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Interpunctive analysis in the interlingual subtitles of *Manbiki kazoku* (2018, Kore'eda Hirokazu): A comparison between Japanese and four European languages

ABSTRACT

Interpunctive analysis in the interlingual subtitles of *Manbiki kazoku* (2018, Kore'eda Hirokazu): A comparison between Japanese and four European languages

This contribution intends to investigate punctuation in the prosubs of the Japanese feature film *Manbiki kazoku* (Kore'eda Hirokazu, 2018) by comparing it with the English, Italian, French and Spanish versions in order to trace trends and points of contact between the four European languages and the original Japanese version. Contrary to expectations, punctuation has not always been the subject of in-depth investigations in the context of audiovisual translation studies since the phenomenon has often remained linked to idiosyncratic uses that are not always shared or shareable by broadcasters, subtitlers, and clients. As recalled in many recent studies, the rules of punctuation differ considerably from one language to another and the subtitles – for the purposes of fluency and readability – should avoid imitating punctuation practices that do not belong to the target languages. This study shows how subtitling that does not start from the original source texts and that – while respecting the translation practice – refuses to make use of punctuation, assuming that what must be translated is the mere syntactic-semantic content of the texts, cannot be sustainable.

Keywords: prosubs, interlingual subtitling, Japanese-Italian subtitling, punctuation

Introduction

This contribution aims to investigate punctuation in Italian, English, French, and Spanish prosubs of the Japanese feature film *Manbiki kazoku* (Kore'eda Hirokazu,

2018) in order to trace trends and points of contact between the four European language versions and the source text. Contrary to expectations, punctuation has not always been the subject of in-depth investigations in the context of audiovisual translation studies since the phenomenon has often remained linked to idiosyncratic uses that are not always shared by broadcasters, subtitlers, and clients. In the first studies by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), as well as more recent studies by Díaz Cintas (2014) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021), it is emphasised that punctuation must be able to ensure *fluency* through so-called *legibility* (the ease with which a text is read on the screen, depending on the type and size of the characters, the contrast between the font and the background images, as well as the speed with which they appear), and the *readability* (the ease with which the meanings and the components of the text are recognised, from the complexity of the syntax, the density of information and the semantic load). Consequently, to be fluent or smooth, the text should follow the *ortho-typographic* rules of the target language, but still with some margin of freedom due to the intrinsic needs of the subtitles. As Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021: 119–120) state:

[...] it is evident that different national subtitling practices share some conventions, at least at the European level. [...] However, punctuation rules in other languages can differ greatly to English ones, and subtitlers ought to avoid aping the punctuation used in the English template files or the dialogue lists provided by the clients.

Therefore, due to the impossibility of relying on a *vademecum* or handbook shared by different languages, each one should be able to develop its own punctuation identity based on its own translation ‘practices.’ In fact, some years ago, in the context of Japanese, Nornes (1999) suggested that subtitlers should develop case-by-case translation solutions, at least at a semiotic level, which could stimulate a certain amount of experimentation, given that:

[...] the original [text] is not an origin threatened by contamination, but a locus of the individual and the international which can potentially turn the film into an experience of translation (Nornes 1999: 18).

In other words, the creative manipulation of language supported by Nornes at a grammatical, morphological and visual level, and, consequently, also at the level of punctuation, must give the viewers a unique user experience that can assist them in intercultural immersion. This, as recent studies of fansubbing and the quality of translation have shown (Dwyer 2019; Orrego-Carmona 2019), could also be conceivable in contexts where the translator closely identifies with the viewer (Cronin 2012), thus disrupting the view of the perpetually ‘external’ audience. However, without bringing into question the highly informative role played by fansubbing, this appears to be somewhat unfeasible in the context of

