narrative atmosphere in these series is often more tense, reflective, or ‘literary’. For example, in *The Essex Serpent* episodes, the historical nature of the series, which features more literary dialogues, appears to leave less room for those linguistic features that are typical of non-standard linguistic spontaneity. Furthermore, *Servant* is a dramatic horror TV series which, by its very nature, is not likely to be rich in slang, but rather in taboo language and other informal elements. Interestingly, even in apparently colloquial contexts involving teenagers (e.g., *The A List*), the choice of register may privilege less marked vocabulary in dialogues. In this case, the minimal presence of SLG indicates that the internal heterogeneity of the corpus is strongly influenced by variables such as genre, historical or social setting, and the translation/adaptation strategies employed in each production.

Considering the content-word ‘real’ SLG instances, the table below shows the related general statistics:

Statistics	Value
Total occurrences of SLG (content words)	42,093
Files having at least one SLG (content)	796 / 796
Maximum number of SLG (content) in a file	526 (<i>Yesterday</i> , film)
Minimum number of SLG (content) in a file	4 (<i>Crashing (UK)</i> – S01E02, TV series)
Mean value of SLG per file (content) having the tag	53.4
Median value of SLG per file (content)	46

Table 17: General statistics on content-words only SLG frequencies.

The recalibration of the metrics on ‘real’ colloquial and slang words alone, excluding interjections and discourse markers, portrays a different picture compared to the overall analysis of the tag. The total number of SLG occurrences exhibits a substantial decrease (from over 156,000 to approximately 42,000) and the mean value per file is lowered to around 53 occurrences. Moreover, most of the SDH demonstrate a stable yet non-dominant presence of authentic SLG, with a median of just 46 occurrences per file. These data suggest a distribution that is less uniform and more associated with specific communicative contexts. Even the maximum number of SLG in a single file undergoes a significant reduction (from 1,154 to 526, about a half less, both in the film *Yesterday*), as well as the minimum number (from 29 to only 4, in two different series). This phenomenon is indicative of the authentic distribution of slang and colloquialisms, which, in contrast to markers of conversational interaction, are significantly less pervasive. Below there is the list of files having the highest number of content-word SLG tag:

File	SLG Occurrences
<i>Yesterday</i> (musical romantic comedy, 2019, Prime Video)	526
<i>Rye Lane</i> (romantic comedy, 2023, Disney+)	443
<i>The Beatles: Get Back</i> – S01E02 (documentary TV miniseries, 2021, Disney+)	442
<i>The Beatles: Get Back</i> – S01E03 (documentary TV miniseries, 2021, Disney+)	354
<i>Rocks</i> (coming-of-age drama film, 2019, Netflix)	321

Table 18: Top five files with the most content-word SLG tag.

Four of the five files also appear in the previous list on general SLG tag, in most cases occupying the same rank. These numbers are contingent on a few factors. For instance, in the case of *Yesterday*, the genre of the product is relevant, since it is a musical comedy and, therefore, may provide lyrics opting for more creative or idiosyncratic terms. The same may happen for the miniseries *The Beatles: Get Back*. Moreover, simply having very dense dialogues with many interactants, a lively style of speech showing many interjections, and presenting young characters or contemporary settings can be a valid motivation (*Rye Lane* and *Rocks*). Other factors may include the tight rhythm of the dialogues or a particular adaptation

choice in subtitles aimed at restoring the naturalness and orality of the spoken word. In any case, youth language and colloquialisms permeate all these files indeed, thus justifying such figures and ranking in SLG list with and without interjections.

The list of five files for which the SLG tag is used less frequently according to content words is presented to justify the previous assumptions on linguistic style, register, and genre:

File	SLG (content)
<i>Crashing (UK)</i> – S01E02 (comedy TV series, Netflix)	4
<i>The Essex Serpent</i> – S01E06 (gothic romance period drama TV miniseries, AppleTV+)	8
<i>Baptiste</i> – S02E03 (mystery drama TV series Disney+)	9
<i>Fleabag</i> – S01E06 (comedy TV series, Prime Video)	10
<i>The A List</i> – S01E13 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	10

Table 19: The five SDH files with the least occurrences of content-word SLG tag.

When the analysis is restricted to content words only – excluding interjections and discursive signals – the scarcity of SLG features becomes even more evident in some files, with very low values as shown in the table. Such a reduction in informal lexicon is likely to be an authorial choice since the original scripts, perhaps influenced by the type of scenes depicted and/or genres involved. For instance, the crime drama *Baptiste* employs a linguistic style that does not involve slang and prominent colloquialisms.

Considering also the other files, these SDH may represent concluding episodes, significant narrative pivots or productions that, despite being set in an informal context, maintain a predominantly neutral register. For instance, the TV programmes *Crashing (UK)* and *Fleabag* may display a scarcity of colloquial linguistic features, perhaps linked to the choice for more profanity rather than slang at least in the selected episode, or even to specific editing choices of the SDH. The borderline cases under consideration provide evidence of the internal heterogeneity of the corpus and the importance of taking genres, communicative contexts, and possible adaptation strategies into account when interpreting quantitative data.

Turning to concrete words, by filtering out interjections and discourse markers, the following ranking of SLG words is obtained:

Lemma⁴¹	Occurrence
gonna	7,945
guys	2,739
lot	2,579
wanna	2,486
cause	1,832
mate	1,413
sort	1,383
gotta	1,351
stuff	1,217
bloody	945

Table 20: Top ten SLG content words.

Apart from ‘gonna’ and ‘wanna’, which also occurred in the previous list, other contracted forms show up (‘cause’, ‘gotta’) as well as still colloquial but generic words as ‘stuff’ and ‘sort’. An interesting instance is represented by the lemma ‘lot’, which occurs more than 2,000 times in the corpus. It is an ambiguous term, as it can mean either ‘many’ or ‘a group of people’, with the latter being identifiable as actual British slang. A more refined search on LanksBox X – involving typing “you lot_SLG” into the query bar – allowed the filtering of the actual occurrences of the term as a typical British slang form, which commonly appears alongside ‘you’ as a common collocation. Consequently, the real frequency of the term with this meaning is just 186. Nevertheless, given that ‘lot’ is primarily employed in informal discourse, even with the more generic meaning of ‘many’, it was decided that its general occurrence in the top ten list would be maintained.

In addition, a typical British informal exclamation is ‘bloody’, often recurring with ‘hell’ as a common collocation identifying an idiomatic expression. This term contributes to the identification of British English as the main variety discussed here. Lastly, other frequent colloquial features can be identified, such as ‘mate’, ‘gotta’, and ‘stuff’.

⁴¹ For the specificity of the research, words such as ‘gonna’, ‘wanna’, or ‘cause’ have been considered lemmas during the creation of the Python reference library used for tagging the corpus.

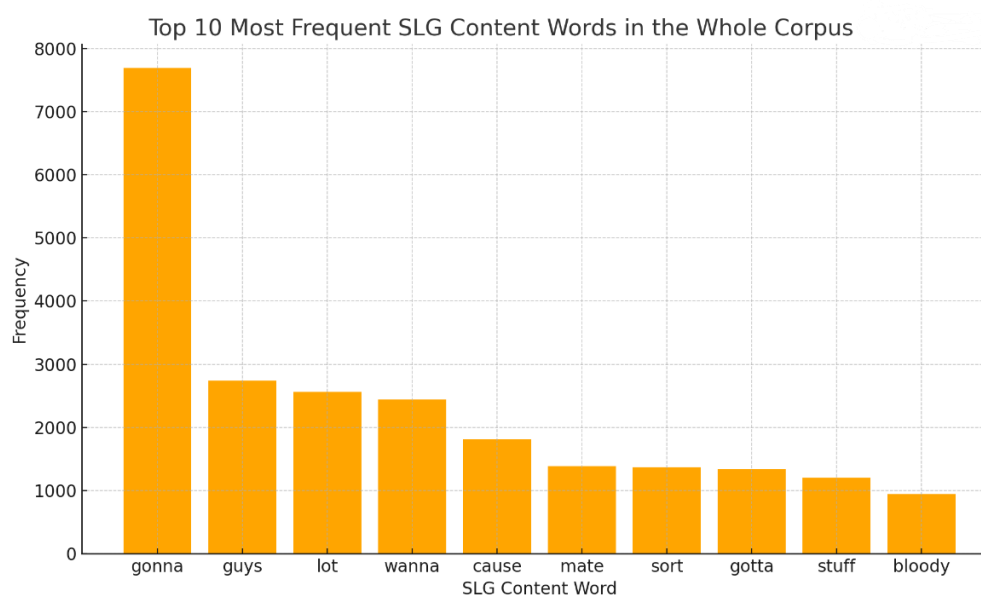


Figure 79: Graph on the frequency of the lexical, 'real' SLG tag throughout the corpus.

4.3.1 Analysis of SLG collocates and semantic relations

Analysing the top list of collocates for SLG-tagged words, several trends can be observed:

- Among the most frequent collocates, elements of dialogic interaction can be detected, such as pronouns, adverbs used in question-answer conversations ('why', 'because'), or modal or high-frequency verbs ('talk', 'help', 'playing'), since many occurrences are actually verbs. Colloquial intensifiers also occur, especially with 'mate', 'cause', and 'bloody' ('you know', 'God', 'hell'). This pattern demonstrates that SLG expressions are closely linked to conversational exchanges. They help manage turn-taking and topic shifts, as well as express uncertainty and informality. It is evident that these interactional strategies, including both the SLG feature and its collocate, are in any case well transposed into SDH, as well as the fact that this trend seems to be referred mainly to interjections.
- Words like 'any', 'lot', 'things', 'course', and 'stuff' are indicative of vague or generalised referents, which is a well-known feature of informal speech. Therefore, the frequent combination of SLG items with such vague quantifiers (for instance in phrases like "Of course, mate!", "kinda stuff", or "any booze") confirms their function in softening, hedging, or intensifying conversational moves. Despite being little peculiar and very common, they have been included in the tagging process since they manifest representativeness of a corpus of SDH in relation to speech written transposition.

- Some socio-cultural signals can also be detected. For example, since the use of ‘mate’ serves both to create in-group solidarity and to signal informal, peer-level relationships, the fact that it may occur with the pronoun ‘you’ (60 hits) makes this function more evident. Also, ‘gotta’, ‘bloody’, and ‘cause’ stand out due to their clear social connotations, and they often signal group solidarity and informal diaphasic setting. Their presence in the corpus shows that SDH subtitlers manage to reflect sociolinguistic variation, even in accessible texts.

still you . -It really is	you , mate_SLG . - [scoffs] Hurry up , you lot_SLG .
's go . Good man . All	you , mate_SLG .	That 's it , you got
right ? - Ray ? - Bernie . How are	you , mate_SLG ?	You got someone in ? You
of course . Good to see	you , mate_SLG .	Yeah_SLG . Christ . It 's like
five days , uh_SLG ... What about	you , mate_SLG ? [Rowmendo] I ai_SLG n't heard
respect that . No one killed	you , mate_SLG .	We brought you back to
we 're going to measure	you , mate_SLG ,	I ' m sorry . I knew
come on in . - How are	you , mate_SLG ?	Good seeing you , man . - Yeah_SLG ,
he 's here . So are	you , mate_SLG .	Yeah_SLG , because of his sort_SLG .
d_SLG do the same for	you , mate_SLG .	Here . A token of my
it . Yeah_SLG . - Yeah_SLG . How are	you , mate_SLG ?	You all right ? Uh_SLG , writing
em_SLG . - I ' m hungry . - Are	you , mate_SLG ?	I think there was a

Figure 80: Excerpt of the co-occurrences of "you" and "mate" in the corpus.

- The vast majority of SLG-tagged words are better described as markers of colloquial, informal English rather than genuine slang. This group includes high-frequency contracted forms such as ‘gonna’ (‘going to’), ‘wanna’ (‘want to’), and ‘gotta’ (‘got to’), which are very frequent in spontaneous spoken English and have become standard indicators of informal register. Their use does not necessarily mark a social group or subcultural affiliation but rather exemplifies everyday speech. Despite being little peculiar and very common, they have been included in the tagging process since they manifest representativeness of a corpus of SDH in relation to speech written transposition.

Yep_SLG ! Coming . Sorry , I was	gonna_SLG	pee_SWR myself . And you have
know what the roads are	gonna_SLG	be like . I mean , should
piece of road , we 're	gonna_SLG	sell furniture . " Also , as a
over the news . Hammond 's	gonna_SLG	read it and say , `
of kerb . These brakes are	gonna_SLG	get hot_SLG . These are the
if I -- -No . I ' m	gonna_SLG	say I was slower . -You
relax ! (GROANING) I ' m never	gonna_SLG	make it . (BRAKES SQUEAL) (GROANS)
n't run . (HYPERVENTILATING) It 's	gonna_SLG	happen . It 's gonna_SLG happen . - (
's gonna_SLG happen . It 's	gonna_SLG	happen . - (TRICKLING) -What ? Who 's
but , erm_SLG ... -But you 're	gonna_SLG .	-Yeah . - [chuckles] -What 's this ?
gets any better , I ' m	gonna_SLG	get two knives . It pays
it . And what are you	gonna_SLG	call this one ? -Oh , `
you know that 's not	gonna_SLG	happen . If there 's more
Everything 's fine . It 's	gonna_SLG	be okay_SLG . -Get an ambulance . - [

Figure 81: Excerpt of the co-occurrences of "gonna" in the KWIC section.

Generally speaking, when considering statistical association measures (logDice, MI), the highest values often pertain to more specialised or less frequent combinations, such as rare colloquial items co-occurring with other informal markers. This reflects the fact that these statistical measures are not solely sensitive to raw frequency, but also to the degree of exclusivity or ‘strength’ in the co-occurrence between two words. For instance, the pair ‘mate’ + ‘alright’, although not uncommon, may not appear as often as more generic combinations like ‘mate’ + ‘thanks’, but when ‘alright’ occurs in proximity to ‘mate’ – as in the classic British greeting “Alright, mate?” – it forms a highly distinctive, socially marked chunk of informal English, especially in informal, familiar contexts or youth registers. The specificity of this collocation leads to a high logDice or MI value, even if its overall frequency is modest.

On the contrary, highly frequent words or collocates, such as ‘any’, ‘things’, or ‘because’, may show up very often in the immediate proximity of SLG forms (for example, ± 5) but do so across a wide variety of constructions and contexts. As a result, their statistical association is rather diluted and their logDice/MI scores are lower, even though their raw frequency is higher. This phenomenon exemplifies Zipf’s Law, according to which the most frequent words in a corpus are generally the least specific or contextually distinctive.

An example of how logDice works in this context can be applied similarly to that used for ‘shit’, in this case involving the word ‘gonna’. The graph below compares the collocates of ‘going to’ and ‘gonna’, showing the collocates of each word separately, as well as the elements they have in common. To illustrate, the coloured dots around each node represent a collocate

and they are positioned either on the left or on the right of the node depending on where they effectively occur – if on the left or right of the given word. Some collocates are neither in the left or right, but instead in a ‘middle’ zone, meaning that they can occur in both positions.

In addition, the colour of each dot indicates the frequency of the collocation: the redder the dot, the more frequent the collocation. The grey dots in the middle of the graph correspond to the words the two nodes have in common as collocates.

Finally, the length of the line between the node and the collocates corresponds to the strength of the collocation. If the line is short, the collocation is strong.

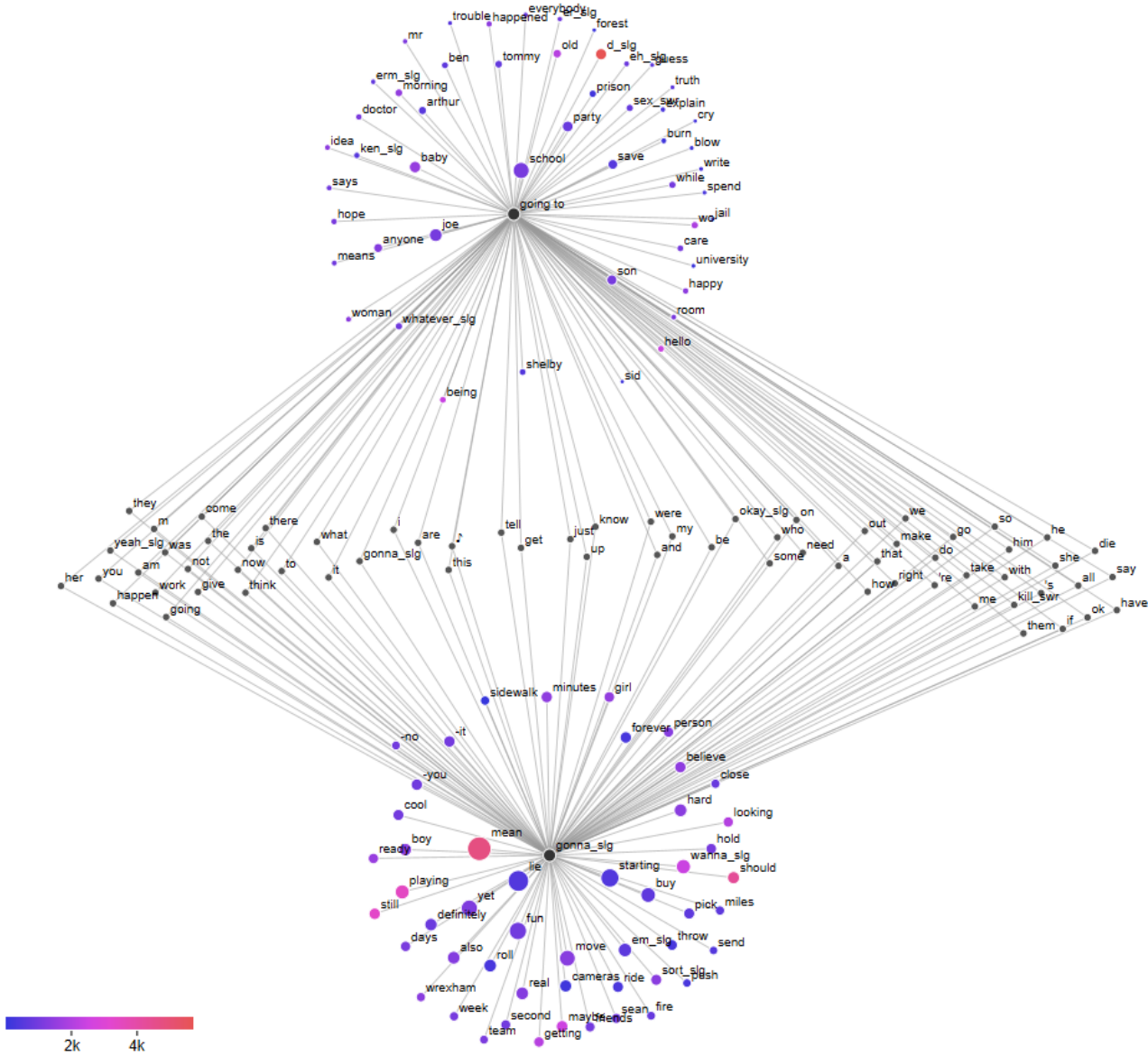


Figure 82: GraphColl of the words "going to" and "gonna" compared.

Firstly, it must be said that ‘going to’ has only 4,741 occurrences (relative frequency: ~1231 per million) compared to the 7,945 occurrences of ‘gonna’ (relative frequency: ~1996 per million). Therefore, ‘gonna’ is more frequent in the corpus, suggesting that a more informal or colloquial register is indeed respected in SDH. They both share collocates referring to the simple future tense, such as pronouns (‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’) with base-form verbs (‘be’, ‘get’, ‘have’) and adverbs (‘not’, ‘just’). Examples of common collocates with high logDice are: ‘be’, ‘get’, ‘go’, ‘tell’, ‘take’, ‘make’, ‘happen’, and ‘die’.

As regards the most significant collocates, ‘gonna’ displays the following preferences:

- Concrete actions: ‘show’ (logDice 8.7), ‘give’ (8.9), ‘put’ (8.4), ‘start’ (8.3), ‘try’ (8.2).
- Informal expressions: ‘okay’ (9.3), ‘wanna’ (6.9), ‘hey’ (7.7).
- Swear words: ‘fuck’ (7.9), ‘fucking’ (7.7), ‘hell’ (6.6).
- Emotional verbs: ‘lie’ (8.0), ‘win’ (8.5), ‘kill’ (8.2), ‘hurt’ (8.3).

While for ‘going to’ the preferences are:

- More neutral verbs: ‘tell’ (8.9), ‘need’ (8.3), ‘help’ (8.1), ‘leave’ (8.1).
- Specific contexts: ‘school’ (7.9), ‘prison’ (6.8), ‘university’ (6.3).
- Strong language verb: ‘kill’ (9.0) is the strongest, but with less variation than ‘gonna’.

Therefore, ‘gonna’ is more versatile in colloquial use, with a wider range of emotional and informal placements, while ‘going to’ is more related to contexts of planning or necessity. Finally, swear words and slang are more associated with ‘gonna’, while ‘going to’ appears in more neutral or institutional contexts.

Other genuine markers of non-standard English – although not included in the top ten list – are forms like ‘ain’t’ (929 hits), ‘innit’ (520 hits), ‘bruv’ (476 hits), or ‘dunno’ (89 hits). In the SDH, these forms are almost always combined with personal pronouns (“I dunno”, “He ain’t”), with negative particles (“Ain’t no way”), as tags or interludes at the end of sentences (“You coming, innit?”), to address someone directly (vocatives: “Listen, bruv...”), and in combinations with adverbs of intensity and pragmatic markers (“I dunno, mate...”, “Ain’t nothing we can do”).

A more focused investigation into the less recurrent SLG-tagged words reveals some valid instances, such as ‘blimey’ (22 occurrences) and ‘geezer’ (21 occurrences). In the case of

‘blimey’, it is an exclamation of surprise which is very peculiar of British slang, and it may occur alone or immediately after the word ‘Cor’ – also tagged as SLG in the corpus – constituting a minced oath from the expression “[may] God blind me!”⁴². Instead, ‘geezer’ occurs in sentences like “He’s a proper geezer, that one” or “He’s a real geezer, isn't he?”, in line with its meaning as a male individual, typically friendly but not exactly without a flawless behaviour. Another example is ‘commie’ (only 3 hits, derogatory term for ‘communist’), often recurring with other swear words (two of the three co-occurrences are ‘cunt’ and ‘bastard’). Words with an extremely low frequency of use include ‘wog’ (an offensive term for a black or Asian person), ‘smartish’ (meaning ‘quickly’), ‘gyppo’ (an offensive term for a Gypsy) and ‘mongrel’ (a term that in British slang indicates a mixed-race person). Once again, the Zipf’s Law predicts that interesting and socially marked lexical items tend to have lower frequencies but a rank with a higher number. Nevertheless, their presence in the corpus demonstrates a tendency in opting for verbatim SDH at least in situations where similar idiosyncrasies are present.

To provide a more detailed overview of the behaviour of SLG words and their interpretation from a semantic point of view, the table below shows the main semantic tags associated with colloquial items. This gives an overall picture of their effective function from a sociolinguistic perspective.

#	Semantic Tag	Occurrences	%	USAS macro-domain
1	Q1.2	990	21%	Speech acts
2	S2	910	19%	People: male
3	X2.2	845	18%	Discourse markers
4	G2	780	16%	Entertainment, sports
5	A1.1.1	530	11%	Size: general
6	S4	430	9%	People: family
7	M1	330	7%	Movement/action
8	L1	320	7%	Life and living things
9	E1	280	6%	General emotion
10	Z2	150	3%	Pronouns

Table 21: Semantic tags mostly associated to SLG words.

⁴² First uses of the expression ‘Cor blimey!’ had been observed in the late 19th century (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, n.d.).

As expected, the SLG tag binds to discursive markers and communicative acts in domains such as entertainment, family, and everyday life. The sociolinguistic roles are reflected in *LISA Corpus*' SDH:

- Marker of identity and belonging (S2): the use of terms such as ‘mate’, ‘bro’, or ‘dude’ may signal belonging to a young, urban, or close-knitted linguistic community, reinforcing solidarity between interlocutors and portraying characters on a social, generational, and relational level. Examples from the corpus are: “Cheers, mate”; “Alright, bro”; “Hey dude, come here”.
- Pragmatic attenuator or reinforcer (Q1.2): colloquial expressions are often used to make the conversation less formal and more cooperative, to reduce the interpersonal distance or, on the contrary, to emphasise a particularly emphatic or marked expression. Examples from the corpus are: “I’m gonna call her”; “Do you wanna join us?”; “He said he’s gonna leave”.

4.3.2 Distribution of SLG per streaming platform

As done for the SWR tag, a further analysis can involve some statistics of the behaviour of the SLG tag in each platform.

Platform	SLG Occurrences	Number of Texts (SDH)	Mean SLG/text	Node = most frequent SLG token (occurrences)
AppleTV+	43,320	219	197.8	yeah (6,261)
Disney+	35,235	173	203.8	yeah (5,266)
Netflix	51,750	260	199.0	yeah (5,857)
Prime Video	33,906	144	235.5	oh (4,681)

Table 22: Distribution of SLG tag per platform.

In addition, the most frequent SLG lemma for each platform are presented:

Lemma	AppleTV+	Disney+	Netflix	Prime Video
yeah	6,261	5,266	5,857	3,911
oh	4,482	3,718	5,064	4,681
okay	3,753	1,176	2,487	922

gonna	2,383	1,647	2,369	1,325
hey	1,670	1,112	1,235	479
uh	1,598	614	684	444
um	1,236	781	899	495
wanna	871	475	960	180
lot	522	584	889	580
ah	495	377	524	403

Table 23: Most frequent SLG lemmas per platform.

Analysis of the metrics by platform reveals consistency in the general occurrence distribution of SLG tags across different streaming services. The mean value is attested around 200 occurrences per text across all platforms, except for Prime Video, which shows a slightly higher average. This suggests that, despite the diversity of catalogues and genres, the strategy of reproducing orality and informality in SDH remains stable across different platforms.

It is also noteworthy that the most frequently used word is ‘yeah’, except on Prime Video, where ‘oh’ takes first place. Such frequencies probably reflect the tendency to use well-known interjections to create an informal overall context, which can also be rather neutral and applicable in many situations. In any case, similar contexts are easier to transcribe into SDH when dealing mainly with such common expressions.

Instead, for what concerns the content words, the results are listed below, at first displaying the general statistics,

Platform	SLG Occurrences	Number of Texts (SDH)	Mean SLG/text	Node = most frequent SLG content word (occurrences)
AppleTV+	6,672	219	30.5	gonna (2,383)
Disney+	4,466	173	25.8	gonna (1,647)
Netflix	7,979	260	30.7	gonna (2,569)
Prime Video	3,722	144	25.8	gonna (1,325)

Table 24: Distribution of content-word SLG tag per platform.

and then the words:

Lemma	AppleTV+	Disney+	Netflix	Prime Video
gonna	2,383	1,647	2,569	1,325
wanna	871	475	960	180
cause	643	383	573	230
lot	522	584	889	580
mate	400	397	333	281
guy	344	200	368	327
gotta	378	338	354	202
stuff	280	262	394	280
sort	258	310	385	427
bloody	205	221	217	299

Table 25: Most frequent content-word SLG tag per platform.

The analysis of the ten most frequent lexical SLG lemmas in the SDH of the four streaming platforms highlights both common traits and distribution specificities related to different reasons. Firstly, colloquial contraction verbal forms such as ‘gonna’ and ‘wanna’, and the abbreviation ‘cause’ remain predominant on all platforms, demonstrating their representativeness of ‘spoken grammar’ and their being well recognised also from a written point of view. It is thus obvious that, whenever these forms are used in dialogues, they will be reported in SDH so to contribute to the reproduction of the naturalness and spontaneity of dialogues, bringing the language of accessible subtitles closer to that of real speech. Moreover, forms such as ‘mate’, ‘bloody’, or ‘lot’ emerge in the top positions, although with a distribution that is not always homogeneous across platforms. In more detail, Netflix and AppleTV+ stand out for their high number of SLG lexical forms, driven by frequent lemmas such as ‘gonna’, ‘wanna’, and ‘cause’. While maintaining lower absolute values, Disney+ shows a significant presence of markers such as ‘sort’, ‘gotta’, and ‘lot’, suggesting a preference for ‘soft’ colloquial forms. Prime Video, on the other hand, presents a rather high mean value per text, partially reflecting the trend already noted for the ‘all-inclusive’ SLG tag, and shows a greater diffusion of the word ‘sort’.

Overall, the distribution of SLG lexical forms reflects the variety of authorial choices, adaptation strategies, and specifics of the target audience for the different platforms. This emphasises the central and transversal nature of colloquialism in subtitling for accessibility.

4.4 Analysis of the distribution of the DIAL tag in *LISA Corpus*

The last lexical tag investigated was DIAL, collecting all geolinguistic features present in *LISA Corpus*. As with the previous tags, the KWIC investigation was performed, as illustrated in Figure 83:

File	Left	Node	Right
Still.games.S07E02.nor	's away, Jack!	(GRUNTS) (LAUGHING)	Youse DIAL hois were laughing - 'No, we
Still.games.S07E02.nor	were. There was tears rolling	door DIAL	your face. That was tears
Still.games.S07E02.nor	usual, Nevil. There you go--	Asst DIAL	what? 'Pricis are up. Bloody_SLG
Still.games.S07E02.nor	to make a big dial	about DIAL	it but enough 's enough
Still.games.S07E02.nor	ve got bootleg garbage floating	about DIAL	Nak_SLG. I 'm done. But
Still.games.S07E02.nor	up. 'No_SLG no gavn the	nos DIAL	are ye? 'No. I 'm
Still.games.S07E02.nor	ye? 'No. I 'm gain'	door DIAL	the bridge. OK_SLG, nos. 'de
Still.games.S07E02.nor	off it. I 'm gannie	door DIAL	's_SLG tidy up where Pete
Still.games.S07E02.nor	the Coronation necklace off the	Queen DIAL	while she 's taking a
Still.games.S07E02.nor	's talked a lot_SLG about	youse DIAL	This is for you - OK_SLG
Still.games.S07E02.nor	We want 12 quid_SLG. What	about DIAL	this? A full complement of
Still.games.S07E02.nor	'Shappin' -> VICTOR: 12 quid_SLG. What	about DIAL	this? Slippery bastard_SWR. I mean,
Still.games.S07E02.nor	at before this gin? - The	Ginnet DIAL	Heem_SLG - The Ginnet_DIAL, tough ship. ->
Still.games.S07E02.nor	gin? - The Ginnet_DIAL - Heem_SLG - The	Ginnet_DIAL	tough ship -> No when I
Still.games.S07E02.nor	muppets. That must make you	Kennet DIAL	the Fud! (LAUGHs) Good one,
Still.games.S07E02.nor	for fo... Jack. Victor. Hello,	lets DIAL	Whose round is it? (INDISTINCT
Still.games.S07E02.nor	Bang_SLG boy will be shitting_SWR	hiself DIAL	Imagine what that could do
Still.games.S07E02.nor	I 'd need to go	door DIAL	the optican 's and get
Still.games.S07E02.nor	just get back behind the	bar DIAL	again? 'Aye_SLG. Pull the old
Still.games.S07E02.nor	water! Beakby. Gennetkeeper turned poacher.	lets DIAL	I know the path!
Still.games.S07E02.nor	Sorry. missus_SLG - Tam - Chai_SLG. Hello,	lets DIAL	What you up to? 'Well,
Still.games.S07E02.nor	that 's us. Good night,	lets DIAL	WINSTON. It 's open! Lets_DIAL
Still.games.S07E02.nor	lets_DIAL. WINSTON. It 's open!	lets_DIAL	What can I get youse_DIAL?
Still.games.S07E02.nor	Lets_DIAL. What can I get	youse_DIAL?	How 's your speight? 'Actually,
Still.games.S07E02.nor	where, would you? (GRUNTS) Sit	also DIAL	I canna see neither! :)
Still.games.S07E02.nor	I want for a slash	about DIAL	an hour ago and I
Still.games.S07E02.nor	the pan and pished all	door DIAL	the leg of my trousers. I
Still.games.S07E02.nor	bloody_SLG hell_SWR do you think	youse DIAL	are doing? 'You were making
Still.games.S07E02.nor	anniversary -> HAZOON anniversary! - HAZOON anniversary!	Youse DIAL	have went to a lot_SLG

Figure 83: KWIC display for the "*_DIAL" query.

The tag DIAL appears 2,147 times in SDH Corpus, with occurrences in 304 out of 796 texts (39%). These data demonstrate the actual scarcity of dialectal and accent items in SDH if compared to the other lexical tags, mainly due to the difficulty of transposing phonetical features in the written mode, since they are not standardised. The distributional metrics are displayed below:

Statistics	Value
Total occurrences of DIAL	2,158
File having at least one DIAL	309 / 796
Maximum number of DIAL in one file	117 (<i>Still Game</i> – S09E04, TV series)
Minimum number of DIAL in one file	1 (<i>Glow Up</i> – S03E05, TV show)

Mean value of DIAL per file having the tag	7.0
Median value of DIAL per file	3

Table 26: General statistics on DIAL frequencies.

The mean value of DIAL per file with at least one tag (7.0) demonstrate that, in the presence of dialect, it can be a marked but not intrusive feature, and the median of 3 indicates that the distribution is skewed by a few very dialect-dense files. Indeed, the DIAL richest file (117 occurrences) belongs to a strongly Scottish series, while other files contain only a single isolated occurrence, perhaps due to a single character, joke, or even some level of standardisation in SDH.

A list of the five files with the most tags is displayed below, which will provide a more comprehensive overview of the situation:

File	DIAL Occurrences
<i>Still Game</i> – S09E04 (TV sitcom, Netflix)	117
<i>Still Game</i> – S08E03 (TV sitcom, Netflix)	104
<i>Still Game</i> – S07E04 (TV sitcom, Netflix)	95
<i>Still Game</i> – S07E05 (TV sitcom, Netflix)	93
<i>Still Game</i> – S08E06 (TV sitcom, Netflix)	93

Table 27: Top five SDH texts with most DIAL tags.

It is evident that dialect features are not ubiquitous throughout the corpus but are closely associated with specific series or episodes. Here, *Still Game* is the most relevant example.

Given that both Scots and Scottish English – with a predominantly presence of Glaswegian accent – are pervasive throughout the series, any attempt to flatten the geolinguistic variation would risk denaturing the series and generating disbelief instead of suspension. This is because all the characters and their surroundings are deeply characterised by age, behaviour, and contextual situations, while the general scenario – set in a fictional area of Glasgow named Craighlang and corresponding to the Maryhill district of the city in reality – provokes linguistic expectations in the audience. Therefore, the diatopic variety in *Still Game* is not only

numerically significant but also demonstrates a rich variety of lexical forms and regional constructs, including many unique hapaxes⁴³.

Instead, the files with the fewest tags are:

File	DIAL Occurrences
<i>Criminal Record</i> – S01E03 (TV crime thriller series, AppleTV+)	4
<i>Glow Up</i> – S03E05 (TV reality show, Netflix)	1
<i>The Grand Tour</i> – S03E01 (motoring comedy TV documentary, Prime Video)	1
<i>Cuckoo</i> – S05E01 (TV sitcom, Netflix)	1
<i>The A Word</i> – S03E04 (TV drama series, Disney+)	1

Table 28: SDH files with the least DIAL occurrences.

These files show a rather sporadic and occasional presence of dialect varieties⁴⁴. In these cases, dialect does not constitute an identity trait of the series or genre, but rather appears as an isolated element, often linked to a joke, a secondary character, or a specific communicative situation. In more detail, *Criminal Record* – a crime thriller TV series on AppleTV+ – uses ‘lad’ as a commonplace macroregional variant for ‘young man’, although not so frequently. In the episode of *Glow Up*, the presence of an isolated DIAL element, i.e., ‘lads’, suggests the use of this regional form by a contestant or judge. However, it does not indicate a marked regional variety in the whole episode. *The Grand Tour*, given the international nature of the programme, may have some dialect but is unusual. In this case, the tagged expression is ‘d’you’, which cannot be identified as expressively dialect, but is linked to British variation from a diatopic perspective. In fact, in film or TV dialogue transcripts, the choice of ‘d’you’ often serves to mark familiar, urban, or working-class speech that is typically English⁴⁵. The same happens in *Cuckoo*: the tag has been applied to the expression ‘y’all’, which well reflects the language of mainstream comedy and gives some humorous colouring, but is more American English than

⁴³ A hapax is a word or expression that occurs just one time in a corpus. Hapaxes are particularly interesting since they reflect a very specific lexicon, either monoreferential or creative, as well as possible misspellings or neologisms. In the case of *Still Game*, the presence of numerous hapaxes underlines both the expressive richness of the series and its role as a possible vehicle for linguistic features which may be uncommon elsewhere.

⁴⁴ Even though such data were obtained after a deep learning check, which may have still maintained a percentage of error, it is highly plausible that there are no instances of false negatives for such files.

⁴⁵ A prove of this fact is given by the analysis of the expression in both BNC2014 and COCA corpora. In BNC it recurs more often than in COCA, i.e., 1,353 vs. only 16 occurrences, thus showing more frequent use in British rather than American English.

British dialect. In *The A Word*, dialect is limited to the single word, i.e., ‘wee’ meaning ‘little’, perhaps to quickly depict a character or restore authenticity to a scene.

The ten most frequent dialectal forms are displayed below.

Form ('lemmatised')	DIAL
y'	173
lads	157
d'you	150
nae	82
cannae	80
tae	80
oot	70
aboot	64
gie	58
a'	52

Table 29: The ten most frequent DIAL terms in the corpus.

Lower frequency words are instead:

Form ('lemmatised')	DIAL
heggie	1
giein	1
nooadays	1
moothfae	1
coonter	1
dinnae	1
whay	1
gob	1
yous	1
haufway	1

Table 30: Ten least frequent DIAL occurrences.

The most prevalent forms accurately reflect the distinctive features of Scottish English and, more generally, of the dialects of the British Isles, in line with the previous discussions. The use of the contraction ‘y’ – a shortened form of the pronoun ‘you’ – is a clear indication of colloquial speech. This contraction is particularly prevalent in Scotland and Ireland, which can thus be included within DIAL tags. Similarly, the contraction ‘d’you’ is a linguistic phenomenon that is strongly associated with the British variation as previously said and is employed to express rapid rhythm and orality. The term ‘lad’ is distinctly British as well and is usually employed in working-class or informal contexts, where it is often used to address young males. Apart from such mainly diastratic features, the following items are considered typical forms of Scots: ‘nae’, ‘cannae’, ‘tae’, ‘oot’, ‘aboot’, ‘gie’, ‘a’’. These forms are not only a written phonetic representation of accent features but also display the related morphological characterisations (‘nae’: ‘not’, ‘cannae’: ‘cannot’, ‘tae’: ‘to’). Some of these forms are also found in Northern English.

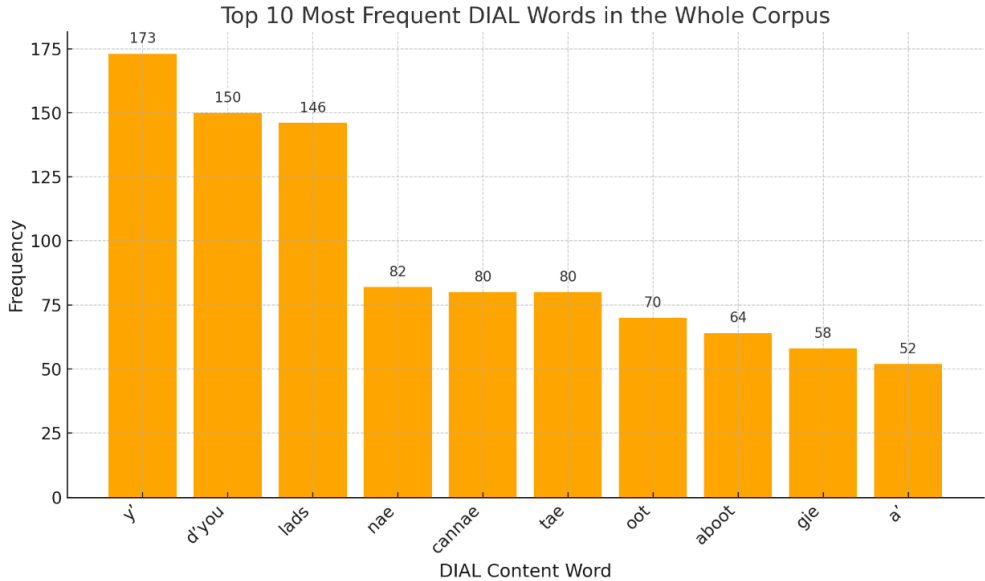


Figure 84: Graph of the frequencies of the first ten DIAL words.

Considering the less frequent forms, they can be distinguished by their high degree of localism and their unusual use. It is evident that many of the words used in this text are accent features transposed graphically, compound words, or rare localisms, often linked to a particular character, episode, or single sketch. Some examples include ‘heggie’, ‘moothfae’, ‘coonter’, ‘haufway’, and ‘whay’. Instead, the terms ‘gob’ and ‘yous’ are commonplace in informal British English and Irish English, with ‘gob’ signifying ‘mouth’ and ‘yous’ standing for ‘you’.

However, these terms are proved to be less frequently used. Lastly, ‘dinnae’ is a form of Scots which, despite being very well-known, yet it is scarcely represented in the corpus – and, dare I say, in the programmes involved – without a particular reason.

In conclusion, the transcription of oral varieties can be problematic, since they do not conform to a written standard and consequently may hinder comprehension for deaf audiences. However, it is noteworthy that the depiction of dialect is achieved in a manner that is appropriate to the pivotal role it plays in the series.

4.4.1 Analysis of DIAL collocates and semantic relations

As regards collocates, DIAL-tagged words often occur in the context of:

- Personal pronouns: standard forms such as ‘you’. ‘yourself’, but also ‘yous’ are frequent, especially on the immediate left of the node. This pattern simply displays the standard SVO construction during turn-takings;
- Terms of kinship and friendship: ‘lads’ and ‘lass’, which are regionally connoted, usually occur with other dialectal forms, thus suggesting an informal, perhaps social strata-based communicative situation;
- Verbal constructions: dialect forms are often preceded and/or followed by verbs, some of which are informal or even dialectal (‘burstin’, ‘spoke’, ‘pretend’, ‘gie’ (‘give’), ‘cannae’), thus echoing the orality of regional speech;
- Daily routine items: it is curious that DIAL-tagged expressions recur together with nouns such as ‘tea’, which does not seem to highlight specific regional-bounded contexts. However, it must be said that similar words belong to a typical British setting, the tea being a British social ritual indeed.
- Profanity and slang: the recurrence of already tagged words in the context of dialectal terms, such as slang or taboo language, serves to reinforce the pragmatic function of conflict, humour, or ‘good natured’ insults between acquaintances. Similar words are ‘half’ (sexual allusion, recurring with ‘willy’, meaning ‘penis’) ‘stank’, ‘pee’, or ‘gob’.

The analysis of collocates facilitates the recontextualisation of the use of dialect and the related functionality, not only in original dialogues, but also in SDH. Despite the existence of other products in the corpus with instances of dialectal terminology, it can be assumed that *Still Game* is so focused on geolinguistically connoted scenarios that the erasing or ‘softening’ of dialectal

features may result in a total loss of characterisation in accessible subtitles, which may have happened in other programmes.

At this point, it can be interesting to evaluate the distribution of a dialect word compared to its standard form, in order to establish its actual context of use and identify the shared collocates. This is the case of ‘about’ and ‘about’:

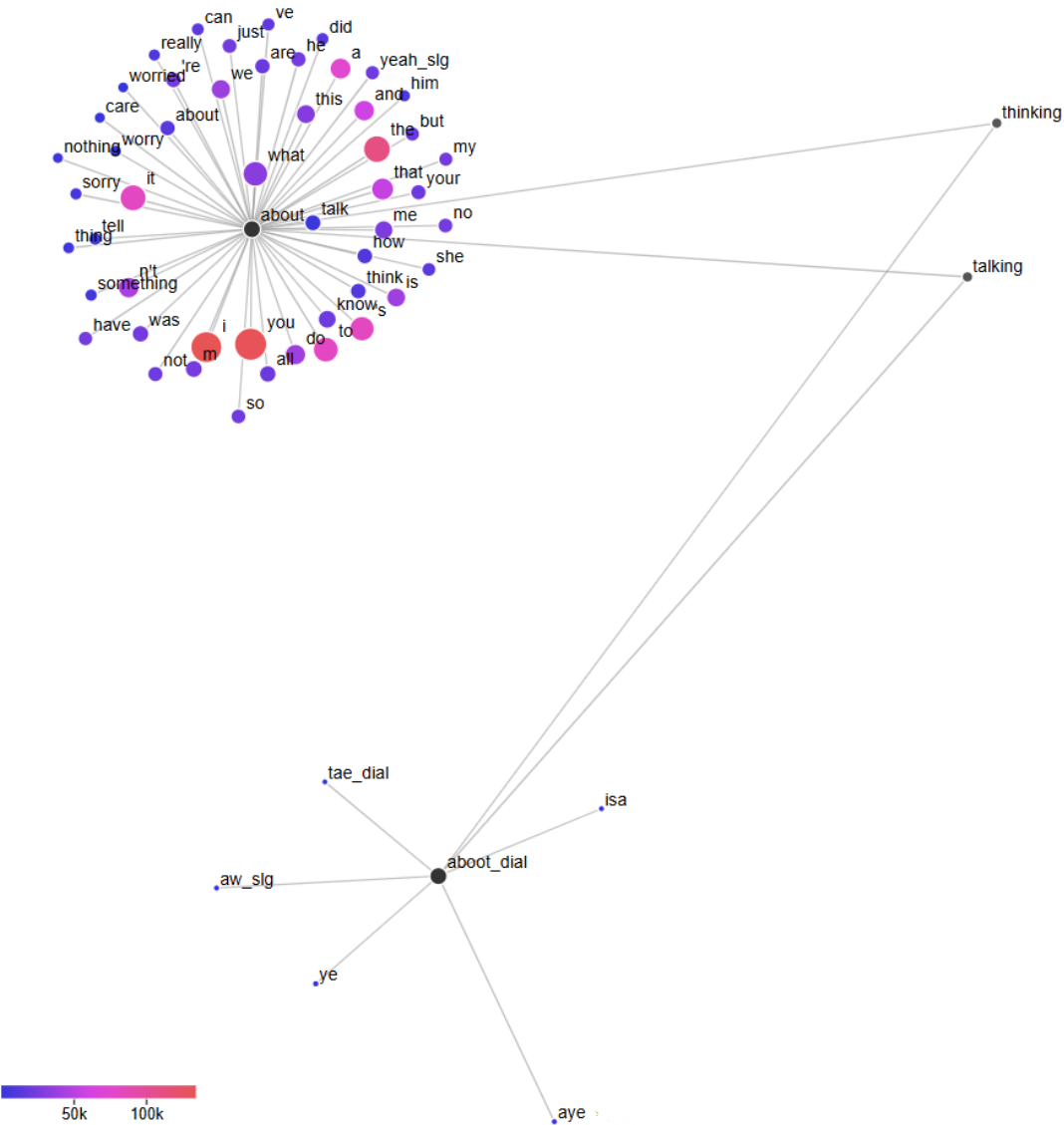


Figure 85: GraphColl of the word "about" compared to "about".

