

Multilingualism in Contemporary Bollywood Cinema

International Colloquium



9th March 2019

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
Faculty of Humanities, Department of Film Studies



Open World
Research Initiative

OWRI

creative
multilingualism



Program

9th March 2019

**ELTE Faculty of Humanities Main Building (1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 6-8)
room -137**

9 30 Welcome by Györgyi Vajdovich, ELTE Department of Film Studies, introduction of the Euro-Bollywood research group

9 45 Monia Acciari: Introduction of the AHRC founded research project entitled “Multilingual Euro-Bollywood: an ‘imaginative language’”

10 00-11 30 Panel 1

Chair: Györgyi Vajdovich

Bernhard Fuchs: The Germanification of Bollywood
Monia Acciari: Dubbing Bollywood in Italy: clusters of Bollywood’ cultural transfers
Dorottya Jancsó: Subtitling religious songs in Bollywood movies: The ways of translating lyrics
Q&A with panelists

11 30-11 45 Coffee break

11 45-13 15 Panel 2

Chair: Monia Acciari

Györgyi Vajdovich: Europe as the Babel of languages? Language as a marker of identity in contemporary Bollywood films
Péter Sági: Code switching, accents and dialects in Bollywood
Júlia Szivák: Party on my mind - Hip hop music in Bollywood cinema
Q&A with panelists

13 15-14 00 Lunch break

14 00-16 45 Film projection: Zoya Akhtar: *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011)

16 45-17 00 Coffee break

17 00-17 30 Discussion about the film *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* with all the participants

Abstracts and Bios

Bernhard Fuchs, University of Vienna **The Germanification of Bollywood**

The cultural transfer of Bollywood and forms of localization in the German speaking context will be discussed in this paper. Transfer of media and culture requires infrastructures and audiences, creative social practices of professionals and fans, discourses and knowledge (or common sense). New eco-types of “Bollywood” emerge in different local contexts.

The transfer of Bollywood to German contexts can be analysed either by investigating on institutional developments (associations, networks, labels, media) and by research on textual transformations. Translations add new linguistic layers to the global cultural field of Bollywood - especially in the form of subtitles. But to the contrary translations reduce the multilingualism of the particular original text by substitution with a dubbed version. Yet a product like a DVD might have multiple choices inscribed. How does Germanness interfere with Bollywood? Films in German tongue inspired by Bollywood cinema will be discussed as examples of local cultural production and compared with translations of original Hindi films in subtitled and dubbed versions.

As an example of an institution the free-TV station *Zee.One* illustrates the process of translating Bollywood for European mainstream audiences. What kind of movies is selected as suiting the German taste? The marketing and programming not only evokes clichés but also actively transforms representations of Bollywood and Indianness. But while discourse and stereotypes tend to lack flexibility the TV-station also attempts to shift the image of Bollywood in order to represent a wider spectrum of genres and emerging trends of New Bollywood.

Bio:

Bernhard Fuchs studied European Ethnology at the University of Vienna, where he is employed since 1997. In both his MA and PhD thesis he observed the niche economy of South Asian migrants in Vienna. His main fields of research are media, migration, and cultural transfer. In a recent project, he studied cultural entrepreneurs in different immigrant communities in Vienna. He is co-editor of the book *SRK and Global Bollywood* published in 2015.

Monia Acciari, De Montfort University, Leicester
Dubbing Bollywood in Italy: clusters of Bollywood' cultural transfers

The ever-growing distribution of Bollywood films worldwide, and in Europe, brings into focus the translational practices of dubbing and subtitling as crucial element that affect the reception of this cinema abroad, as well as the role they play as cultural filters of one culture to another. Dubbing is a practice that between the two has been defined as being more corruptive of the original text, affecting the unique sense of the language, the nuances of a culture but serving the needs of an audience who are the end-users (Fang 2009). In the past few years, the use of Indian accents in Bollywood cinema have caused dissent on the way specific linguistic cultures have been depicted and translate, problematizing the use of multilingualism and its nuances in India. The constrains in film dialogue and the translation of it are well documented, as the irreversible utterance of lip matching movement and throughout the nuances of an accent and 'gestures' of a language. This paper, intends to discuss constrictions and possibilities of cultural transfer and how, if at all, original accents are be translated and transformed?

The case studies in this paper are from the context of Italy, where Bollywood cinema and throughout world cinema is dubbed into Italian.

Bio:

She is a Senior Lecturer in Film and television History at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. Her areas of research are: Film festivals, Popular Hindi cinema, notions of Foreignness in Bollywood cinema (through a variety of approaches, historical, archival and through a digital humanities approach), Transnational cinema, cultural and political nuances of dubbing and subtitling, Film Restoration and preservation and archival research.

She is the director of the UK Asian Film Festival (Leicester) and she is working as principal investigator on two research projects: the AHRC "Multilingual Euro-Bollywood: an Imaginative language workshop" along with Dr Bernhard Fuchs (University of Vienna) and Dr Györgyi Vajdovich (Eötvös Loránd University) and the DMU VC2020 Funding Project "Indian Cinema Archives: The Cinema Museum Collection" along with Dr Hrishikesh Ingle (English and Foreign Language University, India).