prosubs where not only the competency of the translator plays a part, but also the conditions in which the films are selected, imported and marketed in different target countries. In the case of films from Asia, the situation becomes even more complicated, especially if we consider the fact that films are distributed via 'one to all' paid subscription with anonymous translations, often lacking care, particularly with the less common linguistic pairs (Vitucci 2019; 2020; 2021a). In an upcoming study, the punctuation used in the Japanese captions of one film is compared with that in the Italian, English and French prosubs, highlighting the unique character of Japanese punctuation which, unlike the European languages, is almost completely devoid of punctuation marks in the subtitle text. There is an almost total lack of commas and full stops, little use of ellipsis and the now standardised use of inverted commas just to introduce direct discourse.¹ In contrast, the three European languages analysed seemed to express an identity that connected them to professional subtitling practices, but with the intrusion of mirroring punctuation practices that did not always contribute to the development of a distinct identity for each individual language. Although in different ways, the risk – as already noted in research by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) – is also confirmed in this study. In our opinion, the reasons behind this mirroring are probably not to be found in the internal causes of the translation (Díaz Cintas 2012; Von Flotow/Josephy-Hernández 2018), for example the space for and speed of the subtitles, but rather in the external causes, such as the conditions in which the subtitles are produced, the subtitlers' hypothetical experience of translating Japanese films, and the relationship developed between the translated text and the source text. Nevertheless, it does not seem sustainable if the subtitles, while respecting translation practices, refuse to make use of punctuation due to the assumption that what needs to be translated is the mere syntactic-semantic content of the texts. In fact, this approach also raises the issue of training in the context of audiovisual translation, which is often debated in the literature related to this field (Pederson 2019; Orrego-Carmona 2018, 2019; Orrego-Carmona, Lee 2017; Vitucci 2021a). Punctuation, in our view, as well as guaranteeing the smoothness of the text, should preserve the flavour of diegetic immersion in every target language which is itself the fruit of the semiotic interaction between the written word and the images: the fact that subtitles render pseudo-spontaneous speech constructed by screenwriters in a way that reduces redundancies and maintains a consistently high density of information and effectiveness should help us to reflect upon the importance of the diamesic dimension between the visual code and the written word, as well as the effects of the rendering of punctuation. As Mas-trantonio and Orto-re (2019) suggest, since interlinguistic subtitles are influenced

1| For an in-depth study of the characteristics of Japanese punctuation see the studies by Wakabayashi (2021) and Nohara (2018) in the bibliography.

by on-screen dialogues, the relationship between the spoken word and the subtitles appears to have such an effect on the use of punctuation marks that it is fair to say that it constitutes a type of text with its own linguistic dynamics and characteristics related to brevity and clarity, but at the same time appears to be permeable to the influences of other types of writing (English subtitling, new forms of digital communication, spoken language) (Ortore 2019: 239). This assumes, therefore, that – compared to the standard uses of written language – the frequency and variety of punctuation in interlinguistic subtitles present peculiarities that are useful to analyse, not only to eventually arrive at a set of guidelines for each individual language, but also to more clearly define the qualitative parameters of the translation (Cronin 2012; Díaz Cintas 2014; Orrego-Carmona 2018, 2019; Orrego-Carmona/Lee 2017; Pederson 2019; Vitucci 2021a). The functions of the punctuation marks focused on in this study are illustrated below in the context of the dedicated literature, and secondly the actual use within the subtitles of the film, *Manbiki kazoku* (Kore'eda Hirokazu, 2018), will be analysed. For the sake of brevity, only the functions of punctuation in Japanese and Italian will be analysed below. Observations on the other European languages will then be introduced directly in the analysis of the scenes from the film.

1. Punctuation marks in Japanese

Unlike in Italian and other European languages, the use and analysis of punctuation has not yet found its proper place in Japanese studies of audiovisual translation. Even though there is a *vademecum* or handbook on the rendering of Japanese punctuation in English publications (*The Japan Style Sheet*) provided by the *Society of Writers* in 2018, it could be useful to report below some reflections on its intrinsic characteristics for the comparative analysis presented in this study. As Wakabayashi suggests (2021), the concept of the sentence as a formally defined unit did not exist in Japan until the Meiji period (1868–1912), when the introduction of European languages pushed Japanese translators, writers and scholars to introduce marks to separate sentences. Regarding this, Nohara (2018: 48) says:

Translating English [...] has inevitably introduced the stricter, more solid concept of the sentence, and officially authorized Japanese grammar accordingly came to recognize the bun, a unit equivalent to the sentence. The ambiguity of the sentence boundaries, however, remains a characteristic of Japanese today.