The graph above describes the collocations shared by the two terms. While ‘about’ is a key word for a wide variety of constructions in standard English, ‘about’ is strongly associated with Scottish contexts, both in terms of its syntactic forms and use in conjunction with other dialect words. The fact that only ‘talking’ and ‘thinking’ appear in both lists suggests that the use of

‘aboot’ remains constrained to discursive patterns in Scottish speech, frequently manifesting in structures such as ‘thinking about’ or ‘talking about’. In fact, ‘aboot’ plays a very marked pragmatic and sociolinguistic role. On the pragmatic level, the use of this form in dialogical and informal contexts highlights the function of intimacy and proximity between speakers within a Scottish scenario. In this way, the authenticity of a ‘real’ interaction between members of the same community is restored in SDH. This becomes even more evident by the presence of other dialectal terms among the collocates, such as ‘aye’, ‘ye’, or ‘tae’, which strengthen this dimension of familiarity and affiliation⁴⁶. From a sociolinguistic perspective, ‘aboot’ becomes a powerful identity marker. It signals not only the geographical origin of the speakers but also the social bonding within a community, distinct from standard English. Such a regional and social specificity is maintained in SDH, thus favouring a more immersive reception of the represented cultural context.

A further consideration on the meaning of dialect terms and their sociolinguistic behaviour can be extracted from the table below, which associates semantic tags to DIAL:

#	Semantic Tag	Occurrences	%	USAS macro-domain
1	L1	500	18%	Life and living things
2	S2	450	16%	People: male
3	X2.2	420	15%	Discourse markers
4	Q1.2	410	15%	Speech acts
5	S4	390	14%	People: family
6	G2	380	13%	Entertainment
7	A1.1.1	270	10%	Size: general
8	B2-	190	7%	Physical state
9	E1	140	5%	General emotion
10	M1	130	5%	Movement/action

Table 31: Semantic tags mostly associated with DIAL.

Compared to the other lexical tags, the DIAL tag displays a more dispersed distribution but shows a greater affiliation to semantic fields that reflect living contexts, local communities, families, and everyday narratives. The sociolinguistic implications carried by DIAL may be:

⁴⁶ Given that ‘aboot’ appears just before ‘oot’ in terms of frequency in the corpus, I expected to find this word among the collocates of ‘aboot’, as in the idiomatic phrase ‘oot and aboot’. However, the two words never co-occur in the corpus, revealing that they have separate uses.

- Life and living things: dialect terms that identify elements of everyday life (L1), habits, and movements (M1) are indicative of a common approach to life experiences, expressed through geolinguistic forms that are more locally specific. Examples from the corpus are: “That’s a braw day”; “He’s gone tae the hoose”.
- Community construction and representation: the systematic association between dialects and semantic domains such as family (S4), everyday life (L1), and social relations confirms the previous assumptions that dialects serve to reinforce community ties, family hierarchies, and group dynamics. Examples from the corpus are: “She’s a wee lass”; “Ask yer ma”; “Yer gran made this”.

4.4.2 Distribution of DIAL per streaming platform

As regards the distribution of the tag DIAL per platform, the table below summarises the related metrics:

Platform	DIAL Occurrences	Number of Texts (SDH)	Mean DIAL/text	Node = most frequent DIAL word (occurrences)
Netflix	1,393	111	12.55	oot
Disney+	268	107	2.50	lads
AppleTV+	255	90	2.83	lads
Prime Video	188	71	2.65	lads

Table 32: DIAL distribution per platform.

Netflix is the platform with the most prevalent presence of dialect forms, in both absolute terms and in terms of the number of files involved – confirmed by the presence of *Still Game* indeed. Netflix exhibits more than five times as many DIAL-tagged items as Disney+, which also has a significant number of files with at least one dialect instance, thereby confirming linguistic variety in its productions. While AppleTV+ and Prime Video exhibit a satisfactory number of files with at least one dialect instance, they demonstrate a lower density of occurrences per file. This suggests that the use of dialect, at least in SDH, is sporadic and limited to specific productions rather than pervasive.

The notable presence of DIAL on Netflix is potentially linked to two key factors. Firstly, the broad and diverse nature of its content, which encompasses more geolinguistic instances within the British area, such as Scottish, is likely a contributing element. Secondly, it is not excluded

that Netflix, in comparison to other platforms, invests more in the realistic localisation of diatopic varieties – justified by the presence of ‘oot’ as the most frequent node. Conversely, Disney+ exhibits some similarity to Netflix in terms of the number of files including dialect forms. A similar tendency can be attributed to a more balanced yet less ‘intensive’ transposition of regional dialects in SDH. Lastly, it seems that AppleTV+ and Prime Video adopt a more selective approach with dialects, which are present but rarely stand out. This could be an editorial choice that is more oriented towards a global and inclusive understanding at the expense of identity marking, or the genres involved, which may be less dialect-oriented and more focused on other non-standard elements. In fact, the predominance of ‘lads’ in these platforms indicates a prevalence of more recognisable and accessible urban forms. Consequently, these platforms may adopt a sort of ‘compromise’ strategy retaining some elements of local authenticity while favouring those that do not pose a risk of hindering comprehension and have already become part of the linguistic imagination of a wider audience, at least in part.

The analysis of the tag DIAL showed that incorporating idiosyncratic dialect and accent characteristics remains challenging in contemporary productions, although they are evident to a certain extent. This scarcity is also reflected in the written transposition of dialectal forms, which are less or not represented at all in SDH. The main cause can lie in the fact that local varieties are usually little or no standardised, and single words may still undergo some challenges in a diamesic perspective. Apart from essentially dialectal series such as *Still Game*, this hypothesis can involve series such as *Peaky Blinders* (Brummie dialect; only six hits), *Ted Lasso* (Mancunian, Essex, South London; 171 hits for all seasons), and programmes like *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* (Cockney, Indian English, just one hit), as well as films such as *Rye Lane* (South London, 0 hits). Despite the prevalence of accents in these productions, which serve to characterise both the circumstances and certain characters, a scarcity of representation in subtitles remains. However, it is evident that greater emphasis is being placed on the incorporation of these features into contemporary products and into SDH, with the objective of enhancing accessibility.

4.5 Setting the syntactic analysis and checking frequencies

The syntactic analysis of the marked forms was conducted by uploading a different version of the corpus that only contained the dedicated tags. The reason behind this decision was mainly to avoid disturbing the tokenisation process, which starts automatically during the upload on

LancsBox X, and to avoid the risk of embedded tags interfering with their correct detection. As with the lexical tags, this phase involved analysing frequencies, mean and median values, and the distribution of tags among individual files and platforms. As the syntactic tagging process involved four sub-tags, I began by counting general syntactic markedness in a similar way to the lexical tags, i.e., by typing the ‘MRK’ label into the query bar. Firstly, I obtained the total number of occurrences of any marked syntactic form:

File	Left	Node	Right
The.devils.hour.501E0	Is he gonna...<	MRK:	inv>I'm sorry?</MRK: inv
The.devils.hour.501E0	He should kill himself.<	MRK:	inv>I'm sorry?</MRK: inv
Trying.501E04.txt	in the older days.<	MRK:	inv>No, not the
Trying.501E04.txt	All right? Mm. Hello.<	MRK:	form>You having fun?</MRK:
Trying.501E04.txt	n't it? Yeah, yeah.<	MRK:	form>How long we
Trying.501E04.txt	to look like this.<	MRK:	inv> You want it
Trying.501E04.txt	she? It's Jen.<	MRK:	inv>What she want?</MRK:
The.devils.hour.501E0	unit, everyone you can.<	MRK:	cop>You sure that
Dated.and.related.501	It's the boys.<	MRK:	inv> What's going
Dated.and.related.501	to know Kaz more.<	MRK:	form>How you been?</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	I can feel it.<	MRK:	inv>Mehinda, what the
Dated.and.related.501	fun? Are you nerdy?<	MRK:	inv> What's wrong?</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	to flirt with people.<	MRK:	inv> You don't?</MRK: inv
Dated.and.related.501	relationship is stronger now?<	MRK:	inv>After the kiss?</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	Kaz continue. So, yeah.<	MRK:	inv> And what about
Dated.and.related.501	social. You're not...<	MRK:	inv> Know what I
Dated.and.related.501	Yo, yo, yo. Hey.<	MRK:	form>You let gon
Dated.and.related.501	to you. Get advice.<	MRK:	inv> What in the
Dated.and.related.501	didn't tell me.<	MRK:	cop>You snake, bro.</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	to know him more.<	MRK:	inv>You know?</MRK: inv
Dated.and.related.501	look like badass motherfuckers.<	MRK:	inv> Know how I
Dated.and.related.501	you going? Water. Water?<	MRK:	inv>You want some?</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	the kind of girls.<	MRK:	inv>They're worth the
Dated.and.related.501	villa bringing the drama.<	MRK:	inv> What's up?</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	up?</MRK: inv> Hi.<	MRK:	form>How you doing?</MRK:
Dated.and.related.501	you. It's disappointing.<	MRK:	inv> Took you by
Dated.and.related.501	see where this goes.<	MRK:	inv> See what happens,
Dated.and.related.501	your best with Diana.<	MRK:	inv> Maybe it's
Dated.and.related.501	this shit. Oh shit.<	MRK:	inv> You all right?</MRK:

Searched KWIC for "MRK".

Figure 86: KWIC display for the "MRK" search.

The global occurrence of all MRK tags is of 13,051 times in *LISA Corpus*, with a relative frequency of 3,425.27 per 1 million words. Considering the total number of tokens and sentences in the corpus, this figure does not seem to be significant; therefore, not many marked syntactic forms are used. Nevertheless, their presence in the collected SDH still suggests a general tendency to align with the syntactic forms typical of speech.

Since MRK has been differentiated since the beginning of the MATTER cycle, the results of the general frequency for each specific sub-tag are provided below, from the most to the least frequent:

- <MRK: inv>...</MRK: inv>: 10,160
- <MRK: cop>...</MRK: cop>: 1,873
- <MRK: form>...</MRK: form>: 682
- <MRK: agr>...</MRK: agr>: 336.

A more specific analysis for each variant is provided in the next sections.

4.5.1 Analysis of the <MRK: inv> tag distribution in LISA Corpus

The tag <MRK: inv> seems to be the most relevant in terms of distribution. This aspect reflects the tendency of SDH to record the instances – or at least some of them – of missing standard inversion in questions. The wide distribution of <MRK: inv> in the files suggests that this is a systematic pattern and is likely related to the verbatim strategy applied in SDH. The related metrics are displayed in the table below:

Statistics	Values
Total occurrences of <MRK: inv>	10,160
Files having at least one <MRK: inv>	778 / 796
Maximum number of <MRK: inv> in a file	45 (<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E12, TV series)
Minimum number of <MRK: inv> in a file	1 (<i>Departure</i> – S03E02, TV series)
Mean value <MRK: inv> per file having the tag	13.1
Median value <MRK: inv> per file	10

Table 33: General statistics on <MRK: inv> frequencies.

The mean value of 13.1 <MRK: inv> per file indicates a consistent, but not excessively concentrated frequency: in other words, the presence of <MRK: inv> is not limited to just a few files with outliers but is instead spread evenly throughout the corpus. The median value of 10 indicates that, in at least half of the files, the number of inversions missed does not exceed this value. This circumstance suggests that the distribution is slightly asymmetrical, with some files – typically episodes of series with particularly dense dialogue – standing above the average, thus raising the overall value. The highest value is found in *Ted Lasso* – S02E12, with 45 inversions, while the lowest value (1) is detected in episodes such as *Departure* – S03E02.

For a more comprehensive overview, the top five files containing the tag are:

File	<MRK: inv> Occurrences
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E12 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	45
<i>Sex Education</i> – S03E08 (teen sex comedy-drama TV series, Netflix)	44
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E03 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	44
<i>Sex Education</i> – S03E01 (teen sex comedy-drama TV series, Netflix)	44
<i>Sex Education</i> – S03E02 (teen sex comedy-drama TV series, Netflix)	43

Table 34: Top five SDH files with the most <MRK: inv> occurrences.

while the files with the least occurrences of the tag are:

File	<MRK: inv> Occurrences
<i>Departure</i> – S03E02 (suspense drama TV series, AppleTV+)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E03 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E07 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E11 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E12 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1

Table 35: Five SDH files with the least <MRK: inv> occurrences.

It is interesting to note that the series *Ted Lasso* and *Sex Education* display more instances of the <MRK: inv> tag than other products in the corpus. Despite being all composed by AV products mainly characterised by informal language structures, the SDH corpus thus proves to have two main series with the highest concentration of colloquial syntactic structures, specifically of questions without the typically standard inversion. In more detail, *Ted Lasso* is a sports comedy-drama TV series which is rich in colloquialisms, swear words, and marked syntactic forms, providing the typical realism required for such products. In line with this, *Sex Education* behaves similarly, since it is a teen sex comedy-drama TV series and the SDH seemingly manage to reflect the informal speech used. In any case, the difference with the files

having the least occurrences suggests some variability, probably due both to the characteristics of the AV product (genre, dialogue style) and to some possible editing of the subtitles. For instance, *Departure* is a suspense drama TV series, while *The A List* is a teen thriller TV series, both of which may not require the consistent use of a similar marked syntactic structure if compared to *Ted Lasso*.

When comparing between platforms, slight differences emerge:

Platform	<MRK: inv> Occurrences
Netflix	4,103
Prime Video	2,467
AppleTV+	2,203
Disney+	1,387

Table 36: Distribution of <MRK: inv> per platform.

Netflix is the platform with the highest number of non-standard inversions (4,103 occurrences), followed by Prime Video (2,467), AppleTV+ (2,203), and Disney+ (1,387). This trend may reflect several factors. Firstly, the greater variety and quantity of content available on Netflix and Prime Video – including many original series and films with intense dialogue rhythms and informal linguistic styles – may favour the more frequent occurrence of marked interrogative structures, and thus inversion omissions. Furthermore, the degree of attention paid to syntax in SDH may be influenced by the editorial practices and guidelines adopted by different services. For example, platforms with more ‘undefined’ localisation policies may tolerate the editing of original dialogue with marked question structures, thus aligning SDH with more standardised forms. In contrast, platforms with more normative approaches may feature more instances of <MRK: inv>, as they may require a more verbatim approach.

Ultimately, ten valuable examples of <MRK: inv> sentences are:

Example	File
<MRK: inv>Ted asked you guys to come here to get me to come back?</MRK: inv>	<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E11
<MRK: inv>And he’s still alive?</MRK: inv >	<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E12

<MRK: inv>Okay, you know what?</MRK: inv>	
<MRK: inv>Y-You mean he'll be an immortal chicken?</MRK: inv>	<i>The Completely Made-up Adventures of Dick Turpin – S01E04</i>
<MRK: inv>You're a comedian?</MRK: inv>	<i>Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit</i>
<MRK: inv>What, so you're saying, what, that Colombia's exporting something to America?</MRK: inv>	<i>The Grand Tour – S03E02</i>
<MRK: inv>I'm not allowed a man on my arm?</MRK: inv>	<i>Peaky Blinders – S03E01</i>
<MRK: inv>He's a really good guy, you know?</MRK: inv>	<i>Sex Education – S01E06</i>
<MRK: inv>You want to go and dig?</MRK: inv>	<i>Welcome To Wrexham – S01E01</i>
<MRK: inv>That's why you showed up here?</MRK: inv>	<i>Baptiste – S02E05</i>

Table 37: <MRK: inv> examples.

A discussion of each example is provided as follows:

1. <MRK: inv>Ted asked you guys to come here to get me to come back?</MRK: inv>

In this sentence, the auxiliary “did” is missing, thus not accomplishing the standard inversion. It keeps the syntax of an affirmative sentence but uses the question mark to signal its being a question. From a pragmatic perspective, the speaker is seeking confirmation on a pre-supposed action and implies surprise, disbelief, or even provocation.

2. <MRK: inv>And he's still alive?</MRK: inv >

Here the inversion of the verb ‘to be’ with the related subject is not applied. This sentence is a declarative question, where the intonation – orally – and the question mark – graphically – signal the presence of a question, but the syntactic form remains

affirmative. From a pragmatic perspective, the effect is of surprise or a request to confirm a condition.

3. **<MRK: inv>Okay, you know what?</MRK: inv>**

In this sentence, the auxiliary ‘do’ is missing. It can be classified as a colloquial fixed expression, used to introduce a topic or to reveal something.

4. **<MRK: inv>Y-You mean he’ll be an immortal chicken?</MRK: inv>**

As in the previous example, the auxiliary ‘do’ is missing. The main effect is to emphasise the situation through a colloquial structure. It follows the form of a rhetorical question.

5. **<MRK: inv>You’re a comedian?</MRK: inv>**

In this sentence, the verb ‘are’ recurs after the subject and is not swapped. It is another example of declarative question, with high-rise intonation to mark its being a question, despite the affirmative form. It is employed to express scepticism and irony, so to create humour.

6. **<MRK: inv>What, so you’re saying, what, that Colombia’s exporting something to America?</MRK: inv>**

Once again, the auxiliary ‘be’ is not in the sentence’s first position. This affirmative structure for a question with the inserted “what” is typical of spontaneous speech, more specifically, a process of question formulation in real time.

7. **<MRK: inv>I’m not allowed a man on my arm?</MRK: inv>**

This example shows that inversion does not take place even in the presence of negative particles. This question seems rhetorical or intended to provoke, with the declarative form highlighting some level of resentment.

8. **<MRK: inv>He’s a really good guy, you know?</MRK: inv>**

The sentence in question features an affirmative structure followed by a tag question, i.e., “you know?”. Although this is a well-recognised colloquial pattern, the deep learning algorithm correctly identified the absence of inversion in the tag (“pronoun + verb + ?”) and consequently applied the relevant syntactic tag. I chose to retain the tag for such cases for two main reasons. Firstly, there are several similar cases in the corpus where the tag question consists solely of an adverb, such as “okay?” or “all right?”, without any accompanying verb. Most of these non-verbal tag questions were correctly left untagged by the algorithm, which in turn allowed instances like ‘you know?’ (where a verb is present) to stand out as structurally distinct and thus to be appropriately tagged. Secondly, other sentences make use of the colloquial contraction ‘d’you know?’, which

confirms instances in which the auxiliary is effectively employed and so the sentence remains correctly untagged. This condition enhanced the possibility that the tag question ‘you know?’ could have been a normal affirmative (‘You know.’). Also, the intonation pattern is not distinctively high-pitched enough to justify it being a question.

9. <MRK: inv>You want to go and dig?</MRK: inv>

The absence of the auxiliary ‘do’ makes the sentence appear affirmative until the question mark is encountered. As there is no indication beforehand that it will be a question, its meaning may come as a surprise.

10. <MRK: inv>That’s why you showed up here?</MRK: inv>

This sentence is a declarative-interrogative form in which the formula ‘that’s why’ creates some expectations of its possibility to be a question.

The sentences analysed above demonstrate that the absence of inversion is a rather recurring pattern in colloquial and dialogic English and is reported also in SDH. The absence of subject-verb inversion in interrogative contexts is replaced by declarative structures that are marked only by intonation or the question mark. This phenomenon, which is characteristic of spontaneous speech, is employed to express pragmatic nuances such as disbelief, irony, or the search for confirmation (“Ted asked you guys to come here [...]?”), or to reproduce the natural flow of speech, with disfluencies (“What, so you’re saying [...]?”) and fixed forms (“You know what?”, “[...] you know?”). The identification of these deviations from standard syntax by the algorithm – after the training process with a gold standard, as explained in Chapter 3 – demonstrates how questions may appear to be affirmative and yet keep interrogative intentions, thus reflecting the flexibility of speech. The <MRK: inv> tag manages to capture this dynamic in supposedly verbatim SDH, thus making it a valuable tool for the study of informal registers and the characterisation of dialogues in accessible audiovisual texts.

4.5.2 Analysis of the <MRK: cop> tag distribution in LISA Corpus

The omission of copula – mostly the verb ‘to be’ – in copular sentences recurs in the corpus 1,873 times, accounting for approximately 14.4% of all MRK-tagged instances in the corpus.

Statistics	Values
Total occurrences of <MRK: cop>	1,873
Files having at least one <MRK: cop>	676 / 796
Maximum number of <MRK: cop> in a file	13 (<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E06, TV series)
Minimum number of <MRK: cop> in a file	1 (<i>The Grand Tour</i> – S05E04, TV series)
Mean value <MRK: cop> per file having the tag	2.8
Median value <MRK: cop> per file	2

Table 38: General statistics on <MRK: cop> frequencies.

The mean and median values, respectively 2.8 and 2 per file, suggest that copula omission is a less diffused phenomenon than the absence of inversion, despite being found in all products analysed here.

The main five files having the most hits are:

File	<MRK: cop> Occurrences
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E06 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	13
<i>The A List</i> – S02E03 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	12
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E06 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	12
<i>The A List</i> – S02E05 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	12
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E01 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	11

Table 39: Top five SDH files with the most <MRK: cop>.

Instead, the files with less occurrences are:

File	<MRK: cop> Occurrences
<i>Trying</i> – S02E07 (comedy TV series, AppleTV+)	3
<i>The Grand Tour</i> – S05E04 (motoring TV series, Prime Video)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E03 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>Becoming You</i> – S01E03 (documentary TV series, AppleTV+)	1
<i>Extraordinary</i> – S01E06 (superhero comedy TV series, Disney+)	1

Table 40: Five SDH files with the least <MRK: cop>.

Once again, the fact that a series such as *Ted Lasso* appears as the most prominent in preserving a marked syntactic structure suggests its peculiarity as a TV comedy series with dense dialogues and well defined from a diaphasic and perspective. Instead, *The A List* shows the opposite behaviour compared to absence of inversion. Since it is a teen thriller TV series, an abundance of expressions such as “You okay?” or “You all right?” may reflect the possible dialogues characterising this genre. However, this series also appears among the files with the least occurrences, perhaps suggesting some flexibility in terms of stylistic characterisation of dialogues depending on each episode. The other products are described as follows.

Trying is a comedy TV series whose dialogues are colloquial and feature a London accent, however such few occurrences of the tag (3 hits) may be due to the specificity of the episode, which effectively has instances of copular sentences correctly having the copula (“Are we okay?”). *The Grand Tour* is instead a motoring comedy TV documentary starring the well-known British TV presenters Jeremy Clarkson, James May, and Richard Hammond – and born from the ashes of the BBC show *Top Gear* – and is characterised by a rather standard syntactic asset. *Becoming You* is a documentary TV series narrating the growth of children from many parts of the world, whose dialogues may be characterised by other marked forms if it is the children who speak or standard syntax if it is the narrator or the journalists. Finally, *Extraordinary* is a superhero comedy TV series, which shows instances of a rather humorous language and slang but may not include missing copula instances.

The total distribution according to each streaming platform is displayed below in decreasing order:

Platform	<MRK: cop> Occurrences
Netflix	634
AppleTV+	555
Prime Video	381
Disney+	300

Table 41: Distribution of <MRK: cop> per platform.

The platforms show some interesting variations. Netflix and AppleTV+ share the highest positions, probably due to the high amount of content with colloquial language and dialogue compression, typical of spontaneous speech. On the other hand, Prime Video and Disney+ follow with lower values, which could be due to subtitling guidelines standardising dialogue, or the genres that characterise most of their products.

The following ten examples have been selected for closer examination from the corpus:

Example	File
<MRK: cop>You all right?</MRK: cop>	<i>Bad Sisters</i> – S01E03
<MRK: cop>You okay?</MRK: cop>	<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S03E07
<MRK: cop>Everything okay there?</MRK: cop>	<i>Still Up</i> – S01E01
<MRK: cop>You idiot!</MRK: cop>	<i>Long Way Up</i> – S01E01
<MRK: cop>Rose, you in here?</MRK: cop>	<i>Departure</i> – S01E05
<MRK: cop>So what, you one of them chicks, yeah?</MRK: cop>	<i>Youngers</i> – S01E06
<MRK: cop> Well, you lucky.</MRK: cop>	<i>Rocks</i>

<MRK: cop>Speakings not polite.</MRK: cop>	<i>Borat Subsequent Moviefilm</i>
Get here, <MRK: cop>you fucking cunt!</MRK: cop>	<i>Pistol – S01E04</i>
<MRK: cop>What you on about?</MRK: cop>	<i>Man Like Mobeen – S02E04</i>

Table 42: <MRK: cop> examples.

The sentences exemplify the various types of absence of the verb ‘to be’:

1. <MRK: cop>You all right?</MRK: cop>

The standard structure would have been “Are you all right?”, thus demonstrating the omission of ‘are’. This is a typical pattern of polite but informal questions. The brevity of the text suggests immediacy and worry.

2. <MRK: cop>You okay?</MRK: cop>

Similarly to the previous sentence, the example shows ‘okay’ as the complement. It is a rather frequent expression in the corpus, having 101 concordance hits. Pragmatically, it suggests an emotional, rapid assessment of another person’s state of mind.

3. <MRK: cop>Everything okay there?</MRK: cop>

In this sentence, the subject is an indefinite pronoun but still follows the same pattern as the previous cases, with the omission of ‘is’. This sentence represents a question made to evaluate the situation through an informal structure.

4. <MRK: cop>You idiot!</MRK: cop>

This is a nominal expression, naturally omitting the verb ‘to be’. However, the deep learning algorithm identified it as an absence of copula example. It is important to note that this pattern is actually analogous to the omitting verb in copular sentences. Moreover, the exclamation is a particularly interesting element in this context, as it serves to intensify the insult, thereby rendering it more direct and colloquial in nature. Therefore, I decided that this pattern would be maintained within the context of the <MRK: cop> tag analysis.

5. <MRK: cop>Rose, you in here?</MRK: cop>

Although it is not a copular sentence, the omission of ‘are’ can be noticed in this sentence. This case is similar to the one discussed previously, where the algorithm identified this pattern as an absence of copula due to their similarity. Consequently, this sentence can be identified as an extension of the missing copula pattern also to non-

copular structures. Therefore, such an example represents another colloquial syntactic behaviour where ‘be’ is often omitted and which can be included within the phenomenon discussed here.

6. <MRK: cop>So what, you one of them chicks, yeah?</MRK: cop>

Omission of ‘are’ is noted here. The colloquial syntax is combined with the regional form ‘them’ as a demonstrative adjective (these/those), the colloquialism ‘chicks’, and an informal question tag. It is a canonical example of absence of copula in a low diaphasic scenario.

7. <MRK: cop> Well, you lucky.</MRK: cop>

Another form of real absence of copula, this sentence can be identified as a typical spontaneous affirmation, where copula is actually implied.

8. <MRK: cop>Speakings not polite.</MRK: cop>

This non-standard structure can be subject to two different interpretations. Firstly, it can effectively have a plural subject, ‘speaking’, meaning “literary words composed for recitation” (Collins Dictionary, 2025), or it could simply be a mistake made by a speaker with a strong idiolectal form of English (i.e., Borat, the Kazakh main character in *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*). Secondly, the subject is singular and the verb ‘is’ has been attached to it not as a typo, but because it is perceived as part of the word ‘speaking’, followed by a brief pause before saying ‘not’. Consequently, the sentence could be expressed as either “Speakings are not polite” or “Speaking is not polite”. The first hypothesis seems to be the most plausible.

9. Get here, <MRK: cop>you fucking cunt!</MRK: cop>

This sentence, providing a nominal insult, is similar to the example discussed before (point 4). It is typical of aggressive exclamations and the missing of the – possible – copula increases its impact and strengthens profanity.

10. <MRK: cop>What you on about?</MRK: cop>

This informal British structure misses the verb ‘to be’ and has a phrasal verb standing for ‘talking about’. Despite ‘on about’ is not a noun or an adjective, thus not being typically copular, the sentence follows the same pattern of ellipsis of copulas. It expresses a request of clarification with a nuance of concern or conflict and an effect of immediateness. This sentence is another example of how the omission of the verb ‘to be’ extends beyond traditional copular structures, this time also involving phrasal verbs.

The analysis of the sentences shows a clear tendency in SDH to somehow preserve marked syntactic forms as they are pronounced on the screen, maintaining the authenticity of real speech. The absence of the copula, both in traditional copulative phrases (“You okay?”) and in those with similar patterns (“You in here?” or “What you on about?”), demonstrates how the subtitles faithfully reproduce the omissions typical of spontaneous speech, linked to informal registers or dialectal varieties. This choice reflects not only a respect for the acting performance and portrayal of the characters, but also a greater accessibility for the audience, who can thus grasp pragmatic nuances, emotional tones, and socio-cultural identities even at the expense of formal grammatical rules.

4.5.3 Analysis of the <MRK: agr> tag distribution in LISA Corpus

The absence of subject-verb agreement recurs 332 times in the corpus, with a percentage of 2.6% on all other MRK forms:

Statistics	Values
Total occurrences of <MRK: agr>	336
Files having at least one <MRK: agr>	197 / 796
Maximum number of <MRK: agr> in a file	7 (<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E06, TV series)
Minimum number of <MRK: agr> in a file	1 (<i>Departure</i> – S03E04, TV series)
Mean value <MRK: agr> per file having the tag	1.7
Median value <MRK: agr> per file	0

Table 43: General statistics on <MRK: agr> frequencies.

The mean and median values per file reflect the low prevalence of this phenomenon, thus representing a lesser pragmatic weight than other structural simplifications. However, the presence of recurrent instances in *Ted Lasso*, *Rye Lane*, and *Sex Education* suggests that series and films with a fast dialogue rhythm or with regional varieties of English may represent contexts more ideal to concordance errors.

The main files in which the tag <MRK: agr> occurs are:

File	<MRK: agr> Occurrences
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E06 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	7
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E06 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	6
<i>Rye Lane</i> (romantic comedy film, Disney+)	6
<i>Sex Education</i> – S03E04 (teen sex comedy-drama TV series, Netflix)	6
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E04 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	6

Table 44: Top five SDH files with the most <MRK: agr>.

Instead, the files with the least occurrences of the tag are:

File	<MRK: agr> Occurrences
<i>Departure</i> – S03E04 (suspense drama TV series, AppleTV+)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E10 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E07 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>Fleabag</i> – S01E06 (comedy-drama TV series, Prime Video)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E08 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1

Table 45: Five SDH files with the least <MRK: agr> occurrences.

Series such as *Ted Lasso* and *Sex Education* and the film *Rye Lane* are characterised by dialogues that are marked by informality, regionalisms, and spoken structures, as already specified. In such cases, the presence of concordance errors in SDH can be indicative of a tendency to transpose this characteristic of oral English faithfully.

Instead, it is likely that the files containing the least number of <MRK: agr> occurrences do not effectively have many instances of lack of subject-verb agreement in original dialogues neither. In fact, formal dialogues – especially in *Departure* – or the preference for other non-standard features seem to characterise such episodes. It may also be that such episodes have

fewer dialogue scenes, less slang, or more narration than conversation, which would justify this behaviour.

Within this scenario, an interesting example is represented by the Netflix series *At Home with the Furys*. Composed of nine episodes, the single season displays a significant number of `<MRK: agr>` instances:

he's old. <MRK:	agr	>He don't need
in that ring no more.</MRK:	agr	> That was some statement,
's on autopilot. <MRK:	agr	>He don't know
know where he's at.</MRK:	agr	> When you're trying
it all out. <MRK:	agr	>He don't like
when he's like that.</MRK:	agr	> He's barely spoke
train again. Ever. <MRK:	agr	>That don't sound
don't sound very good.</MRK:	agr	> I think, deep down,
with their dad. <MRK:	agr	>Very special that all
all the family are away.</MRK:	agr	> Rarely happens for a
just heard him. <MRK:	agr	>He don't sound
like he's far away.</MRK:	agr	> Hello, darling. Hey, Paris.
's not working. <MRK:	agr	>Athena don't wanna
don't wanna play camping.</MRK:	agr	> Neither does Mum. Come
business with Paris. <MRK:	agr	>Paris don't know
've got in our accounts.</MRK:	agr	> <MRK: agr>
accounts.</MRK: agr> <MRK:	agr	>She don't know

Figure 87: Portion of the occurrences of `<MRK: agr>` tag in the series *At Home with the Furys*.

The total number of agreement error is 28, however the actual occurrences are half of them, 14. In fact, typing “agr” in the query section also results in the appearance of the closing tag (`</MRK: agr>`). Considering that this tag occurs in seven out of nine texts, this means that it covers a notable percentage within all series with respect to other products.

As regards distribution in platforms, the data are listed below:

Platform	<code><MRK: agr></code> Occurrences
Netflix	137
Prime Video	55
AppleTV+	94
Disney+	50

Table 46: Distribution of `<MRK: agr>` per platform.

The distribution of subject-verb agreement errors across the four main platforms in the corpus shows a significant prevalence on Netflix (137 occurrences), followed by AppleTV+ (94), Prime Video (55), and Disney+ (50). This discrepancy can be interpreted from several perspectives. Firstly, the presence of a wide array of products is indicative of a diverse and extensive collection of programmes. Netflix, usually a leader in terms of volume and variety of original and localised products, offers a wide range of genres and dialogue styles, including many shows in which the use of colloquial, regional English is marked. In such cases, subject-verb agreement error may be maintained to preserve the naturalness of speech, or in accordance with stylistic and character traits, despite not so incisively.

It should be also noted that platforms may differ in the guidelines adopted during localisation and editing. In particular, Netflix and AppleTV+ appear to have a greater degree of tolerance for non-standard linguistic forms, if these serve to accurately represent the orality and variety of registers. In contrast, Prime Video and Disney+ seem to demonstrate a tighter grammatical control or a preference for a more neutral and normative style, which may lead to over-standardisation. Looking back at previous analyses of other tags' distribution, this seems a valid assumption.

In addition, titles targeting young adults or set in regional or urban settings (often found on Netflix or AppleTV+) tend to have more concordance errors for reasons of realism or sociolinguistic identification, which are also transposed into SDH. In contrast, more dramatic or thriller-type products, or those with looser dialogue or aimed at families (more frequently found on Disney+), tend to minimise these features, which undoubtedly affect SDH. However, the low absolute frequency of <MRK: agr> makes the difference in percentages less significant than for large numbers of <MRK: inv> or <MRK: cop>.

It must be specified that, in general, variables at morphosyntactic level are more difficult to identify and quantify (Kiesling, 2011, p. 15), as they pertain to a less overt layer of language which is less susceptible to variation compared to lexical and phonetical features. Nevertheless, agreement errors can be observed in local varieties. For instance, within the American English scenario, subject-verb agreement patterns such as 'you was' (instead of the standard 'you were') are a well-documented feature of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), while similar forms also occur in certain Northern British varieties, such as those of York. This form can be classified as a type of morphological alternation (*ibid.*, p. 150) and can be seen as part of a tendency to regularise irregular verb paradigms in spontaneous speech. Moreover, it has been

observed that this specific lack of agreement is more adopted by younger speakers and in certain situations⁴⁷. This perspective justifies the decision to include this non-standard agreement pattern in the analysis, as its presence – though infrequent – provides valuable insight into the interaction between morphosyntactic regularisation and the linguistic practices reflected in SDH subtitles.

Considering practical examples of <MRK: agr> in the corpus, a list of ten marked sentences is provided in the table below, followed by a discussion.

Example	File
<MRK: agr>Where’s me babies?</MRK: agr>	<i>At Home with the Furys</i> – S01E09
<MRK: agr>Lisa, the panel were wowed by your passion and your skill.</MRK: agr>	<i>Glow Up</i> – S04E08
<MRK: agr>Your head look like a phudi.</MRK: agr>	<i>Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit</i>
<MRK: agr>Everyone stand still, yeah?</MRK: agr>	<i>Clarkson’s Farm</i> – S01E04
<MRK: agr>You be a good boy.</MRK: agr>	<i>Blitz</i>
<MRK: agr>-Word become a sound?</MRK: agr>	<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E06
<MRK: agr>but still the meeting have to start in Japanese.</MRK: agr>	<i>The Accident</i> – S01E03
<MRK: agr>The family were holidaying in the Hungarian mountains north-east of Budapest</MRK: agr>	<i>Baptiste</i> – S02E01
<MRK: agr>Who’s we?</MRK: agr>	<i>Peaky Blinders</i> – S0502
<MRK: agr>London don’t need Ez.</MRK: agr>	<i>The Outlaws</i> – S01E06

Table 47: <MRK: agr> examples.

⁴⁷ Tagliamonte, cited in Kiesling (2011, p. 150-151), studied the development of this pattern in the community of York, England. She found a stronger correlation between the singular, 3rd person subjects and the tendency to use ‘were’ instead of ‘was’. In addition, the marked form was more applied by youngsters rather than older speakers.

1. **<MRK: agr>Where's me babies?</MRK: agr>**

In this sentence, the singular third-person form 'is' recurs with a plural noun, 'babies'. This informal syntactic structure is accompanied by the personal pronoun object 'me', which here functions as the possessive adjective 'my'. This is a characteristic feature of both Cockney and Northern dialects. The main effect is of emotional involvement, presumably family affection.

2. **<MRK: agr>Lisa, the panel were wowed by your passion and your skill.</MRK: agr>**

The word 'panel' is singular, however the plural verb 'were' suggests the British tendency to conjugate the verb in the plural form in presence of collective nouns. The emphasis is on the members of the group as a whole; therefore, it seems to function as an agreement by sense.

3. **<MRK: agr>Your head look like a phudi.</MRK: agr>**

This is a clear example of lack of subject-verb agreement, with the verb lacking the third-person '-s' suffix but following a singular noun. The speaker, the stand-up comedian Paul Chowdhry, of Punjabi origin, displays an Estuary accent and occasionally incorporates elements of Cockney for mockery reasons. Additionally, the pace of his speaking is rather fast. These conditions may furtherly support such a non-standard concordance.

4. **<MRK: agr>Everyone stand still, yeah?</MRK: agr>**

'Everyone' is semantically plural, but grammatically singular. This example, which is not an imperative but rather an affirmative, is hence displaying an agreement by sense.

5. **<MRK: agr>You be a good boy</MRK: agr>**

This example illustrates the maintenance of the base form verb 'be' following a singular subject. It can either intend "You must be a good boy" or "You are a good boy". Considering the ambiguous situation, the deep learning algorithm interpreted it as an error of agreement. The situation under discussion occurs in London during a quite anxious scenario, where the main character displays a strong Cockney accent. The use of such a form perfectly adheres to the circumstances.

6. **<MRK: agr>-Word become a sound?</MRK: agr>**

In this case, a singular noun is followed by a plural verb. This is even more relevant given that it is a question, for which there is no evidence of an auxiliary to make it standard. Although this example could have been tagged as <MRK: inv>, the lack of

agreement pattern may be considered more indicative of specific diatopic and diaphasic varieties than inversion absence, which sounds less ‘odd’.

7. <MRK: agr>**but still the meeting have to start in Japanese.**</MRK: agr>

Another example of an agreement error is shown where the word ‘meeting’ is accompanied by a plural verb. This may be because the ‘meeting’ is associated with a group of people, thus requiring a plural verb.

8. <MRK: agr>**The family were holidaying in the Hungarian mountains north-east of Budapest**</MRK: agr>

The singular noun ‘family’ has a plural verb instead. This is quite common in British English, where collective nouns usually require the verb in plural form. Although not grammatically accurate from a standard perspective, this example signals a peculiar British variant.

9. <MRK: agr>**Who’s we?**</MRK: agr>

The lack of agreement is indicated by the use of the singular form ‘is’ with the plural pronoun ‘we’. This colloquial construction signals a rhetorical and sarcastic question.

10. <MRK: agr>**London don’t need Ez.**</MRK: agr>

Here, ‘London’ is personified as its inhabitants, therefore requiring a plural verb due to the agreement-by-sense structure. Using ‘don’t’ in such morphosyntactic situations is typically Cockney.

In conclusion, the analysis of the subject-verb agreement errors in the examined SDH examples reveals a fundamental principle of AVT and sociolinguistics, i.e., the representation of a non-standard trait of linguistic variation. As the analysed cases show, the inclusion of <MRK: agr> instances contribute to the systematisation of dialectal or colloquial traits (“You be a good boy”, “Where’s me babies”, “Who’s we?”), identification of ‘Britishness’ from a linguistic perspective (“The family were holidaying”, “the panel were wowed”), and the providing of immediacy of utterances (“Your head look like a phudi”, “Word become a sound”). Despite less in number compared to other MRKs, the choice to maintain such non-standardisations in SDH constitutes an act of linguistic preservation, where fidelity to orality prevails over grammatical purism, while offering accessibility (reproduction of real speech); documentation (register of linguistic varieties); and characterisation (sociocultural subtext).

4.5.4 Analysis of the <MRK: form> tag distribution in LISA Corpus

The last syntactic tag, <MRK: form>⁴⁸, identifies non-standard verbal constructions mainly referring to auxiliary omission in compound tenses, both in continuous forms (e.g., ‘You talking too much’; ‘she missing him’) and in duration forms (e.g., ‘He been there’).

Statistics	Values
Total occurrences of <MRK: form>	682
Files having at least one <MRK: form>	332 / 796
Maximum number of <MRK: form> in a file	6 (<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E12, TV series)
Minimum number of <MRK: form> in a file	1 (<i>The A List</i> – S01E09, TV series)
Mean value <MRK: form> per file having the tag	2.0
Median value <MRK: form> per file	0

Table 48: General statistics on <MRK: form> frequencies.

Although this phenomenon only accounts for about 5% of the MRK marking cases (682 occurrences), it provides an insight into the strategies of simplification, error fossilisation, or interference of regional varieties in English SDH. The low mean and median values (0.9 and 0) show that these errors are very scattered and sporadically distributed. However, the peaks in series with fast-paced, dense dialogues, such as *Ted Lasso*, and very colloquial registers in *Sex Education*, suggest that these errors are more likely to appear in contexts where spoken language is especially rapid, informal, or regionally marked.

In more detail, the five files containing the highest number of <MRK: form> instances are:

File	<MRK: form> Occurrences
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E12 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	6
<i>Sex Education</i> – S03E01 (teen sex comedy-drama TV series, Netflix)	6

⁴⁸ The label ‘form’ was chosen instead of ‘con’ for ‘[verbal] construction’ or ‘com’ for ‘compound’ to avoid conflict with other labels, especially ‘cop’, during the manual control.

<i>The A List</i> – S02E01 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	6
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E01 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	6
<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S01E02 (sports comedy-drama TV series, AppleTV+)	5

Table 49: Top five SDH files with the most <MRK: form>.

The recurring presence of these marked syntactic forms in different episodes of the same series points to the desire to transpose the spoken language as faithfully as possible. It might be the case that this non-standard pattern is more often used in everyday speech, as suggested by the results, compared to the lack of subject-verb agreement. Alternatively, it may simply be a coincidence that these instances are more numerous. However, with respect to the other two MRK tags, i.e., <MRK: inv> and <MRK: cop>, the absolute frequency is not that high, meaning that a similar pattern may not recur that often in oral communication.

It is interesting to note that the first five files containing just one occurrence come from the same series:

File	<MRK: form> Occurrences
<i>The A List</i> – S0E09 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E11 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S01E13 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S02E03 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1
<i>The A List</i> – S02E06 (teen thriller TV series, Netflix)	1

Table 50: Five SDH files with the least <MRK: form>.

Such files containing only one occurrence come from the series *The A List*, which, as previously mentioned, is a TV series about teenagers and may therefore lack this feature. This gives rise to a couple of considerations. First of all, dramas for and with teenagers may actually avoid using such marked constructions, instead favouring more standardised forms, as previously demonstrated. Secondly, most SDH may be highly formal and accurate because of editing. Although syntactic markedness does occur in numerous instances in general, the overall absolute frequency of this specific tag remains much lower than that observed for the first two

MRK categories. Consequently, there is no compelling reason to systematically standardise *only* this feature during the subtitling process. These findings support the initial hypothesis as the most plausible explanation.

From a platform perspective, Netflix has the highest number of occurrences, followed by Prime Video and AppleTV+, while Disney+ still stands out with the lowest values, in line with a stricter grammar:

Platform	<MRK: form> Occurrences
Netflix	282
Prime Video	160
AppleTV+	160
Disney+	80

Table 51: Distribution of <MRK: form> per platform.

However, when considering the average number of occurrences per file, Prime Video shows the highest value (2.5), while the other platforms remain around 2 errors per file.

This distribution can be interpreted in several ways:

- Netflix: the large catalogue of series and films with young, informal, or regional variations explains the highest absolute number of compound forms errors, reflecting an editorial choice of greater linguistic realism and less standardisation in SDH.
- Prime Video: although the total number is lower than Netflix, the mean value per file is higher (2.5), suggesting that some compound forms errors are concentrated in a few episodes or seasons.
- AppleTV+ and Disney+: displaying lower numbers both in absolute frequency and in mean value (respectively 1.9 and 1.8), these platforms seem to focus on a stricter grammar in SDH, or deal with products that have little instances of <MRK: form> due to style or target audience.

Overall, the presence of verbal compound form errors remains very low across all platforms compared to other types of marking, reflecting little use of such marked syntactic feature, even in products with informal language.