Dorottya Jancsó, Eötvös Loránd University

Subtitling religious songs in Bollywood movies: The ways of translating lyrics

During subtitling Bollywood movies one of the most difficult questions might be the translation of the lyrics of the soundtracks. It propounds many problems like the translators have to decide which way they want to follow: make it more simple or make it exact and precise. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages, but it will influence the auditions (especially thinking of western or non-Indian audiences) in the way how they understand the certain scenes. In case of songs religious contents within, this question happens to be more interesting. The main problem is the following: how can or how should the religious, mythological and cultural codes be translated? Is it important to translate the lyrics properly to understand the whole picture? And is it even possible to translate the songs this way?

Bio:

Dorottya Jancsó is a student in MA in Film Studies at ELTE University, Budapest. During her BA studies she was specialised in Film Theory and Film History, and Indology (especially languages like Hindi, Urdu, and Sanskrit) as a minor field. Her research is focusing on the cross section of the two fields, contemporary Bollywood cinema, with special attention to the music and soundtracks of Bollywood films. She has presented on her research at different conferences both in Hungary and abroad, and most of her research papers were written about the cultural codes and heritage in the lyrics of Bollywood soundtracks.

Györgyi Vajdovich, Eötvös Loránd University

Europe as the Babel of languages? Language as a marker of identity in contemporary Bollywood films

Europe has served as a location for Bollywood films for long decades, but the representation of European countries has undergone some transformations recently. In the 1990s and in the first half of the 2000s European countries served as a place of residence for NRI people or as a place of tourism in the films, but local people rarely figured in the plot, their habits, their way of life were mostly absent. Local languages were rarely incorporated in the sound track, or figured as unidentified, unknown, foreign languages, which created an obstacle for interpersonal communication. The lack of language capacities transformed the foreign countries into hostile places in certain films, where Indian characters met invincible difficulties. In recent years a different image of Europe seems to take form in Bollywood films, where the Indian protagonists try to adapt to the local way of life. In these works the protagonists interact with local people, we see characteristic places, and the different European countries get some unique identity. Language has become a marker of identity in recent films, where the specific language serves as a characteristic of a given figure and is linked to his/her cultural background. Communication problems due to lack of language capacities are often emphasised in these films, but interaction with foreign people is represented as challenging experience, a joyful adventure where obstacles can eventually be overcome.

Bio:

Györgyi Vajdovich is an associate professor at the Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, Department of Film Studies at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, Hungary. Her research and teaching interests include early film history, with special focus on Hungarian cinema before 1945, questions of intermediality and cultural transfer, and contemporary Bollywood. She is member of the research group on Hungarian Film History founded by ELTE University and of the international Euro-Bollywood research group. She is founding editor of the quarterly on film theory and film history entitled 'Metropolis'. Her articles on the above topics were published in English, French and Hungarian in different periodicals and volumes.

Péter Sági, Eötvös Loránd University
Code switching, accents and dialects in Bollywood

Bollywood's Hindi language film industry has a growing appetite to represent certain geographical regions and communities. Panjabi-dominated Delhi, semi-rural settings of Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai are among the places which are seen more often on the silver screen today. In my presentation, I would like to give some examples for the expanding sociolinguistic perspectives of the mainstream film industry, bringing forward a variety of accents and dialects, while touching upon the phenomenon of code switching, in a sample of films produced in Bollywood within the last couple of years.

Bio:

Péter Sági, initially a student of classical languages, turned towards India due to Sanskrit, and went on to pursue PhD studies in Hindi literature in India. He obtained his doctorate at MGAHV, Wardha (India) in 2017 and has recently joined the Department of Indian Studies at ELTE. His academic interests focus on the sociolinguistic problems of Hindi language.

Júlia Szivák, Birmingham City University
Party on my mind - Hip hop music in Bollywood cinema

Hindi cinema has been known to incorporate a vast array of global cultural influences, and Bollywood music directors try to stay up to date with international musical trends. It does not come as a surprise then that recent years have witnessed an increase in the production of hip hop related musical content in Bollywood. However, the hip hop music audible and visible in Bollywood films is very different from both of its North American antecedent and other genres of Bollywood film music in terms of its production and its presentation. In addition to a variety of production-related innovations, the most important Bollywood rappers, Yo Yo Honey Singh, Badshah, Raftaar and Hard Kaur added new layers to the established Bollywood idioms, both in terms of cultural references and language. They not only translated a number of elements of black popular culture into a format accessible for Indian audiences, but they also contributed to the linguistic melting pot of Bollywood. The newest and trendiest Bollywood hip hop songs are either in Punjabi, Haryanvi and most recently, Tapani. Although these languages and dialects had been present in Bollywood cinema earlier, their recent association with hip-hop music has given them a new depth and meaning. The paper will investigate the ways in which these languages became associated with an emergent musical genre and contributed towards establishing new cultural configurations.

Bio:

Julia Szivak is PhD candidate in Media and Cultural Studies at Birmingham City University, where she researches the transnational networks of British Asian music production. She completed her MA in Hindi Literature from the ELTE University, Budapest and in Comparative History from the Central European University, Budapest. Her research interests include South Asian popular culture, with a special focus on Bollywood music.