And it is precisely because of the abovementioned syntactic ambiguity that subtitlers, like other translators and interpreters who find themselves mediating from Japanese into contemporary European languages, are often forced to join sentences together or, paradoxically, divide them into several units in order to be effective (Hasegawa 2012; Sato-Rossberg/Wakabayashi 2012).

In this regard, in Japanese the end of the syntax is normally indicated by the round dot (°) called *maru* まる or 句点 *kuten*. However, according to Wakabayashi (2021), the use of punctuation marks often appears to be dictated by the writer's idiosyncratic choices, rather than by the actual links that develop with the grammar or prosody of the sentence. This is the case with the comma (*tōten*, 読点), for example, whose structural marker functions appear weaker than in English (ibid 2021: 71). Citing the studies of Maynard (1998) and Ikeda (1982), Wakabayashi recalls how the comma is often present to highlight the theme when it is not immediately followed by the predicate, to separate adjacent expressions or sentences of the same hierarchy, to open and close parenthetical clauses, after phrases that express limitation, cause, or condition. Commas are also used when postpositions are omitted, to isolate and accentuate terms within the sentence, in case of phrasal alterations that postpone the subject, to introduce direct and indirect speech, after connectives, to indicate reading pauses, or after expressions of time or place that modify the entire meaning of the sentence (ivi 2021: 71). Similarly, the use of ellipsis in Japanese (*tensen* 点線), like English, signals a change of theme, sudden interruptions in the syntax, silences within dialogues, omissions in the case of citations and, finally, introduces interactive values by activating inference processes in the case of implied or unspoken elements. As revealed by another study which is soon to be published, in the context of Japanese subtitling it is often possible to observe the insertion of spaces between words instead of a comma or inconsistent use of the question mark, which is used more in direct questions than in indirect questions expressing doubt, perplexity or surprise. In contrast, the full stop is almost always omitted, whereas ellipses tend to have the same function as in other forms of written language.

2. Full stops, commas, and ellipsis

The least problematic punctuation mark in Italian is the full stop because it signals the conclusion of a sentence or an entire text (Fornara 2011: 79). In contemporary writing, a repeated use is present in the so-called *style coupé* characterised by short utterances typically juxtaposed without any indication of logical connection (Ferrari 2018b). Often, *style coupé* is useful both for juxtaposition of autonomous syntaxes and for phrasal fragmentation. From the interpretative point of view, this solution produces a triple effect: it facilitates inferential pauses, erases the syntactic-pragmatic hierarchies, and broadly focuses the semantic component of the content of the clause (ibid 2018b: 87). In the context of subtitling, the use of the full stop indicates the conclusion of the line followed by a capital letter at the beginning of the subsequent subtitle or the next frame (Díaz Cintas/Remael 2021). In the writer's opinion, even the practice of the aforementioned *style coupé* seems to be useful in the context of subtitling because it makes it easier

for translators to forsake connectives and use more paratactic solutions in place of hypotaxis (also favored by the internal limits of subtitles). In addition, it fits perfectly with the need to convey prosodic aspects of speech (think of broken utterances due to emotional states). While it is true that some distribution companies usually eliminate the full stop, it must be admitted that this choice often creates disorientation in the viewer, since it is not possible to understand whether the line is over or not without the full stop; the reason for this choice is essentially linked to the need to economise on the number of characters in a single line. However, in other areas both professional and NPS (*Non-professional Subtitling*), as well as *pro-am* (*professional-amateur*), the full stop serves its original function and is inserted at the end of the sentence precisely to overcome the aforementioned problems (Vitucci 2016, 2021).