In terms of practical examples, a list of ten instances of <MRK: form> is provided below to help focus on the details of the target pattern:

Example	File
<MRK: form>What you doing, mate?</MRK: form>	<i>Still Game</i> – S08E06
<MRK: form>So what you waiting for?</MRK: form>	<i>Peaky Blinders</i> – S04E06
<MRK: form>What you writin’?</MRK: form>	<i>Sex Education</i> – S03E02
<MRK: form>You ever done it?</MRK: form>	<i>Bad Sisters</i> – S01E01
<MRK: form>What we gonna do about Benny, guys?</MRK: form>	<i>Youngers</i> – S02E08
<MRK: form>Hi, how you doing?</MRK: form>	<i>Ted Lasso</i> – S02E03
<MRK: form>You been doing some painting?</MRK: form>	<i>Trying</i> – S02E02
<MRK: form>Who done your nails?</MRK: form>	<i>Rocks</i>
<MRK: form>God, you listening?</MRK: form>	<i>Good Omens</i> – S0104
<MRK: form>You seen me shooting.</MRK: form>	<i>Informer</i> – S01E04

Table 52: <MRK: form> examples.

1. <MRK: form>What you doing, mate?</MRK: form>

In this example, the missing verb is the auxiliary ‘are’ in the continuous form. This is typical of British dialects, informal situations, and fast-paced speech. Pragmatically, this sentence describes an informal, familiar situation.

2. <MRK: form>So what you waiting for?</MRK: form>

This is another example of the auxiliary ‘are’ being missing from the continuous form. The sentence suggests a sense of urgency and impatience, well depicted in the dramatic scenario of *Peaky Blinders*.

3. <MRK: form>What you writin’?</MRK: form>

Once again, the verb ‘to be’ is missing in this example, followed by the apocope of the -ing form (‘writin’’). This pattern exemplifies a typical interaction between teenagers.

4. <MRK: form>**You ever done it?**</MRK: form>

This time, the missing auxiliary is ‘have’ in the present perfect tense. This is a non-standard, colloquial form that occurs in British English (Trudgill, 2000), as demonstrated also by its presence in the BNC2014 corpus in informal dialogue. It is also attested in Cockney and Estuary English (Cheshire, 1982). The effect of removing the auxiliary is to create a sense of immediacy.

5. <MRK: form>**What we gonna do about Benny, guys?**</MRK: form>

The verb ‘are’ has been replaced by the colloquial contraction ‘gonna’. Its main pragmatic function is to reflect colloquial, youthful speech.

6. <MRK: form>**Hi, how you doing?**</MRK: form>

This expression seems to be a fixed greeting: it occurs 118 times in the corpus, 30 of which are in *Ted Lasso*, thus showing that it could be the protagonist’s catchphrase. Similar forms, such as ‘How you feeling?’ or ‘How you going?’, occur 168 times in the corpus and demonstrate a recognisable pattern that can easily be reported in SDH.

7. <MRK: form>**You been doing some painting?**</MRK: form>

This example of present perfect continuous is lacking the auxiliary ‘have’. The question seems more direct and immediate, and it is typical of conversations with friends and family. Informal register is redefined once again.

8. <MRK: form>**Who done your nails?**</MRK: form>

This case is rather interesting. It could be another ‘missing auxiliary’ form, where ‘has done’ represents the correct form, or an example of hypercorrection, with ‘done’ being used instead of ‘did’. This phenomenon is characteristic of younger generations and is prevalent in the London linguistic landscape.

9. <MRK: form>**God, you listening?**</MRK: form>

In this context, omitting the auxiliary ‘are’ creates a greater sense of emotional urgency in a prayer to God or dramatic supplication. This is particularly pertinent in the fantasy comedy TV series *Good Omens*, in which the angel Aziraphale tries to prevent the final Armageddon, while the demon Crowley tries to support it.

10. <MRK: form>**You seen me shooting.**</MRK: form>

Of the various interrogative examples, this one is an affirmative and, once again, omits the auxiliary ‘have’. It demonstrates the seriousness of the situation, as well as how concisely the feeling is expressed.

Analysing non-standard compound verbal forms without auxiliaries shows that transcribing authentic dialogue requires a descriptive approach rather than a prescriptive one. This means that these structures are not mistakes and it is therefore meaningless to talk about ‘broken English’. Rather, they are varieties in dialects or regional structures, and pragmatic markers of informality, intimacy, or urgency, depending on the situation. They reflect real speech, which is contextual and fluid, portraying specific characters and situations. Although the MRK form is not as widespread as the lack of inversion in questions or the absence of the copula, it still contributes to demonstrate how non-standard features can also characterise a deeper linguistic level such as syntax. Ultimately, the fact that some instances can still be detected in the SDH confirms the tendency to adhere to the original dialogue, focusing on linguistic accessibility for deaf audiences.

4.6 General considerations on the analysis of non-standard variations

The analysis of each marked structure, both lexical and morphosyntactic, leads to some considerations. Firstly, there is a tendency to respect the original non-standard features across all platforms in SDH, albeit to varying extents. This development can be attributed to the growing success of streaming platforms over the past decade, and the increasing demand for accessible services related to audiovisual productions. However, the number of non-standard features represented may be still lower than that of standard forms. This results in the representation of specific but better-recognised structures, such as certain colloquialisms and profanity, which may in a way be sufficient to give the necessary representativeness of non-standard variation. For instance, the use of swear words is to a certain extent ‘standard’ and thus easily detected, while dialect forms are more idiosyncratic and have specific spelling that is not always shared widely. Interjections are also well recognised.

The recognition of more common non-standard features was observed also in the way the deep learning model behaved during the tagging process. Indeed, some linguistic elements have been well assimilated through the training set – when the model was learning non-standard patterns – as opposed to being just memorised. Consequently, words and phrases exhibiting the same structure were immediately identified and maintained or corrected⁴⁹. Swear words have been the most recognised class of lexicon, since a pre-existing and solid Python library was used for training. The other lexical items required more effort as it was difficult to identify less-

⁴⁹ Annotation through the deep learning model occurred in the cases of false negatives.

spread words, often with unusual spellings. Despite the creation of a dedicated library, further training was necessary.

From the syntactic perspective, the absence of inversion has almost always been adequately signalled by the model. Conversely, the remaining MRK features exhibited some problems, as the model issued both overfitting⁵⁰ and bare ‘memorization’ of single instances. This suggests that the system was only able to recognise the same exact sentences and did not learn the pattern. It was therefore necessary to provide the model with more appropriate inputs – i.e., real data from the corpus and specific test sentences *exasperating* a pattern – to facilitate the comprehension of the features and then assess its progress during the validation and test sets. For example, a portion of the .csv file used for training the model according to <MRK: agr> identification is as follows:

Sentences,boolean value (0,1)
Where is students?,1
everyone has studying.,0
she want studying.,1
she want very busy.,1
it likes at home.,0
he were studying.,1
Mary has tired.,0
John want ready.,1
it do at home.,1
everyone want ready.,1
someone have very busy.,1
Where are the workers?,0
Where is John?,0
the student wants studying.,0
Where are we?,0
he has studying.,0
Mary does very busy.,0
Where are she?,1
she likes very busy.,0

⁵⁰ In machine learning, overfitting is a phenomenon occurring when a model learns the training data excessively well, including possible noise and irrelevant details. This leads to poor generalisation when encountering new and unseen data.

Where are Mary?,1

Table 53: Portion of .csv file used to train the deep learning model.

Correct sentences (0) are accompanied by marked sentences (1). Some of these exaggerate the markedness; for example, “she want very busy” illustrates the incorrect pattern, while “Mary has tired” illustrates the correct one. Since the focus here is subject-verb agreement error, these ‘stretches’ enable the algorithm to recognise any possible oddity within this sphere.

The general issue described above confirms that machine learning tools for linguistic analysis are still trained based on regular expressions or more standard linguistic forms. Consequently, the neural network training process requires greater effort, as statistical probabilistic methods – Regex and spaCy – tend to filter out ‘odd’ items immediately. This means that such items never reach the final stage occupied by the neural networks, which will never learn. Therefore, this aspect confirms the ongoing challenge of detecting non-standard forms in computational sociolinguistic studies of language – which, as we all know, is flexible and dynamic. In this scenario, it should be noted that errors in the detection of non-standard forms by the semi-supervised machine learning may still have occurred.

However, it must be said that the analysis of the data presented in this chapter showed that the performance of spaCy and Regex was generally satisfactory, as was that of the neural network after all the necessary procedures. The initial accuracy rate for detecting false positives and negatives was 67%, rising to 80%, and peaking at around 94% for the agreement task and 97% for the others. The accuracy of the lexical tags reached an average of 97-98% almost immediately. Such data therefore allowed for a generalised analysis of marked patterns in the present SDH.

It can be concluded that the analysed SDH are indeed representative of non-standard forms, although it is plausible that some editing strategies were employed. The next chapter will investigate this aspect in more detail by directly comparing the original speech with the corresponding SDH on each platform and proceeding with a qualitative analysis.

The SDH Sub-Corpus

A Qualitative Analysis of Subtitles on SVoD

This chapter examines a selection of the SDH contained in *LISA Corpus*, which therefore constitutes a sub-corpus of SDH. The approach under discussion involves the identification of equivalences and discrepancies between the original dialogues and the related subtitles, with the objective of delineating a pattern when it comes to oral text adaptation in the written mode. The productions analysed will start from the AppleTV+ products, followed by the Disney+, Netflix, and finally the Prime Video ones, thus proceeding in alphabetical order. For each platform, the series will be analysed first, while the film will be examined subsequently. All seasons of each series will be considered for the present analysis, regardless of the varying number of episodes. The reason behind this decision is rooted in the demand for a more profound exploration of non-standard elements, which may encounter greater challenges and a less comprehensive investigation in case of a strict selection of episodes. An analysis of subtitling strategies and translation techniques will be undertaken, with particular reference to time and space constraints and to the rendering of intralingual variation. Subsequently, the study will explore the complexities of speech elements, encompassing not only lexical choices but also the nuances of prosody, if present. All features identified will be aligned with sociolinguistic implications, which constitute the primary focus of the present study in terms of accessible linguistic variability.

5.1 AppleTV+: *Ted Lasso* and *Blitz*

The present section will analyse the two products selected for AppleTV+, i.e., *Ted Lasso* and *Blitz*. The selection of these products within the AppleTV+ catalogue responds to the necessity for two productions that are in some ways representative of the linguistic variety and sociolinguistic complexity that characterise contemporary English-language serialisation and cinematography. While *Ted Lasso* offers an insight into the differences between British and American English varieties, with some register variation that produces humour and comic effect, *Blitz* provides different examples of variation, mainly related to local dialects and vulgar

expressions, as well as typical marked syntactic forms of speech that well reflect dramatic moments. The selection of these two productions on AppleTV+ enables an exploration of the representation of non-standard language in different modes. This aspect offers a comparison between the comic and dramatic registers.

5.1.1 *Ted Lasso: British English vs. American English*

Ted Lasso is an Anglo-American television series produced by AppleTV+ that began broadcasting in 2020. The series, created by Bill Lawrence, Jason Sudeikis, Joe Kelly, and Brendan Hunt, tells the story of an American football coach, Ted Lasso, who is hired to coach an English football team, Richmond AFC, despite having no experience in European football. With regard to the classification of genres, the series can be conceptually aligned with both sports comedy and drama. Indeed, the combination of humour and emotions, as well as references to popular culture constitute the primary elements around which the series revolves. The setting, which is situated within a London suburb, in conjunction with the presence of an American protagonist, creates many scenarios involving interactions and conflicts between the two cultures.

From a linguistic perspective, *Ted Lasso* is characterised by a rich variety of linguistic diatopic features, registers, and non-standard phenomena. The series draws parallels between the protagonist's American English and the British English spoken by the local characters, showcasing a diverse array of accents, colloquial expressions, regional dialects, wordplay, and cultural allusions. The presence of characters from different social, generational, and geographical backgrounds contributes to a marked linguistic heterogeneity, which is frequently characterised by elements of colloquialisms, idiomatic speech, and diastratic and diatopic variations.

A fundamental aspect of the series is the persistent manifestation of non-standard linguistic features, including but not limited to:

- British and American slang and colloquialisms
- idiomatic expressions
- proverbs and idioms
- cultural and linguistic-pragmatic interferences between British and American English
- diastratic traits

- variations in register, ranging from formality to forms of politeness to good-natured or marked insults.

These elements render the series particularly suitable for the present analysis. Indeed, the combination of comedy, cultural and linguistic markedness, as well as the pace of the dialogue and the frequent situations of contact between different language varieties, make *Ted Lasso* a particularly significant case for the analysis of speech rendering in SDH.

a) Accents

In the first episode of Season 1, the issue of accents representation in SDH emerges quite evidently. For instance, the scene at minute 2:00 depicts the current AFC Richmond coach, George Cartrick (Bill Fellows), being fired. George is distinguished by a pronounced Northern accent, presumably of Yorkshire origin, which contributes to the formation of his social identity and his narrative role. However, such a markedness is totally neutralised in the SDH, where his lines are reported without any indication of his regional background, nor on phonetic or prosodic specificities. This linguistic flattening affects both representativeness and accessibility. To a certain extent, while hearing viewers can instantly identify George's sociolinguistic background through his voice, DHH audiences lose access to a significant layer of the character's portrayal and interpersonal dynamics. As already pointed out in previous chapters, it is a common critical issue in the domain of accessible subtitling, particularly in instances where regional dialects are not represented through lexical or syntactical markers, but exclusively through the medium of phonetic variation.

The omission of accent signalling can be largely due to the absence of clear AppleTV+ guidelines and a desire to avoid stigmatising or overly marking specific characters. The role of technical constraints, such as the limited screen space available and the risk of information overload, is also to be considered. Nevertheless, this approach may compromise the principle of equity in SDH, particularly in instances where regional varieties are somewhat pivotal in the development of characters.

A comparison of George's original lines and their official SDH reveals the systematic removal of Yorkshire phonetic features:

Original Dialogue (transcript, stressing phonetic traits)	SDH	Notes on accent/variety rendering
Hey. I <i>luv</i> what you've done to the place.	Hey. I love what you've done to the place.	No indication of accent or regional origin.
Did you do it yourself or get some poof to help <i>ya</i> ?	Did you do it yourself or get some poof to help you?	No indication of accent or regional origin.
She's a cheeky one, isn't she, eh?	She's a cheeky one, isn't she, eh?	No indication of accent or regional origin.
Right, <i>luv</i> . Listen, I've got training in a minute.	Right, love. Listen, I've got training in a minute.	No indication of accent or regional origin.
So, <i>whateveRR</i> it is you need to get off your impressive chest, let me have it.	So whatever it is you need to get off your impressive chest, let me have it.	No indication of accent or regional origin.
Fired? What the fuck ([fɒk]) for?	Fired? What the fuck for?	No indication of accent or regional origin.
Hey, Higgy boy.	Hey, Higgy boy.	No indication of accent or regional origin.
What <i>d'you</i> think's worse?	What do you think's worse?	No indication of accent or regional origin.
<i>YouRR</i> husband [hɒzbənd] cheating on you or being the last to know?	Your husband cheating on you or being the last to know?	No indication of accent or regional origin.

Table 54: George's original lines and the correspondent SDH.

Even when the wording remains unchanged (“She’s a cheeky one, isn’t she, eh?”; “Hey, Higgy boy.”), several Yorkshire phonetic elements are completely neutralised in the SDH (e.g. ‘luv’ for ‘love’, ‘ya’ for ‘you’, the rhotacism into ‘whateveRR’, the pronunciation [fɒk] for ‘fuck’, etc.), erasing his sociolinguistic identity for the DHH viewer.

Methodologically, a more inclusive approach could involve neutral and standardised labels – e.g., [from Yorkshire], [Northern accent] – introduced contextually, as is sometimes done for dialects lacking a written transposition. Such labelling used, with main characters when they first appear, would help avoid stereotyping while supporting equitable representation.

While some may argue that George’s social characterisation is communicated through British slang, colloquial vocatives (“Higgy boy”), gestures, or costume, these features alone do

not fully substitute the role of accent in constructing identity, especially since not all viewers will interpret them in the same way. As regards physical appearance, George seems to consistently wear very short sports shorts and a sweatshirt with the logo of the football team. Moreover, he has shaggy hair and a strong build. Therefore, the words that Rebecca Welton (Hannah Waddingham), the owner of AFC Richmond, says to George while firing him emphasise such a visual appearance:

I suppose I could go for any number of reasons, really. Your casual misogyny, for one. I know, it's a big word. Ask one of your daughters what it means. Or perhaps it's your performance, having led this team through yet another remarkably average season. Or maybe it's because you insist on wearing those tiny shorts that force me to see one of your testicles. [George sits back in his chair with his legs spread]⁵¹ And there's the other one. Liam and Noel. Though, perhaps not an oasis. Still, if I'm being completely honest, George, you're fired because I'm the owner now, and I don't like you. Now do piss off, you fat twat.



Figure 88: Screenshot from the opening scene of Ted Lasso. George wears his tracksuit, and Higgins – the director of communication – stands next to him. Subtitles also show the derogatory slang word 'poof' George is using. Source: AppleTV+.

From Rebecca's words, George's character portrayal emerges from a plurality of elements:

- Direct and informal tone;
- The use of diminutives and colloquial vocatives;

⁵¹ My label.

- Swear words and slang;
- Gestures and vestemics;
- Humour and interaction with other participants.

While verbal and nonverbal cues may help convey social and behavioural aspects of George's character, a label to signal his accent would enhance his portrayal and favour the DHH audiences' interpretation. Although George is a minor character, the omission of his regional background in the SDH may result in diminishing the narrative depth, as well as his social representation. This aspect underscores the significance of methodological reflection and the adoption of more inclusive practices in the domain of accessible subtitling.

Nevertheless, in more peculiar situations the accent is documented. In Season 2, Episode 9, Coach Beard and three Richmond supporters enter a private club in London known as Bones & Honey, presenting themselves as members of Oxford University. In order to not be disclosed, Coach Beard identifies himself as Professor Declan Patrick Aloysius MacManus, and imitates Irish accent, which is signalled (minute 13:00):

[in Irish accent]⁵² There you are, lads. Ha. / Thought I'd lost you.

However, standardisation of words can be detected, despite the non-standard pronunciation. The SDH

I'm a Merton man, **myself**.

does not correspond to the actual pronunciation, which is:

I'm a Merton man, **meself**.

⁵² All bolds used in the reported subtitles and dialogue are mine.



Figure 89: Screenshot of Coach Beard in the club. The SDH reports 'myself', while he actually says 'meself'.
Source: AppleTV+.

Although expectations on accent were already given by the label, the fact that this sentence is pronounced when Coach Beard is in medium close-up shot – meaning his lips are clearly visible as a thin line rather than more open – further suggests some attention on written verbatim variants in the SDH. The absence of lip correspondence in subtitles may indeed enhance the viewer's sense of disbelief. Following this approach, it is unclear why in Season 3, Episode 6 the non-standard form 'me' as possessive adjective is retained in the SDH of Jamie Tartt's speech (Phil Dunster), a central character who has a thick Mancunian accent (minute 42:47):

When I was 14, **me** dad / was trying to get back with **me** mum [...].

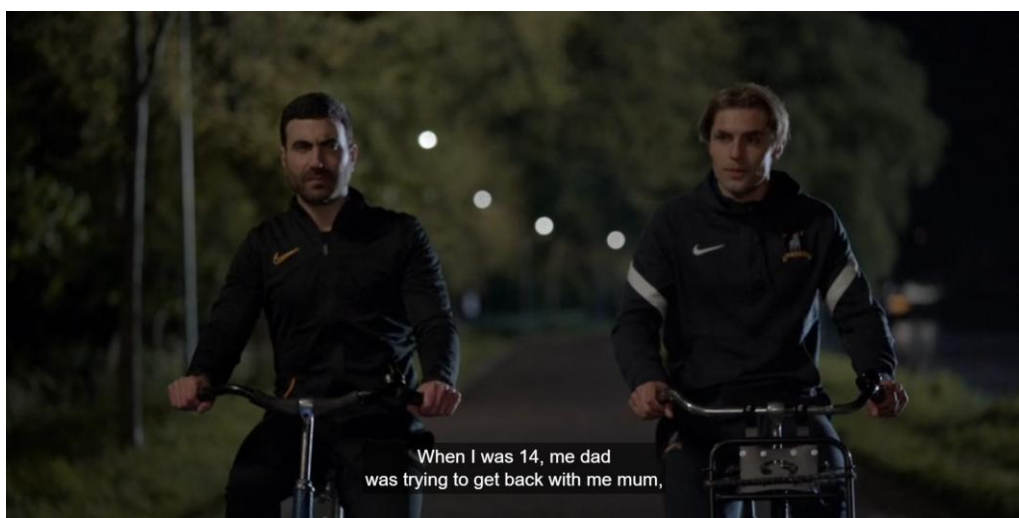


Figure 90: Screenshot of Tartt and Roy's scene. Source: AppleTV+.

In this scene, Tartt is riding a bike with Roy, who became his personal coach. The characters are portrayed in medium shot and the scene is set at night; as a result, the profile of their faces is less defined than in the daylight. Despite this, the marked form is literally transcribed in SDH, in contrast to the previous example. Although similar decisions are not consistent throughout the series, the ‘myself’ option remains questionable, particularly when considering the visual contrast between Coach Beard’s close-up framing and that of Tartt.

In other non-humorous contexts, where the accent does not play an active role in the depiction of the scene, the label is not included. Another example can be found in Season 3, Episode 4, when a woman of Slavic origins, Anastasia, talks with coach Nate Shelley (Nick Mohammed). The SDH (minute 45:08) is

Congratulations to your victory.

and does not signal her peculiar accent. On the contrary, if a different language is spoken, a label is introduced (Season 3, Episode 6, minute 0:14):

[announcer speaking Dutch].

Analogously, in Season 1, Episode 10 (minute 33:46), a label states:

[woman singing in French]

which correctly identifies the foreign language used.

b) American English vs. British English

With regard to cross-regional varieties, Ted Lasso brings with him the American variety, which is highly distinctive and is frequently confronted by the local British one. For instance, in the first Episode of Season 1 (minute 4:54), Ted is on his flight to England. An English young man approaches. The SDH for this scene are as follows:

Man: Oi, mate. This you?

Ted: -I believe it is, yeah.

Man: -Oh, man! Legend.

M: Can I get an ussie?
 [camera clicks]
 M: -That's dope.
 T: -[Ted chuckles]
 T: You know, back where I'm from, / we call those selfies.
 M: Well, it's not "myself", yeah?
 M: It's "us", innit? "Ussie".
 T: Yeah. I like that.
 M: Wicked.
 M: You coaching football.
 M: Mate, you are a legend / for doing something so stupid.
 M: I mean, it's mental. / They're gonna fucking murder you.
 T: Well, you know, / I've heard that tune before.
 T: But here I am, still dancing.
 M: -Legend.
 T: -Yeah. Nice meeting you.

The SDH are verbatim and accurately reflect this variational difference, which is crucial to understand the scene and predict Ted's linguistic journey in England. This exchange is rather rich in sociolinguistic markers which highlight both diatopic and diastratic varieties. The young man uses typical idioms of informal, non-standard British English, summarised below.

- **British diatopic and diastratic markers:**

- **“Oi, mate”**: formed by the typical British interjection ‘oi’ and the informal vocative ‘mate’. ‘Oi’ is usually employed in a working class setting or, more geographically, in London and South UK. Used to call for someone’s attention, it can be considered rather insolent. ‘Mate’ is instead distributed throughout the UK, especially in young, male-dominated contexts.
- **“Legend”**: used both as an exclamation (“Oh, man! Legend”) and approval (“Mate, you are a legend...”), it can occur among youngsters and in sport contexts to mention somebody’s noticeable or ‘brave’ action.
- **“Can I get an ussie? [...] It’s “us”, innit? “Ussie”**: ‘ussie’ can be considered as a British neologism to say a group photo, in contrast with the worldwide

known term ‘selfie’⁵³. ‘Innit’ is a well-known informal British question tag, very common in London and in Southern England, and it functions as a sociolinguistic marker.

- **“That’s dope”**; **“Wicked”**; **“It’s mental”**: these terms belong to youngsters’ British slang. Their condensed use reveals the purpose of strongly differentiating the British variety from Ted’s American one.

These expressions, strongly rooted in the British linguistic tradition, are immediate indicators of social and geographical affiliation. The presence of such traits in the dialogues serves to delineate identity boundaries and highlight the distance between the American protagonist and the surrounding British context.

- **American diatopic and pragmatic markers:**

- **“You know, back where I’m from, we call those selfies”**: Ted explicitly mentions the diatopic lexical difference (‘ussies’ vs. ‘selfies’), albeit ironically, reinforcing his American identity and his function as an outsider. Pragmatically, the metalinguistic reference (‘back where I’m from’) acts as a real marker of otherness, contributing to the awareness of linguistic variety and its social implications into the narrative. In the SDH, the sentence is given verbatim, without any mediation or additional explanation, which would be unnecessary.
- **“You know...”**: this discourse marker is typically American and can be used to maintain the flow of conversation, engage the interlocutor, facilitate textual cohesion, or simply allow enough time for speakers to organise their thoughts.

A further indication of linguistic differences is given later by Coach Beard, his assistant:

They don’t say “out of bounds”. / They say “into touch”.

Coach Beard’s line explicitly exposes a well-known lexical difference between American and British English within sports, revealing the coexistence of two sporting, cultural, and linguistic systems to the audience. ‘Out of bounds’ is the expression used in American soccer to indicate

⁵³ It seems that the term is of Australian origin and is an example of hypocorism, i.e., diminutive, which Australians usually employ in everyday speech (ABC Science, 2014).

that the ball has left the field; ‘into touch’ is the British variant, used in both English football and rugby. This real-time self-translation, addressed to Ted – and thus, by extension, to the audience – underlines the need to ‘decode’ the local language in order to integrate and communicate effectively. In the SDH, the line remains unaltered; however, such a strong building of Ted’s alterity in relation to the British context may find some criticalities elsewhere.

In the second episode of Season 1 (minute 7:58), Ted is delivering a speech to the team in the locker room. He invites each player to write a note requesting improvements and place it in a box. Therefore, he says:

You could have issue with, uh, the **color** of the towels.

The use of the American spelling ‘-or’ seems to be adequate in this case, given that Ted Lasso is American. This strategy is particularly advantageous in differentiating British from American English, which could otherwise cause further challenges. However, in Episode 4 (minute 31:44), the same spelling is adopted when a British character, the footballer Roy Kent (Brett Goldstein), speaks:

Hey, do me a **favor**.

Since he has a pronounced Cockney accent, such an American transcription may be rather misleading. Given the challenges of writing a dialect, the adoption of the ‘-our’ version may be more useful than expected. This phenomenon is not confined to a single example, but rather, it is systematic throughout the series (e.g., ‘colored’, ‘favored’, ‘favorite’, ‘behavior’, ‘honor’). A valuable example of how such a potential misunderstanding might arise is provided by Season 2, Episode 11, which offers an instance of metalinguistics (minute 28:56):

Ted: You spelled “favorite” wrong.

In this scene, Ted is reading a farewell letter from his therapist, Dr. Sharon Fieldstone (Sarah Niles). In the letter, the word ‘favourite’ is written according to the British variant, which provokes Ted’s reaction. However, given that such words were invariably spelled with the American version in the series’ SDH, such a difference may not be perceived, and the reference may not be fully captured by the DHH audience. At this point, the adoption of the ‘-our’ version

in subtitles pertaining to British speakers would have been more congruent with the decoding of similar lines.

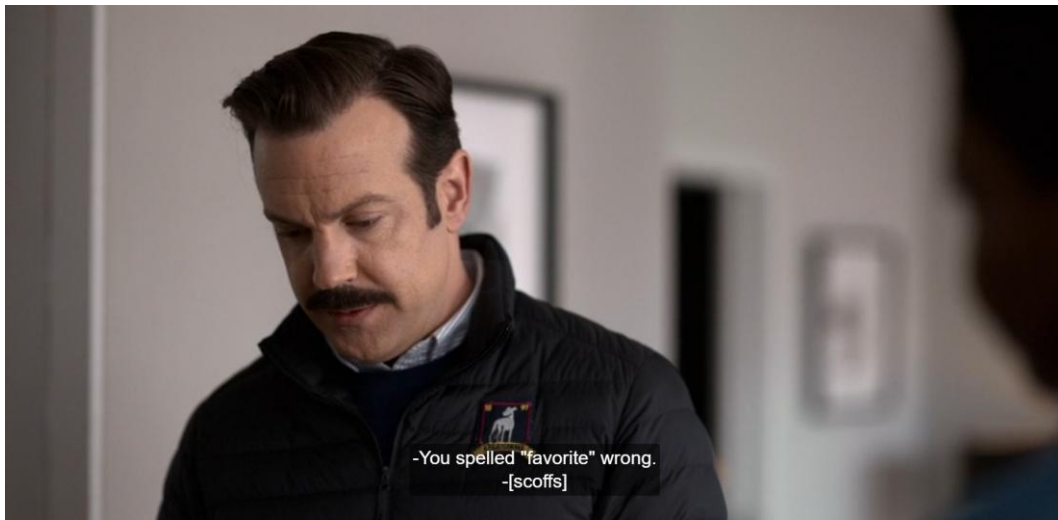


Figure 91: Screenshot of the scene described above. Source: AppleTV+.

c) Music

Another issue regards the rendering of music. The opening of the first episode features the Sex Pistols' *God Save the Queen*, yet this crucial detail is omitted from the SDH, which instead provides the more generic "[rock music playing]" label. Despite the song's global popularity and its potential to serve as an introduction to British culture in line with the plot of the series, this interpretation is not conveyed in the subtitles. Another example can be found in Season 2, Episode 11, where the SDH does not signal Radiohead's song *Karma Police*, but simply reports "[music playing]". An additional example can be found in Season 1, Episode 10, which was previously referenced. Indeed, the label "[woman singing in French]" actually represents Édith Piaf singing *Non, je ne regrette rien*.

Although the signalling of music references does not refer to linguistic variation, it is indeed a key element in shaping the cultural context and intertextual references of audiovisual products. The absence of such references may signify a reduction of cultural nuances for DHH audiences, thereby underscoring the necessity to adopt a comprehensive approach to accessibility that transcends mere language.

As demonstrated by the above examples, it can be concluded that the qualitative analysis of SDH in *Ted Lasso* reveals a tendency towards normalisation and homogenisation of linguistic

varieties, despite its status as one of the most verbatim series in *LISA Corpus*. Despite the presence of characters with strong phonetic and sociolinguistic characterisations, such as the ex-coach George and Roy Kent, the signalling of such traits remains absent or little exploited in the SDH. This omission not only deprives the DHH audience of an important access key to the identity and the construction of more peculiar characters but also contributes to a lack of intensity within the audiovisual narrative. While multilingualism is generally indicated by conventional labels such as [speaking Dutch] or [...in French], additional pragmatic details are rarely provided to contextualise the intervention of the foreign language or local varieties in discourses. Another significant issue that has been identified is the recurrent use of American spelling (e.g. ‘favor’, ‘center’, ‘behavior’) for British speakers, which results in the erasure of a key visual marker distinguishing between British English and American English. This phenomenon may impoverish the sociolinguistic dimension available to viewers, thereby compromising the intended socio-cultural impact of the text. It is evident that the translation choices demonstrate a limited consideration of the sociolinguistic and intercultural aspects of accessible subtitling. The necessity for synthesis, space, and readability must not overshadow the linguistic diversity present in the original work.

5.1.2 *Blitz: Exploring social dynamics through language*

Blitz is a historical, war drama film distributed by AppleTV+ in 2024 and directed by Steve McQueen. The film is distinguished by its setting in the British urban context and its intense and realistic portrayal of social, personal, and collective dynamics during World War II. Set in 1940s London during the German bombing raid known as the ‘Blitz’, the film tells the story of George, a nine-year-old mixed-race boy evacuated to the countryside for safety reasons. His mother, Rita (Saoirse Ronan), sends him away on a train with other children, with the intention of safeguarding him. However, George decides to return home, and thus escapes the train on which he was travelling by throwing himself from the train door. From that moment onward, he begins a dangerous and tense journey to return home to his mother, and encounters several people on his way, some of whom display friendliness, while others do not. The narrative is characterised by events and characters immersed in a reality marked by emotional tensions and conflicts, with language playing a role in delineating belonging, identity, and sometimes power relations.

From a linguistic perspective, *Blitz* is characterised by diatopic and diastratic variations of English, through the presence of a regional accent, slang forms, colloquial expressions, and

marked syntax. In the film, language is employed as a means of authenticity and characterisation, reflecting the complex nature of the British social fabric during wartime. In fact, this aspect can be defined by the identification of non-standard elements, encompassing urban slang, idioms and marked syntactic forms, as well as alternating registers, ranging from informal discourse to harsh confrontation and children's speech. The richness of these components makes *Blitz* a potential case of interest for the study of accessible subtitling, as it offers a range of opportunities to observe and analyse the strategies adopted for the rendering of sociolinguistic traits also in a similar genre.

a) Accent and dialect

Starting from diatopic variation, Cockney represents the primary marker of linguistic identity in the film. Set in the East End of London, this film employs linguistic strategies that contribute to its authenticity and social construction. One example that is notable for its recurrence in the film is the transcription of ‘em’ instead of ‘them’. The pronoun reduction reflects the actual pronunciation of the word by characters in London, in a typical interactional and social setting where characters are expected to speak more rapidly and impulsively due to the dramatic and anxious situation. The following examples are drawn from the SDH:

Force `em open!

and

Open `em up!

both mentioned by guards, who are solicited by civilians to open the gates of the underground to let them hide from bombs (minutes 7:44 and 8:03, respectively). A similar elision occurs in this phrase (minute 14:25):

Old iron! Any ol' iron!

This is a traditional call used by rag-and-bone men or metal collectors – appearing on screen – demanding for some scrap metal items⁵⁴.



Figure 92: Screenshot from the ragman scene, arriving on his carriage in the background. The SDH show the call "any ol' iron". Source: AppleTV+.

Non-standard phonetic reduction can also be seen in 'ya', i.e., a form of vocalic reduction and assimilation of the long vowel [u:] in 'you', which becomes [jɐ]. This form of spelling pronunciation occurs verbatim in SDH in most cases, as evidenced in the following example (minute 20:54):

Missing mummy, are ya?

that a child says to George while on the train. Although this particular instance of phonetic reduction is transposed, another case does not receive the same treatment, which is somewhat unexpected. At minute 18:35, the SDH

[worker 4] Bloody misery, isn't it?

is actually pronounced as

Bloody misery, innit?,

⁵⁴ The phrase also recurs in a popular 1911 British music hall song and probably refers to a gay man, since 'iron' is the Cockney Rhyming Slang term for 'gay' (The Guardian, 2001).

thus eliminating an additional element that would have further characterised spontaneous speech. The decision to standardise it, despite its well-known graphic form, may be rather difficult to justify.

Notwithstanding their importance, phonetic reductions represent merely one of the strategies employed in the film to imply diatopic variation. Specific spelling is also employed to transpose it in the written mode. Interjections such as ‘oy’ are indicative of the variety employed, and are accurately reproduced in the subtitles (for example, at minute 20:33):

Oy, get down from there immediately, son.

This sentence is uttered by the ticket inspector towards a teenage boy who is standing on a seat while travelling by train. The speaker’s accent is identified as Cockney; however, a phonetic spelling is not provided. While the sentence conforms to standard orthographic conventions, the word ‘oy’ is retained as an element of diatopic variation. This form of mediation continues to provide audiences with a general understanding of the variety employed, or at the very least, offers indications that the variety used does not correspond to RP.

From a morphological perspective, an illustration is provided by the case of ‘me’ being used as a possessive adjective, a practice that is consistently observed in the film’s SDH whenever the adjective is mentioned. For instance:

I lost **me** way.

and

Me granddad says he was deported.

George utters both sentences to his new acquaintance, Ife – a black soldier whom the boy had previously encountered while escaping (at minutes 52:47 and 54:33, respectively). It can thus be posited that pronoun reductions, idiomatic expressions, and local interjections are adequately transposed in the SDH in such a way that the DHH audience can grasp the specificity of the variety.

However, it should be noted that numerous instances of Cockney are not represented in the SDH, primarily due to the challenge of transcribing phonetic traits in writing. One such

phenomenon is the T-glottalisation, i.e., the fall of the final or intervocalic /t/ sound in words, which is frequently substituted by a glottal stop [ʔ] or, in certain instances, by zero sound. In Cockney, this phenomenon can also be encountered when /t/ is followed by another consonant. The following practical cases are provided for illustration:

- Intervocalic /t/ dropped: “Guess you’re saving your voice for *la’er* (later), eh?” (minute 18:11)
- Final /t/ dropped: “Yeah, I know. It’s bloody hard sending ‘em away like *tha’* (that)” (minute 17:54)
- Glottalisation before another /t/ (both are glottalised, therefore it is more likely an intervocalic case): “It’d be like going to Blackpool. *Be’er!* (better)” (minute 18:08); “What’s the *ma’er* (matter) with you both?” (minute 22:49).

As is evident, a similar spelling would have implications for the legibility of subtitles for both DHH and hearing audiences. Probably with the exception of ‘tha’’, which remains identifiable, other examples demonstrate more complexity. The corresponding SDH maintain the standard form for three principal reasons:

1. Readability: as outlined briefly above, the spelling of marked forms may result in general difficulties during reading, especially due to the absence of standardised written forms.
2. Subtitling Conventions: a preference is typically exhibited standard writing, and when a dialect occurs, a compromise is generally enacted, depending on the importance of the variety for the plot or the character.
3. Accessibility: as discussed in Chapters One and Three of the present work, norms on accessibility suggest that excessive orthographic distortions should be avoided, to ensure that DHH’s general comprehension of the product is not adversely affected.

As a consequence, the SDH do not transpose this feature graphically. Despite the absence of elements pertaining to phonetic richness and character portrayal, other forms including lexicon, pronouns, and syntactic markedness are transposed, thereby achieving a certain compromise. Furthermore, given that the majority of characters use a Cockney accent, the inclusion of a label specifying the variety would be redundant.

Peculiar orality is hard to emphasise in subtitles even if it suggests class membership. For example, at minute 1:02:21, a working-class man is preventing a – supposedly – Sikh man to use their toilet in the shelter for racist reasons. The original utterance can be transcribed as

Who **d'you** think you are, ay? Just move **ova**,

while the SDH corresponds to

Who **do you** think you are, eh? Just move **over**.



Figure 93: Screenshot from the working-class man scene. The SDH is over-standardised. Source: AppleTV+.

At that point, a presumably upper-class character addresses this man with a polite, RP-accented sentence:

Sir, he wasn't raising his voice.

The working-class man, on the other hand, uses colloquialisms and British slang and speaks with a less formal accent. The SDH manages to preserve the pragmatic contrast and the use of slang:

And I definitely wasn't talking to you lot, mate,

but does not capture the full specificity of his accent. These extracts once again display the inherent difficulty of representing accent features in the written form, thus relying on lexical

items. Nevertheless, the overall register and social dynamics of power are conveyed through punctual lexical choices.

b) British lexicon

Within markedness, lexicon assumes a pivotal function. As evidenced by the interjection ‘oy’ and the idiomatic expression ‘any ol’ iron’, the preservation of lexical features can be a more effective means of achieving linguistic variety in subtitles. In *Blitz*, other instances can be detected in the SDH, which indeed fulfil this function:

- **‘bog’** in “What happens if you wanna go to the bog?” (said by George to another child; minute 33:55);
- **‘nappy’** in “Maybe they give you a nappy or something” (in response to the previous utterance; minute 33:56)
- **‘ta’** in “Ta, Albert” (said by a newspaper seller to Albert, a looter, who gives him a coin; minute 1:14:19)
- **‘scallywag’**, repeated several times throughout the film, as in “[guard 1] Get off me, you scallywag.” (said by a guard who spots George and his friends jumping off a freight train; minute 37:01)
- **‘blimey’** as in “Blimey, Doris!” (said by one of Rita’s co-workers; minute 39:13);
- **‘jacksie’** in “You can shove your job / up your jacksie for all I care!” (said by Rita to her boss; minute 11:11:02)
- **‘jeepers’** in the exclamation “Jeepers!” (said by a child on the freight train when George narrates how he escaped the previous train; minute 33:25)
- **‘fella’** – more widely recognised – in “What’s it to you? Is he your fella?” (said by one girl to another on the children’s train, referring to George; minute 20:58).

All the previous examples show the way variation traits are preserved in the SDH due to affordability in terms of both reading comprehension and ease of graphical transposition. However, the general rendering of a British variety through the correct written transposition of the British lexicon may be affected by other factors. More specifically, the American spelling of words ending in ‘-our’ in British English is adopted throughout the film, as was the case for *Ted Lasso*. For instance, the SDH (minute 33:21)

Strawberry jam! My **favorite**!

is used for an English boy, which may cause confusion and does not align with his actual background. Once again, using American spelling in an entirely British context is inaccurate and undermines one of the most obvious markers of written linguistic identity. This choice risks reducing communicative effectiveness, particularly where vocabulary and syntax are closely linked to a specific British variety. It could be argued that standardising the spelling according to the orthographic conventions of the variety represented would be more suitable. Apart from this issue, the general British lexicon was respected throughout the film.

c) Marked syntax

Similar treatments to those used for the lexicon were applied to syntactically marked forms. The following examples illustrate this:

- “You be a good boy” (marked verbal time; told by George to his cat; minute 13:39)
- “What he don’t know, it ain’t gonna hurt him” (absence of subject-verb agreement; mentioned by Rita’s coworker in a club; minute 48:35)
- “Yeah, you done good, George” (verbal form without auxiliary; mentioned by the looter, Albert; minute 1:18:40)
- “I look like a plum?” (lack of inversion in a question; said by Rita to George in a flashback; minute 1:06:00)
- “You mind where you’re going!” (explicit rendering of the subject in an imperative form⁵⁵ to reinforce the interlocutor; mentioned by a male off-screen voice to George; minute 1:07:31).



Figure 94: Screenshot from George's greeting scene while saying "You be a good boy" to his cat, Ollie. Source: AppleTV+.

⁵⁵ This form is not included in the tag list of syntactic markedness in this work but is still interesting to note.

Retaining non-standard syntactic forms in the SDH represents a positive choice, as it serves to reinforce the authenticity of the interaction and consistency with the spoken variety of the characters. This demonstrates that, even in accessible writing, it is possible to represent the richness and distinctness of oral language without compromising comprehensibility.

d) Music and sound

Ultimately, an issue detaching from sociolinguistics but regarding the multimodal dimension can be identified in the context of music. As happened in *Ted Lasso*, certain decisions made to represent sounds can be debatable. In more detail, melodies accompanying scenes can be rarely detected. For example, in the scene starting at minute 18:48, a group of factory workers are building bombs. Only sound effects deriving from the use of materials are included in the SDH, while the musical accompaniment remains unlabelled. In this scene, violins perform a sprung, crescendo rhythm while synchronised with the actions, thus allowing the application of labels such as *[sprung rhythm playing], *[deep sprung violin sound], or *[dramatic music crescendo]. A similar case occurs at 30:00, where the musical rhythm recalling the steam train sound effect is not signalled, despite being recurrent during the entire scene. The absence of notes or labels relating to recurring pieces of music or sounds may have a negative impact on the reception of the scene by the SDH audience. The employment of particular descriptions, such as *[rhythm imitating steam train], has been demonstrated to facilitate the comprehension of the emotional and cultural elements communicated by the music or sound effects.

As demonstrated by the above instances, it can be stated that *Blitz* represents an interesting case of accessible subtitling in which the tension between linguistic authenticity and the need for readability leads to varied and sometimes inconsistent solutions. Where regional vocabulary and syntax are well transposed, there is a tendency towards standardisation for more pronounced phonetic phenomena and spelling, which can be partially mitigated by the use of explanatory labels. Greater attention to the consistency and transparency of the editorial criteria would be desirable, as well as the accessibility of the multimodal dimension, in order to offer a truly inclusive and culturally rich experience. In spite of its serious tone, *Blitz* also represents a valid example of how the management of marked linguistic features can contribute to both sociolinguistic awareness and accessible translation across genres.

5.2 Disney+: *Wedding Season* and *Rye Lane*

The present section will analyse the two products selected for Disney+, i.e., *Wedding Season* and *Rye Lane*, a comedy series and film respectively. The selection of these products was made on the basis of their diversity regarding sociolinguistic assets: the TV series is set in a contemporary and diversified social context but employs a relatively standard language, while the film appears to be more accurate in its depiction of linguistic variation and more socially characterised. Consequently, an investigation into the discrepancy in sociolinguistic rendering and SDH production across two distinct productions within the same platform may prove to be worth exploring. The following two products will thus demonstrate different strategies for exposing general variation in both narrative and accessible AVT regarding a very similar genre.

5.2.1 *Wedding Season: some 'Scottishness' with standard SDH*

Wedding Season is a romantic comedy series released on Disney+ in 2022 and created by Oliver Lyttelton. The series combines elements of romance and comedy with action and crime thriller genres, and offers a portrayal of modern, upper-middle British society, with references to Scotland. The plot is centred on Stefan (Gavin Drea), a doctor who disrupts Kate's wedding (Rosa Salazar), with whom he has a complicated relationship. During the wedding banquet, eight guests died poisoned, with the exception of Katie, who escaped and consequently became the main suspect of murder. Because of his involvement in Katie's actions, Stefan is also considered a suspect and is therefore detained at the Manchester Metropolitan Police Station. However, he is intercepted by Katie, who forces him to follow her in a complex, turbulent escape with the scope to prove their innocence and find the actual culprits. Through this dynamic storytelling, *Wedding Season* explores elements of personal identity and power relations within modern British life, with language choices serving to convey such dimensions.

From a linguistic perspective, the series offers a rich landscape for the study of language variation at different levels. Diaphasic strategies involving the change of register and style are combined with diatopic nuances, especially within a Scottish scenario. The analysis of the SDH should identify the level of representation of such nuances through the lens of accessibility of the final product.

a) Scottish English

Starting from the diatopic characterisation, an important aspect is the tendency to flatten accent references in the series' SDH. In more detail, the Scottish accent is employed on many occasions on different characters, since a significant portion of the series is set in Scotland. The impact of the accent on the characterisation of such speakers is noteworthy; nevertheless, this is not indicated in the SDH. For instance, the character of Police Inspector DI Donahue (Jamie Michie), who is Scottish, exhibits a distinct accent that is clearly distinguishable from that of the other interlocutors, who are supposedly from Manchester – the city where the police station is located and where the series begins. It is true that, despite his origin, Donahue's accent is not excessively pronounced; nevertheless, it is conceivable that some features of pronunciation could have been implemented in the written mode. In Episode 1 (minute 25:39), he exclaims

Oh, **shite**,

which is instead standardised in the SDH with:

Oh, **shit**.