In Italian, the comma indicates a subordination or coordination of information between parts of speech of the same or different ranks (Mortara Garavelli 2008) and often plays the role of delimiting the various information units within the syntax (Ferrari 2018a). In recent years we have been witnessing the curious phenomena of over-extension in which the comma (called *seriale* or *passe-partout*) replaces the higher-level marks such as the semicolon, the colon, and the full stop in order to represent long speech without interruptions, groupings, or hierarchies (ivi 2018a: 55–61). In addition to suggesting the syntactic-punctuative intonation of the text, the effect of this practice is the general flattening of the semantic hierarchies as a consequence of thought (think of the flow of consciousness) without a real overall structural design: neither from the point of view of intonation, nor semantic-pragmatic. In the context of subtitling, we can distinguish uses that adhere to written language standards from others that deviate from them, following trends promoted by word processing or stimulated by contact with proto-texts in English (Mastrantonio/Ortore 2019: 223). In the context of its standard uses the comma is often used to separate elements in a list or to isolate discursive signals, whereas in the context of subtitling it is often seen in proximity to circumstantial elements that precede the focus of the sentence (time complements, for example). The *passe-partout* function separates different linguistic acts or two sentences which, normally, should be divided by a colon (for example, main and subordinate explanatory or causal phrases) or also introduces direct speech. In written Italian, Fornara (2011) also reports its presence in vocative expressions, parenthetical clauses and appositions just as happens in English subtitles, even though Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) advise against using a comma at the end of a sentence (especially when changing frames).

In written language three consecutive dots, the ellipses, are found during a textual suspension which can be followed by a resumption of the same topic or a change of theme (Fornara 2011). It is often possible to see them at the end of lists too (in this case, they eliminate the full stop). Thanks to new forms of typed

communication (email, SMS, chat), in recent years there has been a significant increase in the use of ellipsis: in the context of interlingual subtitling, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) suggest inserting them where a sentence or a period is not concluded, in order to continue into the next frame, emphasizing the following part of the sentence. Practice suggests not starting with a capital letter in the frame that follows, even if some clients insert only two points instead of three.² Mastrantonio and Ortore (2019) identify it as the most representative punctuation mark in subtitling as it can produce multiple mimetic relationships with speech and introduce interactive values (meaning they activate processes of inference). However, unlike theatrical and cinematographic scripts where an ellipsis gives indications for acting, the opposite occurs in the subtitles: due to the needs of intersemiotic cohesion (Taylor 2016; Vitucci 2018) the writing is informed by the dialogue, the suprasegmental traits of speech and extraverbal codes (mimicry, gestures, eye contact), especially when translators have the original script available (Mastrantonio/Ortore 2019: 227). This happens, for example, when the ellipsis is linked to acting pauses in speech (suspended recitative) or is produced by ongoing acting (often of an extraverbal type); among the over-extensions compared to standard written Italian, it is worth noting the use of ellipsis instead of a colon in the cataphoric-presentative function (specification) or the introduction of direct speech with a clear imbalance in favour of prosodic rendering of spoken language (ivi 2019: 236).

3. Subtitle dataset

In order to trace the trends and characteristics of the punctuation marks focused on in this study, the official DVDs of the feature film *Manbiki kazoku* (2018, Koreëda Hirokazu) were analysed in the following versions:

1. Japanese: distributed by *Pony Canyon Inc. Japan* including 120 minutes of audiovisual text, captions³ for the hearing-impaired, audio description for the visually-impaired, and an audio interview with the director (no interlingual subtitles in other languages);
2. English (title: *Shoplifters*): distributed for England by *Thunderbird releasing* including 116 minutes of audiovisual text, interlinguistic subtitles in English with original audio in Japanese, audio description for the visually-impaired (no English dubbed version);

2| Another solution may be to completely abolish the three ellipsis (act by default) and not to insert any punctuation between the frames. In this case, the full stop will signal the completion of the period or sentence (Díaz Cintas/Remael 2021).

3| It should be noted that the Japanese captions perfectly mirror the dialogues of the feature film.

3. Italian (title: *Un affare di famiglia*): distributed by *01 Distribution* including 121 minutes of audiovisual text, interlinguistic subtitles in Italian for the hearing-impaired with original audio in Japanese, plus the Italian dubbed version;
4. French (title: *Une affaire de famille*): distributed by *Le Pacte* including 116 minutes of audiovisual text and interlinguistic subtitles in French with the original Japanese audio, audio description for the visually-impaired, subtitles for the hearing-impaired, dubbed version in French;
5. Spanish (title: *Un asunto da familia*): distributed by *Cameo Media S.L.* including 116 minutes of audiovisual text and interlinguistic subtitles in Castilian with original Japanese audio.