In this example, the changing of a single word would have served to refine a character without reducing him to a mere caricature. In contrast, the role is instead assigned to a Scottish police officer in Episode 2, who works close to Edinburgh. Katie and Stefan are seen by the police officer while stealing a motorbike. The officer erroneously assumes that they are having engine trouble. At this point, the fugitives feign an engine malfunction, and the policeman replies (minute 11:18):

Oh, that's the worst. And Gavin, / our mechanic, is off on holiday.



Figure 95: Screenshot from the police officer's scene. Source: Disney+.

The man's accent is distinctly Scottish, yet this feature is not indicated in the SDH. In particular, the pronunciation of 'worst' features an open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ] in place of the standard open-mid central unrounded vowel [ɜ]. Additionally, the doubling of [s] results in a shift from the standard pronunciation of ['wɜ:st] to a more rounded ['wɔs:t]. Considering the complexity of transposing this variant in the SDH, perhaps a label indicating *(Scottish accent) could contribute to his portrayal. At minute 11:48, he offers Stefan and Katie a lift in his service car:

That's settled then. Come on.

The word 'settled' is pronounced with a glottal stop [ʔ] as a result of the double [t] lenition. As already exposed for *Blitz*, the difficulty to transcribe graphically the actual pronunciation – which would resemble to 'se'led' and complicate the reading – may wish for the addition of the label.

The intricacies involved in the transcription of oral utterances that exhibit accents may also be susceptible to interpretation errors. The following sentence is worthy of note, which involves the same police officer. While the SDH proposes (minute 11:45)

Let's go

the original version is more likely to correspond to

Off you go.

This sentence is more appropriate for the scene, as both Katie and Stefan are reluctant to accept the policeman's invitation in order to avoid identification. Furthermore, the pronunciation approximates [ɔv ju 'go], demonstrating slight closure of the back vowel [ɒ] to [ɔ], voicing of the final obstruent from [f] to [v], and replacement of the standard diphthong [əʊ] with the monophthong [o] for 'go'. It appears that the form 'let's' does not share any features that corresponds to the original speech.

Finally, upon reaching their destination, the policeman asks the two fugitives whether he is allowed to eat the final piece of candy (minute 19:12). The SDH shows:

Do **you' s** want this?

which seems to be ungrammatical. Instead, considering the Scottish origin of the speaker, he must have said

Do **youse** want this?

This example illustrates the significance of paying close attention to SDH, not only to ensure accurate pronunciation of the character, but also to avoid any potential misunderstandings in communication.

In Episode 3, the scenario and character change. Following a daring escape from members of a criminal organisation that aims to kill them, Katie and Stefan encounter a local worker who offers to help them escape. The man speaks with a thicker Scottish accent than the characters analysed above, yet this is not indicated in this scene either. Although the facial expressions of both protagonists appear somewhat sceptical as soon as the worker starts talking, this comedic effect is not replicated in SDH due to their 'clean' form. In more detail, the worker is quoted as saying

Aye, of course, I can take **ye** (pronounced [ji:]).

However, in the SDH his utterance is standardised in

Of course, I can take you.



Figure 96: Screenshot from the Scottish man's scene. Source: Disney+.

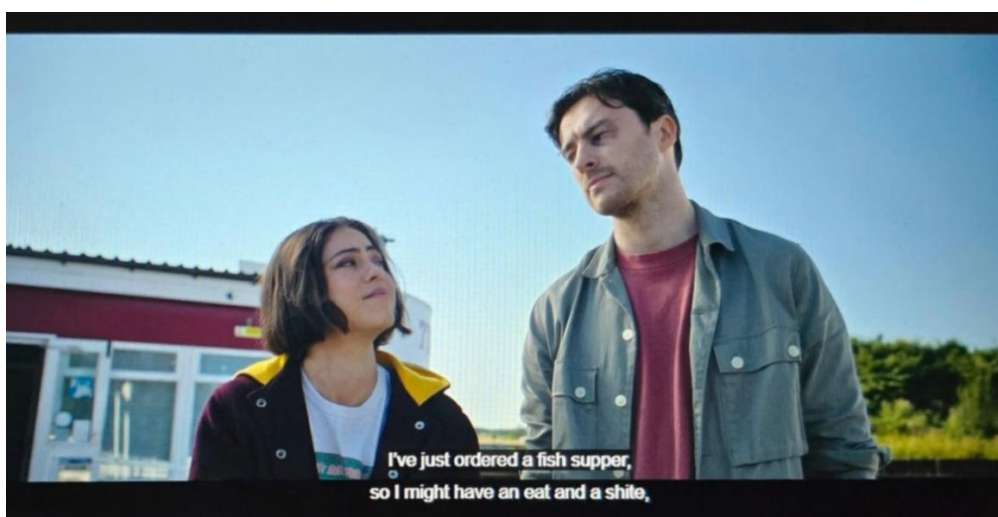


Figure 97: Screenshot of Stefan and Katie's facial expressions at hearing the man speaking. Source: Disney+.

The worker's line commences with 'aye' and concludes with 'ye', yet both terms underwent modification in the SDH; the former was deleted, and the latter standardised. The incorporation of similar dialectal terms in subtitles would serve to enhance the specific variety where the accent fails. Additionally, the word 'course' is pronounced with a high-rise intonation and vocalic extension (resembling ['kʰo:ɫs]), which is a typical prosodic characteristic of Scottish varieties. This trait contributes to the emphasis of the message, which is lost in the SDH due to its diamesic complexity. One potential solution may be represented by labels such as

*[emphatic voice] **Aye**, of course, I can take **ye**

or

*[rising intonation] **Aye**, of course, I can take **ye**

so that greater emphasis is placed on prosody and it is not necessary to include a label for the Scottish variety, already given by ‘aye’ and ‘ye’.

Apart from all phonetic issues, some lexical elements are correctly retained in the subtitles. For example, the SDH at 8:33

I've just ordered a fish supper, / so I might have an eat and a
shite

demonstrates that the correct pronunciation of ‘shite’ is transcribed in this instance. It is possible that the characterisation of the individual in question is that of a working-class person, while the police inspector is depicted with an upper localisation, as if it was deemed inappropriate to associate him with a dialect variant. Nevertheless, the general standardisation of the utterances somewhat reduced the characterisation of the speaker, whose sole transposition of ‘shite’ may not be sufficient.

The missing label for the Scottish accent also occurs in Episode 4, where the character of Conrad (Richard Gadd), a criminal, is displayed. At that point in the narrative, he is taking Katie and Stefan at hostage. In a flashback, he remembers his speech at his own wedding with Katie, who was disguised as Keira at that time. In a fairly standard accent, he says (minute 0:58):

I'm not a very big speech guy. / And you all complain
about my accent anyway, / so I'll keep it short.

The reference to his accent appears to place him within a Scottish linguistic background, a hypothesis that is supported by the fact that Katie and Stefan meet him in Glasgow. It is also true that the geolinguistic area in which the monologue was delivered is not clarified; consequently, it remains ambiguous as to whether Conrad was the sole Scottish person in the flashback scene or if he comes from an isolated region of Scotland characterised by a distinct dialect. The actor's Scottish identity, hailing from the town of Wormit in the Fife region, lends further support to the first argument. Returning to the present, the actor employs a distinctive

Scottish accent, and the addition of a label here would have ensured the comprehensibility of the utterance in the flashback for deaf viewers.

b) American spelling

A further critical element in the analysis of linguistic rendering in *Wedding Season*'s SDH concerns spelling. The failure to indicate regional accents in accessible subtitles can result in the loss of an important identity and contextual component. Nevertheless, the systematic selection of American spelling in productions featuring British actors, settings, and language varieties – as evidenced in *Ted Lasso* and *Blitz* – can be problematic. In such contexts, it is to be expected that consistency with British spelling would prevail – ‘colour’ instead of ‘color’ (S01E01, 25:34), ‘favour’ instead of ‘favor’ (S05E05, 31:47), ‘realised’ instead of ‘realized’ (S01E01, 8:40), and so on – as a natural reflection of the sociolinguistic identity of the characters and the narrative universe represented. The use of American spelling, in fact, may deprive the language in the SDH of the British nuance that this series has. It could be assumed that the majority of subtitle creators for American streaming platforms are likely to be American themselves, yet this practice may have an adverse impact on linguistic diversity.

c) Syntactic markedness and British colloquialisms

Despite all the critical issues analysed above, it must be admitted that certain non-standard elements are preserved in the SDH. It is the case of syntactic markedness, especially the lack of inversion in questions and copula omission:

- “You love weddings?” (E01, Katie to Stefan; minute 13:13)
- “You really think I did this?” (E01, Katie to Stefan; minute 24:42)
- “You all right there?” (E02, Stefan to Katie; minute 21:19)
- “They knew about you and me?” (E04, Stefan to Katie; minute 15:52)
- “Your girlfriend seemed like a murderer to you?” (E06, DI Donahue to Stefan; minute 20:23)
- “I really don’t know what to say?” (E06, Vince, a wedding designer, to Katie; minute 21:20)
- “You okay?” (E07, Stefan to Katie; minute 3:00)
- “You ever feel like that?” (E08, Katie to Mitzi, an influencer and daughter of a crime boss; minute 5:23)

- “You wanna talk now?” (E08, Stefan to Katie; minute 8:20).

The given examples demonstrate that syntactic markedness is consistently expressed in written language and prove once again that this phenomenon can be readily articulated in written form.

Other elements correctly included in the SDH are British colloquial forms such as ‘lad’, ‘bloody’, ‘biz’ standing for ‘business’; informal expressions such as ‘gotta’, ‘wanna’, and ‘gonna’ – which was subject to one case of normalisation into ‘going to’ (E03, 34:07); swear words such as ‘fuck’, ‘shit’, ‘motherfuckers’: all swearing is always signalled and never censored in SDH; some acronyms such as ‘af’ for ‘as fuck’ and ‘tbh’ as ‘to be honest’ (E01, 4:08 and 4:37).

d) Labelling music and languages

Finally, a consideration can be made on music. As in the case of AppleTV+ productions, in this series there have been instances where the incorporation of songs into the SDH format has not met expectations. To illustrate this point, in Episode 1, a label signals:

(funky music playing).

Rather surprisingly, the reference is Foals’ song *My Number*, released in 2013. The incorporation of the song-specific meta-textual references in the label would probably have caused its immediate identification, particularly in light of its popularity in the UK at the time⁵⁶. A more curious case involves Dead or Alive’s song, *You Spin Me Round*, which is signalled as

(upbeat music playing).

Considering the general fame of the song, the SDH should have reserved meta-textual information as well.

A positive instance is instead reserved for the language used in a song. In Episode 7 (minute 16:43), the song *Style* by Aiden J. is performed. Such information is included in the dedicated label. In addition, another label follows:

⁵⁶ *My Number* attained 23rd position in UK charts and was recognised as the group’s most popular song on a global scale (Official Charts, n.d.).

(rapper raps in Korean).

The indication of the song's language is a fundamental device from both an accessible and a cultural point of view. The language indication enables the DHH audience to perceive the change of code and the general mood of the scene, which would otherwise remain limited.

The analysis of *Wedding Season*'s SDH compared to the original dialogues reveals a marked asymmetry between syntactic and lexical elements and diatopic and pragmatic factors. On the one hand, British slang terms, despite being few, and marked syntactic forms were transposed faithfully, thus contributing to authenticity and immediacy of original speech. They represent the strongest points of the series' SDH. On the other hand, noticeable issues emerge on representation of diatopic varieties and accent traits, as well as of orthographic variation, which systematically tends towards American English despite British speakers. The absence of specific labels or graphic markers to render Scottish accent or prosody reduces linguistic richness and identity depiction in some way. This tendency to standardisation usually responds to the need for readability and simplification, but risks depriving the DHH viewers of elements that are fundamental to the full understanding of the narrative, character portrayal, and communicative actions.

If SDH in *Wedding Season* proves effective in the rendering of non-standard morphosyntactic and lexical structures, a significant gap remains in the representation of sociolinguistic and pragmatic complexity. The primary challenge in achieving truly accessible and inclusive subtitling could thus be the identification of innovative solutions and greater sensitivity to cultural and identity-specific nuances.

5.2.2 Rye Lane: *younger speakers in London*

Rye Lane is a 2023 romantic British comedy directed by Raine Allen-Miller, produced by BBC Film. The film is set in the Peckham and Brixton areas in the South of London and follows the events of Dom (David Jonsson) and Yas (Vivian Oparah), two young Black Londoners who casually encounter each other during the exhibition of their mutual friend. They spend a day together confessing themselves and developing a relationship. The work is distinguished by its narrative, utterly visual and fresh, as well as by an authentic representation of contemporary multicultural urban reality in London. From a sociolinguistic perspective, *Rye Lane* may represent a privileged viewpoint for the analysis of the variety named Multicultural London

English (MLE), which developed in the late 1990s and in 2000s, and of youth slang. The film provides the audience with colloquialisms, marked syntactic structures, and phonetic phenomena typical of urban spoken language, thus making it an interesting case for studying contemporary sociolinguistic realisation in accessible subtitling.

a) Syntactic markedness

The primary element that merits attention is the pervasive use of instances of syntactic marked structures, a feature consistently documented in the subtitles. This strategy immediately collocates the language in the informal, juvenile register, thus setting the diaphasic dimension onto a lower level. Some examples are displayed below:

- “Everything all right in there?” (Yas to Dom while he is hiding in the toilet; minute 2:39)
- “You nervous?” (minute 3:36)
- “You ever feel like that?” (minute 5:23)
- “You cool?” (minute 5:30)
- “You okay?” (multiple times)
- “You wanna talk now?” (minute 8:20)
- “So, where you off to?” (minute 8:46)
- “He don’t wave at boats.” (minute 31:46)
- “This gonna be good.” (minute 32:32)
- “I’m a see what happens.” (minute 34:56)
- “You got a boner over his gaff.” (minute 56:46).

The omission of the forms of the verb ‘to be’, the absence of inversion in questions, and the lack of subject-verb agreement serve to increase the pace and emphasise the spontaneity of speech. An interesting case is the verbatim SDH

“I’m a see what happens.”⁵⁷,

which reports the sentence said by Yas to Dom while sitting together on a bench in a park. The linguistic condensation process starts with the initial formulation of the future tense, ‘I’m going

⁵⁷ The inverted commas employed are integral to the original SDH, as it is a direct quotation.

to', and progresses sequentially through its simplification to 'I'm gonna', and ultimately to 'I'ma'. The infinitive form follows directly. This colloquial expression is indicative of youth orality, particularly evidenced in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) (Lanehart, 2015), yet it seems to be included in the context of youth London slang as a loanword, perhaps due to music influence (Rampton, 2011). The rendering in the SDH is an accurate representation of the original, thereby preserving the markedness and spontaneity of the dialogues.

b) Urban lexicon

Another feature that is distinctive of the film revolves around local lexicon and discursive expressions, which are identifiable as MLE, urban, and youth, and are transposed in SDH as in the original speech. Below a list of noticeable terms is included accompanied by an explanation:

- **'Aight'**, (meaning 'All right'; minute 3:47)
- **'Geezer'** (meaning 'man', 'guy', typically British; minute 14:17)
- **'Payin''** ('paying' with the elision of the final 'g'; minute 14:18)
- **'Coppin''** ('copping' from 'to cop', meaning 'buy', 'take', typically MLE slang; minute 7:37)
- **'Man'** (MLE form, standing for a generic pronoun; minute 7:42)
- **'Bare'** (meaning 'many'; minute 7:42)
- **'Peas'** (meaning 'money'; minute 7:42)
- **'Ting'** (meaning 'thing'; minute 10:25 and other instances)
- **'In ya gut'** (short for 'your'; minute 9:35)
- **'Peng'** (meaning 'very attractive' or 'impressive'; minute 9:41)
- **'Stuntin' on 'em'** (meaning 'praise oneself'; minute 13:36)
- **'Gaff'** (meaning 'home'; minute 56:46)
- **'Rep'** (short form for 'reputation'; minute 21:02)
- **'Innit'** ('isn't it'; minute 4:36 and other instances)
- **'Whactha'** (contraction of 'what do you think'; minute 6:25).

Among these expressions, some of them are of particular interest. Firstly, the words 'man', 'bare', and 'peas' occur in the same sentence:

Man must have bare peas saved up.



Figure 98: Screenshot from the reference scene, showing Nathan in extreme close-up. Source: Disney+.

This sentence is uttered by Nathan (Simon Manyonda), a mutual acquaintance of Dom and Yas, during his photographic art exhibition about mouths. Nathan attempts to persuade Dom to purchase one of his photographs and leverages the fact that his friend may have some funds available, given his return to living with his parents. It is in that moment that Nathan delivers the colloquial sentence. The term ‘man’ is used as neutral pronoun in MLE with a similar meaning to ‘you’, ‘one’, or ‘someone’ (Cheshire, 2023, p. 51). ‘Bare’ is used as an intensifier, which means ‘many’, ‘a lot’, mainly among London youngsters. Finally, ‘peas’ is the MLE form for ‘money’, which usually occurs with ‘bare’ as a common collocation (Green’s Dictionary of Slang, 2016). This sentence accurately captures some of the key characteristics of MLE, including innovative pronominality, a multicultural lexicon, and non-standard intensifiers.

Another interesting term is ‘ting’, which is an example of TH-stopping, which consists of the alveolarisation of the [θ] and [ð] phones into [t] and [d], respectively. Such a realisation is another phonetic peculiarity of MLE and, more generally, different dialects of British English such as Cockney. This term occurs for the first time at minute 10:25, when Yas and Dom are walking together outside the Rye Lane Market:

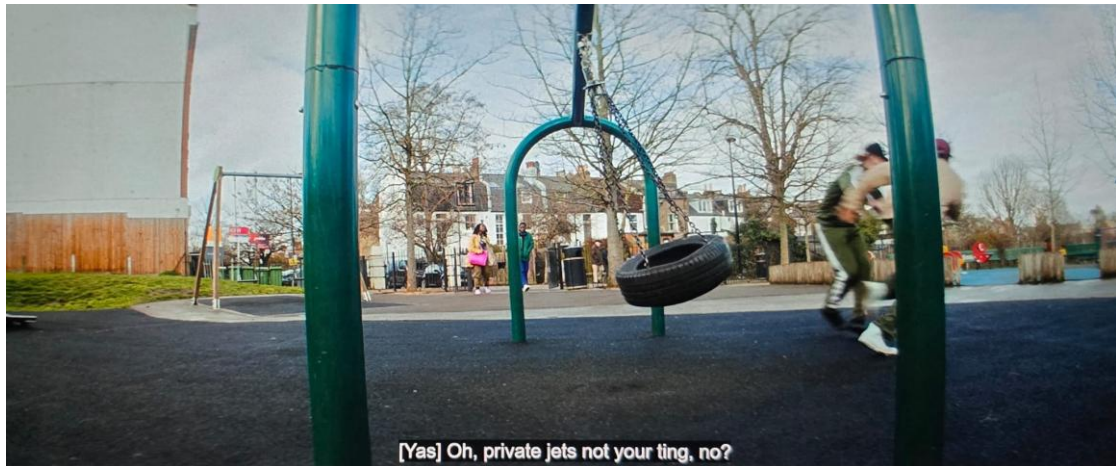


Figure 99: SDH of the 'ting' sentence. Source: Disney+.

It is noticeable that this term is recurrent throughout the subtitles, except for the utterance at minute 28:00:

Aw, you poor **thing**,

which is pronounced by Yas with a plosive rather than a fricative. This choice can be attributed to two possible reasons. Firstly, the use of the standard form 'poor thing' – which is rather idiomatic – may reflect a tendency towards readability and established orthographic norms in SDH, despite the non-standard pronunciation ('ting'). Subtitlers may avoid the form 'ting' in this context to prevent visual alienation or confusion for the DHH viewer, prioritising conventional recognition over phonetic accuracy. Secondly, inconsistencies may arise from the collaborative aspect of the subtitling process, wherein subtitlers' perceptions vary regarding which non-standard forms legitimate representation. The former case may be considered plausible in this instance.

With the exception of 'ting', the TH-stopping is not observed in all SDH cases. For instance, at minute 7:37 Nathan tries to convince Dom by saying

People see you coppin', might inspire them.

The word 'them' can be transcribed as [dəm], but it is not properly signalled in SDH. Nevertheless, the general adherence to variation is not affected by this missing non-standard feature. Furthermore, this sentence exhibits various grammatically marked peculiarities. Firstly, the final 'g' in the slang term 'coppin'' is elided. Secondly, the subject 'it' or 'this' is implied

in the second sentence. Thirdly, the connection between sentences and discursive coherence is implied as well (the explicit utterance should be: *If people see you copping [the photograph], it might inspire them). These characteristics already contribute to the authentic representation of urban identity in the SDH, thereby overcoming the need for the TH-stopping written rendering.

Another standardised phonetic form is represented by the lenition of [t] with [ʔ] as in Nathan's utterance

Babes, we know more about / the planet Jupiter
than we do the inside of our own mouths.

The subtitle does not perform graphically the actual pronunciation of 'Jupiter' as ['dʒu:pɪʔə] due to its complexity, as already exposed for the previous products.

b) British orthography

According to orthography, the film represents the only instance so far to provide a British spelling instead of an American one. At minute 51:30, Yas and Dom are in a karaoke club talking with Mona (Omari Douglas), the drag owner of the venue, who says:

What entertainment are you providing Mona / in exchange for this
favour?

The use of the British spelling finally signals the British variety. This option is probably due to the film's origins as a BBC Film production. It is plausible that *Rye Lane* was uploaded to Disney+ with pre-prepared subtitles reflecting the British localisation. This choice contrasts with that of the previous Disney series analysed, which was created directly for the platform and perhaps follows the trend of adopting American spelling in English-language subtitles, even for UK-based content.

c) Swearing

The film also accurately depicts swear words, many of which are locally characterised. Apart from ‘fuck’, ‘wanker’, and ‘shit’, which are commonly used, an interesting instance is (minute 56:46):

I get it. You got a **boner** over his gaff.

The scene unfolds at Yas’s former partner’s apartment, where she and Dom entered to recover a vinyl record that Yas had left behind following their breakup. Dom is observing the room and notices a variety of pieces of art adorning the space. The sentence – apart from using the slang word ‘gaff’ – also provides a swearing term referring to the sexual sphere, i.e., ‘boner’. This lexical choice shows once again the level of informality characterising this product.

A similar instance of humour can be identified in another scene. Yas and Dom are going shopping at a local market. Yas pays a compliment to a female customer regarding her clothing style, to which the woman smiles in response. Dom, in an attempt to emulate her, performs a similar action on a man, yet the outcome is not identical. The SDH are shown below:

Yas: Babe, that outfit? Tens across the board.

Woman: Oh. Thank you so much. [chuckles]

Dom: Do you know her?

Y: No, but she looks fire, innit?

D: What’s up, man? Cool kicks.

M: What?

M: **Dickhead**, man.

M: **Suck your mum**.

D: Yep.



Figure 100: Screenshot of the 'suck your mum' scene. Source: Disney+.

The following two insults are identified. The term 'dickhead' is a particularly prevalent form of insult in the UK. It is offensive, yet it has become a standardised element of the low diaphasic lexicon. The expression 'suck your mum' is a vulgar manifestation of Jamaican (Jamaican Patwah, 2022) and youth UK origin in the MLE context, characterised by its intensive and unabashed use of language. The term is suggestive of a vulgar gesture and can be translated as 'fuck off' or 'go away'. This meaning is employed to provoke or humiliate. It is noteworthy that both insults are reported verbatim, thereby demonstrating an acute attention to the actual representation of language.

d) Instances of multilingualism

The representation of language is also identified with the representation of multilingual instances. At minute 19:30, Dom, accompanied by his former partner Gia (Karene Peter) and his friend Eric (Benjamin Sarpong-Broni) – who has since become Gia's current partner – is seated in a restaurant. Eric employs the Portuguese word 'irmão' ('brother') when addressing the waiter, and Gia subsequently provides an explanation of its meaning to Dom.



Figure 101: Screenshot of the 'irmão' scene. Source: Disney+.

This word is retained in SDH, both because the person using it is on screen, and it is subsequently discussed in the following lines. Furthermore, multilingualism is perceived by the label “[employee speaking Spanish]”, when Dom and Yas are outside a burrito shop.

In conclusion, *Rye Lane* can be regarded as a paradigmatic example of accessible subtitling that has been shown to be largely effective in conveying the richness and dynamism of contemporary urban English, specifically Multicultural London English, to a DHH audience. The SDH exhibit a high degree of sensitivity to marked syntactic structures, youth slang, and urban lexical variety, preserving not only the informal register but also the immediacy and orality of the original dialogues. This aspect is most evident in the transcription of non-standard forms, such as the elision of subject pronouns, absence of inversion, and the use of MLE-specific vocabulary (‘ting’, ‘bare’, ‘man’, ‘peng’, among others). Nevertheless, certain limitations can be observed, particularly in the non-graphic rendering of phonetic phenomena such as TH-stopping or glottalization of [t], due to readability issues. However, a general tendency to maintain the integrity of non-standard and youth language can be identified, including profanity and expressions. The employment of direct speech serves to augment the perceived authenticity and inclusivity of the linguistic variation depicted in the film.

5.3 Netflix: *Sex Education* and *The Beautiful Game*

The present section analyses the two products selected for Netflix: *Sex Education* and *The Beautiful Game*. These works perform different sociolinguistic strategies, shaped by their respective genres – *Sex Education* as a teen sex comedy-drama, and *The Beautiful Game* as a sports comedy-drama focused on inclusivity. This genre difference offers a compelling perspective for analysing the sociolinguistic strategies adopted to construct interpersonal relationships and their representation in SDH. Moreover, Netflix’s explicit guidelines for the composition of SDH in comparison to other platforms sets higher expectations regarding the verbatim transcription of linguistic variation in accessible subtitles.

5.3.1 *Sex Education: taboo language and genderlect in teenagers’ speech*

Sex Education (2019-2023) is a British series created by Laurie Nunn and produced by Eleven Film for Netflix. Set in the imaginary English town of Moordale, the series focuses on the life of the teenager Otis Milburn (Asa Butterfield), son of the sex therapist Jean (Gillian Anderson), who covertly opens a service of sexual consultation at school with his friends Maeve Wiley (Emma Mackey) and Eric Effiong (Ncuti Gatwa). Many characters share their experiences with them and expose gender troubles, sexual inhibitions, and self-awareness dynamics with a perspective on inclusion and diversity. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the series can be regarded as an exemplar of linguistic strategies that primarily addresses taboo language and vulgar expressions, genderlect, and identity markers from a diastratic perspective. Additionally, it combines youth British slang mixed with neologisms and foreign terms within a multilingual framework.

a) **Taboo language**

As the focus of the series, taboo language principally pertains to the sexual sphere. The terms employed in this context range from neutral to highly offensive. For example, in the opening scene of Season 1, Episode 1, Aimee (Aimee Lou Wood) and Adam (Connor Swindells) are having a sexual intercourse. It is immediately evident that a gradation of terms is performed in Aimee’s lines, ranging from the least vulgar to the most vulgar (minute 00:32):

Do you like my tits? [...] Hello? Tits! [...] Do you wanna come on them? [...]
Actually, don’t. I got a rash last time. Let’s do it from behind. [...]

I'm gonna come. Are you gonna come? [...] Did you just fake it? [...] Where's the spunk, Adam?

The SDH do not censor this type of lexical choice, reflecting the general tendency throughout the series. The majority of vulgar expressions appear in a strong youth context, sometimes as authentic allusions, sometimes simply as intended offence. Terms such as 'hard-on' (S01E01, minute 05:41), 'hand jobs' (S01E01, 07:25), 'shagging' (S01E01, 07:45), 'wank' (S01E02, minute 05:38), 'rimmin'' (S01E03, minute 36:40), or 'dry humping' (S01E04, minute 00:12) are indeed used to denote sexual practices. The explicit naming of these not only heightens the vulgar register but also reflects the adolescent milieu, where sexual curiosity and exploration of their own bodies are prominent. Since the sexual sphere is a primary site for swearing and taboo language among younger individuals (McEnery & Love, 2018), it is not surprising that direct, uncensored terminology is employed, even in SDH. While these words are non-standard from a systemic and grammatical perspective, they are non-standard in a normative sense, as they belong to a low-register, in-group language specific to youth culture.

A considerable number of scabrous terms are employed as mere insults, for example:

- **'slag'** (S01E01, minute 8:10): particularly offensive, intended for promiscuous women
- **'shit biscuit'** (S01E01, minute 11:45): a strong insult with scatological allusion
- **'piss-flaps'** (S01E02, minute 06:54): explicit, derogatory reference to female genitalia
- **'minge'** (S01E04, minute 01:19): another vulgar term for the female sex organ
- **'rank-looking vagina'** (S01E05, minute 01:00): where 'rank' means 'disgusting' in British slang
- **'jizz'** (S01E01, minute 24:50): strong slang for male ejaculation
- **'slut'** (S01E06, minute 35:49): stigmatisation of female promiscuity.

Other lexical choices are instead indicative of creativity, which serves to further delineate the linguistically clever and unabashed social group to which adolescents belong, or in reference to very intimate but adult situations. The use of abbreviations in the series is of particular interest, including:

- **'semi'** (S01E01, minute 15:21), abbreviation for 'semi-erection'
- **'nympho'** (S01E01, minute 8:17), derogatory reduction from 'nymphomaniac'
- **'scrote'** (S01E05, minute 02:34) slang abbreviation of 'scrotum'

- ‘**clit**’ (S01E01, minute 49:15) abbreviation for ‘clitoris’.

Other more creative expressions include:

- ‘**man milk**’ (S01E01, minute 24:50), well-known vulgar expression for semen. The term is used by Jean in an ironic explanation to the teenager Adam.
- ‘**flicking the bean**’ (S01E01, minute 49:15), a colloquial and vulgar expression indicating clitoral stimulation (‘bean’ as UK slang for clitoris)
- ‘**jack your beanstalk**’ (S01E01, minute 07:45), a popular slang pun for male masturbation
- ‘**beef curtains**’ (S01E05, minute 44:05), strong vulgarity for female genitalia
- ‘**hoo-hoo**’ (S04E05, minute 13:53), a euphemism for female genitalia, contrasting the previous more explicit expression
- ‘**quicky**’ (S04E04, minute 02:07), term to indicate a brief sexual encounter, used in an adult context where Gloria – a close friend of Adam’s father – calls another man to satisfy herself.

Each of these vulgar terms are correctly transposed into the SDH without any form of censorship.

Within the context of linguistic creativity, a considerable number of neologisms are represented by the following lexical choices. In Season 1, Episode 1, Eric is walking through the school corridors when he is physically assaulted by Adam, who violently pushes him onto the lockers. As Eric, visibly distressed, welcomes him, Adam responds (minute 10:40):

Shut the fuck up, **Tromboner**.



Figure 102: Screenshot of the 'Tromboner' scene. Source: Netflix.

From a linguistic viewpoint, 'Tromboner' is a blend word, which is formed by the combination of 'trombone' and 'boner'. This type of formation, particularly frequent in youth slang and in humour contexts, creates brand new terms with autonomous meaning, often related to word jokes internal to the series. In *Sex Education*, the term assumes the role of Eric's school nickname, and always recurs in capital letter in the SDH, as to highlight its status as a proper noun.

At minute 16:39, a similar approach is applied for the word 'Knobzilla', which merges the insult 'knob' and 'Godzilla':

-[Maeve] How's it going with **Knobzilla**?
-He can't come.

In this scene, Maeve and Aimee observe Adam engaging in playful but childish behaviour. They refer to the fact that the boy appears to possess anatomical qualities that are considered to be above average, yet he experiences difficulties with sexual performance. It is in this context that Maeve creates the word.

In a similar manner, but in a different context, it is Jean who addresses her ex-husband with a colourful term (S01E03, minute 23:54). During a video call, he alludes to the fact that his ex-wife is lacking in ideas for potential publications, provoking her reaction of annoyance. Following the call, Jean finds the necessary inspiration to conceive a new book idea. Feeling proud, she uses this expression to address her former husband:

Take that, **Thunderdick**.

This word is an ironic blend of ‘thunder’, which evokes strength and power, and ‘dick’, which can refer to either the literal ‘penis’ or the figurative ‘idiot’. In any case, the term could be a sarcastic dig at his perceived ‘superiority’. Once again, SDH do not censor such elements, which instead provide DHH viewers with typical vividness of linguistic creativity.

b) British youth slang

Apart from vulgar language, *Sex Education* presents also different instances of local and youth slang, thus confirming the communication group involved in the series. A list of peculiar terms throughout the seasons is provided below with an explanation:

- ‘yup’ (S01E01, minute 07:12), colloquial interjection
- ‘wonky’ (S01E01, minute 08:02), British slang for ‘strange’, ‘crooked’
- ‘clodpole’ (S01E01, minute 37:31), British slang for ‘stupid’
- ‘h’idiot’ (S01E02, minute 41:02), possible graphic transcription of a regional accent or simply used for stressing
- ‘puke’ (S01E02, minute 39:33), slang for ‘vomit’
- ‘BYO booze’ (S02E06, minute 06:55), meaning ‘Bring Your Own [alcohol]’, typical British colloquial abbreviation
- ‘cheeky chops’ (S02E07, minute 00:54), colloquial playful British nickname, used to tease someone in an affectionate manner
- ‘fag’ (S02E08, minute 06:47), British slang for cigarette
- ‘pillock’ (S03E01, minute 05:34), mild insult, used to mock someone who did something stupid
- ‘oatcake’ (S03E01, minute 06:38), an affectionate nickname, similar to ‘darling’
- ‘shrooms’ (S03E05, minute 07:29), jargon for hallucinogenic mushrooms
- ‘ick’ (S03E05, minute 08:26), Gen Z slang neologism, sudden repulsion to something
- “Hiya, crumpets!” (S04E01, minute 08:17), ‘Hiya’ is a casual British greeting, while ‘crumpets’ is a nickname for showing affection
- ‘brekkie’ (S04E05, minute 02:14), British slang for ‘breakfast’
- ‘fruity’ (S04E07, minute 07:12), slang for something odd or funny
- ‘beanies’ (S04E07, minute 09:03), British term for ‘caps’.

The SDH usually retains this slang, which contributes to making the conversations appear real and immediate. Although the list is not exhaustive, it gives an idea of the variety not only of a social group, but also of the geographical background. However, the use of local and youth slang may pose some challenges for international or DHH audiences, who may have difficulties in the comprehension of a marked terminology. While many of the words are now grounded in the UK, their meaning might not be transparent to all viewers, highlighting the balance between linguistic authenticity and accessibility.

c) Other geolinguistic references

The SDH of *Sex Education* consistently maintain terms from local varieties and foreign languages, thus preserving variation for different purposes. For example, in Season 1, Episode 2, Eric introduces himself to Maeve by saying (minute 07:24):

I'm Eric, his *numero uno*, so to speak.

The phrase “numero uno” appears in italics, highlighting the code-switching and exposing DHH audiences to Eric’s cosmopolitan identity.

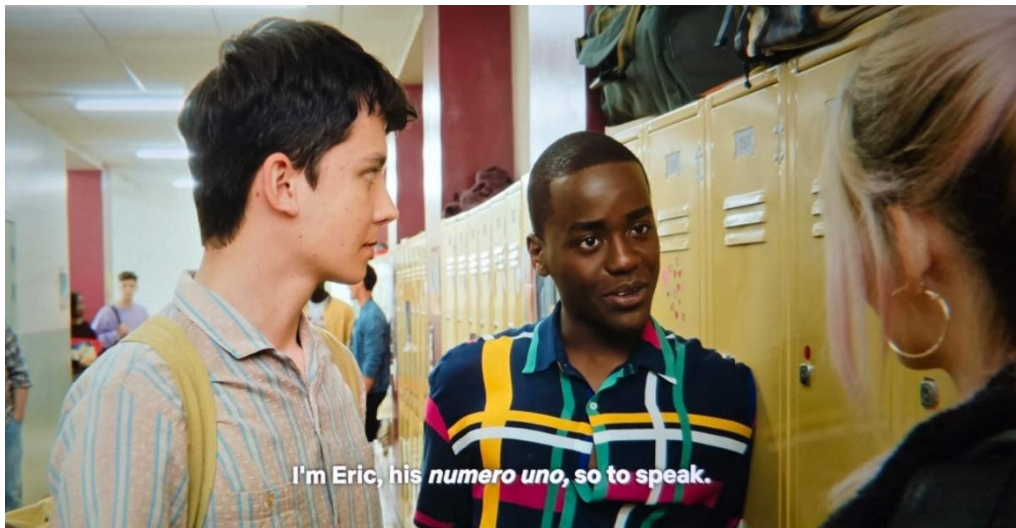


Figure 103: Screenshot of the 'numero uno' scene. Source: Netflix.

Similarly, in Season 2, Episode 2, Eric says to Otis (minute 10:29):

We're gonna do it **alfresco**,

meaning ‘outdoors’, thus employing an Italian loanword now fully integrated into English, and here used with sexual implications. As a well-established term, it is not italicised.

The series also displays the same phonetic variation as seen in *Rye Lane*, namely the TH-stopping phenomenon in ‘tings’ (S04E02, minute 42:01), reflecting MLE or African English influences, once again characteristic of Eric’s speech.

In the context of British variety, an additional non-standard form can be identified in the SDH: the transcription of the pronoun ‘me’ to denote ‘my’. Despite not always marked in the subtitles, this feature can be observed in the following instance (S04E03, minute 15:54):

Welcome to **me** humble abode!

The line is mentioned by Roman (Felix Mufti), a transgender young man who became friends with Eric and Otis after they changed school.



Figure 104: Screenshot of the scene with 'me' used as a possessive adjective. Source: Netflix.

d) Genderlect and disability references

Gender identity and inclusive language play an important role in *Sex Education*, and so is the terminology used accordingly, especially in Seasons 3 and 4. This is particularly evident in the character of Cal (Dua Saleh), a non-binary student. For instance, in Season 3, Episode 8, Cal refers to Jackson Marchetti (Kedar Williams-Stirling) with the following words (minute 17:32):

I think your **cishet** brain maybe exploded a bit.



Figure 105: Screenshot of the 'cishet' scene. Source: Netflix.

The word 'cishet' is a blend for 'cisgender' and 'hetero', particularly in use within LGBTQIA+ communities and online discourse. However, the term may still be intricate to understand by audiences, thus reflecting a tension between in-group jargon and broader accessibility (Zimman, 2020). A similar instance occurs in Season 4, Episode 7, where Cal mentions the testosterone therapy they decided to do, referring to it with 'T' (minute 28:42):

The **T**'s definitely helping.

Such a label seems to be common in trans and queer spaces; however, it cannot yet be considered universal in public discourse.

Other elements of genderlect are also manifest in the pronoun with which Cal wishes to be identified, i.e., they/them. In Season 4, Episode 8, Cal is missing, and their mother, Nicky, visits the school in an attempt to gather information regarding their whereabouts. The dedicated SDH are illustrated below (minute 09:25):

Nicky⁵⁸: Hi. Sorry, do you know Cal Bowman?

Aisha: - Yes.

N.: - [NICKY] I'm their mum.

N.: **They** didn't come home last night, / and **they're** not answering **their** phone.

A.: Oh, I'm sorry. I haven't seen **them**.

⁵⁸ The names, left in Times New Roman, are added here on purpose, so to help readers identify the speakers.

N.: I've called the police, / but **they're** just not taking it seriously.

N.: **They** just... / **they don't** seem **themselves** now, and I'm...

The dialogue has been correctly rendered in the SDH, thereby exemplifying adherence to the original speech and exhibiting a strong commitment to inclusivity. Indeed, the pragmatic impact of the use of 'they/them' for a single individual is significant: not only does it manifest Cal's gender identity, but also challenges traditional grammatical norms, thus fostering a more inclusive and precise language (Bradley and Evans, 2022). The series' SDH mirrors this tendency, providing DHH audiences with the same cues for identity negotiation as hearing audiences. Moreover, such practices establish a significant benchmark for future audiovisual translations, emphasising the evolving role of SDH as a means for both accessibility and cultural advancement. Ultimately, the employment of 'they/them' in mainstream contexts is becoming common in English-speaking countries, thereby eliminating any potential ambiguity or cognitive effort for viewers in such a contemporary sociolinguistic scenario.

Finally, it is noteworthy for this study the consideration of a deaf character, Aisha (Alexandra James), who has a cochlear implant. One scene in particular is worth mentioning. In Season 4, Episode 8, during a conversation with her peers, they attempt to sign the verb 'practicing', thus showing that they have been engaged in BSL practice to strengthen their bond with her. However, they erroneously signed 'fucking' instead of 'practicing'. This misunderstanding arises because the two signs are visually similar in BSL, differing mainly in *sig*, i.e., movement. Consequently, she immediately corrected them while acknowledging their efforts. The related SDH are displayed below, followed by some observations (minute 8:54):

Abbi: Hey, guys. / Um, what are you guys talking about?

We've been practicing.

Roman: Yeah, we were practicing all night.

Aisha: You were fucking all night?

Ab.: -Aisha, what? No!

R.: -We definitely weren't fucking all night.

Ab.: Roman!

Ai.: Oh, you mean practicing?

Ab.: Practicing, sorry.

Ai.: Oh, that's very nice / that you're trying. Aw.

In the SDH examined, the misunderstanding between the signs of ‘practicing’ and ‘fucking’ is not immediately apparent to the viewer, especially to those unfamiliar with the nuances of BSL signs. The subtitles simply transcribe the spoken dialogue without evidencing the mistake in signing. This omission risks reducing the accessibility and accurate interpretation of the scene, although Aisha’s correction is presented with a close-up on her hands and vocal emphasis.

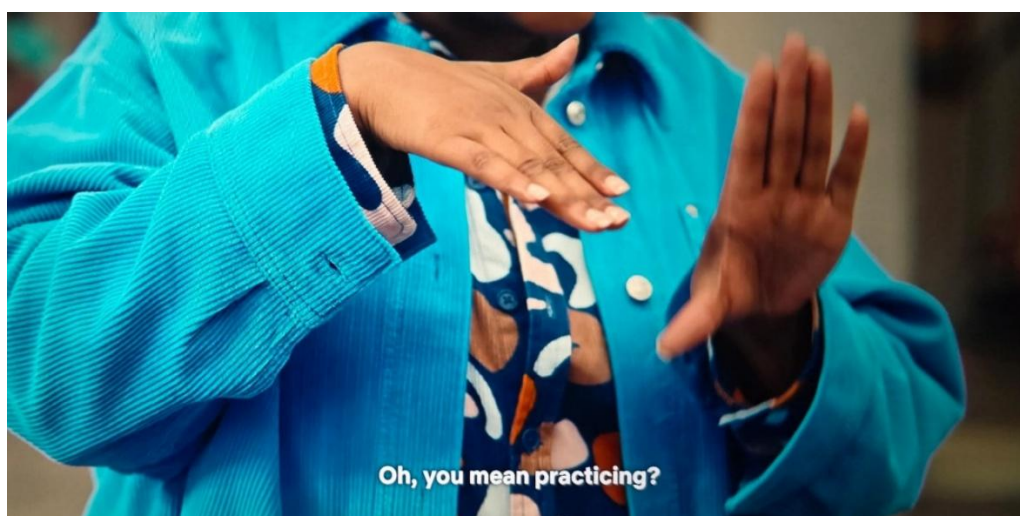


Figure 106: Screenshots of the scene in BSL. In the picture above, the sign for 'fucking' is enacted, while below there is the correct sign for 'practicing'. A close-up framing for 'practicing' is reserved for clarifying meaning and disambiguating the sign. Source: Netflix.

To improve accessibility, marking the trigger word can represent a particularly efficient technique, for instance with italics:

*We've been *practicing*.

*Yeah, we were *practicing* all night.

A similar device in fact facilitates the highlighting of a *double entendre* or error without explicitly anticipating or altering the progression of the gag – later solved by Aisha herself. Italics, for example, could guarantee communicative transparency, offering a more accessible and faithful option to those who cannot rely on all reception modes of the audiovisual message, as well as to those who rely on subtitles as their primary access to meaning. In this example, the lack of explicit cues in the SDH highlights the ongoing need for improved accessibility practices across platforms.

In conclusion, the analysis of the Netflix series *Sex Education* reveals an impressive linguistic and cultural richness, which is captured in the SDH. The tendency to adhere faithfully to the original speech demonstrates a high level of inclusivity and accessibility, thanks to the discursive innovation and realistic representation of language pertaining to adolescents' social group. The series is mostly characterised by taboo expressions, which, despite the level of rudeness exhibited, these expressions are never censored in the subtitles, thereby proving a high level of tolerability. Moreover, the employment of British slang terms and multilingual stances serves to reinforce the notion of diatopic multiplicity. In this sociolinguistic scenario, which is both rich and new, genderlect is also included and maintained. It is evident that *Sex Education* offers one of the most precise representations of variegated and profound linguistic markedness in accessible subtitles.

5.3.2 The Beautiful Game: *global variations and multilingualism*

The Beautiful Game is a British sports comedy-drama released in 2024 on Netflix and directed by Thea Sharrock. The narrative is focused on the character of Mal (Bill Nighy), a former scout from Premier League who is now the coach of the English team of football for the homeless. He successfully persuades the former striker, Vinny (Michael Ward), who played for West Ham, to join his new team. All participants are engaged with the Homeless World Cup, an event hosted in Rome. Vinny finds himself immersed in a new reality, wherein each player discloses his own personal story and struggles. The participants include individuals involved in criminal activities, refugees, struggling with drug abuse, and those experiencing homelessness who have faced challenging familial circumstances. Despite their diverse backgrounds, all of them share a common pursuit: the desire to find a sense of belonging and the hope for redemption through the medium of football. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the film serves as a prime example of how accessible subtitles can address multilingual scenarios and the global variations of

English. This assertion is evidenced by the fact that the tournament brings together diverse groups of participants from various global regions, who communicate with each other in English.

a) Code-switching and multilingualism

Given the multilingual nature of the film, the use of code-switching is particularly evident and thus remains in the SDH. For instance, given its setting in Italy, the film contains numerous references to Italian, and the original words are invariably retained. For instance, at minute 21:33, the organiser of the championship, Gabriella (Valeria Golino), delivers a speech to all teams that have recently arrived in Rome. As a native of Italy, she welcomes the participants employing an Italian greeting, rendered in the SDH as follows:

Benvenuti!

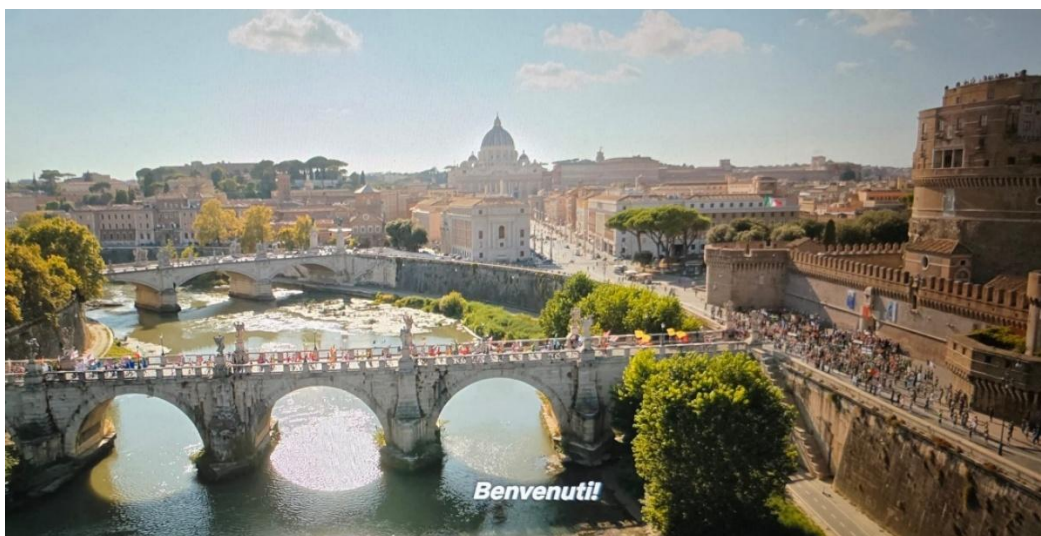


Figure 107: Frame of the 'Benvenuti!' SDH, signalled in italics since it is pronounced off-screen and is a foreign term.
Source: Netflix.

The foreign word is italicised in the SDH, thus indicating that this formatting is used to transcribe foreign terms. As previously mentioned, a further instance occurs at minute 27:34, when Mal alludes to the points that the English team is more likely to secure since its first match, against Japan:

Yeah. Japan. / Never played before. *Tre punti.*

The same strategic approach is evident by the time a Portuguese word is mentioned. In more detail, at minute 36:49, Mal and the team's coach from Portugal engage in a handshake right before the match, both parties employing Portuguese expressions:

-Boa sorte.

-Obrigado, Mal. And good luck to you too.

It is evident that every time foreign words are used, the SDH adequately reports them without interlingual translation strategies, thus maintaining the idea of transnationality and interpersonal social construction. In other times, when a discourse is taken in a foreign language, it is signalled first with a label in square brackets, and then fully translated into English. It is the case of scene at minute 40:35, during which one of the Japanese players is giving a motivational speech to her teammates:

[woman in Japanese] We are here / to honor our country. / To make ourselves proud. / So hard work! / Hard work. / [woman] Loyalty! / Loyalty. / [woman] Commitment! / Commitment. / And goals. Lots of goals! / Right? / [in English] Get stuck in!

Metalinguistic signals – such as the labels above – facilitate the identification of code changes. Overt translations facilitate the target audience's comprehension of the lines. The audience is indeed conscious of the fact that a foreign language is being performed here, yet they are able to comprehend the content of the message. This strategy prioritises the delivery of comprehensive information, catering to both DHH viewers and those who are not familiar with the language.

Another example is presented at minute 46:46. The South African team, while training, is conversing in a local language, precisely signalled in the SDH:

[men speak Xhosa]

In this case, the indication is unambiguous and contributes to the general idea of a multilingual scenario.

This level of precision does not reflect the scene that occurs at minute 1:32:40. In this setting, a group of young men – presumably friends – are enjoying themselves by playing football in a

small square in Rome. Vinny arrives on the scene and engages in play with them. However, he then flees with the ball while performing various manoeuvres. Therefore, the boys begin to shout at him, and the subtitle reveals:

[men speak Italian].



Figure 108: Screenshot of the scene with Italian guys yelling at Vinny. The SDH does not signal the use of a Roman accent. Source: Netflix.

The language employed is in reality the Roman dialect, as distinct from standard Italian. Although it is improbable that this discrepancy will be perceived by a British or international audience, it is evident that the performance of a local variety is indeed ongoing. For the sake of clarity, this information should be incorporated into the SDH.

An even more peculiar option was reserved for foreign accents while speaking English, which sets the product in the global Englishes scenario and should stress the function of English as a lingua franca despite preserving global nuances. For instance, at minute 21:48, Gabriella is delivering her speech to the teams, as already mentioned. However, despite her ‘benvenuti’, which comes afterwards, her English is spoken with an Italian accent. This feature is not signalled in the SDH, either with a label or with some graphical strategies. The subtitle limits to label that a woman is speaking; therefore, the addition of a specification of the accent performed would have potentially ensured the diatopic variation. Given that time and space constraints do leave place for further indications, perhaps, instead of

[woman] Welcome to Rome, the Eternal City

a more complete SDH could be

*[woman, in Italian accent] Welcome to Rome, the Eternal City.

Consequently, the necessity for any additional indications regarding her accent is rendered unnecessary for the duration of the film. In the same scene, Gabriella introduces the teams by starting with Mexico. The dedicated SDH is (minute 22:26):

And now, please welcome Mexico!

However, it is not signalled that she purposely uses the Spanish pronunciation. One potential option could be:

*And now, please welcome... [in Spanish] Mexico!

The addition of the label and suspension dots serves to both signal the code-switching and the hesitation before naming the country to enhance suspense.

Another instance of accent occurs in the scene at minute 34:31. The South African team, under the direction of a nun as both coach and motivator, are unable to depart from Johannesburg airport since one of the players is resident in another country. Both the nun and the passport control officer perform a South African accent. In the SDH, this trait is not reported, thus characterising the accessible subtitles less in this term.

A similar case comes is identified in the character of Aldar (Robin Nazari), a Kurdish refugee living in England. From the very first line, his accent is clearly Kurdish, although this is never explicitly signalled. This option may limit the portrayal of his migrant identity, as it is not depicted in the same manner as for a hearing viewer.

b) Mispronunciations

Notwithstanding the general absence of accent transcription in SDH, notable attention can be given to the representation of mispronounced foreign terms, often through distinctive spellings and formatting. For instance, at minute 1:01:23, when Aldar greets Vinny and his other

teammate Cal (Kit Young) on Terrazza del Pincio, he attempts to say ‘buonasera’, but instead utters:

[Aldar] Ciao. *Buono sera.*



Figure 109: Screenshot of the scene with Aldar (off-screen) saying 'Buono sera'. Source: Netflix.

As is evident, the use of italics highlights the incorrect pronunciation, thus marking the term in comparison with the standard form. Interestingly, the well-known Italian greeting ‘ciao’ is maintained in regular font, suggesting that italics are reserved to denote words different from English every once they are firstly introduced. At first, italics is employed to signal simple foreign terms, especially if not widely recognised; then, its use becomes related to words being pronounced oddly and requiring an equally odd spelling. To confirm this hypothesis, another subtitle can be analysed. At minute 59:32, Aldar thanks a driver with:

Escuzi.

The italicisation, paired with non-standard spelling, signals Aldar’s attempt at the Italian ‘scusi’, although resulting closer to a Spanish pronunciation while contemporarily bearing his English accent. Therefore, it can be stated that, apart from the signal of an off-screen voice, italics tends to be applied to less internationally recognised terms, as well as mispronunciations.

c) Prosodic traits

The presence of marked spelling for mispronunciations does not necessarily imply the presence of marked prosody. Even though in certain scenes the intonation of utterances is significantly accentuated for the purpose of humour, the SDH does not provide graphical support for this feature. As demonstrated in *Wedding Season*, where marked prosody was a distinctive feature of the Scottish variety but was not subtitled, the use of prosody in this film also reveals mockery but remains without graphic representation. For instance, at minute 28:12, Gabriella and Mal discuss the group England was assigned. Subsequently, they greet themselves with a ‘Ciao’, which is correctly reported. Following Gabriella’s departure, the team starts mocking Mal, thereby indicating a potential flirt between the two. The following table presents a comparison of dialogue and the SDH:

Dialogue	SDH
-Ciaaaao?	-Ciao?
-Ooh, Mal! Hahaha.	-Ooh, Mal! [laughs]
Giiiiirlfrieend!	Girlfriend!

Table 55: Original dialogue compared to SDH in Gabriella and Mal's scene.



Figure 110: Screenshot of the 'Ciao' scene. Here, Cal gives a mischievous look alluding to the flirt between Gabriella and Mal. Source: Netflix.

Cal lengthens the vowel [a] in ‘ciao’ to parody a flirtatious tone, while Jason (Sheyi Cole) adopts a more sing-songy tone for ‘girlfriend’, with the same intentions. The graphic repetition

of vowels in both occurrences may be disadvantageous, as it could potentially lead to reading difficulties or result in an inaccurate depiction of the intended tone. Similarly to the ‘[laughs]’ label, indications such as *[mocking flirting tone] and *[sing-songy tone] could be employed instead to emphasise irony, since they can be regarded as paralinguistic features.

Within the domain of phonetic representations, it can be observed that instances of TH-stopping are not consistently signalled in the SDH, also in the context of this film. For example, in the scene at 33:33, the graphic substitution of the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ with the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ may represent a problem at the phonological level. The scene depicts the English team celebrating their victory with a chant, which the SDH transcribes as follows:

♪ *We've got three points n the bag* ♪

The real pronunciation of ‘three’ is [tri:], which can be confused with the word ‘tree’. Reporting the actual pronunciation would therefore be confusing in terms of meaning. The choice to write ‘n’ instead of ‘in’ may represent an attempt to emphasise the specificity of ‘t’ pronunciation, thus maintaining the characterisation while avoiding potential misunderstandings. This approach is an example of orthographic compensation and suggests the application of a selective eye dialect (Brett, 2009)⁵⁹, showing that only certain non-standard phonetic features are marked graphically in order to maintain characterisation, while others are left unmarked to avoid semantic ambiguity or confusion for the viewer. In other words, SDH must balance the need for an authentic representation of spoken variation with the need for clarity and intelligibility when reading. This selective marking still allows for the retention of sociolinguistic characterisation without compromising the DHH viewer’s understanding.

d) Informal lexicon and syntax

It goes without saying that the British variety is properly represented in any case with informal lexical choices, such as ‘lads’, ‘lot’, ‘shite’, ‘bloody’, ‘bollocks’, and ‘junky’. Informality is also evident in the use of marked syntax, particularly the lack of inversion in questions and the absence of the copula. For example, the sentence

⁵⁹ Eye dialect refers to the phenomenon of non-standard spelling to signal features of colloquial speech. The term was first used by George P. Krapp in his 1925 work *English Language in America*. For further information, see Brett (2009).

Anyone forget their sunglasses?

at 26:07 in the SDH transcript omits inversion and makes an inappropriate choice of verb tense, using the present tense instead of the expected past tense. The SDH sometimes performs sentence reduction despite the character’s mouth being visible. Some examples are listed in the table below:

Minute	Dialogue	SDH
26:32	Jason, you know I’m supposed to send you home for this.	[Mal] I’m supposed / to send you home for this.
36:20	Kind of relief when it all came down, you know .	Kind of relief when it all came down.
1:30:57	-You’re not better than us . -Be in honesty , he’s the better player.	-You’re not better. -He is the better player.
1:31:08	I’m not better than you, is that what you sayin’ ?	I’m not better than you?

Table 56: Examples of marked syntax in the film's SDH.

While the first two instances demonstrate the elimination of a vocative and the ‘you know’ filler – which is accepted – the final instances reveal some omissions that, while not pivotal to the plot, contribute to the depiction of the scene, characters’ behaviour, and linguistic intensity. Furthermore, the presence of speaking characters in a mid-close shot inevitably highlights discrepancies between their lip movements and the written text, which undermines the suspension of disbelief. Although the speech is characterised by a relatively rapid tempo, incorporating ‘than us’ and ‘is that what you sayin’’ in the referring sentences would have added greater semantic nuance.

Overall, it can be concluded that *The Beautiful Game* offers a significant case study of the representation of multilingualism and global varieties of English in SDH. The subtitles frequently demonstrate an awareness of linguistic diversity; for example, foreign words are written in italics, and foreign discourses are accompanied by specific labels. These features all contribute to the film’s transnational dimension. UK slang is generally respected, and syntactic markedness helps to maintain the sociolinguistic authenticity of the dialogue. However, the

analysis also reveals some shortcomings. Nuances of pronunciation, accent, and prosody are not always explicitly indicated, resulting in certain communicative intentions being partially invisible. Similarly, the omission of parts of sentences, even when visually evident, reduces the realism and oral quality of the subtitled text. While the SDH often succeed in conveying the film's multilingual and multicultural fabric, greater consistency in signalling accents, prosodic cues, and pragmatic markers would further enhance the audience's ability to fully access not only the informational, but also the sociolinguistic and emotional layers of meaning.

5.4 Prime Video: *The Grand Tour* and *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit*

The analysis of Amazon Prime Video's SDH focuses on two distinct products: *The Grand Tour*, a TV show and docuseries, and *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit*, a stand-up comedy special with a runtime comparable to a film⁶⁰. These two products were chosen primarily because of their storytelling and direct engagement with the audience. *The Grand Tour* initially adopts a traditional show style, with an on-site audience, but subsequently shifts to a traditional documentary approach, exploring nature and civilisations, with the three hosts addressing the home audience directly. In his stand-up performance, Paul Chowdhry actively interacts with the live audience, using their responses and reactions to create humour. A central focus of this section is the handling of strong language in the SDH – specifically, whether censorship is applied or a verbatim strategy is preferred. Given that both productions make extensive use of black humour, any differences in the treatment of offensive language in the SDH will provide insight into Prime Video's approach to subtitling swear words.

5.4.1 The Grand Tour: from variation to silence

The Grand Tour is a comedy documentary series about motoring and travel, produced by Amazon Studios and starring Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond, and James May. It originated as a new project from the former BBC programme *Top Gear*. Each episode features the three presenters undertaking car tests, embarking on adventurous travels around the world, taking on challenges, and performing humorous sketches. A strong element of improvisation and interaction can be detected throughout. The series alternates between studio segments and

⁶⁰ Please note that Chowdhry's show is no longer available on Prime Video Italy but remains accessible via Prime Video UK. The analysis presented in the dedicated section was conducted prior to its removal from the Italian platform. Readers without access to the English version of Amazon can watch the full-length show on YouTube, along with selected clips on Comedy Central's official YouTube channel.

long road trips and international adventures, emphasising the competition that the three hosts usually engage in. Distinctive aspects of the series include auto-irony and goliardery, as well as globalisation and multicultural contexts. Thanks to the linguistic variation among the protagonists and guests, the use of slang and regional accents, and the continuous alternation between formal and informal registers, the series also represents an ideal ground for sociolinguistic analysis. The speech is both scripted and authentic, rendering the series particularly suitable for an SDH analysis.

a) Profanity

The presence of elements such as profanity in the SDH is expected align with the intended adult audience, who are interested in motoring and accustomed to British humour. For example, the word ‘shit’ is never censored throughout the series and is repeated if the speaker uses it. In Season 4, Episode 1, one of the three protagonists, Richard Hammond, experiences an engine malfunction on his boat while navigating a river in Vietnam, attempting to re-enter the Mekong (minute 0:57:21):

Oh, shit. Oh, shit.

Generally speaking, words correctly maintained in SDH are mostly associated with:

- **the sexual sphere:** ‘screwed’, ‘dick’, ‘cock’, ‘cunt’, ‘prick’, ‘knob’, ‘willy’, ‘bitch’, ‘buttocks’
- **the scatological sphere:** ‘shit’, other words are ‘arse’, ‘arsehole’, ‘turd’, ‘piss’, ‘piss-heads’
- **the mental illness sphere:** ‘moron’, ‘stupid’
- **the blasphemous sphere:** ‘God’, ‘hell’, ‘damn’, ‘Jesus’
- **the violence sphere:** ‘kill’, ‘rape’.

This suggests the tendency of the series to be adherent to original spontaneous speech, maintaining a register that is direct yet suitable for an adult audience.

However, it is curious that the word ‘fuck’ is always censored. Strategies applied include the use of the label [BLEEP], and in some cases, even the mouth of the speaker is pixellated,

particularly in the first season. For instance, in the first episode, Richard Hammond is testing his car and says:

It's spinning its fucking wheels in sixth!

However, the SDH censors it and the image itself is modified to make lips unreadable (minute 18:00):



Figure 111: Screenshot showing the blurred lips and the bleeping of the word 'fuck'. Source: Prime Video.

Another example appears in Episode 8 (minute 19:03), while the presenters traverse Namibia. Hammond, still asleep in his dune buggy, is unknowingly attached to a helicopter by Clarkson and May. Upon awakening and realising he is suspended in the air, he exclaims “What the f***?”, which is rendered in SDH as

What the (BLEEP)?

and, immediately after:

What the (BLEEP) is this?



Figure 112: Screenshot of the scene with Hammond suspended in the air. 'Fuck' is censored here. Source: Prime Video.

Here, the 'bleep' is transcribed in the SDH to ensure multimodal coherence between the audio and the text. Given that the programme was broadcast on a streaming service, the post-production team may have opted for a cautious approach, aiming to avoid profanity in order to appeal to a wider and potentially younger audience. Curiously, only this particular word was censored, while other, arguably stronger swear words were preserved. Derivatives of 'fuck' are censored as well, but the affixes are left unchanged (S02E06, minute 21:55):

because that's gonna be / un (BEEP) ing editable, / that is!

In the scene, during the 'Conversation Street' segment⁶¹, a flock of sheep runs past the glass wall, prompting Clarkson to laugh and hope that this unscripted moment is left uncut.

As demonstrated by previous examples, 'fuck' seems to be a problematic word, to be consistently censored to ensure compliance with the established ratings criteria and avoid any potential objections. Conversely, other forms of profanity may be overlooked or not explicitly flagged by current guidelines. Nevertheless, the use of swear words functions as a social marker and a tool of group bonding, as evidenced by the strong relationship among the three presenters that extends beyond filming. The inconsistent removal or masking of profanity may have a dual impact, both on pragmatics and the Britishness of the series, which cannot be exactly classified as suitable for children.

⁶¹ It is a part of the show that consists in discussing recent events regarding cars while sitting behind a desk.

b) Colloquialisms and euphemisms

As regards colloquialisms, a frequent normalisation of non-standard forms is evidenced. For instance, in season 1 episode 1, Hammond comments his car's abilities by saying (minute 25:04):

Oh-oh! That bloody car is **tryna** kill me, and I'm not even in it.

The marked cliticization 'tryna' is standardised with 'trying to' in the SDH, thus resulting in:

Oh-oh! That bloody car
is **trying** to kill me, / and I'm not even in it.

Considering that Hammond performs a mild but still identifiable Brummie accent, it would have been appropriate to provide indications of non-standard spelling, especially in a situation characterised by excitement and stress.

The same situation can be observed with 'gonna'. Notably, 'gonna' recurs 651 times throughout the series, while the standard 'going to' form is employed 325 times. In some cases, the SDH opts for a standardisation of the verb, thus neutralising the speaker's informal register. For instance, in Season 2, Episode 7, Hammond is driving a car to test another bizarre invention – an on-road petrol station that fills the car while driving. The SDH for this scene is seen as follows (minute 28:25):

Right. I've never done this. / I don't know if it's **going** / **to**
work. I'm hoping it does.

This three-lined dense subtitle occupies even more space by standardising 'gonna' and eliminates any informal speech nuance Hammond shows. The same condition can be identified in Season 3, Episode 5, when May describes the potential of the Alpine he is driving compared to a Porsche (minute 04:02):

That's something you're **going** / **to** have to explain when / you're
down the pub.

Another prominent case occurs in Season 3, Episode 12, where Clarkson is depicted in a close-up shot, his lips clearly articulating the word ‘gonna’, despite the subtitle shows:

Yeah. This is **going** / **to** happen a lot.

The previous examples demonstrate how subtitles can diverge from the original speech, thus generating a markedly different pragmatic effect. Similar strategies are observed with ‘innit’, often replaced by ‘isn’t it’; the possessive ‘me’ becoming ‘my’; and ‘nope’ being standardised to ‘no’ even when the speaker’s articulation clearly shows the /p/ sound.

It must be said that other instances show the retainment of colloquial terms, some of which are listed below⁶²:

- **‘bloke’** (British term meaning ‘man’)
- **‘vom’** (short form for ‘vomit’, S03E07, minute 30:44)
- **‘tis’** (abbreviation of ‘this’, S03E07, minute 37:31)
- **‘chavs’** (British term indicating a low-social status person, S01E04, minute 03:45 and another instance)
- **‘thick’** (term meaning ‘stupid’)
- **‘soz’** (British term for ‘sorry’, S01E04, minute 01:42)
- **‘muppet’** (British term used for a foolish person)
- **‘jeez’** (euphemism for ‘Jesus’)
- **‘Jezza’** (typical British nickname for ‘Jeremy’)
- **‘helluva’** (British abbreviation of ‘hell of a’, S02E01, minute 50:12)
- **‘ya’** (colloquial form of ‘yes’)
- **‘what-evs’** (short form of ‘whatevers’, S03E10, minute 29:16)
- **‘Oh my giddy aunt’** (typical British exclamation).

A particular effective SDH rendering is found in the informal and euphemistic word ‘cee’, uttered by Hammond to refer to Clarkson. The scene takes place in Namibia, where the three presenters, in search of the capital Windhoek, unexpectedly encounter the sea once again. The

⁶² Due to the extensive number of episodes, the indication of season, episode, and minute is not reported for all the terms in the list. Most terms are indeed repeated many times throughout the series, sometimes reaching into the hundreds.

mistake is attributed on Clarkson's poor navigation skills. The following exchange is presented, with the SDH here being fully verbatim (S01E07, minute 15:56):

JAMES⁶³: You muppet. What's that?

Clarkson: Um...

May: "Um" what?

C.: I never knew Namibia had two seas.

M.: It doesn't have two seas.

Hammond: No, it has one / massive "cee"⁶⁴ in it.

H.: One massive, stupid "cee"

H.: that's navigated us back / to where we started.

M.: - Can I just say...

C.: - It wasn't my... I...

M.: Why did we even believe / you could navigate by the stars?

M.: You can't even / read a compass.

H.: There are two "cees". / There's two "cees" here

H.: for believing that / that "cee" could navigate us.



Figure 113: Screenshot from the 'cees' scene. The word is in inverted commas. Source: Prime Video.

In this scene, Hammond makes a multilayered wordplay. He attempts to rebut Clarkson's 'apparent' geographical confusion by stating that, in the same way that Namibia has only one

⁶³ The name in uppercase is shown as it appears in the original SDH. The names in lowercase and left in Times New Roman are my indication of who is speaking. To avoid confusion between James and Jeremy, who both start with 'J', I have indicated the surnames of all interlocutors.

⁶⁴ My bold.

sea, there is only one “massive ‘cee’” in the group. By emphasising the colloquial term and pointing at Clarkson, he subtly alludes to the idea that Clarkson himself is a big ‘C’, playfully but pointedly alluding to the offensive term ‘cunt’. This kind of indirect insult using *double entendres* is typical of British banter, which employs homophones and context to avoid explicit profanity while still delivering the comedic effect. The SDH achieve the same effect by using inverted commas to highlight the non-standard term, and by suggesting the pronunciation instead of merely typing the letter ‘C’. This choice facilitates the comprehension of the term and maintains the spelling parallelism with the word ‘sea’, which contains an ‘e’ and is three-letters long as well.

c) Onomatopoeias

In terms of pronunciation, onomatopoeia functions as a paralinguistic feature that sometimes appears in the series. The following examples are provided for illustrative purposes and show some level of creativity:

- **‘Pa-ching!’** (indicating high speed, S01E01, minute 54:44)
- **‘Phwoar’** (mimicking the engine roaring, S01E07, minute 07:19 and other instances)
- **‘Ow-ow- ow- ow-, ow- ow- ow- ow-, ow- ow- ow- ow- ow’** (mimicking the engine roaring, S01E11, minute 41:20)
- **‘Nyeh’** (used to mock elderly people’s way of speaking, S02E01, minute 13:40)
- **‘Eurgh’** (disgust, S02E07, minute 40:08).

The orthographic representation of such forms is not standardised, reflecting an attempt to visually convey both the sound and the pragmatic function of the expressions. In general terms, the transcription of these elements in SDH may vary according to time and space constraints or clarity. However, the examples demonstrate the attempt to accurately reproduce actual sounds, including the very long sound effect ‘ow-ow’, since it simply follows the duration of the real utterance. These paralinguistic elements contribute to the construction of the characters’ voices and emotive tone, enabling a DHH audience to grasp nuances of humour, expressiveness, and characterisation.

d) Diatopic varieties and misunderstandings

A discussion on pronunciation would be incomplete without mentioning diatopic varieties. Firstly, it is possible to distinguish between local varieties and foreign languages. Starting with local varieties, in Season 1, Episode 11, Clarkson uses a Yorkshire expression while he is climbing steps. The SDH shows (minute 54:40):

I'll go **t'foot** / of our stairs here,

in which 't' corresponds to 'the'. It must be said that Clarkson himself specifies this to be a Yorkshire expression, therefore the subtitle had to transpose it in the clearest way.

According to foreign languages, some inconsistencies can be noticed when signalling accents and code-switching. For example, in Season 2, Episode 3, Italian accent is correctly reported with a label (minute 56:23):

(ITALIAN ACCENT) / "It's a Lamborghini. / When you leave here
you drive like the wind."

However, this is not always the case. In Season 3, Episode 12, the Italian accent is not identified in the SDH, which simply uses the inverted commas to signal the reported speech (minute 07:28):

I mean, Eugenio said / a lot of the stuff in here
Wasn't working because, "If it was / working, then it would be an
Audi."

Here, the accent mimicking is not conveyed, and so is the humour function.

Another instance occurs in Season 1, Episode 9, where Clarkson is talking about the difference between the German way to assess cars' functionalities and the British one using the example of Mercedes and Jaguar. When referring to a Mercedes engineer, he mimics the German accent, and all the SDH will report the features (minute 02:55):

There was a Mercedes engineer
and a Jaguar engineer / having dinner one night.
The Mercedes engineer / said, "**Ve haf...**"

Forgive the accent.
"Ve haf a quality test / at ze Mercedes factory.
Every night, ve take a car / off ze line at random.
Ve put a cat in it, / close ze doors.
If... When ve come back / in ze morning,
ve know the door seals / are vorking correctly
if ze cat has suffocated."

Given that Clarkson also makes a metalinguistic reference by saying "forgive the accent", the SDH are even more 'justified' in transposing certain elements of German accent. Later, when discussing the work of Jaguar engineers, Clarkson parodies the Blackpool accent, thereby alluding to the origins of the automobile factory. However, the SDH do not transpose any of the mimicking, thus resulting standard:

The Jaguar engineer said,
"We've got something very / similar at our factory.
We take a car / off the line at random.
We put a cat in it. / We close [klaus]⁶⁵ the door.
And we know the car's / been built properly
if, when we come back in the morning, / the cat hasn't escaped⁶⁶ [i'skaɪpt].
- [LAUGHTER]

The laughter at the end can be attributed to both the humour of the joke itself and the accent portrayed. Nevertheless, the absence of any indication of the Blackpool vocal peculiarity in the SDH – especially after the German case – results in a diminution of the entertainment for a DHH audience, especially if British.

The same episode provides another example involving foreign languages at minute 32:14. In this scene, several Chelsea football players arrive in a car park and observe the presenters' cars. The SDH signal only the use of French and Portuguese with the labels [HE SPEAKS FRENCH] and [HE SPEAKS PORTUGUESE], but do not translate or explain the content of their speech. Although it is clear from their facial expressions that the players do not appreciate Clarkson's car, this is not made explicit in the subtitles. Clarkson then jokes, "Having established that all top professional footballers loved my car", deliberately twisting the reality

⁶⁵ My phonetic transcriptions, kept in Times New Roman to differentiate them from the SDH.

⁶⁶ Closing inverted commas are missing in the original SDH.

for comedic effect. It is true that providing a translation of the foreign speech would have undermined the intended humour based on unintelligibility. However, a more descriptive label such as *[DISLIKING THE CAR] or *[EXPRESSING DISAPPROVAL] could have offered additional support to the visual cues, reinforcing the irony of Clarkson's comment.



Figure 114: Screenshot of the scene with the French Chelsea footballer. The player's facial expression seems disoriented, since the car sun visor hits his eyes, thus being uncomfortable. Clarkson tries to understand the player's reaction. Source: Prime Video.

As with Clarkson's interpretation of the German accent, instances of accents being performed for mockery can also be observed in other episodes. For instance, in Season 2, Episode 5, the English performer Bill Bailey is featured as a host of the show and narrates the story of his cancelled flight from Spain. Wishing to return home via France by train, a rail strike happened. At this point, he reports the alleged words of the local officer, which are as follows (minute 31:19):

"Non, I don't care. / I don't care about you."



Figure 115: Screenshot of the Bill Bailey's scene. Source: Prime Video.

He employs a French accent in a mocking manner; however, this is not indicated in the SDH, as displayed above. The inclusion of a label such as [MIMICKING FRENCH] or [WITH FRENCH ACCENT] would have served to enhance the humour for DHH viewers.

Another instance of French occurs in Season 1, Episode 11. While in the Normandy town of Honfleur, the three presenters must drive within the town's tiny streets. As a consequence, they get stuck and cause a queue. Hammond steps from his car and tries to explain the problem to the driver behind him in French. The original lines are different from the SDH, as shown in the table below (minute 44:13):

Original Utterances	SDH
Mon ami...	My friend...
Il a conduit-ay-ay-ay son voiture	He has driven his car...
comme le gorilla.	\
Vous devrez... le jambon	you should the ham...
prenez la rue à gauche	take the street on the left...
et nous sommes les champignons!	And we are the mushrooms.

Table 57: Hammond's lines in Honfleur's scene.



Figure 116: Screenshot from the pseudo-French sketch. The word 'champignons' is translated into 'mushrooms'. Source: Amazon Prime Video.

As can be observed, there is no indication of Hammond speaking French, nor that the SDH were a translation of his words. Translating only 'ham' and 'mushrooms' seems to be out of context, both culturally and phonetically. Firstly, the word 'jambon' may have been mentioned simply because it is a well-known French word, chosen by Hammond at random to present himself as a pseudo-polyglot. Meanwhile, 'champignons' may be an example of calembour, exploiting its phonetic similarity to 'champion' and perhaps alluding to the idea of finally getting unstuck after following his random instructions. Moreover, the line referring to the gorilla is not reported at all in the SDH, thus causing an actual missing information.

To better maintain the comic effect, the SDH could be improved by adding a label such as *[SPEAKING FRENCH] or more precisely *[SPEAKING RANDOM FRENCH] before the translation. Also, keeping the 'champignons' in the translation using italics, for instance

**And we are the champignons!*

would have reinforced the sense of phonetic wordplay, especially since the term is widely recognised.

Foreign language misunderstandings are not always poorly indicated. For instance, in Season 4, Episode 1, Clarkson asks a Vietnamese translator why people are keeping laughing at him when he pronounces the name of his boat. The sequence is displayed below (minute 59:04):

Clarkson: My boat is called... / (RAISED INFLECTION): Du Ma.
Translator: (LAUGHS)
C.: And everybody laughs / when I go, "Du Ma."
T.: Everybody laughs for a reason.
C.: But it means "Boat Machine."
C.: Boat Machine?
C.: Du: boat. / Ma: machine.
C.: So, why is that funny?
T.: It's a similar / pronunciation to
T.: "f*** your mother" / in Vietnamese.

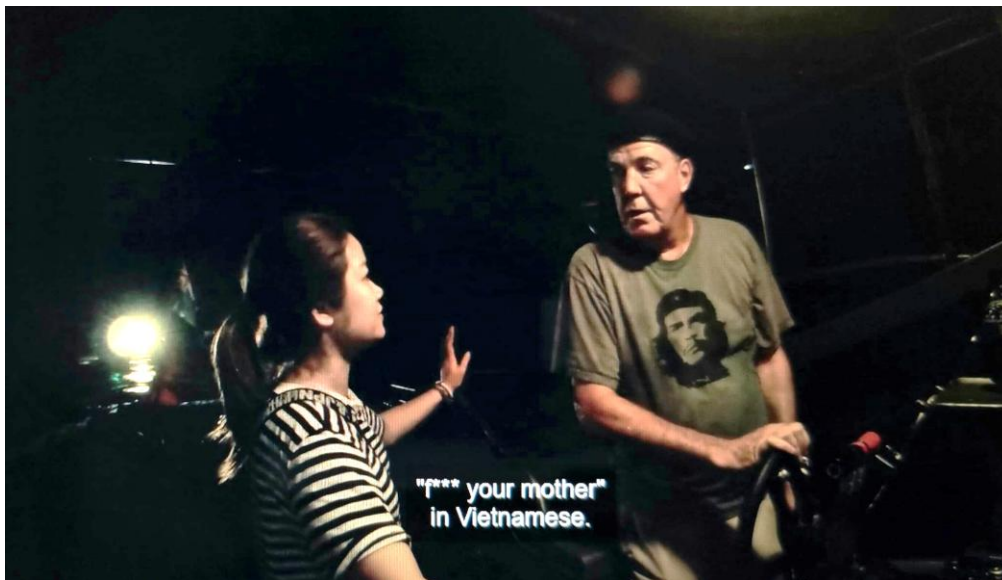


Figure 117: Screenshot of the 'Du Ma' scene. Source: Prime Video.

This example resumes the essential features investigated in this series. Notably, in the more recent seasons, even vocal inflections are indicated in the SDH when relevant to the understanding of the scene – unlike in previous seasons, where even simpler pronunciation features were often left unmarked. Additionally, while ‘fuck’ is still censored, the method changes: rather than transcribing (BLEEP) or (BEEP), asterisks are now used. This choice likely ensures that viewers can infer the intended meaning, especially since the SDH here provide a direct translation meant to resolve Clarkson’s doubts. This example thus demonstrates how humour can be preserved in SDH through careful attention to both language and context.

Overall, *The Grand Tour* represents a rich example of how non-standard is implemented and transposed, both diatopically and diaphasically. The series showcases a broad spectrum of linguistic variation, encompassing British regional accents and dialects, as well as sociolects and slang. It also features mocking of foreign speech and the creation of idiosyncratic code-switching. The primary function of the show goes beyond its status as documentary, focusing instead on the development of characters to convey humour and irony. The SDH employ a range of strategies to identify and transpose these features. In fact, labels for language varieties are found, as well as others which signal paralinguistic cues linked to pronunciation, and certain phonetic transcriptions. However, these strategies were rather inconsistent, thus resulting in an incomplete rendering of the cited features. The subsequent simplification of certain elements may have an impact on accessibility for the DHH audience and can dilute the richness of the original dialogue. Nevertheless, *The Grand Tour* still succeeds in conveying humour and diversity through a constant negotiation of cultural and linguistic instances in the accessible subtitling process.

5.4.2 Paul Chowdhry: *Live Innit: pretending racism through language*

Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit is a stand-up comedy full-length show released in 2019 on Amazon Prime Video. It was created by the British comedian Paul Chowdhry, whose performance was recorded at Wembley Arena. The main thematic are identifiable with satire on cultural, ethnic, and religious identity, mental health, LGBTQIA+, and stereotypes. As regards language, he usually employs linguistic jokes and code-switching to achieve the satirical component of the show. This product represents a valid example of sociolinguistic enactment since Chowdhry manipulates different registers of English, going from slang compared to standard English, different codes and non-native accents, black humour and racial irony, lexical ambiguity between insult and self-mockery, as well as elements of paralanguage and live performance, especially when communicating with the audience. It is therefore interesting to notice the way the SDH rendered any of the features considering the level of censorship found in Prime Video's previous production.

a) Swearing

The linguistic scenario can be defined at first by the massive use of swearing, which in this case Amazon never censors because of the genre of the show and the topics debated. At the very beginning of the show, the announcer's voice immediately set the tone by saying

'Welcome to this total shithole / in the heart of East London,
'an even bigger shithole.

The informal register is determined since the first lines of the show, therefore creating expectations in terms of diaphasic variation. Expectations are indeed maintained since different instances of bad language appear throughout Chowdhry's performance. The complete list of swear words, along with an example of when they appear, is provided below:

- **'shitting'** (minute 1:18)
- **'fuck'** (minute: 26:03); **'fucking'** (minute 1:23); **'fucked up'** (minute 3:07)
- **'hell'** (for instance in "fucking hell", minute 30:04)
- **'bastards'** (minute 1:50)
- **'wanker'** (minute 7:50)
- **'slag'** (minute 10:06)
- **'bollock'** (minute 26:26)
- **'one ball'** (minute 26:35)
- **'bone'** (minute 46:45)
- **'dick'** (minute 52:08)
- **'prick'** (minute 8:26)
- **'pissed'** (for instance in "pissed off", minute 13:17)
- **'pussyhole'** (minute 22:26)
- **'bitch'** (minute 32:10)
- **'cocks'** (minute 38:40)
- **'cunt'** (minute 43:39)
- **'lun'** (meaning 'penis', minute 38:05)
- **'nonce'** (meaning 'paedophile', minute 47:31).

Considering the list above, it can be stated that Chowdhry employs different swearing expressions that are mostly related to sexuality area. The SDH preserve all swearing and taboo forms, contributing to preserve the explicitness of Chowdhry's voice, who performs linguistic transgression.

b) Multi-ethnic jokes and code-mixing

Chowdhry's speech is also marked by the use of insults originating from Punjabi and, more broadly, Indo-Aryan languages. This approach resonates with his multi-ethnic audience, with whom he shares the same origins, and inscribes black humour within an ethnic perspective. The comedian feigns racism, albeit also in a self-referential manner, with the aim of achieving satirical and cathartic effects. An example of this phenomenon is the word 'pehnchoda', which functions as a catchphrase due to its great frequency in Chowdhry's speech. Used both as an interjection and a vocative, its meaning is equivalent to the English 'motherfucker'. While common in everyday insults among young men in South Asia – especially in informal or playful contexts – it remains highly offensive. In the show, however, its repeated use becomes a source of humour for the audience, amplifying its connotative power. For example, at minute 25:43, while joking about the similarity of Sikh names – his own ethnic group – Chowdhry addresses a man in the audience as 'stupid':

No, the Sikh guy behind you, / **pehnchoda**.

Another instance occurs at minute 29:45, when Chowdhry asks why he was once described as having a 'bad-bad, ding-ding' accent. He then attempts to use this 'mock language' in a brief imaginary conversation:

Correct me if I'm wrong
but I have never seen one Indian / person / walk up to another Indian
person
"Bad-bad...
"...ding-ding.
"Fucking hell, bad-bad."
"**Pe hnchoda**, ding-ding."
"Bad-bad ding-ding."

In this case, the word is used as an offensive vocative.

‘Pehunchoda’ is not the only Hindi term to be used in this sense. Another insult is ‘phudi’, which is comparable to ‘pussy’. One example can be seen at minute 8:47, when Chowdhry addresses a man in the audience who is filming the show on his phone. Noting the man’s short, curly hair, the comedian comments:

Get a haircut as well / when you come back to my show.
Your head look like a **phudi**.

Similarly, the word ‘kuchi’ is used, which has the same meaning. At minute 37:53, Chowdhry mocks a person in the audience for not resembling a ‘proper’ doctor, and says:

What fucking kind of doctor are / you?
“I got a headache, doctor.” / “OK, take down your **kuchi**.”
If I walked in and I saw you / sat there with your lun out...

In this excerpt, both ‘kuchi’ and ‘lun’ are used to imply a sexual intercourse or an assault, once again as a form of social criticism. As often observed in Brit-Asian comedy, the use of similar terms serves not only to shock or amuse, but also to mark the in-group register and play with taboos as a form of social commentary.

These elements offer a prove of the show’s peculiarity as a valid example of code-switching and loanwords expressing transculturality and, thus, non-standard solutions in terms of diastratic variation. More specifically, the expressions listed below demonstrate a constant mixing between English and South Asian languages, as well as Arabic instances:

- ‘**assalamu alekhum**’ (greeting in Arabic, minute 1:03)
- ‘**Qasmay**’ (Urdu/Hindi expression meaning ‘I swear!’, minute 5:29)
- ‘**kuffar**’ (meaning ‘non-believer’, minute 7:45)
- ‘**kurta pajama**’ (a typical Indian dress for men, minute 6:47)
- ‘**Inshallah**’ (Arabic expression meaning ‘God’s will be done’, minute 17:36)
- ‘**pug**’ (abbreviation of ‘pagri’ or ‘pagdi’, meaning the turban worn especially by Sikh men, minute 25:49)
- ‘**Dari**’ (or ‘Daari’, typical beard worn by Sikh men, minute 25:49)
- ‘**Musalman**’ (pronunciation used by Indian people to name Muslim people, minute 23:53)

- ‘**dhal**’ (Indian dish made with red lentils, minute 12:14)
- ‘**poppadom**’ (also found ‘papadum’, Indian bread, minute 12:18).

By adhering to these terms in the SDH, attention is given to covering also variation from diatopic and diastratic perspectives in an accessible way. For elements unknown to a Western audience, Chowdhry provides translations or explanations as a metalinguistic escamotage. For instance, at minute 25:49, a middle-aged person is framed wearing a turban but not a beard, which is not in accordance with the Sikh tradition. Therefore, Chowdhry states:

The one with the **pug** on and no / **dari**.
 You got a turban but no beard. / Is this a fashion statement?

Since the two *realia* may be unknown to the audience, Chowdhry’s instant translation into English represents a strategic decision, which makes the code-mixing accessible and facilitates cross-cultural comprehension. This metalinguistic approach allows the SDH to preserve the original flavour of the loanwords without burdening the subtitles with additional explanations.

c) Syntactic calques

Further characteristics of Indian English are detected in the syntactic forms, which are maintained in the SDH. For example, at minute 3:14, Chowdhry is discussing the fact that Indian people are more practical than the English ones. Referring to how someone might live as a comedian, he imagines the following situation:

When my Indian fans find out / I’m a comedian,
 they don’t care about jokes.
 “You’re a comedian? / Go on, then.”
 “Go on then what?” / “**How much money you make?**”
 “**What car you drive?** / **How much your mortgage?**”

The sentences in bold exemplify one of the main structures of Indian English and of other English varieties influenced by South Asian languages. They can also have common traits with other varieties, such as MLE, however this is the context of Indian linguistic background. In more detail, the original languages (Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi) do not require neither an auxiliary in questions nor the inversion, also in ‘wh-’ main clauses. The result is a sentence reflecting an

affirmative structure in Standard English but corresponding to a question in the Indian variety (Mesthrie and Bhatt, 2008, p. 80). In fact, SOV languages tend to not have inversion and auxiliary for questions, thus influencing English in a systemic way and again reflecting the typicality of diatopic variations (p. 78).

d) Accents

The influence of Hindi, Urdu, or Punjabi substrates on Indian English is evident not only in the syntax and loanwords, but also in the accent. The sentences previously cited were articulated with a pronounced Indian accent, with the intention of providing a more vivid illustration of the character Chowdhry is portraying. The most replicated phonetic element throughout the show to serve as a social Indian indicator is the retroflex /r/, which can be either a flap [ɾ] or an approximant [ɻ]. Generally speaking, Chowdhry's objective is to stress the Indian accent and manner of speech, aiming to ensure that his humour is more precise and contextual. This is given through the use of an alveolar trill [r], which furtherly demonstrates the intention of mockery. In fact, the word 'mortgage' is pronounced more like ['mɔ:r:ɡedʒ], by exaggerating the retroflex [ɾ] up to [r]. This choice improves humour and provokes laughter in the audience. However, this phenomenon is not reported in the SDH, which only adhere to the marked syntax. One potential strategy for the inclusion of accents is the use of two 'r's combined with uppercase or italics, for example

*"How much your **MORRTGAGE**?" .

It is important to note that a similar graphic choice can render the subtitle difficult to read. Therefore, a simple label such as [stressing Indian accent] or [trills the R] at the beginning may be sufficient.

A similar case is that at minute 6:56, when Chowdhry mentions the typical Indian suite 'kurta pajama'. He repeats the term several times, always stressing the Indian accent. Indeed, ['kʊɾ:ʈɑ pə'dʒɑ:ma] can represent the actual phonetic transcription, with the stress on the retroflex flap.

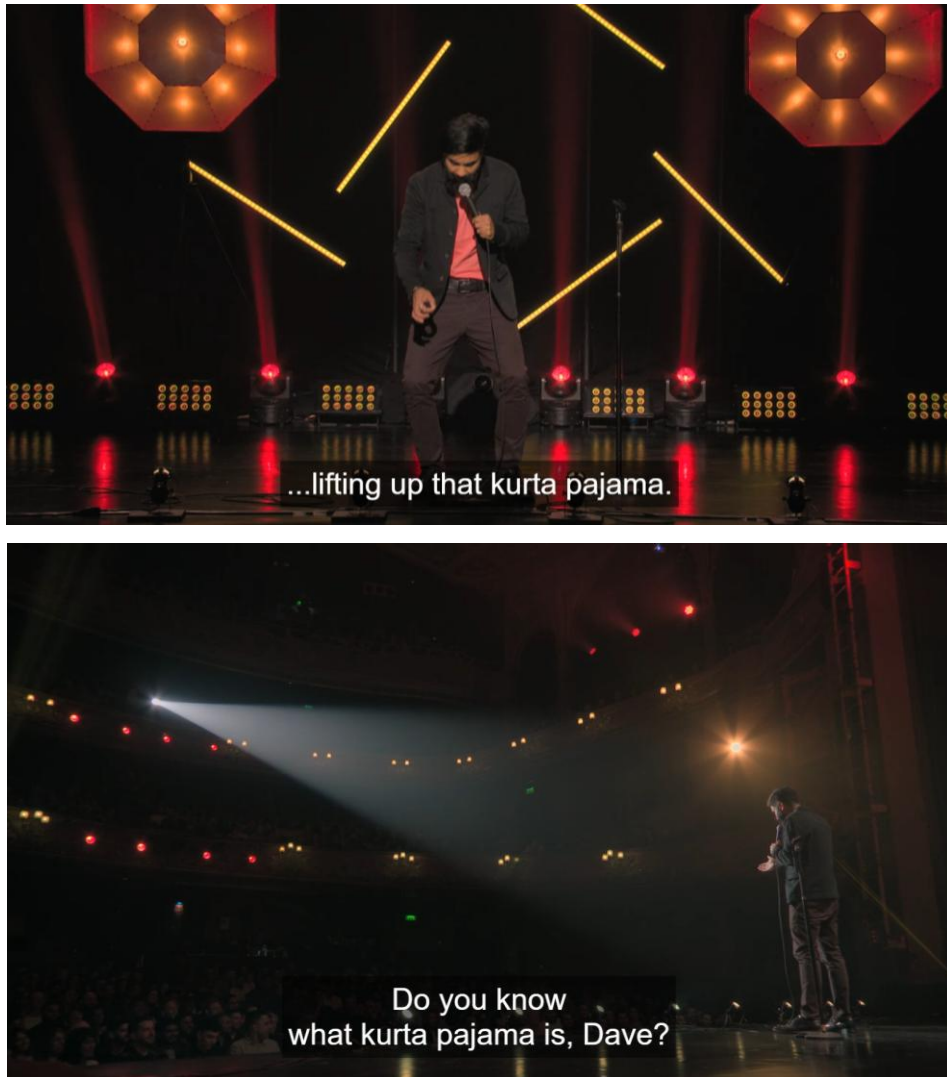


Figure 118: Screenshots from the 'kurta pajama' segment. Source: Amazon Prime Video.

The correspondent SDH show a standard transcription without reflecting the consonant stressing. However, the *realis* is correctly reported without being translated.

In the previous scene on working as a comedian, Chowdhry also pretends the typical response of a man from London, who uses a Cockney accent. The SDH are as follows:

"What do you do for a living?"
 - "I'm a comedian." / - "Yeah? Go on, then."
 "Go on then what?"
 "Go on, do a joke." / "I've got to get on the stage."
 "Trace, come over here, love."
 "We got a new Paki next door / thinks he's funny⁶⁷."

⁶⁷ Chowdhry actually says "who thinks he's funny", but the subtitle misses the pronoun.

"I think he's an Uber driver. / Bring the kids an' all."

Analogously to the Indian accent features, the Cockney accent is not signalled here, despite its being stressed to improve humour. It is true that a colloquialism is retained, i.e., "an'", with the final elision; however, the actual pronunciation of 'then' is ['dɛn], performing TH-stopping, and the name 'Trace' is more similar to [tra:ɪs] rather than the standard [treɪs]. Since the lines are not peculiarly non-standard in syntax or lexicon, some further indications on accent mockery would have given a more complete framing to the scene also for DHH audiences.



Figure 119: Screenshots from the 'work as a comedian' excerpt. The first image corresponds to the mocking of Cockney accent, while the second corresponds to the stressing of Indian accent. Source: Amazon Prime Video.

An additional illustration of a pronounced accent is evident in Chowdhry's articulation of his full name (minute 12:09). The SDH is simply rendered as:

Taj Paul Asingha Chowdhry.

The absence of a label to provide a similar indication in subtitles is a notable limitation.

The issue of accents is further complexed by the fact that, at a certain point in the show, the comedian makes a metalinguistic reflection on accents. In this specific segment, the subject engages in a fictitious conversation with an individual referred to as ‘Dave’, a name that symbolises the archetypal Englishman. This character is portrayed with a London accent, reflecting a stereotypical representation of the English vernacular. Dave accuses Chowdhry to be racist during his shows. The correspondent SDH are as follows (minute 28:11):

Dave: "How come it's all right / for you to go up on stage, / right,
"and do my accent / and I'm not allowed to do your / accent?"

Chowdhry: "You are allowed to do my / accent."

D.: "No, how come it's all right / for you to go up on stage, / right,
"and do my accent, / and it's racist
"if I go up on stage / and do a bad-bad ding-ding / accent."

C.: "A what?"

C.: "Say that again, mate."

D.: "Do a bad-bad ding-ding / poppadom butter-chicken accent."

In this particular excerpt, the presence of a working-class London accent is not indicated. Since a DHH audience may encounter challenges in perceiving it – along with all other accents typically portrayed – the humour may not be fully comprehensible. The implementation of some labels indicating accents could provide a valid solution to the issue.

An interesting solution is actually given in two specific scenes. The first is at minute 22:07, when Chowdhry discusses criticism he received after mentioning ‘Mohamed’ in a video about Zayne Malik’s family, a reference to Gigi Hadid’s father. The reaction was particularly strong among some members of the South Asian Muslim community, as ‘Mohamed’ is a highly sacred name in Islam. A part of the SDH of the monologue is displayed below:

"Bruv, hey, come here, man.

"Why the fuck, yeah,

"did you use the word Mohamed / in your fucking **wideos**?"

[Laughter]

"What?"

"Why the fuck, yeah, / did you use the word Mohamed
"in your fucking **wideos**?"
"Sorry, in my... in my what?"
"Your fucking **wideos**, you / pussyhole!"

Here, the accurate transcription of the phonetic cue in 'wideos' reveals the importance of accent and pronunciation for the comic effect. Later, Chowdhry further emphasises multiculturalism by naming his ideal interlocutor with 'Hackney', a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in Northeast London, which gathers members of South-Asian and African communities. This name is usually associated with urban humour, strong accent, and 'working-class' sub-culture. By choosing this name, Chowdhry not only reinforces a diastratic dimension of language, but also underlines the need for the SDH to capture both lexical and phonetic features for full sociolinguistic representation.

The second instance of accent preservation is exemplified at minute 31:06, when Chowdhry asserts that the Chinese community should not be mocked, on the basis that they typically do not appreciate racism:

Me and my friends / used to hear "**ching-chong**".
That's proper racist, innit?
I've never once in my life / seen one Chinese person
walk up to another Chinese / person,
in my life...
I ain't gonna do it.
Because it's racist.
And Chinese people / don't like **racism**.

This section presents two clear examples of accent retention. The first is 'ching-chong', a case similar to 'bad-bad, ding-ding', both of which mock a foreign accent. The second is the word 'racism', which exemplifies the liquid merger between 'r' and the 'l', a feature peculiar to Sino-Tibetan, Japonic, and Koreanic languages. These SDH excerpts show that certain phonetic idiosyncrasies can be effectively transposed, especially when they are easy to represent in writing, thus preserving their humour and sociolinguistic significance.

e) Prosody

Elements regarding voice and prosody are not consistently retained in the show's SDH in the same way as accents are often omitted. Yet, signalling these features would offer a fuller understanding of both the scene and the characters. For example, at minute 10:43, Chowdhry briefly narrates the story of the terrorist Khalid Masood, mocking various voice tones and imagining his entry into ISIS. The correspondent SDH are displayed below:

```
You know what his real name was?  
Adrian Russell.  
He was a Muslim convert.  
He wasn't even a real Muslim. / No wonder he changed his name.  
You can't turn up at an ISIS / meeting / with that. Adrian.  
"What's your name?" / "Adrian Russell."  
"You're not on the guest list."  
[Makes guttural sounds]  
"Front of the queue for you."
```

The SDH only provide the label [makes guttural sounds], intended to imitate the Arabic pronunciation of the consonant cluster 'kh', i.e., the voiceless velar fricative [x]. However, other vocal nuances are left unmarked. For example, when Chowdhry says the name 'Adrian Russell', he shifts to a high-pitched tone, enhancing the comedic effect and incredulity that such a name could belong to an ISIS member. On the other hand, he performs the 'ISIS recruiter' with a lower tone and a slight Arabic accent. The omission of these paralinguistic cues in the SDH reduces the amount of information available to DHH viewers, limiting their access to the full humour and characterisation in Chowdhry's performance.

A similar stance is given in Michael Jackson's segment starting at minute 43:23. In more detail, a potential fan is defending the popstar from the accusation of being a paedophile. The SDH reports:

```
"You don't get it, Paul. / Michael got beaten up by his / dad."
```

And yet does not signal the peculiar voice the comedian uses, which is high-pitched to index stupidity or childishness. At minute 44:31, instead, Chowdhry mocks Michael Jackson's voice insistently, which generates hilarity in the audience, but is not signalled in any ways:

"I love your kid
"I love your kid.
"Really cute, your kid.
"Can I play with your kid?"
"Can I?"

The peculiarity of the mimicry here lies in the use of a childish and slowed-down tone, with the word 'kid' pronounced with a lengthened, close front unrounded vowel [i] rather than the standard near-close near-front [ɪ], so to exaggerate Michael Jackson's speech. Although Chowdhry's facial movements reinforce this effect, they do not necessarily indicate the type of voice used. A label such as *[slow, high-pitched tone] could have better conveyed this mimicry.

Another instance occurs a couple of minutes later, where Chowdhry says:

[Mimics voice] "I love kids."
[...]
He goes, "What's wrong / with sharing your bed
"with a kid?"
What's with that voice? / He was a 50-year-old man.

While the SDH includes a generic label [Mimics voice], this does not sufficiently convey the specific tone or manner in which Chowdhry performs the voice. Moreover, the reference "What's with that voice?" should further justify the use of a more descriptive label. For a DHH audience, it is crucial that paralinguistic features are described more precisely, for example with *[slow, childish voice] or *[slow, high-pitched tone]. In addition, the word 'bed' undergoes vowel lengthening as 'kid' does for comic effect. In this case, although the addition of two or three 'e's (e.g., 'beeed') could suggest the pronunciation ([i] rather than an [ɛ]), the indication of the vocal features through a descriptive label remains the clearest and most accessible solution.



Figure 120: Chowdhry's mouth articulation for the word 'bed', which suggests the pronunciation of the phone [ɪ]. Source: Comedy Central UK, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=gG5XgJRwOJ4>.

f) 'Innit'

In any case, the show's SDH often succeed in maintaining sociolinguistic variation. Alongside South-Asian lexical choices, British slang and colloquialisms such as 'bruv', 'mate', and, notably, 'innit' are faithfully transposed. In this context, the term 'innit' serves as a dual purpose: it is deliberately overused to reinforce stereotypical or 'obvious' statements, and it simultaneously signals the linguistic background shared by Chowdhry and much of his audience, namely, the London area. Its frequent use – occurring 53 times throughout the show – reflects its prominence in London English as a prevalent tag question and sign of shared identity.

This condition renders its faithful representation in the SDH imperative for conveying both the performative and community dimensions of Chowdhry's act. Therefore, the overuse of 'innit' being highly invariant (Andersen, 1998)⁶⁸ in both performance and the SDH thus reinforces group identity. 'Innit' functions as both a discourse and a sociolinguistic marker and assures accessibility in terms of linguistic quality.

Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit is a valid example of the sociolinguistic complexity characteristic of contemporary British stand-up comedy. During the performance, Chowdhry navigates a multilingual space that combines MLE forms with Indian English and Standard British English. The SDH are inclined to preserve non-standard forms, particularly in swearing and syntax, the

⁶⁸ Invariant tags, in contrast to canonical tags, do not perform inflection. They maintain their form and are not dependent on the anchor sentence. For a more detailed discussion on this topic, please refer to Andersen (1998).

latter being a result of the influence of Indian languages substrate. Diatopic and transcultural variation is also captured by loanwords and references to Indian and Arabic culture. This enables DHH audiences to enjoy a rich linguistic experience similar to that of the hearing audience. Nevertheless, the analysis of the SDH simultaneously underlines the challenges and potentialities in describing such a dense linguistic diversity: whereas lexical and syntactic variation is generally maintained, phonetic contrasts and prosodic indications remain difficult to transcribe, however scattered are labels or new orthographic substitutes used. In any case, *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* serves to illustrate how the language of stand-up comedy functions as an instrument of inclusion and a representation of British contemporary and multicultural society, thereby underscoring the crucial role of SDH in representing linguistic diversity through accessible audiovisual media.

5.5 Final Considerations: Tendencies, Criticalities, and Perspectives of Sociolinguistic Variation in the SVoD's SDH

The qualitative analysis of the eight audiovisual productions confirms how the sociolinguistic variation issue – in particular its diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic dimensions – represents a pivotal challenge for SDH and, more generally, for the written transposition of multilingualism, considered as both related to foreign and local languages. The various sociolinguistic features examined in the selected products can be further grouped into different areas and discussed according to their adherence to the original dialogue in the SDH and their functionalities.

a) Informal language: lexical strategies through swearing and colloquialisms

The strategies encountered in the analysed SDH demonstrate a faithful transposition of non-standard lexical forms, involving colloquialisms, slang, and swear words. This choice reflects contemporary audiovisual narration and awareness towards accessibility. For instance, in *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit*, the option to maintain terms like ‘bruv’, the same ‘innit’, ‘nonce’, ‘wanker’, ‘cunt’, ‘slag’, and ‘pussyhole’ allows for the spontaneous speech to be represented on stage and the recalling of the humour through bad language. In the same way, *The Grand Tour* manages to preserve offensive terms such as ‘knob’, ‘willy’, ‘bitch’, ‘buttocks’, ‘turd’, ‘arse’ or ‘piss-heads’, while operates censorship on ‘fuck’. Taboo language is recurrent especially in *Sex Education*, which not only performs profanity but also adopts creative solutions through neologisms linked to sexual sphere, such as ‘Tromboner’ and ‘Knobzilla’.

Instances of genderlect are also maintained in the SDH. *Ted Lasso*, instead, plays with idiomatic expressions such as ‘mate’, ‘wicked’, ‘out of bounds’, and ‘into touch’ to signal diatopic differences between British and American English, so to highlight the sense of identity and ‘otherness’. The film *Blitz*, contrary to expectations on a war film, displays several colloquial strategies – ‘em’, ‘ya’, ‘ol’, ‘me’ (meaning ‘my’), ‘bog’, ‘scallywag’, ‘jeepers’ – which fixes the film in both time and space of narration. The same strategy is applied in *Rye Lane*, where the place is the same, but the narrated time has changed, thus showing a more multicultural London through lexical choices like ‘aight’, ‘ting’, ‘gaff’, and ‘coppin’. Informal language is also depicted through marked syntax, the most diffused and respected pattern in the SDH of all the productions. It reflects spontaneity in dialogues to the extent that it can compete with marked lexical choices. These findings highlight how representation of non-standard lexicon plays a crucial role in shaping identities and identifying social dynamics in accessible subtitles.

b) Multilingualism: loanwords, calques, and labels

Another *fil rouge* emerged from the products’ analysis regards the handling of code-switching and multilingualism. Titles such as *The Beautiful Game*, *Sex Education*, and *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* show examples of marked code-switching both through the insertion of labels – [men speak Italian], [men speak Xhosa], [woman in Japanese], or [speaks Punjabi] – and by using foreign loanwords: ‘ciao’, ‘benvenuti’, ‘obrigado’, ‘numero uno’, ‘alfresco’, ‘dhal’, ‘kuffar’, ‘dari’, ‘Qasmay’, ‘pehnhoda’. Some of these words witness a graphic negotiation, especially those needing a transliteration from Hindi.

Syntactic calques are also present. *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* represents the most faithful product in these terms, since Indian English performs syntax similar to the background original language – Hindi, Punjabi – and the SDH maintain these characteristics. In this way, the subtitles constitute a support as identity marker so to favour the in-group humour. *The Grand Tour* displays instances of multilingualism as well, sometimes using labels – [HE SPEAKS FRENCH], [HE SPEAKS PORTUGUESE] – and other times translating foreign words such as ‘my friend’ for ‘mon ami’ or ‘car’ for ‘voiture’. In the latter case, the foreign language is not displayed, thus flattening the multilingual perspective and reducing humour.

In other cases, foreign accent is never signalled, as occurs in *The Beautiful Game*, despite its being a multilingual production. However, the indication of specific spelling to mark pronunciation errors – ‘Buono sera’, ‘Escuzi’ – or strong peculiarities – Chowdhry’s ‘wideos’,

‘ching-chong’ – allows the products to provide variety as well. Overall, the products having instances of foreign languages tend to respect such variation in their SDH.

c) Accents and prosody: diatopic challenges

In contrast to the treatment of foreign words and syntactic structures, accents are not always reported in the analysed SDH. In *The Grand Tour*, instances of graphic representation of the foreign accent are detected – the German accent of the Mercedes engineer, for example – as well as labels such as (ITALIAN ACCENT). A similar phenomenon is observed in *Ted Lasso*, where the accent plays a pivotal role in characterisation and is essential to the progression of the plot – [in Irish accent]. Nevertheless, the representation of accents is widely regarded as the most complex and challenging aspect of SDH to transpose. Examples can be found in most productions, including the Mancunian accent in *Ted Lasso*, Cockney in *Blitz*, and Scottish in *Wedding Season*, which sometimes contributes to the character portrayal and provokes specific reactions in the interlocutors. Other notable examples are glottalisation forms in *Rye Lane*, stressed prosody in *The Beautiful Game* and *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit*, Blackpool accent mimicking in *The Grand Tour*, or Indian accent, London accent, and Arabic accent in *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit*.

The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, it is challenging to produce non-standard oral features that do not already have a standardised written form. This results in uncertainty regarding the most effective method for articulating these elements, ensuring their comprehension without necessitating cognitive effort, particularly for a DHH audience. Furthermore, temporal and spatial limitations play a pivotal role in the process of subtitling. Consequently, the incorporation of a label indicating the accent may result in the loss of space, thereby hindering the inclusion of crucial information.

Another factor to be considered is the risk of stereotyping characters. The inclusion of a label or the adoption of particular spellings may result in depicting a speaker for the variety used, even if it is not peculiar. Nonetheless, the SDH report the content of the original soundtrack, incorporating paralinguistic features; therefore, the signal of accent and prosodic markers may be embedded in this reasoning to guarantee a complete experience to the DHH audience.

Ultimately, the consideration of an accent or a prosodic feature is not always identified as essential to character portrayal, which may result in the omission of certain signals in the SDH. Nonetheless, it is evident that the inclusion of vocal features is indicative of the screenwriter’s

consideration of these elements. Consequently, the absence of such features may be interpreted as a form of censorship rather than an enhancement of comprehension.

However it may be, the portrayal of accents and prosodic variation in SDH remains a contentious issue, where a delicate balance must be struck between audience needs, narrative purposes, and sociolinguistic complexity. As AVT continues to evolve, it is essential that the approaches to rendering spoken diversity on screen are also developed and refined.

d) Methodological considerations

From a methodological perspective, the bottom-up analysis of the productions and their SDH confirms the richness of the data but also reveals a certain level of missing precise and punctual standards shared by all the platforms considered here. The differences observed among the SVoD platforms and the productions, and occasionally between productions within the same platform, suggest that the strategies employed for rendering variation are not always homogeneous. Instead, these strategies may be influenced by genre, target audience, and the linguistic sensitivity of the subtitlers themselves. With the exception of genre and target audience – for instance, a historic film such as *Blitz* would never employ a strong language such as that used in *Sex Education* – some programmes exhibit censorship of swear words, while others demonstrate a lesser focus on accent depiction, despite their significant use – see *The Grand Tour* and *Chowdhry*. In any case, the empirical analysis of the data generated theoretical reasoning on the limits of audiovisual transposition. Furthermore, the segmentation of subtitling strategies, categorisation of non-standard varieties, and the comparison of the platforms enabled the delineation of trends and uneven criteria on variation rendering.

In consideration of the observations and explanations presented above, the most significant elements pertaining to non-standardisation in general can be summarised for each product analysed. This methodological approach facilitates a more precise understanding of the observed phenomena. The following table is designed for this purpose:

Production	<i>Ted Lasso</i>	<i>Blitz</i>	<i>Wedding Season</i>	<i>Rye Lane</i>	<i>Sex Education</i>	<i>The Beautiful Game</i>	<i>The Grand Tour</i>	<i>Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit</i>
Slang / Colloquial expressions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accents / prosody (spellings, labels)	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Code-switching / mixing	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Loanwords / foreign languages	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Taboo / Swearing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Censoring swearing	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Humour and irony	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marked syntax	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnic and cultural references	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 58: Presence and absence of sociolinguistic elements in the SDH of the eight productions. The green tick represents the presence of the feature, while the red cross signals the absence of the feature.

e) Concluding remarks: convergences, divergences, and perspectives

In summary, the adopted solutions in the subtitling – sometimes verbatim, other times normalised – reflects not only the technical constraints and accessibility guidelines, but also precise narrative and ideological choices at platform and production level. Across the cases examined, SDH tended to preserve lexical and morphosyntactic markedness (e.g., youth slang,

colloquialisms, lack of inversion, and copula variation), while diatopic cues such as accent and orthography were more often flattened or inconsistently signalled (e.g., scarce use of neutral accent labels and American spellings in UK settings). Multimodal cues – notably music identification – also showed inconsistent treatment, with implications for cultural framing. These practices are united by the centrality of language as a vehicle for identity and social inclusion, and divided by divergent productive, cultural and technological models, as well as differing editorial priorities around readability, space, and perceived stigma. The table above summarises these strategies and phenomena, highlighting the need for a flexible yet critical approach to accessible sociolinguistic subtitling – one that can preserve variation where it carries meaning and justify normalisation where it demonstrably improves comprehension.

Interview Data Analysis

Analysis of Interview Data on Perception and Reception of SDH on Streaming Services

This chapter examines the participants' responses to the sociolinguistic interview on perception and reception of SDH on SVoD. Firstly, it will provide a general presentation of each participant's demographic and linguistic profile. Secondly, it will delve deeper into SDH general perception to understand the way deaf users experience accessible tools in the audiovisual environment. Finally, the reception section goes into more detail, where participants were invited to watch and comment on video clips from selected series, one per streaming platform involved in the study.

6.1 Data Discussion

This analysis examines qualitative responses from interviews with deaf individuals regarding their experiences of SDH on streaming services. Participants were recruited by distributing a Google Forms link to various d/Deaf organisations and charities in the UK, including Hearing Link Services, and academic institutions such as the Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL) at UCL's Division of Psychology and Language Sciences and the School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Language Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. Despite the broad reach of these networks, only three respondents participated. This limited participation can be attributed to the pilot nature of the study – which deliberately sought to avoid the complexities of large-scale data analysis – and the considerable time commitment required to complete each interview (approximately 30-40 minutes). Nevertheless, such a small sample is considered sufficient for conducting an in-depth qualitative analysis. The study involved three participants: an 82-year-old male cochlear implant user, a 46-year-old female hearing aid user and a 34-year-old female hearing aid user. The three different age groups provide a variety of perspectives and increase the demographic relevance of the findings. The age groups were defined as follows: 20-40, 41-60, and 61-80+ years. Although narrower age ranges might have provided greater specificity, such an approach would have made recruitment more difficult and increased the likelihood of similar responses due to minimal differences

between closely spaced age groups. In contrast, the use of wider age ranges not only facilitated recruitment, but also minimised the risk of overlapping views, particularly in relation to the use of SDH and SVoD.

Considering this, the demographic ‘general’ information can be summarised as follows (questions 1-10):

- **Participant 1:** An 82-year-old male from Whitley Bay, England, who is an engineer diagnosed with profound hearing loss. This participant uses a cochlear implant and reports high proficiency in Standard British English.
- **Participant 2:** A 46-year-old female from Leeds, England, working as a lead research assistant with profound hearing loss. Relying on hearing aids, she is bilingual in both Standard British English and British Sign Language.
- **Participant 3:** A 34-year-old female from Glasgow, Scotland, currently unemployed and with severe hearing loss. She uses hearing aids and considers herself ‘enough’ bilingual in Standard British English and British Sign Language, the latter being the less used.

All participants hold a university degree, and both their parents had/have an occupation, thus suggesting economic stability. Differently from the male participant, who moved twice in his life within England, the female ones changed place of life several times, both in the UK and worldwide, thus suggesting the habit of communicating with different language communities using different communicative approaches.

6.1.1 Questions on deafness

Concerning the section on deafness, the table below summarises the questions posed to the participants:

11) ⁶⁹ Which degree of hearing loss have you been diagnosed?
12) Do you have a cochlear implant or use hearing aids?
13) Which kind of hearing loss do you have?

Table 59: The three questions on deafness asked during the interview.

⁶⁹ The number indicates the actual number of the question in the interview.

The graph below shows the typologies of hearing loss the participants have:

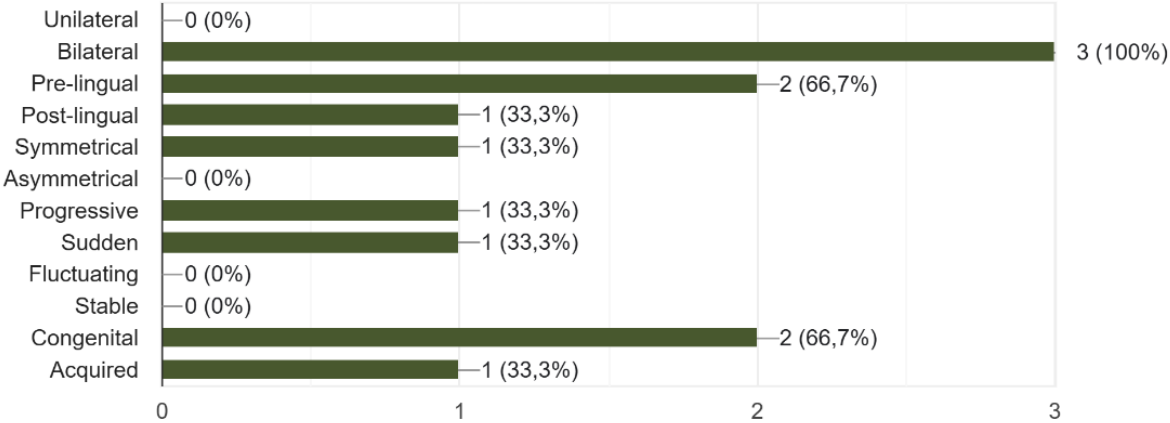


Figure 121: Graph on the participants' deafness typologies.

It can be noticed that the only similarity all participants share is the bilateral form of hearing loss. As regards the male participant, he describes himself as a post-lingual deaf person, meaning that his hearing loss occurred later in life. This is further supported by the other answers he provided, which indicate that his deafness is both progressive and acquired. However, the participant also selected the option ‘sudden’, which seems to contradict the ‘progressive’ feature. It is possible that this was an error during the selection. The participant states that he uses a cochlear implant, suggesting that his hearing loss is now stable. It is interesting to note that none of the participants mentioned any stable or fluctuating aspects of hearing loss. The 46-year-old female interviewee declared that she is a pre-lingual deaf person, with symmetrical and congenital hearing loss. In this case, it can likewise be assumed that her deafness is stable. The 34-year-old female only specifies that her hearing loss is bilateral, pre-lingual, and congenital. It can be assumed that it has been sudden and symmetrical, but a further specification of being fluctuating or stable cannot be easily deduced.

6.1.2 Sociolinguistic section

The sociolinguistic section started with the following questions:

14) What language did you learn first?
15) What language do/did your parents speak/sign to each other?
16) And what about your grandparents?
17) What language do you use when you think?
18) What language do you use when you get angry/annoyed/lose your temper?
19) What language do you use at home (i.e. with your son/daughter(s), parents, siblings, partner)?
20) What language do you use with close friends from the same area of yours?

Table 60: Questions of the sociolinguistic section.

As briefly anticipated in the participants' profile sketch, it is shown that English was the language they all learnt first and which their parents and grandparents also used. It can be assumed that their parents and grandparents were/are not deaf, so all participants grew up in an environment where English was the main language used. From a more cognitive perspective, the three respondents state that English is the language used when they "think, get angry/annoyed/lose their temper" and from a relational perspective it is the language used "at home (i.e. with your son/daughter(s), parents, siblings, partner)". Remaining in the social setting, when asked "What language do you use with close friends from the same area as you?", only female participants answered that they use both English and BSL.

The following questions (21-23) were designed provide wider information according to different public settings:

- "What language do you use with friends from other parts of the country/world?"
 - **P1**⁷⁰: English
 - **P2**: English, BSL, gestures, some ASL/international fingerspelling
 - **P3**: English or BSL. Occasional International Sign.
- "What language do you use with colleagues, shopkeepers/vendors, public institutions, and doctors?"

⁷⁰ P1, P2, and P3 stand for, respectively, Participant 1 – the male one – Participant 2 – the middle-aged female one – and Participant 3 – the younger female. They will be referred to in this way from now on.

- **P1:** English
- **P2:** Colleagues - BSL, English; varies in public - English if hearing audience, BSL if deaf signers
- **P3:** English.
- “What language do you use at the local market?”
 - **All:** English.

The different responses seem to indicate that P1 only uses English and is not as familiar with or does not use BSL as much. Conversely, P2’s circumstances may be indicative of her professional environment. She is careful to differentiate the languages she uses according to the people she is interacting with. She also mentioned that she uses gestures to communicate with foreigners when they do not speak English. With her colleagues, she tends to use her two main languages, while differentiating between hearing and deaf people and adapting accordingly. A similar approach is used by P3, especially with people from other parts of the world, with whom she can use English, BSL and even International Sign Language, depending on the interlocutor. However, she only uses English with colleagues, suppliers, public institutions or doctors. Finally, given the status of the local market as a public setting with many interactants and possibly varieties of English, the more generic option, i.e. English, is preferred.

6.1.3 Linguistic competence section

As far as the linguistic competence section is concerned, the questions are shown in the table below:

25) Can you discuss any topic in Standard British English?
27) Can you discuss any topic in BSL?
28) Are there any other languages or varieties that you know? How proficient are you in writing, speaking/signing, and reading these languages?
29) How often do you use Standard British English, BSL, and other language(s)?
30) Can you discuss any topic in other language(s)?

Table 61: Questions regarding language competence and SBE-BSL bilingualism.

P1’s unfamiliarity with BSL is confirmed, while P2 considers herself bilingual and P3 just ‘enough’, mentioning “No though I can have basic conversations” (question 26):

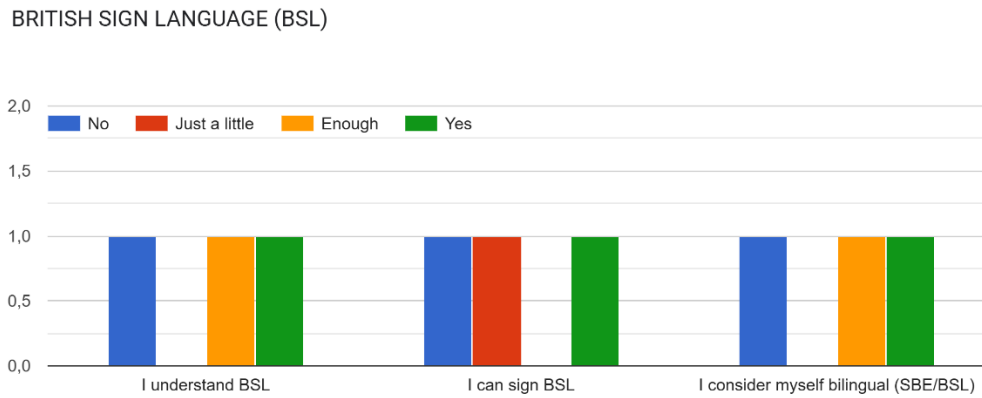


Figure 122: Graph on BSL use and comprehension.

On the contrary, English is P1's main – and perhaps – only language, despite being critical in declaring his speaking proficiency (question 24):

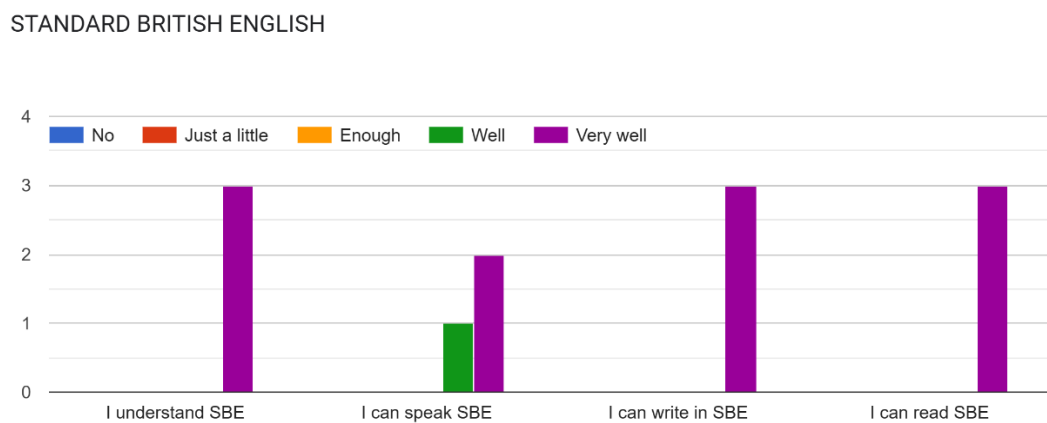


Figure 123: Graph on British English use and comprehension.

Finally, P1 and P2 do not know or use another language. P3 occasionally speaks Spanish, which she can use to discuss any topic.

6.1.4 Questions on SDH usage

The subsequent questions concern the use of SDH for watching TV series and films:

31) How often do you use SDH (subtitles for D/deaf and hard of hearing people) to watch TV series and films?

32) Where do you usually watch programmes using SDH (for instance, TV broadcast, streaming services...)?

33) Which streaming services have you subscribed to?
34) Compared to TV broadcast, how often do you watch programmes on streaming services?

Table 62: Questions on the use of SDH.

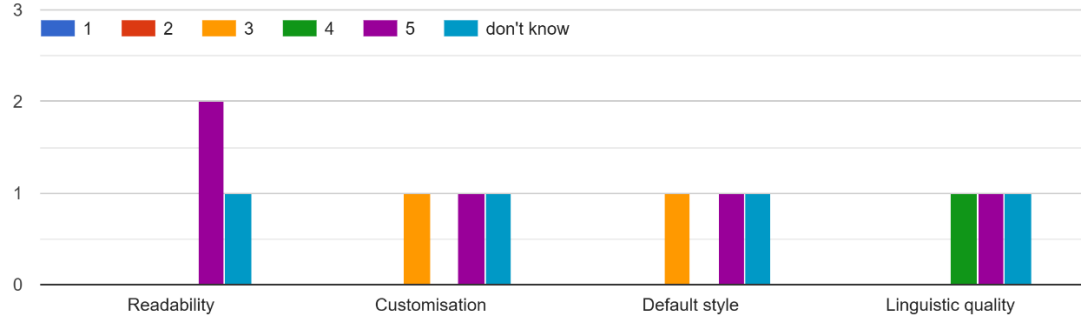
All interviewees agreed that they always watch audiovisual content with SDH. P1 only uses subtitles on BBC public television broadcasts, while P2 uses “TV, playback, streaming, cinema”; finally, P3 is the only participant who actively use streaming platforms, more specifically Netflix and, previously, Amazon Prime Video. P2 specified that she does not currently have a subscription to an SVoD, as she uses Freeview, BBC iPlayer, ITVX, and 4oD. However, she has previously used Amazon Prime, Netflix, Apple TV, Now, and Disney+, demonstrating her familiarity with the overall range of streaming platforms and their accessible tools.

6.1.5 Perception section

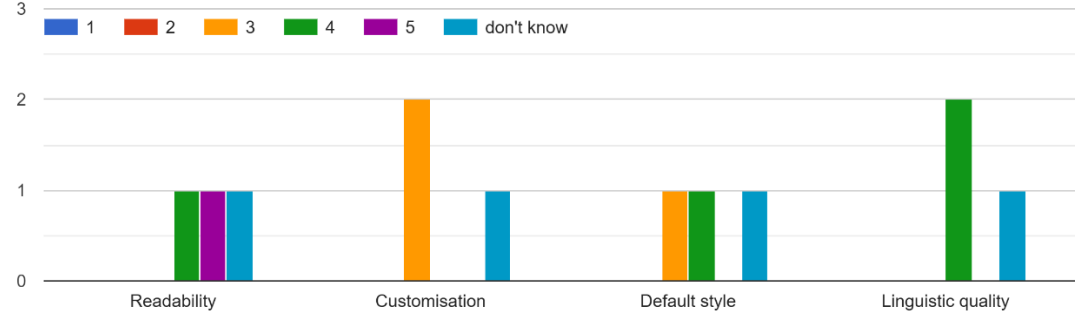
The SDH perception section starts with the perception of the comfort of reading SDH on screen (questions 35-46). In general, P3 considers SDH always comfortable to read, while P2 often considers it comfortable and P1 ‘sometimes’. This aspect can be attributed to the general use of streaming services by P2 and P3, which may be more technically advanced in providing and customising subtitles, as opposed to BBC subtitles, which is the only means used by P1. In more detail, the participants were asked to express their preference in terms of readability, customisation, default style, and linguistic quality for each streaming service under analysis. Considering the previous answers of P1, it comes without saying that his answers concerning the perception of SDH quality on streaming platforms have always been ‘don’t know’. Starting with Amazon Prime Video, P2 became critical according to customisation and default style, which are not very satisfactory. Instead, readability is highly appreciated, and linguistic quality is generically satisfactory. P3 considers all elements as very satisfactory, suggesting an overall positive experience in using this platform’s SDH. As regards both Netflix and AppleTV+, P2 classified them in the same way as Amazon Prime Video, therefore suggesting some problems at the customisation and default style levels, while being more satisfied, but not totally, with linguistic quality, and totally satisfied with general readability. Instead, Disney+ got lower ranks, especially in terms of customisation, default style, and linguistic quality. P3 selected ‘do not know’ for both AppleTV+ and Disney+, as she has not a subscription to these platforms;

however, for Netflix she expressed a general satisfaction, but not a total one, for readability, default style, and linguistic quality, but less for customisation. These responses are represented in the graphs below (questions 36-39):

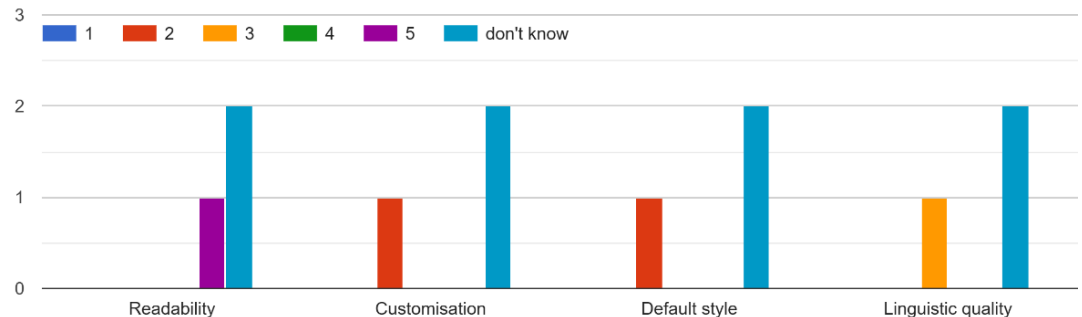
AMAZON PRIME VIDEO



NETFLIX



DISNEY+



APPLE TV+

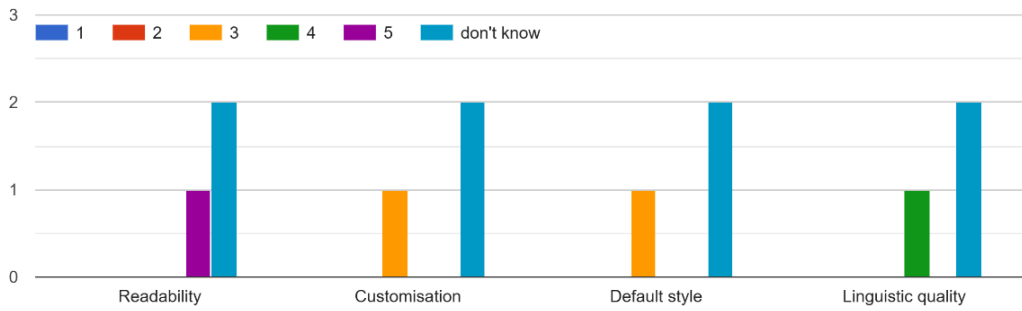


Figure 124: Graphs showing the satisfaction levels for each category in the four SVoDs.

When it comes to the speed of SDH, for each streaming platform the result is very satisfactory. P1 declared that SDH do not seem to be too fast in general, while P2 stated that it depends on

the reader’s level of reading and their speed. I can read quite fast, others perhaps cannot. I hate it when they cut swear words or shorten sentences and miss out a lot of words. This is typical of watching an old movie but newer stuff is subtitled better.

This aspect is in line with the contemporary experience of difficulties in accessing subtitling services, that P2 underlined in her statement: “Yes. Sometimes not available, not syncing, or the wrong subtitles for that programme”. P1 does not find any difficulty in these terms. P3 usually considers general speed on Amazon Prime Video SDH more satisfactory than on Netflix, despite not underlying any specific difficulty for any of the platforms she uses. All answers are represented in the graph below (question 40):

Speed of SDH:

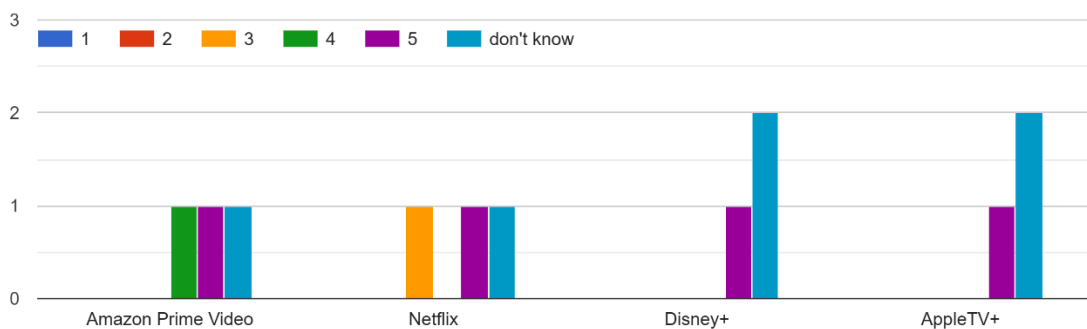


Figure 125: Graph showing the satisfaction levels of SDH speed on each SVoD.

When it comes to editing, P2 also underlined that in the past there was a general tendency to edit original dialogues much more than in recent times; however, “they still cut swear words or they don’t include the lyrics of the song that’s playing”. P1 stated that he does not know the actual amount of editing in subtitles in general, and P3 usually does not spot any form of massive editing. In the same section, the question “Do you feel excluded from general access to programmes? Why?” was answered differently: P1 said that most BBC programmes are covered, which in his opinion does not imply an exclusion, while P2 declared that “not ALL⁷¹ programmes are subtitled so it’s not 100% access”. Furthermore, P2 suggested subtitling every single programme, as well as some specific improvements in light of the previous statements:

Include swear words. Include song lyrics. Allow moveability of subtitles on screen eg watching football or right, subtitles always in the wrong place (eg covering the match or the presenters face) and allow changing size/font of subtitles. Easier on laptop/PC, less so on TV.

Similarly, P3 said that “Yes some programmes on TV don't have subtitles”, and “Sometimes the captions are white on a coloured background and not clear or they are in the blackbox if using Google ones”, thus underlying problems regarding the general aspect of SDH when appearing on screen, which may cause some confusion in terms of understanding of the general context of the scene.

6.1.6 Reception section

Reception section of the interview (questions 47-62) delved into the participants’ subjective assessments of SDH on streaming platforms by watching the video clips previously introduced in Chapter 3. The transcription of the original dialogues is reported below, together with the corresponding SDH.

Starting with Amazon Prime Video (questions 47-50), the video clip from *The Grand Tour* documentary (Season 1, Episode 13, “Past v Future”, 31:03-32:10) shows James May talking with Seamus, a race man, to understand the rules of a pick-up racing challenge in the wild. Here, James has some difficulty in doing his tasks while Seamus is driving the pick-up in the mud. In the table below, the original dialogue is presented with the corresponding SDH:

⁷¹ The uppercase is used by P2 herself.

ORIGINAL DIALOGUE	SDH
<p>There are 50 punches</p> <p>dotted around in different parts of the site.</p> <p>We have a punch card on the side of the vehicle there.</p> <p>You've got to get this punchcard to the punch.</p> <p>The punch will be on a string maybe 2ft long from the tree, or maybe 1ft.</p> <p>So you've got to punch the number.</p> <p>- Like a hole puncher? - Yes.</p> <p>When you get stuck...</p> <p>-Yeah.⁷²</p> <p>-...because you're gonna get stuck...</p> <p>- Yes. Yeah, yeah. - I have to get out</p> <p>and attach the winch to a tree, or...?</p> <p>Yes, you'll get out, and you'll get</p>	<p>There are 50 punches</p> <p>dotted around in different parts of the site.</p> <p>We have a punch card on the side of the vehicle.</p> <p>You've got to get this punchcard to the punch.</p> <p>The punch will be on a string maybe 2ft long from the tree, or maybe 1ft.</p> <p>So you've got to punch the number.</p> <p>- Like a hole puncher? - Yes.</p> <p>When you get stuck,</p> <p>because you're gonna get stuck...</p> <p>- Yes. Yeah, yeah. - I have to get out</p> <p>and attach the winch to a tree?</p> <p>Yes, you'll get out, and you'll get</p>

⁷² Bold text emphasises the differences between the original dialogue and the SDH, and the addition of italics also highlights markedness. Both edits are mine.

your strap with you.

The strap goes round the tree
to **pr'tect** the tree.

Then you bring your wincher
up to the tree,

or whatever obstacle
we attach it to,

and I was... I'll operate the
buttons.

- Your English is excellent, by the
way.
- Thank you.

I've been practising
for a long time now, **yeah yeah.**

A lot of practice's gone
into **tha'**.

As soon as the contest began,

Seamus made it plain
that my new role in life

was to be his... **'winch bitch'.**

OK, got to go, go, go.

- What, I've got to get out?
- Yeah.

Where the hell do you
think I'm gonna go?

Go with the winch rope
to that tree over there.

your strap with you.

The strap goes round the tree
to protect the tree.

Then you bring your wincher
up to the tree,

or whatever obstacle
we attach it to,

and I'll operate the buttons.

- Your English is excellent.
- Thank you.

I've been practising
for a long time now.

A lot of practice
has gone into that.

As soon as the contest began,

Seamus made it plain
that my new role in life

was to be his winch bitch.

SEAMUS: OK, got to go, go, go.

- What, I've got to get out?
- Yeah.

Where the hell do you
think I'm gonna go?

Go with the winch rope
to that tree over there.

<p>Oh, man!</p> <p>This is like being a F**ing hippopotamus.</p> <p>Awwwwgh!</p> <p>OK, the clock is ticking.</p> <p>Having got our first punch,</p> <p>I was hoping the day might get a bit less terrible.</p> <p>But it didn't.</p> <p>- Oh, man! - James, cm'on, will you?</p> <p>Ow!</p> <p>Ugh.</p> <p>OOOOH!</p> <p>I'm winching meself.</p> <p>Oh, that's much better.</p> <p>Well, I say it's "much better",</p> <p>then it's less shit!</p>	<p>[GROANS] Oh, man!</p> <p>This is like being a... [BLEEP] hippopotamus.</p> <p>[GRUNTS]</p> <p>[CRIES OUT]</p> <p>OK, the clock is ticking.</p> <p>Having got our first punch,</p> <p>I was hoping the day might get a bit less terrible.</p> <p>But it didn't.</p> <p>- Oh, man! - James, come on, will you?</p> <p>Ow!</p> <p>[GRUNTS]</p> <p>[CRIES OUT]</p> <p>I'm winching myself.</p> <p>Oh, that's much better.</p> <p>Well, I say it's "much better",</p> <p>it's less shit.</p>
---	--

After watching the clips, the interviewees answered to the following questions:

- Are the subtitles comfortable to read?
 - **P1:** yes

- **P2:** No. Too short and quick. Better if on the screen for longer.
- **P3:** yes.
- Can you spot any dialect or accent from the subtitles?
 - **P1:** no
 - **P2:** No. Didn't realise until James May said 'your English is very good'. Normally I'd have time to watch the speaker's face and read the subtitles but not in this case. But knowing James May he was likely being sarcastic.
 - **P3:** yes.
- Where is Seamus from, in your opinion? How do you know it?
 - **P1:** no idea
 - **P2:** Ireland by his name but other than James saying 'your English is very good' would assume not Irish... would have to watch again...can now see Irish flat at beginning but missed Tis as was focused on subtitles going so fast!
 - **P3:** Ireland.
- How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?
 - **P1:** n/a
 - **P2:** Slow them down, lengthen the text so there's more speech on each line rather than 'bullets' flashing on and off the screen. If sophisticated, align the subtitles with the speaker's location on the screen, give the options for different colours or name of person speaking. Highlight the accent being spoken e.g. (Polish) or type the words as they're being pronounced (but give this as an option) - perfect English or accented English.
 - **P3:** no.

The suggestions promoted by P2 highlight the need to remodel the methods to synchronise subtitles on the platform. Although the series in question is relatively recent – originating from a long-established BBC series – attention to the precise composition of its subtitles still appears to be lacking. Issues arose both in terms of timing and language. For instance, P2 literally referred to the SDH as “bullets flashing on and off the screen,” thereby highlighting concerns regarding the speed of subtitle presentation. In addition, the language employed suggested a need to specify the variation used, especially when humour was intended. It should be noted that Seamus speaks very rapidly, which may result in synchronisation difficulties during post-production. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the need to align subtitles not only with the pace of the original dialogue but also with the reading capabilities of the user, either deaf or

hearing, in accordance with established guidelines, e.g., a minimum duration of 1.2 seconds for a four-word subtitle (BBC, 2025). In the current instance, a one lined, seven-word subtitle appears on screen for 1.12 seconds, and a two-lined, eleven-word subtitle remains for 2.16 seconds, which are both lower than what usually recommended. Moreover, deliberate emphasis and pauses introduced by James May – for instance, in the noun phrase “winch bitch”, which was prosodically stressed – were not reflected in the subtitles, thus diminishing the impact of the original humorous intention. This nuance had not been explicitly flagged by either participant, perhaps because it was not fully perceived. Therefore, despite the overall verbatim strategy applied here, adjustments are still needed to make this product more accessible. It must be noted that the only participant to find SDH perfectly clear and with no further adjustments needed is P3, going in a different direction from the other participants. This difference may be attributed to her experience in using Amazon Prime Video, despite not anymore, and to her faster ability to read and process on-screen images and text simultaneously. This enhanced capability may be related to her habit of accessing subtitled material on social media as well as on television, a pattern that is likely influenced by her young age.

As far as the Netflix product is concerned, namely *Sex Education* (Season 1, Episode 1, 24:01-25:06), the scene shows the teenager Otis at home with his mother Jean, a rather eccentric sex therapist, and Adam, a chirpy, arrogant classmate who has dropped by. Otis remains in the background while Jean and Adam smoke weed and discuss the relationship between smoking and sexuality. Below there is the original dialogue with the SDH:

ORIGINAL DIALOGUE	SDH
Do you smoke every day?	[JEAN] Do you smoke every day?
Yeah. Yeah, most days, Mrs., um...	Yeah. Yeah, most days, Mrs., um...
Oh, just call me Jean.	Oh, just call me Jean.
You know, they've been doing some interesting studies with cannabis.	You know, they've been doing some interesting studies with cannabis.
They're just starting to wake up to its health benefits.	They're just starting to wake up to its health benefits.

<p>Yeah? Like, um...</p> <p>How it makes everything funny?</p> <p>- You know, like your face. - Hm?</p> <p>Ever so serious,</p> <p>like a... atlas.</p> <p>Hahahaha. Hahaha.</p> <p>However, it has been linked to early onset impotence.</p> <p>Nothing conclusive yet.</p> <p>But you have to be careful with how much you smoke.</p> <p>Mum...</p> <p>I only bring it up because I have a number of clients who were heavy drug users at your age,</p> <p>and now they have trouble with sexual performance.</p> <p>- Sexual... performance? - They have trouble finishing.</p> <p>- Ejaculation. - Hm.</p> <p>Jizz, spunk.</p>	<p>Yeah? Like, um...</p> <p>How it makes everything funny?</p> <p>- You know, like your face. - Hm?</p> <p>Ever so serious,</p> <p>like a... atlas.</p> <p>[BOTH GIGGLE]</p> <p>However, it has been linked to early onset impotence.</p> <p>Nothing conclusive yet.</p> <p>But be careful with how much you smoke.</p> <p>Mum...</p> <p>I only bring it up because I have a number of clients who were heavy drug users at your age,</p> <p>and now they have trouble with sexual performance.</p> <p>- Sexual performance? - They have trouble finishing.</p> <p>- Ejaculation. - Hm.</p> <p>Jizz, spunk.</p>
---	---

<p>Man milk!</p> <p>- Mum, Jesus Christ!</p> <p>- Don't have a problem with that.</p> <p>What makes you think I've got... a problem with that?</p> <p>I didn't say you had a problem with tha'.</p>	<p>Man milk!</p> <p>- Mum, Jesus Christ!</p> <p>- Don't have a problem with that.</p> <p>What makes you think I've got a problem with that?</p> <p>I didn't say you had a problem with that.</p>
---	--

The questions and answers related to this clip are as follows:

- “Are the subtitles comfortable to read?”
 - **P1:** yes
 - **P2:** Better than the previous clip. Only Jean’s name was highlighted.
 - **P3:** Yes
- “Do you think language here is very informal? Or even strong?”
 - **P1:** English is fine
 - **P2:** Well it fits with what’s being said more or less accurately.
 - **P3:** Yes
- “Can you spot any sentence reduction here?”
 - **P1:** no
 - **P2:** Not that I can see. Missed Jean’s section on sexual impotence, not sure if she might have said more than the subtitles did but I couldn’t see her face very well or when they were talking off screen.
 - **P3:** Yes
- “How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?”
 - **P1:** n/a
 - **P2:** Identify each speaker. Offer a choice to have black background, speaker colour, change size
 - **P3:** No.

It seems that the original dialogue is not different from the SDH provided. The only sentence reduction that can be detected is in the Jean’s utterance “But you have to be careful with how much you smoke”, which becomes “But be careful with how much you smoke”. It appears that

only P2 noticed this difference, but due to the poor visibility of her lips – as the frame was not a close-up –, she could not confirm this. Another factor that may be worth considering is the speaker identification, which according to P2 needs to be included to help viewers understand who is talking when the camera is not actually framing people talking. For instance, on more than one occasion, Jean is talking to Adam, but it is only Otis whom we see on screen with SDH occurring below, which may potentially cause some confusion:



Figure 126: Frame from Sex Education's episode showing Otis with Jean's subtitle.

Finally, a practical example of the above mentioned SDH customisation factor on Netflix seems to occur in this clip, since P2 underlined the need to opt for a black background, speaker colour, and size change. Apart from size, which can change just slightly, the other options are not offered in the platform⁷³.

As concerns the Disney+ clip from *Wedding Season* (Season 1, Episode 1, 24:34-26:05), the scene shows a doctor, called Stefan, who is being questioned by two police inspectors, a man and a woman, about the poisoning of all the guests during a wedding. It seems that the only person to survive and escape was the bride, whom Stefan knows. Therefore, the inspectors both think that Stefan is somewhat involved in the accident. The original dialogue and the corresponding SDH are:

⁷³ In terms of colour, on Netflix only white and yellow can be chosen, but this option will be available for all SDH, regardless of the speaker.

ORIGINAL DIALOGUE	SDH
<p>Now, Stefan, son, you're walking a very thin fucking line here.</p> <p>You're a doctor, for now.</p> <p>You probably know a lot about the human body and how to poison it.</p> <p>You really think I did this?</p> <p>You disrupted that wedding once already.</p> <p>You and Katie had been seen multiple times together over the past three months.</p> <p>This is you in Cornwall a few weeks after Yuna's wedding.</p> <p>You both entered the United States a few weeks after that.</p> <p>- I don't know, I-I-I...</p> <p>- I think you're in way over your head</p> <p>and I think you know something.</p> <p>Now you can tell us or we can talk to the GMC.</p> <p>Look, look, look, I-I didn't poison anyone, I...</p> <p>I feel sick.</p>	<p>Now, Stefan, son, you're walking a very thin fucking line here.</p> <p>You're a doctor, for now.</p> <p>You probably know a lot about the human body and how to poison it.</p> <p>(eerie music playing)</p> <p>You really think I did this?</p> <p>You disrupted that wedding once already.</p> <p>You and Katie had been seen multiple times together over the past three months.</p> <p>This is you in Cornwall a few weeks after Yuna's wedding.</p> <p>You both entered the United States a few weeks after that.</p> <p>- I don't know, I...</p> <p>- I think you're in way over your head</p> <p>and I think you know something.</p> <p>Now you can tell us or we can talk to the GMC.</p> <p>Look, I didn't poison anyone, I...</p> <p>I feel sick.</p>

<p>If you can't do the time, son.</p> <p>No, no, no, it's-s the stress, I mean, like I'm gonna...</p> <p>Fuck's sake.</p> <p>If we let you go to the bathroom, you'll help us after, Stefan?</p> <p>Ughhh.</p> <p>Huh.</p> <p>Ugh, that colour is not natural.</p> <p>You need to change your diet, Stefan, son.</p> <p>Oh, shite.</p> <p>I've got to make a phone call. These bloody lawyers.</p> <p>All right. Don't you move an inch.</p> <p>You, keep a fucking eye on him.</p>	<p>If you can't do the time, son.</p> <p>No, it's the stress, I mean, like I'm gonna...</p> <p>Fuck's sake.</p> <p>If we let you go to the bathroom, you'll help us after, Stefan?</p> <p>(door opening)</p> <p>(gaging)</p> <p>(breathes heavily)</p> <p>That color is not natural.</p> <p>You need to change your diet, Stefan, son.</p> <p>(cell phone beeps and vibrates)</p> <p>Oh, shit.</p> <p>I've got to make a phone call. These bloody lawyers.</p> <p>All right. Don't you move an inch.</p> <p>You, keep a fucking eye on him.</p>
---	---

Below there are the dedicated questions and answers:

- “Are the subtitles comfortable to read?”
 - **P1:** yes
 - **P2:** They’re ok
 - **P3:** Yes
- “Can you spot any English dialect or accent from the subtitles?”

- **P1:** no
- **P2:** No
- **P3:** Yes
- “Do the subtitles show extra-linguistic elements well? For example, stumbles, interruptions...”
 - **P1:** no
 - **P2:** Noise effects it jumped very quickly from (sound of door banging) to gagging (which was spelt gaging). Good use of ... to pause but when character speaking off screen didn't know who was talking
 - **P3:** Yes
- “How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?”
 - **P1:** n/a
 - **P2:** Name the person talking if they're starting to speak off screen. Add accents (either in brackets) and/or change the English to show how the word is being pronounced
 - **P3:** White writing in black box not clear blurred.

In this case, SDH do not differentiate from the original dialogue, thus suggesting the choice for the verbatim strategy. However, according to P2, issues seemed to occur with the timing of sound effects and extralinguistic features, which appeared too rapidly, as well as with off-screen speaker identification, which was found to be lacking. When it comes to accent, P3 stated that she could identify an accent in the subtitles, although the other participants experienced quite the opposite, but she did not indicate which accent(s) or how it was represented. It is possible that she was referring to the use of marked syntactic structures, as observed in the sentence “You really think I did this?”, although this remains difficult to verify. P2 suggested that adding brackets to signal a different accent, or altering the spelling to indicate such a difference, might have been appropriate. For example, the male inspector, at the end of the scene, was heard saying “oh, shite” [ˈʃaɪt] in a typical Scottish accent; however, this was standardised as “oh, shit” [ˈʃɪt/] in the subtitles, potentially diminishing his characterisation. Furthermore, another issue related to variation was noted: although the setting is in the UK, more specifically Scotland, the word “colour” was rendered as “color” (i.e., in American spelling⁷⁴), thereby misaligning with the overall original English variety.

⁷⁴ This issue was largely illustrated in Chapter 5.

Finally, the clip from AppleTV+'s *Ted Lasso* (Season 2, Episode 8, "Man City", 36:43-37:26) shows a middle-aged man entering the dressing room of Richmond Football Club looking for his son, Jamie Tartt, who plays for that club. He wants to get free pass to the pitch for his friends and him, even though he is constantly mocking the team for their poor performance against Manchester City, the team he actually supports. Jamie seems very upset by his father's behaviour and refuses. The clip has the following dialogues and SDH:

ORIGINAL DIALOGUE	SDH
Are you decent? Hahaha!	Are you decent? [laughs]
I told ya. Prick.	I told ya. Prick.
Oh, gentlemen!	[chuckles] Oh, gentlemen!
Gentlemen!	Gentlemen! [groans, chuckles]
Hey, it's a tough one, lads.	Hey, it's a tough one, lads.
It's a tough one, but no shame to it,	It's a tough one, but no shame to it,
'cause, y'know , we only ever bea' ,	'cause, you know, we only ever beat,
uh, everybody we play.	uh, everybody we play. [laughs]
Hahaha!	
So, you pups had no chance.	So you pups had no chance.
Oh. And there he is! My son!	[gasps] Oh. And there he is, my son.
My own flesh and blood.	My own flesh and blood.
Poor Jamie, my son.	Poor Jamie, my son. [breathes heavily]
Now, maybe I'm thinking	[sniffs] Now, maybe I'm thinking
his heart's still in Manchester	his heart's still in Manchester
and that's why he missed that sitter	and that's why he missed that sitter
in the first half.	in the first half.
Oh. Whoo!	[chuckling] Oh. Whoo!

You absolutely balled it. You balled it.	You absolutely balled it. You balled it.
What were you thinking? I'm only kidding, hey. Hahaha.	What were you thinking? [groans] I'm only kidding, hey. [chuckles]
Hey, look, do us a favour and get Denbo and Bug past security.	Hey, look, do us a favor and get Denbo and Bug past security.
They wanna go on the pitch, take a few snaps, yeah?	They wanna go on the pitch, take a few snaps, yeah?
I'd rather 'em not.	I'd rather 'em not.
Yeah, they just want to look around. It'll only take a second. Doosh.	Yeah, they just want to look around. It'll only take a second. Doosh.
I'd rather 'em not.	I'd rather 'em not.

Below there are the questions and the answers dedicated to this part:

- “Are the subtitles comfortable to read?”
 - **P1:** ok
 - **P2:** No, too much flow of the first speaking on and on... could break it down into separate lines more
 - **P3:** Yes
- “Is the character using British English or American English?”
 - **P1:** no idea
 - **P2:** No idea if the accent from the subtitles where the spelling is in British English but we know Ted Lasso has gone over to coach in America so if know the storyline might work it out but from that clip alone, no idea
 - **P3:** British English
- “Can you spot a specific dialect or accent here?”
 - **P1:** no
 - **P2:** Not clearly from subtitles until footballer says ‘I’d rather ‘em not’ but without knowledge of who speaks like that ca[n’]t work it out unless assume it’s

Manchester as bearded guy refers to Manchester⁷⁵ but no idea or they're Italian (based on looks, attitude, behaviour) either!!!

- **P3:** Yes
- “How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?”
 - **P1:** there didn't seem many
 - **P2:** Add accent in brackets and or change the English to how it's pronounced.
 - **P3:** A little unclear as not black box around.

P2 raised an issue which occurred also in *Wedding Season*'s example, that is the American English spelling used for British English dialogues. Despite mistakenly indicating that Ted Lasso, the leading character of the series, is coaching in the USA at the moment of that scene, she notices that the overall subtitles seem to align to the British English variety. However, the word 'favour' is spelled with the American version, i.e., 'favor', thus complicating interpretations. Indeed, given P2's response, *Ted Lasso* seems to be rather well-known in the UK, and the general plot is somewhat familiar: a former American football coach who has been transferred to the UK to work as a football coach – this time intended as 'soccer' in American English – and who is now completely absorbed in British culture. Therefore, when it comes to identifying other characters through SDH, even if secondary characters, it makes even more crucial to specify the correct spelling accordingly. In this scene, Ted never speaks, but he is seen for a few seconds while the only two characters interacting are Mancunian and speak this British variety. It is also worth noting that Jamie's father has a more pronounced accent than his son, and he is a secondary character. Therefore, it might be beneficial to consider a more precise spelling or some labels to ensure the character is portrayed accurately. This could help avoid any potential assumptions, such as those mentioned by P2, about the character's background or identity. Additionally, it might be advantageous to explore unconventional spelling choices without compromising readability, especially given the character's limited screen time. Although the SDH effectively suggest the presence of a regional variety in contrast to Standard British English, participants noted that some nuances still appear to be missing.

⁷⁵ I must admit that I was surprised to read this statement, as I have never heard of bearded men being usually associated with Manchester. Therefore, I decided to do some more research and came across a post by Mr Sam Bail on his personal blog entitled *Beards of Manchester, or: The hairiest two weeks of my life*, which somewhat confirmed P2's statement. The post even states that “Manchester seems to be full of fantastic beards, some big and bushy, others neatly trimmed, and others perfectly styled, curled and waxed” (2011). The piece can be read here: <https://sambail.com/2010/09/25/beards-of-manchester-or-the-hairiest-two-weeks-of-my-life/>. It can be said that a sociolinguistic and reception interview has given me yet another piece of British culture.

At the end of the interview, participants P1 and P2 offered additional insights. In contrast, P3 was the only participant who did not provide any additional information. Both P1 and P2 expressed reservations concerning the composition of SDH. Specifically, P1 noted that the absence of detailed specifications regarding accents and linguistic varieties resulted in the examples given being open to interpretation (“A lot was left to the imagination”), thereby suggesting a persisting divide between hearing and deaf scenarios. P2, on the other hand, provided specific examples where SDH fell short of conveying the complete dialogue in general terms. She highlighted that subtitles often omit swear words, song lyrics, and, at times, crucial off-screen commentary. These omissions have the effect of depriving viewers of important emotional and contextual cues. The absence of nuanced linguistic elements seems to be a recurring issue, even in the examples provided here, indicating that current SDH practices might overly soften the original dialogue. Participants usually using or used to SVoD identified a need for enhanced customisation tools, such as the ability to adjust subtitle speed and on-screen duration to match reading pace, and to modify size, font, and background of subtitles, easing their legibility across different devices. Finally, the incorporation of off-screen speaker identification should be standardised and occurring consistently. These recommendations reflect an emerging paradigm where user-centred customisation has the potential to transform the viewing experience for d/Deaf audiences, that is, both within and outside the Deaf community. While P1’s responses did not elaborate much on these points, the detailed critique from P2 and some considerations from P3 illustrate a broader demand for SDH that are not only accurate but also adaptable to individual needs and totally accessible to avoid a feeling of exclusion.

Conclusions

This concluding section provides a comprehensive summary of the research presented in this doctoral dissertation, focusing on the sociolinguistic analysis of accessible subtitles for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) audiences in the UK. This section reinforces the primary objectives, summarises the key findings from both corpus-driven and interview-based methodologies, and critically evaluates the strengths and limitations of the study. Moreover, it provides a comprehensive overview of the broader implications of this research within the domain of Audiovisual Translation and Accessibility Studies, offering insights into its practical relevance and theoretical contributions. Finally, it outlines potential directions for future research, thereby providing a proactive response to anticipated questions regarding the significance and impact of the work.

I. Summary of the research study

The present study proceeded with an empirical investigation into the linguistic quality and sociolinguistic coherence of SDH in British audiovisual productions. The primary objective was to evaluate the representation of non-standard English features such as informal register, dialects, and syntactic markedness in subtitles through the lens of both accessibility and linguistic accuracy. The research was motivated by two factors. Firstly, the – increasing – prevalence of hearing loss in the UK inevitably demands for more accessible services, as illustrated in Chapter 2. Secondly, this growing demand is closely linked to the need for verbatim and linguistically accurate subtitling, as discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1.

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses (Chapter 3). In these terms, a significant contribution of this research is the creation of *LISA Corpus* (Large Intralingual Subtitles for Accessibility), a novel dataset comprising SDH from British productions across four streaming platforms – AppleTV+, Disney+, Netflix, and Amazon Prime Video. This corpus was later meticulously tagged to identify sociolinguistic variants across diatopic, diaphasic, and diastratic dimensions, mainly employing a Labovian framework and recalling Collins and Hollo (2010) and Hilpert (2014) for grammar, as well as Watson (2018), Kerswill (2018), Sunderland (2018), Baker (2018), and McEnery and Love (2018). As discussed in Chapter 4, the quantitative analysis of *LISA Corpus*, facilitated by the

corpus analysis tool LancsBox X, focused on the frequency and distribution of non-standard features such as slang, colloquialisms, swear words, regionalisms, dialectal phonetic spellings, and marked syntactic structures. Chapter 5 provided a further explanation of how such features were put into practice, analysing and commenting on specific series and films divided per streaming platform.

Complementing the corpus analysis, a written sociolinguistic interview was administered to British DHH participants (Chapter 6). This qualitative component aimed to gather direct insights into their perceptions and reception of the linguistic quality of SDH, particularly concerning character portrayal and the representation of non-standard linguistic features. The triangulation of findings from both methodologies provided a multifaceted understanding of the current state of SDH in the UK, at least on SVoD.

The key objectives addressed by this research included identifying the strengths and weaknesses inherent in British accessible subtitling practices across the four streaming services listed above – which are not only the most widely used in the UK, but also those offering many original products. Furthermore, through the creation of *LISA Corpus* the study aimed to develop an initial SDH monitor corpus intended to support tangible improvements in the linguistic quality of English audiovisual programmes. Finally, a crucial objective was to obtain direct feedback from the target audience, ensuring that the research was enriched by the experiences and preferences of DHH individuals themselves.

The theoretical framework was derived from existing literature in the fields of AVT, sociolinguistics and deafness studies, with particular emphasis placed on the importance of linguistic coherence, the challenges of diamesic transposition from oral to written forms, and the cognitive implications of reading subtitles for individuals with hearing loss. The study highlighted the tension between technical constraints (e.g., character limits, reading speed) and the need to preserve sociolinguistic nuances, as advocated by BBC guidelines, OFCOM, and DHH associations.

II. Key findings and discussion

The analysis of *LISA Corpus* revealed a complex picture regarding the representation of non-standard English in SDH. Quantitatively, the study confirmed the presence of various sociolinguistic markers, indicating a general tendency towards including variation and broadly aligning with BBC guidelines. Importantly, the quantitative analysis was conducted at corpus

level: tagged features were aggregated across titles and platforms, and dispersion was characterised using per-file mean and median values to estimate the relative ‘weight’ of marked content across files. No per-title normalisation against total word counts was performed, nor were original spoken-dialogue transcripts aligned and analysed. Accordingly, the study does not estimate a title-by-title percentage of fidelity to the original dialogue for all subtitles included in *LISA Corpus*. What the data do show – given a corpus of roughly four million words – is that the frequency of sociolinguistically marked items is substantial and non-negligible, as illustrated by the distributional graphs, thus supporting the claim that variation is nowadays present in SDH.

Qualitatively, two approaches were selected. First, a sub-corpus from *LISA Corpus* was used to signal occurrences of marked linguistic items in practice. This subset was aligned with original dialogues and compared to SDH to illustrate – rather than generalise – a tendency towards verbatim rendering in accessible subtitling. Second, interviews with DHH participants provided nuanced perspectives. While participants generally appreciated the effort to include non-standard features, their reception was often influenced by individual linguistic backgrounds, literacy levels, and prior exposure to different English varieties. In any case, participants commonly reported the need to improve character identification and sociolinguistic representations, as well as to reduce subtitle speed.

It is essential to note that the research yielded several significant findings. Firstly, the SDH across the corpus consistently include non-standard lexical items and grammatical structures; this pattern supports the interpretation that variation is actively represented. However, given that the present study did not align subtitles with original spoken dialogues on a large scale – as previously mentioned – it does not claim to precisely quantify ‘verbatimness’. Secondly, the corpus demonstrated a notable representation of colloquialisms and slang, particularly in content aimed at younger audiences, which effectively contributed to character authenticity and genre verisimilitude. Challenges mostly concerned the phonetic spelling of words and the representation of regional accents and dialects, which are displayed through labels or dialectal spellings only occasionally. More specifically, within the tagged layer, lexical tags were not uniformly distributed: #_SLG was by far the most frequent, partly because it encompasses interjections, discourse markers, and marked colloquial elements which usually constitute spontaneous speech. This feature was followed by #_SWR – which is traditionally enduring in English-language productions – with #_DIAL being the least frequent. As investigated above in this work, this condition is likely due to the greater difficulty and cost of orthographically

rendering diatopic variation. Syntactically, <MRK: inv> was the most consistently preserved, whereas <MRK: agr> was the least frequent in the SDH. Of the case studies examined, Netflix appeared more attentive to preserve elements of spontaneous dialogue in subtitles, tending to maintain colloquial vocabulary and pragmatic cues. This trait can be deduced also from the qualitative analysis of the sub-corpus: although investigating different marked features of speech, Netflix demonstrated faithfulness to original speech by preserving diatopically, diastratically, and diaphasically-connoted slang and loanwords, with the only exception of a few missing labels for foreign languages and dialects used.

The scarcity of dialect resources also resulted in confusion among participants' reception of SDH, emphasising the necessity for refinement in the subtitling guidelines and practices. Finally, the impact on character portrayal was evident: when non-standard features were rendered effectively, participants reported a stronger sense of character personality and social identity, whereas omissions or generic standardisations tended to diminish character depth.

III. Strengths of the research study

This research presents several significant strengths that may contribute to the fields of Audiovisual Translation, Sociolinguistics, and Accessibility Studies⁷⁶. A primary methodological strength lies in *LISA Corpus* itself, which represents a valuable resource for future research into SDH. This tagged dataset of British SDH not only represents a useful method of systematic analysis of sociolinguistic peculiarities but also attempts to offer a valid resource to linguistic studies of subtitles, many of which focus on interlingual subtitling or lack detailed sociolinguistic annotation. The adoption of a mixed-methods approach, combining corpus-driven quantitative analysis with qualitative insights from DHH participants, as already specified, offers a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the phenomenon, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings through both broad generalisations and nuanced interpretations of individual experiences. The study's focus on sociolinguistic variation delves into a relatively underexplored area, moving beyond merely technical aspects of subtitling to address the cultural and social dimensions of language accessibility and highlighting how linguistic choices may impact identity representation, cultural aspects, and DHH audience engagement.

⁷⁶ The terms "Audiovisual Translation", "Sociolinguistics", and "Accessibility Studies" are capitalised to emphasise their status as defined scholarly fields and to foreground their conceptual relevance to the present discussion.

A crucial strength is the integration of direct user feedback through the dedicated interview. This ensures the research is grounded in the lived experiences and preferences of the target audience, providing a user-centred perspective and enhancing the practical relevance of the work. By addressing a critical accessibility need, the research aims to directly contribute to the improvement of services for a significant and growing demographic, offering practical insights which can lead to more inclusive media consumption for DHH users.

IV. Limitations and justifications

i) The interview

The first limitation of the research concerned sampling and community engagement during development of the interview. Interview participation was limited despite a sustained outreach to associations, institutions, and social channels. Therefore, the participant pool for the sociolinguistic interview, while providing valuable insights, cannot be fully representative of the entire DHH population in the UK. Multiple factors plausibly contributed, including community gatekeeping and safeguarding practices, research complexity, privacy concerns, accessibility and trust barriers, and the absence of strong pre-existing relationships. Consequently, the qualitative sample is small and not statistically representative; generalisations should therefore be made with caution.

Furthermore, while the study discusses cognitive load and reading comprehension in Chapter 2, it does not employ direct psycholinguistic methods for cognitive load measurement, such as eye-tracking, which could provide more precise data. Such a decision had pragmatic implications, as integrating eye-tracking technology would have added significant complexity and resource intensity beyond the project's practical constraints. The current approach relies on valuable self-reported perceptions from the interview, which, while indirect, still provide meaningful insights and highlight the possibility for future interdisciplinary collaboration with neurolinguistic research centres.

ii) The corpus and the tagset

Another limitation is related to corpus size and representativeness. While *LISA Corpus* represents a significant step, its current size – though substantial for the present research – may not fully capture the entire spectrum of sociolinguistic representation across British audiovisual productions on streaming platforms. The selection of productions was led by sociolinguistic

relevance, as explained in Chapter 3, thus overtly manifesting a degree of selectivity. However, the task of compiling a truly exhaustive corpus requires more extensive resources and time beyond the scope of this doctoral study. The current corpus effectively serves as a robust monitor corpus and a proof-of-concept for future, larger-scale endeavours. Additionally, the subjectivity inherent in tagging sociolinguistic variants represents another issue. While a detailed model framework guided the semi-supervised tagging process, a degree of subjective interpretation is inevitable, meaning that different annotators might categorise certain linguistic features slightly differently. This possibility was mitigated by objectively illustrating the composition of the model necessary for computational processes and developing a clear and comprehensive tagset. However, the complexity of sociolinguistic phenomena impedes to achieve an absolute objectivity, suggesting future work could explore machine learning approaches.

The dynamic nature of streaming content also presents an obstacle: because the corpus is static in time, it may not fully reflect the latest trends in a constantly evolving landscape of new productions and subtitling practices. This represents a substantial challenge for any corpus-based study, and *LISA Corpus* is designed as a monitor corpus, allowing for future updates and diachronic analysis. The findings may thus provide a fundamental understanding that can serve as a foundation for further research and investigation.

Another methodological limitation is that the scope of the quantitative analysis was not extended to include per-title normalisation against total word counts, and the original spoken-dialogue transcripts were only analysed for a portion of *LISA Corpus* rather than the entire corpus. This design choice reflects the objective of capturing macro-level tendencies in a large monitor corpus rather than title-specific fidelity metrics. Consequently, the study avoids making assertions regarding the degree of verbatimness or title-by-title fidelity; instead, it concentrates on the prevalence and dispersion of marked features throughout the corpus.

Finally, practical difficulties encountered during the neural tagging experiments included:

- Tight timelines limiting extensive hyperparameter search and error analysis.
- Need for iterative (re)training to strengthen domain adaptation and rare-tag coverage.
- Hardware constraints: several experiments would benefit from GPUs with larger VRAM/throughput instead of a personal computer.

In summary, this research aims to go beyond a purely linguistic analysis, offering significant implications for accessibility service providers and computational perspectives. The findings

highlight the importance of developing a more nuanced understanding of linguistic diversity within SDH, moving away from a simplistic view of ‘correct’ versus ‘incorrect’ language.

V. Research significance and contribution

This study directly addresses a fundamental aspect of digital inclusion and media accessibility for a significant segment of the population. With millions of DHH individuals relying on subtitles, their quality directly impacts cultural participation, information access, and social integration. By meticulously analysing the representation of sociolinguistic variation, this research advocates for subtitles that are not merely functional but also culturally and linguistically rich, reflecting the authentic voices and identities portrayed in audiovisual content. This takes accessibility beyond basic comprehension, offering a fuller, more immersive viewing experience and tackling potential discrimination while enhancing the quality of life for DHH audiences.

Furthermore, in an era where streaming services dominate media consumption, understanding the intricacies of SDH becomes paramount. This research provides empirical evidence to inform best practices, potentially fostering a more inclusive approach to content creation and distribution. It highlights that accessibility requires continuous adaptation and sensitivity to the diverse needs and preferences of the target audience.

In terms of corpus creation and computational tools, a key contribution of this work is a two-layer tagging scheme that couples lexical tags (#_SWR for profanity, #_SLG for slang/colloquialisms/interjections, and #_DIAL for dialectal items) with sentence-level syntactic markers (<MRK: inv> for lack of inversion in questions, <MRK: cop> for copula omission/alteration, <MRK: agr> for lack of subject-verb agreement, <MRK: form> for no-auxiliary verbal form/morphology). This hybrid scheme (i) makes sociolinguistic variation auditable and machine-readable, (ii) supports both macro-corpus quantification and micro-level qualitative inspection, and (iii) facilitates reproducibility and extension for future investigations. Moreover, the tagging pipeline integrates lightweight neural components: a DistilBERT-based sequence tagger (for lexical disambiguation and WSD-style cues) and a Graph Neural Network (GNN) to encode structural signals (e.g., local co-occurrence at sentence level and disambiguation detection). These components helped balance precision and recall compared with purely rule-based baselines.

As discussed in §II, the quantitative analysis relied on aggregated tagged counts and summary statistics (means and medians) computed across files to characterise dispersion and relative prominence of marked features. Because no alignment with original spoken-dialogue transcripts was performed at scale, the study does not provide title-level fidelity metrics nor make assertions about subtitles being ‘100% verbatim’; fidelity analysis can be proposed as future work.

VI. Future research directions

The present research suggests a number of potential avenues for future investigation, building upon the inquiries discussed in this dissertation:

- 1 Expansion and Longitudinal Study of *LISA Corpus*:** the *LISA Corpus* can be expanded to include a wider range of British audiovisual productions, further genres, and content from additional streaming platforms. A longitudinal study could track changes in subtitling practices over time, particularly in response to evolving accessibility guidelines and technological advancements. This would provide valuable insights into diachronic trends in sociolinguistic representation.
- 2 Comparative Studies Across Languages and Cultures:** extending this research to other languages and cultural contexts would offer a broader understanding of how sociolinguistic variation is handled in SDH globally. Comparative analyses could reveal universal challenges and culturally specific solutions, enriching the theoretical framework of AVT.
- 3 Experimental Studies on Cognitive Load:** future research could employ experimental methodologies, such as eye-tracking studies, to precisely measure the cognitive load associated with different types of sociolinguistic representations in SDH. This would provide empirical data to inform best practices for balancing linguistic fidelity with optimal readability and comprehension for DHH viewers.
- 4 Development of AI-Assisted Subtitling Tools:** drawing on both *LISA Corpus* and the sociolinguistic tagging framework, AI-assisted subtitling tools may be developed to automatically identify and appropriately render sociolinguistic variants, thus improving the efficiency and consistency of SDH production. In practice, fine-tuning DistilBERT – coupled with active learning or uncertainty sampling – can steer data curation and

model updates; adopting low-rank adaptation (LoRA)⁷⁷ and knowledge distillation can further boost efficiency for large-corpus tagging with more granular, custom labels. Expanding lexical resources (especially for #_DIAL) and calibrating decision thresholds for lexical tags, alongside the syntactic markers <MRK: inv/cop/agr/form>, will improve precision-recall trade-offs and support more faithful, controllable rendering of variation.

- 5 User-Centred Design and Participatory Research:** further participatory research involving DHH groups and communities in the design and evaluation of subtitling solutions would ensure that future developments are truly user-centred. This requires building interpersonal relationships and long-term, reciprocal trust with Deaf communities and organisations, through transparent aims, shared decision-making, appropriate recognition and compensation, and accessible communication. Activities may include co-creation workshops, focus groups, and iterative testing of new subtitling formats.
- 6 Investigation of Specific Sociolinguistic Features:** deeper dives into specific sociolinguistic features (e.g., prosodic markers, discourse particles, code-switching) and their representation in SDH could provide more granular insights and help mirror new instances of contemporary communication.

Pursuing these future research directions may expand this doctoral dissertation, leading to further advancements in the understanding of accessible subtitling practices. The objective remains unchanged: to ensure that DHH audiences have equitable access to the rich repertoire of audiovisual content and can fully engage with its linguistic and cultural nuances. To date, this research has hopefully made a contribution to the field of *sociolinguistic* accessibility.

⁷⁷ LoRA (Low-Rank Adaptation) is a way to fine-tune large pre-trained models without having to retrain the whole network. Instead of updating all the model's original weights, LoRA adds a few small adapter layers that can be trained cheaply, while the rest of the model stays frozen. In practice, this makes adaptation faster, lighter, and less resource-intensive.

References

- Agha, A. (2007). *Language and Social Relations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Agulló, B. & Matamala, A. (2019). Subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in immersive environments: results from a focus group. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 32, 227-235.
- Allasino, E., Ferrier, C., Scamuzzi, S., and Telmon, T. (2007). Le Lingue del Piemonte. *Quaderni di Ricerca*, 113, 1-187. Istituto di Ricerche Economico Sociali del Piemonte. Industria Grafica Falciola.
- Andersen, G. (1998, May). *Are tag questions questions? Evidence from spoken data*. Paper presented at the 19th International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English (ICAME) Conference, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
- Androutsopoulos J. (2012). Introduction: Language and society in cinematic discourse. *Multilingua – Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 31(2), 139-154.
- Androutsopoulos, J. (2014). Mediatization and sociolinguistic change: Key concepts, research traditions, open issues. In J. Androutsopoulos (ed.), *Mediatization and sociolinguistic change* (pp. 3-48). Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter.
- Attardo, S. & Pickering, L. (2023). *Eye Tracking in Linguistics*. Bloomsbury.
- Baker, P. (2018). Language and Sexuality. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 482-494). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Baños, R. & Diaz-Cintas, J. (2018). Language and Translation in Film: Dubbing and Subtitling. In K. Malmkjaer (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies and Linguistics* (pp. 313-326). Routledge.
- Barnes, C. & Mercer, G. (2010). *Exploring Disability. A Sociological Introduction* (2nd ed.) [E-reader version]. Polity.
- Barton, L. (1996). *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*. Longman.
- Bélangier, N. N. & Rayner, K. (2015). What eye movements reveal about deaf readers. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24(3), 220-226.
- Bergs, A. (2005). *Social Networks and Historical Sociolinguistics: Studies in Morphosyntactic Variation in the Paston Letters*. Walter de Gruyter.

- Berne, R. M. & Levy, M. N. (2000). *Fisiologia. Quarta edizione*. Casa Editrice Ambrosiana.
- Berruto, G. (2011). *Fondamenti di Sociolinguistica* (Manuali di base, 9). Editori Laterza.
- Beseghi, M. (2016). WTF! Taboo Language in TV Series: An Analysis of Professional and Amateur Translation. *Altre Modernità*, 15, 215-231.
- Bianchi, F., Eugeni, C., & Grandioso, L. (2020). Verbatim vs. Adapted Subtitling and Beyond. An empirical study with deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing children. *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 36, 7-29.
- Boatner, E.B. (1981). Captioned Films for the Deaf. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 126(5), 520-525.
- Bogucki, Ł. (2011). The Application of Action Research to Audiovisual Translation. In L. Incalcaterra McLoughlin, M. Biscio and M.A. Ni Mhainnín (eds.), *Audiovisual Translation Subtitles and Subtitling, Theory and Practice* (pp. 7-18). Peter Lang.
- Bolaños García-Escribano, A. & Díaz-Cintas, J. (2020). The cloud turn in audiovisual translation. In Ł. Bogucki and M. Deckert (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility* (pp. 519-544). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bradley, E. D. & Evans, L. (2022). *The gender binary as a factor in pronoun choice and misgendering in English* [Preprint]. ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363533486_The_gender_binary_as_a_factor_in_pronoun_choice_and_misgendering_in_English.
- Branchini, C. & Mantovan, L. (2022). *Grammatica della lingua dei segni italiana (LIS)*. Edizioni Ca' Foscari.
- Brett, D. (2009). Eye dialect: Translating the untranslatable. In S. Cocco, M. Dell'Utri, S. Falchi, & S. White (Eds.), *Lost in translation: testi e culture allo specchio: Workshop papers* (pp. 49–62).
- Burnham, D., Leigh, G., Noble, W., Jones, C., Grebennikov, M.T.L., & Varley, A. (2008). Parameters in Television Captioning for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Adults: Effects of Caption Rate Versus Text Reduction on Comprehension. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 13(3), 391-404.
- Castano, P., Cocco, L., De Barbieri, A., D'Este, L., Floriani, F., Gheri, G., Mondello, M. R., Papa, S., Petriglieri, P., Pizzini, G., Ridola, C., Rossi, S., Sacchi, G., Sirigu, P. & Spinella, S. (1995). *Anatomia Umana*. Edi-ermes.
- Chaume, F. (2004). Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two Disciplines at Stake in Audiovisual Translation. *Meta*, 49 (1), 12-24.

- Chaume, F. & Pappens, J.N. (2021). *Doublage et sous-titrage. Guide d'une profession en plein essor*. L'Harmattan.
- Cheshire, J. (1982). Linguistic variation and social function. In S. Romaine (Ed.), *Sociolinguistic variation in speech communities* (pp. 153-166). Edward Arnold.
- Cheshire, J. (2023). Multicultural London English and New-Dialect Formation. *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 71, 45-64. 10.18290/rh237106.3s.
- Chinn, C., & Thorne, S. (2003). *Proper Brummie: A Dictionary of Birmingham Words and Phrases*. Brewin Books.
- Collins, P. & Hollo, C. (2010). *English Grammar. An Introduction – second edition*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006).
- Coupland, N. (2007). *Style: Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Coupland, N. (2014). Sociolinguistic change, vernacularization, and broadcast British media. In *Mediatization and Sociolinguistic Change*. De Gruyter.
- Crowley, T. (2017). *The Liverpool English Dictionary. A Record of the Language of Liverpool 1850-2015 on Historical Principles*. Liverpool University Press.
- Crystal, D. (1995). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2018). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Culpeper, J., Kerswill, P., Wodak, R., McEnery, T. & Katamba, F. (eds.) (2018). *English Language. Description, Variation and Context*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Delabastita, D. (1989). Translation and Mass-Communication: Film and TV Translation as Evidence of Cultural Dynamics. *Babel*, 35(4), 193-218.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. (2003). Audiovisual Translation in the Third Millennium. In G. Anderman & M. Rogers (eds.), *Translation today: trends and perspectives* (pp. 192-204). Multilingual Matters.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. (2004). Subtitling: the long journey to academic acknowledgment. *The Journal of Specialised Translation, Issue 1*, 50-70.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. & Remael, A. (2007). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. St Jerome.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. (2009). Introduction – Audiovisual Translation: An Overview of its Potential. In J. Díaz-Cintas (ed.), *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation. Topics in Translation* (pp. 1-18). Multilingual Matters.

- Díaz-Cintas, J. (2010). Subtitling. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, 1, (pp. 344-349). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. (2011). Dealing with multilingual films in audiovisual translation. In W. Pöckl, I. Ohnheiser & P. Sandrini (eds.), *Translation - Sprachvariation - Mehrsprachigkeit. Festschrift für Lew Zybatow zum 60* (pp. 215-233). Peter Lang.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. & Massidda, S. (2019). Technological advances in audiovisual translation. In M. O'Hagan (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology* (pp.1-14). Routledge.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. & Remael, A. (2021). *Subtitling: Concepts and Practices*. Routledge.
- Ellender, C. (2015). *Dealing with Difference in Audiovisual Translation. Subtitling Linguistic Variation in Films*. New Trends in Translation Studies, 14. Peter Lang.
- Elsley, B. & Brittain, J. (Creators). (2007). *Skins*, Season 1, Episode 7 [Still frame]. Company Pictures; E4; Netflix.
- Erting, C. & Woodward, J. (1979). Sign language and the deaf community a sociolinguistic profile. *Discourse Processes*, 2(4), 283-300.
- Foss, K. A. (2014). Constructing Hearing Loss or 'Deaf Gain?' Voice, Agency, and Identity in Television's Representations of d/Deafness. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 31(5), 426-447.
- Gambier, Y. (2006). Multimodality and audiovisual translation. In M. Carroll, H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast & S. Nauert (eds.), *MuTra 2006: Audiovisual translation scenarios*. EU-High-Level Scientific Conference Series.
- Gottlieb, H. (1992). Subtitling: A New University Discipline. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddegaard (eds.), *Teaching Translation and Interpreting*, 1 (pp. 161-170).
- Gottlieb, H. (1997). *Subtitles, Translation & Idioms*. Centre for translation studies, University of Copenhagen.
- Greco, G.M. (2018). The nature of accessibility studies. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, 1(1), 205-232.
- Harman, T. T. (2024). *Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham. A History and Guide, Arranged Alphabetically*. HardPress.
- Hilpert, M. (2014). *Construction Grammar and its Application to English*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Howard, I. P. (2012). *Perceiving in Depth: Volume 1 Basic Mechanisms*. Oxford University Press.

- Hughes, A., Trudgill, P., & Watt, D. (2012). *English Accents and Dialects. Fifth Edition*. Routledge.
- Hutchinson, J. (2023). *The educational outcomes of deaf children in England: Attainment at key stages 1, 2 and 4*. Educational Policy Institute.
- Kalantzi, D. (2009). *Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: A Corpus-based Methodology for the Analysis of Subtitles with a Focus on Segmentation and Deletion* [PhD thesis]. University of Manchester.
- Katamba, F. (2018). Morphology: Word Structure. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 42-63). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Keller, R. (1994). *On Language Change: The Invisible Hand in Language*. Routledge.
- Kerswill, P. (2009). Language and social class. In J. Culpeper, F. Katamba, P. Kerswill, A. McEnery, & R. Wodak (eds.), *English language: Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 358-372). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kerswill, P. (2018). Language and Social Class. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 291-304). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Kerswill, P. & Culpeper, J. (2018). Standard English and Standardization. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 167-185). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Kiesling, S. F. (2011). *Linguistic variation and change*. Edinburgh Sociolinguistics.
- Kozloff, S. (2000). *Overhearing Film Dialogue*. University of California Press.
- Krejtz, I.; Szarkowska, A. & Łogińska, M. (2016). Reading Function and Content Words in Subtitled Videos. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 21(2), 222-232, <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/env061>.
- Kruger, J. L., Szarkowska, A. & Krejtz, I. (2015). Subtitles on the Moving Image: An Overview of Eye Tracking Studies. *Refractory: A journal of Entertainment Media*, 25, 1-14. University of Melbourne.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lanehart, S. L. (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of African American Language*. Oxford University Press.
- Leech, G. (2018a). Grammar: Words (and Phrases). In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 64-81). Bloomsbury Academic.

- Leech, G. (2018b). Grammar: Phrases (and Clauses). In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 82-100). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Leech, G. (2018c). Grammar: Clauses (and Sentences). In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 101-118). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Litovsky R. Y., Goupell M. J., Fay R. R., & Popper A. N. (eds.) (2021). *Binaural Hearing*. Springer.
- Lucas, C., Bayley, R., Valli, C., Rose, M., & Wulf, A. (2001). Sociolinguistic Variation. In C. Lucas (ed.), *The Sociolinguistics of Sign Languages* (pp. 61-111). Cambridge University Press.
- Maragna, S. (2008). *La sordità. Educazione, scuola, lavoro e integrazione sociale*. Hoepli.
- Massidda, S. (2022). The Symbiotic Match of AVT & Tech Industry: State-Of-The-Art and Way Forward. *Rhesis. International Journal of Linguistics, Philology and Literature*, 13(1), 21-35.
- Matamala, A. & Orero, P. (eds.) (2010). *Listening to Subtitles. Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*. Peter Lang.
- Mayberry, R. I. (2010). Early Language Acquisition and Adult Language Ability: What Sign Language Reveals About the Critical Period for Language. In M. Marschark & P. E. Spencer (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies, Language, and Education*, Vol. 2 (pp. 281-291). Oxford University Press.
- McEnery, T. (2009). Bad Language. In J. Culpeper, F. Katamba, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak & T. McEnery (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 564-575). Palgrave Macmillan.
- McEnery, T. & Love, R. (2018). Bad Language. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 495-507). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mesthrie, R. & R. M. Bhatt (2008). *World Englishes. The Study of New Linguistic Varieties*. Cambridge University Press.
- Milroy, L. (1987). *Language and Social Networks*. Blackwell.
- Milroy, L. (2002). Social Networks. In: *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Blackwell.

- Miquel Iriarte, M. (2017). *The reception of subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing. Viewers' hearing and communication profile & subtitling speed of exposure* [PhD thesis]. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Montagud, M.; Orero, P. & Matamala, A. (2020). Culture 4 all: accessibility-enabled cultural experiences through immersive VR360 content. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, 24(6), 887-905.
- Moran, S. (2012). The effect of linguistic variation on subtitle reception. In E. Perego (ed.), *Eye Tracking in Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 183-222). Aracne Editrice.
- Neves, J. (2005). *Media for All: Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description, and Sign Language* [PhD thesis]. School of Arts, Roehampton University, University of Surrey.
- Neves, J. (2008). 10 fallacies about Subtitling for the d/Deaf and the hard of hearing. *The Journal of Specialised Translation, Issue 10*, 128-143.
- Neves, J. (2018). Subtitling for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences. In *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 82-95). Routledge.
- Neves, J. (2021). Subtitling for deaf and hard of hearing audiences: moving forward. In L. Pérez-Gonzalez (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 82-95). Routledge.
- OFCOM (2005). *Subtitling – An Issue of Speed?* Office of Communications.
- Orletti, F. (2016). La lingua dei sottotitoli per non udenti. In A. Manco & A. Mancini (eds.), *Scritture brevi: segni, testi e contesti. Dalle iscrizioni antiche ai tweet*, Quaderni di AION Linguistica. Università degli studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” (pp. 219-234).
- Parini, I. (2015). Cultural and linguistic issues at play in the management of multilingual films in dubbing. In L. Bogucki & M. Deckert (eds.), *Accessing Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 27-50). Peter Lang.
- Parnami, S., & Jain, T. (2021). A Study on Increase in the Usage of OTT Streaming Services. *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management*, 4(8), 142–145.
- Pedersen, J. (2011). *Subtitling Norms for Television: An Exploration Focussing on Extralinguistic Cultural References*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Perego, E. (2005). *La Traduzione Audiovisiva*. Carocci.
- Piñar, P., Carlson, M. T., Morford, J. P. & Dussias, P. E. (2017). Bilingual deaf readers' use of semantic and syntactic cues in the processing of English relative clauses. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 20(5), 980-998. Cambridge University Press.
- Popelka, G. R., Moore, B. C. J., Fay, R. R. & Popper, A. N. (eds.) (2016). *Hearing Aids*. Springer.

- Pustejovsky, J. & Stubbs, A. (2012). *Natural Language Annotation for Machine Learning*. O'Reilly.
- Rampton, B. (2011). Style contrasts, migration and social class. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 1236-1250.
- Ranzato, I. (2015). Dubbing Teenage Speech into Italian: Creative Translation in *Skins*. In J. Díaz-Cintas and J. Neves (eds.), *Audiovisual Translation. Tacking Stock* (pp. 159-175). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Ranzato, I. (2016). Reading Dialect Varieties in the Literary Macrotext. *Status Quaestionis*, 11, 1-16.
- Ranzato, I. (2018). The British Upper Class. Phonological Fact and Screen Fiction. In I. Ranzato & S. Zanotti (eds.), *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 203-227). Routledge.
- Ranzato, I. (2019). Talking proper vs. talking with an accent: the sociolinguistic divide in original and translated audiovisual dialogue. *MULTILINGUA*, 38(5), 547-562.
- Ranzato, I. (2021). The Accented Voice in Audiovisual Shakespeare. In D. Montini & I. Ranzato (eds.), *The Dialects of British English in Fictional Texts* (pp. 150-167). Routledge.
- Remael, A. & Reviere, N. (2021). Multimodality and audiovisual translation: Cohesion in accessible films. In L. Pérez-Gonzalez (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 260-280).
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2009). More haste less speed: Edited versus verbatim respoken subtitles. *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), 109-133.
- Romero-Fresco, P. (Director). (2012). *Joining the Dots* [Short documentary film]. GALMA / Accessible Filmmaking Project.
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2012). Respeaking in Translator Training Curricula. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 6(1), 91-112.
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2013). Accessible Filmmaking: Joining the Dots between Audiovisual Translation, Accessibility and Filmmaking. *Journal of Specialized Translation*, 20, 201-223.
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2015). *The Reception of Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Europe: UK, Spain, Italy, Poland, Denmark, France and Germany*. Peter Lang.
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2018). Reception Studies in Live and Pre-recorded Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In E. Di Giovanni & Y. Gambier (eds.), *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 199–223). John Benjamins.
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2019). *Accessible Filmmaking. Integrating translation and accessibility into the filmmaking process*. Routledge.

- Romero-Fresco, P. (2020). Accessible Filmmaking. In Ł. Bogucki and M. Deckert (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility* (pp. 545-566).
- Romero-Fresco, P. (2021). Accessible Filmmaking. In L. Pérez-Gonzalez (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 498-515).
- Russo Cardona, T. & Volterra, V. (2007). *Le lingue dei segni. Storia e semiotica*. Carocci.
- Sala, E. (2022). Rendering Tone and Mood in Creative Subtitles for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing. A Proposal. *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, 1(55), 73-91.
- Schembri, A. (June 2008). British sign language corpus project: Open access archives and the observer's paradox. In *sign-lang@LREC 2008* (pp. 165-169). European Language Resources Association (ELRA).
- Schilling, N. (2013). Surveys and interviews. In R. J. Podesva & D. Sharma (Eds.), *Research methods in linguistics* (pp. 96–115). Cambridge University Press.
- Schotter, E. R. & Rayner, K. (2012). Eye movements in reading. Implications for reading subtitles. In E. Perego (ed.), *Eye Tracking in Audiovisual Translation* (pp. 83-104). Aracne Editrice.
- Stamp, R., Schembri, A., Fenlon, J. & Rentelis, R. (2015). Sociolinguistic Variation and Change in British Sign Language Number Signs: Evidence of Levelling? *Sign Language Studies*, 15(2), 103-224.
- Stamp, R., Schembri, A., Fenlon, J., Rentelis, R., Woll, B. & Cormier, K. (2014). Lexical Variation and Change in British Sign Language. *PLoS ONE*, 9(4), 1-14.
- Statista (2024). *Video streaming in the United Kingdom*.
- Stevens, K. N. (1998). *Acoustic Phonetics*. The MIT Press.
- Stokoe, W. C. (1960). Sign Language Structure. An Outline of the Visual Communication System of the American Deaf. University of Buffalo.
- Stokoe, W. C. (1980). Sign Language Structure. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 9, 365-390.
- Stone, C. (2022). A Deaf translation norm? In E. Bielsa (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Media - 1st Edition* (pp. 490-500). Routledge.
- Stuart-Smith, J. (2017). Bridging the gap(s): The role of style in language change linked to the broadcast media. In: J. Thogersen, N. Coupland and J. Mortensen (eds.), *Language (De)standardisation in Late Modern Europe: Style and media studies* (pp. 51-84) Novus Press.
- Stuart-Smith, J., Timmins, C., Pryce, G. & Gunter, B. (2013). Television Can Also Be a Factor in Language Change: Evidence from an Urban Dialect. *Language*, 89, 501-536.

- Sunderland, J. (2018). Gender and Language. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 469-481). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Sutton-Spence, R., Woll, B. & Allsop, L. (1990). Variation and recent change in fingerspelling in British Sign Language. *Language Variation and Change*, 2, 313-330.
- Szarkowska, A. (2020). Subtitling for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. In Ł. Bogucki and M. Deckert (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility* (pp. 249-268).
- Szarkowska, A., Krejtz, I., Kłyszejko, Z. & Wieczorek, A. (2015). Eye tracking in Poland. In P. Romero-Fresco (ed.), *The Reception of Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Europe: UK, Spain, Italy, Poland, Denmark, France and Germany* (pp. 235-262).
- Szarkowska, A., Krejtz, I., Pilipczuk, O., Dutka, L. & Kruger, J. L. (2016). The effects of text editing and subtitle presentation rate on the comprehension and reading patterns of interlingual and intralingual subtitles among deaf, hard of hearing and hearing viewers. *Across Languages and Cultures*, 17 (2), 183–204.
- Thompson, R. L., Vinson, D. P., Fox, N. & Vigliocco, G. (2013). Is Lexical Access Driven by Temporal Order or Perceptual Salience? Evidence from British Sign Language. *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 35(35), 1450-1455.
- Traxler, M. J., Corina, D. P., Morford, J. P., Hafer, S., Hoversten, L. J., & NSF Science of Learning Center for Visual Language & Visual Learning (VL2) (2014). Deaf readers' response to syntactic complexity: evidence from self-paced reading. *Memory & cognition*, 42(1), 97-111. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-013-0346-1>.
- Trudgill, P. (1983). *On Dialect. Social and Geographical Perspective*. New York University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (1992). *Language and society*. Penguin Books Ltd.
- Trudgill, P. (1999a). *The Dialects of England. Second Edition*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Trudgill, P. (1999b). Standard English: What It Isn't. In T. Bex & R.J. Watts (eds.), *Standard English. The Widening Debate* (pp. 117-128). Routledge.
- Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics. An introduction to language and society*. Fourth Edition. Penguin Books.
- Trudgill, P. (2001). *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (2003). *A Glossary of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (2004). *New-dialect formation: the inevitability of colonial Englishes*. Edinburgh University Press.

- Trudgill, P. (2010). *Investigations in Sociohistorical Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (2011). *Sociolinguistic Typology: Social Determinants of Linguistic Complexity*. Oxford University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (2014). Diffusion, drift, and the irrelevance of media influence. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 18, 213-222.
- Tucci, L. (2000). ...a pagina 777 di televideo. In C. Taylor (ed.), *Tradurre il cinema*. Atti Convegno (Trieste, 29-30 novembre 1996), Trieste, 2000, pp. 91-95.
- Vandeghinste, V. & Sang, E.F.T.K. (2004). Using a Parallel Transcript/Subtitle Corpus for Sentence Compression. *LREC*, 231-234.
- Watson, K. (2009). Regional variation in English accents and dialects. In J. Culpeper, F. Katamba, P. Kerswill, A. McEnery, & R. Wodak (eds.), *English language: Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 337-357). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Watson, K. (2018). Regional Variation in English Accents and Dialects. In J. Culpeper, P. Kerswill, R. Wodak, T. McEnery & F. Katamba (eds.), *English Language. Description, Variation and Context* (pp. 271-290). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Weinreich, U. (1953). *Languages in contact*. Mouton.
- WHO (1980). *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps*. World Health Organization.
- WHO (2001). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health*. World Health Organization.
- Wolfram, W. & Schilling, N. (2016). *American English: Dialects and Variation* (3rd ed.). Wiley Blackwell.
- Zárate, S. (2021). *Captioning and Subtitling for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences*. UCL Press.
- Zimman, L. (2020). Transgender Language, Transgender Moment: Toward a Trans Linguistics. In K. Hall & R. Barrett (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Language and Sexuality*. Oxford Handbooks Online.

Web References

- ABC Science (2014). A brief history of the selfie. *Abc.net.au*, retrieved July 15, 2025, from <https://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2014/08/12/4065062.htm>.
- Action on Hearing (2015). Subtitle it! Progress on pause Spelling out the case for subtitles on on-demand services [Report]. *Rnid.gov.uk*. Retrieved August 12^t, 2023, from https://rnid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SubtitleItReport_2015.pdf.
- AI Media (2023). 5 Great Moments in the History of Closed Captioning. *Ai-media.tv*, retrieved March 6, 2024, from <https://www.ai-media.tv/knowledge-hub/insights/great-moments-history-captioning/>.
- Apple Support (2024). Accessibility features in the Apple TV app. *Support.apple.com*, retrieved September 23, 2024, from <https://support.apple.com/it-it/guide/tvapp/atvbaeff85db/web>.
- Bail, S. (2011). Beards of Manchester, or: The hairiest two weeks of my life. *Sambail.com*, retrieved June 30, 2025, from <https://sambail.com/2010/09/25/beards-of-manchester-or-the-hairiest-two-weeks-of-my-life/>.
- BBC (2022). Accessibility for Products: Subtitle Guidelines. *Bbc.co.uk*, retrieved August 13, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/forproducts/guides/subtitles/#Subtitle-Guidelines>.
- BBC (2024). Subtitle Guidelines. *bbc.co.uk*, retrieved February 17, 2024, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/forproducts/guides/subtitles/#OVERVIEW>.
- BBC (2025). Subtitling Guidelines. Timing. *Bbc.co.uk*. Retrieved April 1, 2025, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/forproducts/guides/subtitles/#Timing>.
- Bodytrak (2024). Tinnitus statistics 2024. *Bodytrak.co*, retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://bodytrak.co/news/tinnitus-statistics/###how-many-people-have-been-diagnosed-with-tinnitus-in-the-UK>.
- British Deaf Association – BDA (2011). BSL Statistics. Facts and Figures within the UK. *Bda.org.uk*, retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://bda.org.uk/help-resources/#statistics>.
- Cambridge English Dictionary (2024). Retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/deafness>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (August 7, 2023). Types of hearing loss. *Cdc.gov*, retrieved March 28, 2024, from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/types.html>.

Central Digital & Data Office (October 25, 2017). Research and analysis. Saleem: profoundly deaf user. *Gov.uk*, retrieved September 11, 2023, from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-disabilities-and-impairments-user-profiles/saleem-profoundly-deaf-user#:~:text=the%20user%20experience,Statistics%20about%20hearing%20loss,25%25%20for%20the%20general%20population>.

Cleveland Clinic (2023). Cochlear implants. *Myclevelandclinic.org*, retrieved April 30, 2024, from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/4806-cochlear-implants>.

Collins Dictionary (2024). Deafness. In *Collins English Dictionary*. HarperCollins Publishers. Retrieved May 3, 2024, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/deafness>.

Collins Dictionary. (2025). Speakings. In *Collins English Dictionary*. HarperCollins Publishers. Retrieved May 30, 2025, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/speakings>.

Comedy Central UK. (n.d.). 'F***** Michael Jackson' | Paul Chowdhry Live Innit | Comedy Central UK* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=gG5XgJRwOJ4>.

Communications Act 2003, c. 21. (2003). *Legislation.gov.uk*, retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/contents>.

Deaf History (2020). 1979 - ...Closed Captions and Subtitles for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. *Deafhistory.eu*, retrieved March 15, 2023, from [https://deafhistory.eu/index.php/component/zoo/item/closed-captions-and-subtitles-for#:~:text=The%20British%20Broadcasting%20Corporation%20\(BBC,of%20its%20main%20broadcast%20channels](https://deafhistory.eu/index.php/component/zoo/item/closed-captions-and-subtitles-for#:~:text=The%20British%20Broadcasting%20Corporation%20(BBC,of%20its%20main%20broadcast%20channels).

Described and Captioned Media Program (n.d.). Captioning Timeline Highlights. *dcpm.org*, retrieved March 3, 2024, from <https://dcmp.org/learn/25-captioning-timeline-highlights>.

Dictionaries of the Scots Language. Retrieved October 1, 2024, from <https://dsl.ac.uk/>.

Disney+ Help Centre (2024). Closed captions, subtitles and audio language on Disney+. *Help.disneyplus.com*, retrieved September 23, 2024, from <https://help.disneyplus.com/en-GB/article/disneyplus-video-language>.

Domeij, S. (February 27, 2024). The European Accessibility Act 2025 – What businesses need to do. *Vaimo.com*, retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.vaimo.com/blog/the-european-accessibility-act-2025-what-businesses-need-to-do/#:~:text=The%20European%20Accessibility%20Act%202025%20is%20a%20call%20to%20action,will%20be%20put%20in%20place>.

Encyclopaedia Britannica (2024). Human ear. *Britannica.com*, retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/science/ear/Hearing-tests>.

Enhance the UK (n.d.). Deaf awareness training. *Enhancetheuk.org*, retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://disabilityawareness.training/deaf-awareness-training/>.

EUR-Lex (December 11, 2007). *Directive 2007/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities (Text with EEA relevance)*. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32007L0065>.

EUR-Lex (March 10, 2010). *Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (Codified version) (Text with EEA relevance)*. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32010L0013>.

EUR-Lex (November 14, 2018). *Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities*. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018L1808>.

EUR-Lex (April 17, 2019). *Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services (Text with EEA relevance)*. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019L0882>.

European Commission (January 9, 2024). Commission report on the application of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. *Commission.europa.eu*, retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/commission-report-application-audiovisual-media-services-directive>.

European Union of the Deaf (2024). Revised Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMS). *Eud.eu*, retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.eud.eu/policy/eu-accessibility-legislation/revised-audio-visual-media-services-directive/#>.

Ferster, G. (Illustrator). (2023). [Illustration of tinnitus and the auditory system]. *Verywell Health*. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-tinnitus-causes-effects-and-treatment-1046499>.

Flynn, J. (2023). Deaf awareness in education. *Open.edu*, retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=159787§ion=4.3>.

FREELANG Cockney-English Dictionary (n.d.). Retrieved October 1, 2024, from https://www.freelang.net/dictionary/docs/html_cockney_english.php.

Gov.uk (July 31, 2023). The British Sign Language (BSL) report 2022. *Gov.uk*, retrieved May 3, 2024, from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-british-sign-language-bsl-report-2022/the-british-sign-language-bsl-report-2022>.

Green's Dictionary of Slang. (2016). *Peas*. In *Green's Dictionary of Slang*. Retrieved July 20, 2025, from <https://greensdictofslang.com/entry/arpik4q>.

Hear4u (n.d.). Hearing loss statistics. *Hear4u.co.uk*, retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://www.hear4u.co.uk/hearing-loss-statistics/>.

Hearing Link Services (April 2022). Deafness & hearing loss facts: Hearing loss statistics in the UK. *Hearinglink.org*, retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://www.hearinglink.org/your-hearing/about-hearing/facts-about-deafness-hearing-loss/>.

Hearing Link Services (2024). Deafness and hearing loss facts. *Hearinglink.org*, retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://www.hearinglink.org/your-hearing/about-hearing/facts-about-deafness-hearing-loss/>.

Lomax, H. (February 21, 2019). 'Lost generation' of deaf children falling behind by one grade at GCSE. *Britishdeafnews.co.uk*, retrieved March 5, 2024, from <https://www.britishdeafnews.co.uk/lost-generation-of-deaf-children-falling-behind-by-one-grade-at-gcse/>.

Merck Manual (2022). Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.merckmanuals.com/en-ca/professional/ear,-nose,-and-throat-disorders/hearing-loss/hearing-loss>.

National Deaf Children Society (November 19, 2021). Lack of subtitles stops deaf people seeing first deaf superhero. *Ndcs.org.uk*, retrieved August 16, 2022, from <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/about-us/news-and-media/latest-news/lack-of-subtitles-stops-deaf-people-seeing-first-deaf-superhero/>.

Netflix Partner Help Center (2024). Timed Text Style Guide. *Partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com*, retrieved September 23, 2024, from <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/217350977-English-USA-Timed-Text-Style-Guide>.

- O'Dell, L. (July 13, 2022). Over 25,000 people call for more accessible video on-demand services. *Limpingchicken.com*, retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://limpingchicken.com/2022/07/13/over-25000-people-call-for-more-accessible-video-on-demand-services/>.
- OFCOM (2018a). England. What people told us about representation and portrayal of England on TV. *Ofcom.org.uk*, retrieved April 15, 2024, from <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/bbc-operating-framework/representation-portrayal-bbc-tv/research-hub/england>.
- OFCOM (2018b). Representation and portrayal on BBC television Thematic review. *Ofcom.org.uk*, retrieved April 15, 2024, from <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/tv-radio-and-on-demand-research/bbc-representation-and-portrayal/report-bbc-representation-portrayal.pdf?v=323496>.
- OFCOM (2023). 2022/2023 annual report and accounts – for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. *Ofcom.co.uk*, retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/annual-reports-and-plans/annual-report-22-23>.
- Official Charts (n.d.). My Number – Foals. *Officialcharts.com*, retrieved July 29, 2025, from <https://www.officialcharts.com/songs/foals-my-number/>.
- OpenSubtitles corpus* (2018). <https://opus.nlpl.eu/OpenSubtitles/corpus/version/OpenSubtitles>.
- Oxford English Dictionary (2024). Deafness. Retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=deafness&tl=true>.
- Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d.). Cor blimey. *Oxfordlearnersdictionary.com*, retrieved May 26, 2025, from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/cor-blimey#google_vignette.
- Prime Video direct (2024). Caption (timed text) requirements. *Videodirect.amazon.com*, retrieved September 23, 2024, from <https://videodirect.amazon.com/home/help?topicId=G201979140#G201979160>.
- RNID (2023a). On-Demand Services are still not delivering subtitles consistently across different platforms. *Rnid.org.uk*, retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://rnid.org.uk/2023/05/on-demand-services-are-still-not-delivering-subtitles-consistently-across-different-platforms/>.
- RNID (2023b). *RNID Subtitle it report*. https://rnid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RNID-Subtitle-It-Report_new-1.pdf.

RNID (January 4, 2024). Prevalence of deafness and hearing loss. *Rnid.org.uk*, retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://rnid.org.uk/get-involved/research-and-policy/facts-and-figures/prevalence-of-deafness-and-hearing-loss/#:~:text=One%20in%20five%20adults%20in,320%2C000%20people%20in%20North%20Ireland.>

RNID (January 17, 2024). What tinnitus sounds like. *Rnid.org.uk*, retrieved April 29, 2024, from <https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/tinnitus/what-tinnitus-sounds-like/>.

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) (2018a). Hearing loss. *Rnid.org.uk*, retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/hearing-loss/>.

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) (2018b). Facts and Figures. *Rnid.org.uk*, retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://rnid.org.uk/about-us/research-and-policy/facts-and-figures/>.

Sanh, V., Debut, L., Chaumond, J. & Wolf, T. (2020). DistilBERT, a distilled version of BERT: Smaller, faster, cheaper and lighter [Preprint]. *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/1910.01108>.

Scots Language Centre (2024). Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/4019>.

Sense (2024). Deafness and hearing loss. *Sense.org.uk*, retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://www.sense.org.uk/information-and-advice/conditions/deafness-and-hearing-loss/#disability>.

Sketch Engine Glossary (n.d.). MI Score. *Sketchengine.eu*, retrieved April 6, 2025, from <https://www.sketchengine.eu/glossary/mi-score/#:~:text=The%20Mutual%20Information%20score%20expresses,score%20which%20may%20be%20misleading.>

Suck-unu-madda. (n.d.). In *Jamaican Patwah Dictionary*. Retrieved August 1, 2025, from <https://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Suck-Unu-Madda/4316>.

Terptree (2024). The Deaf Community and the Perception of Disability. *terptree.co.uk*, retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://terptree.co.uk/deaf-awareness/the-deaf-community-and-the-perception-of-disability/>.

The Accessible Filmmaking Guide (n.d.). Retrieved March 5, 2024, from <https://accessiblefilmmaking.wordpress.com/>.

The European Year of People with Disabilities (2003). Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://eypd2003.org/eypd/index.jsp>.

The Guardian (March 9, 2001). Have a gay old time. *Theguardian.com*, retrieved July 20, 2025, from

https://www.theguardian.com/friday_review/story/0,3605,448635,00.html#:~:text=The%20English%20music%20hall%20has,Wow%20%2D%20contain%20coded%20gay%20content.

The Hearing Solution Group (March 21, 2022). A Deep Dive into the Different Types of Hearing Aids. *Sg.hearingsolutiongroup.com*, retrieved April 30, 2024, from <https://sg.hearingsolutiongroup.com/hearing-health/a-deep-dive-into-the-different-types-of-hearing-aids/>.

The National (October 31, 2021). BBC Guilt: Apology after complaint about ‘unacceptable’ subtitle errors. *Thenational.scot*, retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.thenational.scot/news/19684915.bbc-guilt-apology-complaint-unacceptable-subtitle-errors/>.

TourdeManc (n. d.). Manc Dictionary. *Tourdemanc.co.uk*, retrieved October 1, 2024, from <https://www.tourdemanc.co.uk/mancunian-dictionary/>.

United Nations (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>.

World Federation of the Deaf (2014). *Working Document on Adoption & Adaptation of Technologies & Accessibility*. Retrieved July 17, 2024, from <https://wfdeaf.org/news/resources/working-document-on-adoption-adaptation-of-technologies-accessibility/>.

World Health Organization (January 30, 2023). Ear and hearing care. *Who.int*, retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ear-and-hearing-care#:~:text=In%20the%20European%20Region%20approximately,some%20hearing%20loss%20or%20deafness.>

Young, G. (October 31, 2021). BBC Guilt: Apology after complaint about ‘unacceptable’ subtitle errors. *Thenational.scot*, retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.thenational.scot/news/19684915.bbc-guilt-apology-complaint-unacceptable-subtitle-errors/>.

Filmography

- Allen-Miller, R. (Director). (2023). *Rye Lane* [Film]. BBC Film; BFI; Searchlight Pictures; Disney+.
- Basgallop, T. (Creator). (2019-2023). *Servant* [TV series]. Blinding Edge Pictures; Escape Artists; AppleTV+.
- Beesley, D. (Creator). (2017-2019). *White Gold* [TV series]. Fudge Park Productions; BBC Two; Netflix.
- Bennett, R. (Creator). (2019-2021). *Top Boy* [TV series]. Cowboy Films; Easter Partisan; DreamCrew; SpringHill Entertainment; Netflix.
- Berlinka, D. & Metivier, N. (Creators). (2018-2021). *The A List* [TV series]. Kindle Entertainment; BBC iPlayer; Netflix.
- Bowker, P. (Creator & Writer). (2016-2020). *The A Word* [TV series]. Fifty Fathoms; Keshet UK; BBC One; Disney+.
- Boyle, D. (Director). (2019). *Yesterday* [Film]. Working Title Films; Decibel Films; Perfect World Pictures; Amazon Prime Video.
- Branagh, K. (Director). (2020). *Artemis Fowl* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Tribeca Productions; Disney+.
- Burge, S. & Walter, N. (Creators). (2023). *Still Up* [TV series]. Various Artists Limited; AppleTV+.
- Butterworth, J. & Richardson, J. (Creators). (2022). *Mammals* [TV series]. Street Hassle; Vertigo Films; Fulwell 73; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.
- Chowdhry, P. (Writer & Performer), & Loughlin, B. (Director). (2019). *Paul Chowdhry: Live Innit* [Stand-up comedy special]. Amazon Prime Video.
- Coe, A. (Writer), & Christensen, C. B. (Director). (2020). *Black Narcissus* [TV miniseries]. DNA TV; FX Productions; BBC One; FX; Disney+.
- Craig, D. (Director). (2022). *The Honeymoon* [Film]. Notorious Pictures; Tempo Productions; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.
- Doff, N. (Director). (2020). *Get Duked!* [Film]. Material Pictures; Highland Midgie; Nowhere; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.
- Downes, C., Jarvis, I. & Lane, S. (Creators). (2024). *The Completely Made-Up Adventures of Dick Turpin* [TV series]. Big Talk Studios; AppleTV+.

Edge, T. (Creator). (2016-2018). *Lovesick* [TV series]. Clerkenwell Films; Channel 4; Netflix.

Edmunds, T. (Director). (2018). *Dead in a Week (Or Your Money Back)* [Film]. Rather Good Films; Amazon Prime Video.

Entwistle, J. & Covell, C. (Creators). (2017-2019). *The End of the F**ing World* [TV series]. Clerkenwell Films; Dominic Buchanan Productions; Channel 4; Netflix.

Falkous, K. & Regier, J. (Creators). (2021). *Zero Chill* [TV series]. Lime Pictures; Netflix.

Fincham, P. & Wilman, A. (Executive Producers). (2021-2023). *Clarkson's Farm* [TV series]. Expectation Entertainment; Con Dao Productions; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.

Fraser, M. (Creator). (2020-2023). *Glow Up: Britain's Next Make-Up Star* [TV series]. Wall to Wall Media; BBC Three; Netflix.

French, R. & Quirke, K. (Creators). (2016-2019). *Cuckoo* [TV series]. Roughcut Television; BBC Three; Netflix.

Frost, N., Pegg, S., Serafinowicz, J. & Saunders, N. (Creators). (2020). *Truth Seekers* [TV series]. Stolen Picture; Sony Pictures Television; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.

Gaiman, N. (Creator). (2019). *Good Omens* [TV series]. BBC Studios; Amazon Studios; Narrativia; The Blank Corporation; Amazon Prime Video.

García, R. (Director). (2022). *Raymond & Ray* [Film]. Apple Studios; Mockingbird Pictures; Esperanto Filmoj; AppleTV+.

Gavron, S. (Director). (2019). *Rocks* [Film]. Fable Pictures; Film4; BFI; Netflix.

Gervais, R. (Creator). (2019-2021). *After Life* [TV series]. Derek Productions; Netflix.

Hall, E. (Director). (2020). *Blithe Spirit* [Film]. StudioCanal; Protagonist Pictures; Fred Films; Powder Keg Pictures; Align; British Lion; Amazon Prime Video.

Horgan, S., Finkel, D. & Baer, B. (Creators). (2022). *Bad Sisters* [TV series]. Merman Television; ABC Signature; AppleTV+.

Jackson, P. (Director). (2021). *The Beatles: Get Back* [Documentary series]. WingNut Films; Apple Corps; Walt Disney Studios; Disney+.

Karukoski, D. (Director). (2019). *Tolkien* [Film]. Fox Searchlight Pictures; Chernin Entertainment; Disney+.

Kay, A. (Creator & Writer). (2022). *This Is Going to Hurt* [TV miniseries]. SISTER; Terrible Productions; BBC One; AMC; Disney+.

Kay, G. & Field Smith, J. (Creators). (2023). *Hijack* [TV series]. 60Forty Films; Idiotlamp Productions; AppleTV+.

Kelly, R., Crisp, J. & Bradbury, C. (Executive Producers). (2022). *Save Our Squad with David Beckham* [Documentary series]. Twenty Twenty; Studio 99; Disney+.

Khan, G. & Milligan, A. (Creators). (2017-2022). *Man Like Mobeen* [TV series]. Tiger Aspect Productions; Cave Bear Productions; BBC Three; Netflix.

Kiernan, F. & Hemphill, G. (Creators). (2017-2019). *Still Game* [TV series]. The Comedy Unit; BBC Scotland; Netflix.

Knight, S. (Creator). (2013-2022). *Peaky Blinders* [TV series]. Caryn Mandabach Productions; Tiger Aspect Productions; BBC; Netflix.

Kuffuor, B. & Addai, L. D. (Creators). (2013-2014). *Youngers* [TV series]. Big Talk Productions; E4; AppleTV+.

Leigh, L. (Executive Producer). (2023). *At Home with the Furys* [TV series]. Optomen; Netflix.

Leonard, M. & Moorcroft, N. (Directors). (2022). *Fisherman's Friends: One and All* [Film]. Fred Films; Powder Keg Pictures; Head Gear Films; Amazon Prime Video.

Loach, K. (Director). (2016). *I, Daniel Blake* [Film]. Why Not Productions; Sixteen Films; Wild Bunch; Amazon Prime Video.

Lyttelton, O. (Creator). (2022). *Wedding Season* [TV series]. Dancing Ledge Productions; Jax Media; Disney+.

McElhenney, R., & Reynolds, R. (Executive Producers). (2022-2023). *Welcome to Wrexham* [Documentary series]. Boardwalk Pictures; Maximum Effort; 3 Arts Entertainment; FXP; Disney+.

McGregor, E., Boorman, C., Alexanian, D. & Malkin, R. (Creators). (2020). *Long Way Up* [TV series]. Big Earth; Elixir Films; Long Way Productions; AppleTV+.

McQueen, S. (Director). (2024). *Blitz* [Film]. Apple Studios; Working Title Films; Lammas Park; Regency Enterprises; AppleTV+.

Merchant, S. & James, E. (Creators). (2021-2022). *The Outlaws* [TV series]. Big Talk Productions; Four Eyes Entertainment; BBC One; Amazon Prime Video.

Moffat, S. (Creator). (2022). *Inside Man* [TV series]. Hartwood Films; BBC Studios; Netflix.

Moffat, S. & Gatiss, M. (Creators). (2016-2018). *Sherlock* [TV series]. Hartwood Films; BBC Wales; BBC One; Amazon Prime Video.

Moran, E. (Creator). (2023-2024). *Extraordinary* [TV series]. Sid Gentle Films; Disney+.

Moran, T. (Creator). (2022). *The Devil's Hour* [TV series]. Hartwood Films; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.

Mrksa, K. (Creator & Writer). (2020). *White House Farm* [TV miniseries]. New Pictures; ITV; Disney+.

Neville, M. (Creator). (2021). *Watch the Sound with Mark Ronson* [TV series]. Tremolo Productions; AppleTV+.

Neville, M., Forsyth, H., Lambert, T. & Klein, L. (Executive Producers). (2020). *Becoming You* [TV series]. Wall to Wall Media; AppleTV+.

Newman, S., Webber, C. E. & Wilson, D. (Creators). (2016-2018). *Doctor Who* [TV series]. BBC Wales; BBC Studios; BBC One; Amazon Prime Video.

Nunn, L. (Creator). (2019-2023). *Sex Education* [TV series]. Eleven Film; Netflix.

Pearce, C. (Creator). (2022). *Pistol* [TV miniseries]. FXP; Wiip; Mammoth Screen; Disney+.

Rutman, P. (Creator). (2024). *Criminal Record* [TV series]. Tod Productions; STV Studios; AppleTV+.

Schumacher, T. (Creator). (2022–2024). *The Responder* [TV series]. Dancing Ledge Productions; BBC One; Disney+.

Sharrock, T. (Director). (2024). *The Beautiful Game* [Film]. Blueprint Pictures; Film4; Netflix.

Shiao, V. (Creator). (2020–2023). *Departure* [TV series]. Shaftesbury; Greenpoint Productions; Corus Entertainment; Starlings Television; AppleTV+.

Singer, B. (Director). (2018). *Bohemian Rhapsody* [Film]. 20th Century Fox; Regency Enterprises; GK Films; Queen Films; Disney+.

Singer, E. W. & Lightfoot, S. (Creators). (2022). *Shantaram* [TV series]. Paramount Television Studios; Anonymous Content; AppleTV+.

Smith, W. (Creator). (2022). *Slow Horses* [TV series]. See-Saw Films; Flying Studio Pictures; Sony Pictures Television Studios; AppleTV+.

Sudeikis, J. & Lawrence, B. (Creators). (2020-2023). *Ted Lasso* [TV series]. Ruby's Tuna Inc.; Doozer; Universal Television; Warner Bros. Television; AppleTV+.

Symon, A. (Creator). (2022). *The Essex Serpent* [TV series]. See-Saw Films; AppleTV+.

Thorne, J. (Creator & Writer). (2019). *The Accident* [TV miniseries]. The Forge; Channel 4; Hulu; Disney+.

Vaughn, M. (Director). (2017). *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* [Film]. Marv Films; Cloudy Productions; TSG Entertainment; 20th Century Fox; Disney+.

Waller-Bridge, P. (Creator). (2016). *Crashing* [TV series]. Big Talk Productions; Channel 4; Netflix.

Waller-Bridge, P. (Creator). (2016-2019). *Fleabag* [TV series]. Two Brothers Pictures; BBC Three; BBC One; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.

Walters, L. (Creator & Head Writer) & Andrew, S. (Executive Producer). (2016-2017). *The Lodge* [TV series]. Zodiak Kids Studios; Disney Channel; Disney+.

Williams, H., & Williams, J. (Creators). (2019-2021). *Baptiste* [TV series]. Two Brothers Pictures; BBC One; Disney+.

Williams, R. (Creator). (2022). *Suspicion* [TV series]. Keshet Productions; AppleTV+.

Wilman, A. (Executive Producer). (2016-2024). *The Grand Tour* [TV series]. W. Chump & Sons; Expectation Entertainment; Grand Tour Productions; Flat Four Films; Amazon MGM Studios; Amazon Prime Video.

Wilson, L., Sleeman, E., Fearnley, S., Fox, J. & Bon, E. (Executive Producers). (2022). *Dated and Related* [TV series]. Great Scott Media; Main Event Media; Netflix.

Woliner, J. (Director). (2020). *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* [Film]. Four by Two Films; Amazon Studios; Amazon Prime Video.

Wolton, A. (Creator). (2020-2022). *Trying* [TV series]. BBC Studios; AppleTV+.

Appendix

The present appendix presents the questions used in the sociolinguistic interview with deaf individuals in the UK, which are discussed in Chapter 6.

Interview – Perception and Reception of SDH (Subtitles For d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Viewers) on streaming services (SVoD)

Year: 2024

Examined Linguistic Variety: ENGLISH SDH

Purpose: SOCIOLINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION

Target Population: DHH COMMUNITIES

Gatherer: FRANCESCA ILLIANO (University Of Parma, Italy)

This interview project is dedicated to d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the UK that usually watch series and films on streaming platforms.

The purpose is to understand if subtitles (SDH or CC) are considered accessible by DHH viewers in presence of very informal language.

The questions may be quite long to answer (30/40 minutes or so). I will appreciate your patience.

The interview is asynchronous and anonymous. No personal sensitive data will be requested.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

(Some of the questions in this section are optional)

1. Gender (you can leave this space blank) _____

2. Age _____

3. Place of birth

4. Where are your parents from?

1. _____

2. _____

5. What job do/did your parents do?

1. _____

2. _____

6. Your higher education:

- Primary
- Secondary (GCSE)
- College
- University
- Other qualification(s):

7. Where do you live now? _____

8. Have you always lived here? Yes No

If not, where? _____

9. What is your job? _____

10. Which degree of hearing loss have you been diagnosed?

- Mild Hearing Loss
- Moderate Hearing Loss
- Severe Hearing Loss
- Profound Hearing Loss

11. Do you have a cochlear implant or use hearing aids?

- Yes, I have a cochlear implant
- Yes, I use hearing aids
- No, I don't use any of them

12. Which kind of hearing loss do you have?

- Unilateral
- Bilateral
- Pre-lingual
- Post-lingual
- Symmetrical
- Asymmetrical
- Progressive
- Sudden
- Fluctuating
- Stable
- Congenital
- Acquired

2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC SECTION

(Most of the questions in this section are optional)

1. What language did you learn first?

2. What language do/did your parents speak/sign to each other?

3. And what about your grandparents?

4. What language do you use when you think?

5. What language do you use when you get angry/annoyed/lose your temper?

6. What language do you use...?

a. at home (i.e. with your son/daughter(s), parents, siblings, partner)?

b. with close friends from the same area of yours?

c. with friends from other parts of the country/world?

d. with colleagues, shopkeepers/vendors, public institutions, and doctors?

e. at the local market?

3. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

A. Standard British English

- Do you understand Standard British English?
 - No
 - Just a little
 - Enough
 - Well
 - Very well

- Can you speak Standard British English?
 - No
 - Just a little
 - Enough
 - Well
 - Very well
 - Can you write in Standard British English?
 - No
 - Just a little
 - Enough
 - Well
 - Very well
 - Can you read Standard British English?
 - No
 - Just a little
 - Enough
 - Well
 - Very well
 - Can you discuss any topic in SBE?
-

B. BSL (British Sign Language)

- Do you understand BSL (British Sign Language)?
 - No
 - Just a little
 - Enough
 - Well
 - Very well
- Can you sign BSL (British Sign Language)?
 - No
 - Just a little

- Enough
 - Well
 - Very well
 - Do you consider yourself bilingual (English / BSL)?
 - No
 - Just a little
 - Enough
 - Yes
 - Can you discuss any topic in BSL?
-

C. Other languages/varieties

- Are there any other languages or varieties that you know? How proficient are you in writing, speaking/signing, and reading these languages?
-
-

- Can you discuss any topic in other language(s)?
-

1. How often do you use...?

- | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------------|-------------|---------|----------|
| ● SBE | ○ never | ○ occasionally | ○ sometimes | ○ often | ○ always |
| ● BSL | ○ never | ○ occasionally | ○ sometimes | ○ often | ○ always |
| ● Other | ○ never | ○ occasionally | ○ sometimes | ○ often | ○ always |

language(s)

2. How often do you use SDH (subtitles for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing people) to watch TV series and films?

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| ○ never | ○ little | ○ often | ○ always |
| ○ never | ○ little | ○ often | ○ always |
| ○ never | ○ little | ○ often | ○ always |

3. Where do you usually watch programmes using SDH (for instance, TV broadcast, streaming services, BBC iPlayer...)?

4. Which streaming service have you subscribed to?

5. Compared to TV broadcast, how often do you watch programmes on streaming services?

- never occasionally sometimes often always

4. PERCEPTUAL SECTION

1. Do you generally find SDH on streaming services comfortable to read?

- never occasionally sometimes often always

2. Please, express your preference in terms of readability, customisation, default style, and linguistic quality for each streaming service. Please select a number from one to five for each section. One indicates “very dissatisfied”, and five indicates “very satisfied”.

Amazon Prime Video:

Readability: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Customisation: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Default style: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Linguistic quality: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Netflix:

Readability: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Customisation: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Default style: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Linguistic quality: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Disney+:

Readability: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Customisation: 1 2 3 4 5 don't know

Default style:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
Linguistic quality:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
AppleTV+:						
Readability:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
Customisation:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
Default style:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
Linguistic quality:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know

How do you perceive the speed of SDH on screen? For each streaming service, please select a number from one to five for each section. One indicates “very dissatisfied”, and five indicates “very satisfied”.

Amazon Prime Video:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
Netflix:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
Disney+:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know
AppleTV+:	1	2	3	4	5	don't know

3. Do you think that SDH are still too fast in general?

Short answer:

4. Are you still experiencing difficulties in accessing subtitling services?

5. Generally speaking, do you feel that SDH edit original dialogues too much?

6. Do you feel excluded from general access to programmes? Why?

7. What would you improve in terms of SDH quality?

8. And what would you improve in terms of accessibility to programmes?

5. RECEPTION SECTION

This section is particularly important for research. However, it does require a little extra effort. I would really appreciate it if you could take part.

When clicking the links of the videos, this will redirect you to a drive folder and leaves this page in the background, so that you can return to it. Thank you for your kind collaboration and patience!

1. Watch this subtitled clip from **Amazon Prime Video** and answer the following questions:

Are the subtitles comfortable to read?	
Can you spot any dialect or accent from the subtitles?	
Where is Seamus from, in your opinion? How do you know it?	
How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?	

2. Watch this subtitled clip from **Netflix** and answer the following questions:

Are the subtitles comfortable to read?	
Do you think language here is very informal? Or even strong?	
Can you spot any sentence reduction here?	
How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?	

3. Watch this subtitled clip from **Disney+** and answer the following questions:

Are the subtitles comfortable to read?	
Can you spot any English dialect or accent from subtitles?	
Do subtitles show extra-linguistic elements well? For example, stumbles, interruptions...	
How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?	

4. Watch this subtitled clip from **AppleTV+** and answer the following questions:

Are the subtitles comfortable to read?	
Is the character using British English or American English?	
Can you spot a specific dialect or accent here?	
How would you improve these subtitles? Do you feel that there is something missing?	

Would you like to add something that has not been asked in your opinion?