After a quick search on the Internet, it was possible to establish that – apart from the Japanese captions – the interlingual subtitles in the aforementioned languages have been uploaded to various sharing sites such as *Opensubtitles* (www.opensubtitles.org), *Subtitlesbank* (www.subtitlesbank.com), *Subscene* (www.subscene.com), *Subtitledb* (www.subtitledb.org) and *Sottotitolicc* (<https://www.sottotitolicc.com>). During this research, slightly modified versions were also found which included differences in the number and internal subdivision of the subtitles, for example in English there was a text that was practically identical to the official *Thunderbird releasing* subtitles but with 81 extra lines, most likely produced by amateur subtitlers. In Spanish there were two different amateur versions online. For future developments in the study of punctuation and to compare translated texts in different languages it could be helpful to use alignment software such as *LF Aligner* (<https://sourceforge.net/projects/aligner/>), but, for this microanalysis, given the number of lines and the quantity of language analysed, the original subtitle files were converted to .srt format for the purposes of consultation using *Aegisub* subtitles software (<https://aegisub.it.uptodown.com/mac>).

4. *Manbiki kazoku*: Synopsis

In 2018 Kore'eda Hirokazu presented his fourteenth feature film at Cannes, *Manbiki kazoku*, with the English title of *Shoplifters*. In line with his previous films, *Soshite chichi ni naru* (*Father and Son*, 2013), *Umimachi diary* (*Little Sister*, 2015) and *Umi yori mo mada* (*After the Storm*, 2016), *Manbiki kazoku* is centred on the theme of family. The story's protagonists are the Shibata family: Osamu and his wife, Nobuyo, live in a working-class area of Tokyo along with her younger sister, Aki, his aging mother, Hatsue, and their adolescent son, Shōta. Osamu is a casual worker for a construction company, whereas Nobuyo works in a laundrette. The main source of income for the family is Hatsue's pension, inherited from her deceased ex-husband. Despite not contributing to the household income, Aki is independent thanks to her job in an adult entertainment club. Although this is

the image they want to portray publicly, the reality is rather different: none of the members of the family are true blood relatives. They are a group of shoplifters (like the term *manbiki* in the original title, literally ‘shoplift, theft’) that form a collaboration – partly sentimental, partly opportunistic – in order to survive in contemporary Japanese society.

5. Interlinguistic analysis of punctuation

Two scenes selected from the film are presented below with the relevant subtitles in English, French, Spanish and Italian.⁴ For each scene there are two tables: the first with the Japanese captions, the second comparing the English, Italian, Spanish and French. As well as shedding light on translation solutions, the comparison of the subtitles with the original captions is intended to highlight the most commonly recurring punctuation marks and to analyse their main uses. For this study, two scenes were selected that provide a contrast between a dialogue, which is presented as a quasi-monologue, and a dialogue with multiple speakers which is developed in the style of a typical interrogation. For each scene there will be a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the punctuation.

5.1. Scene 1. Osamu speaks to Shōta in the car (min. 34:50–36:30)

5.1.1. Description

The scene’s protagonists are Osamu and little Shōta. The man finds the boy in the car, probably maddened by jealousy towards Yuri, a girl who was found in the street after being physically abused by her parents. Osamu tries to convince Shōta to accept the little girl and, at the same time, to recognise him as a father figure. However, the boy is reluctant to consider Osamu as his real father seeing as he was a foundling too. Although Shōta does respond timidly, the scene takes the form of a quasi-monologue.

5.1.2. Interlinguistic and quantitative analysis

As can be observed in Table 1, the analysis of the punctuation in the Japanese captions immediately highlights the subtitler’s elimination of the comma and full stop in favour of ellipses, question marks and exclamation marks, as well as blank spaces within individual lines. Here, it is significant to note how the question mark is not always respected in Japanese: one example is in line 10 (*Ja, nande* → Eng. *So, what’s wrong?*) where the question mark is omitted in a direct question. In lines 14/15 (*Nanka yakunitatta hō ga ano ie ni iyasui daro* → Eng. *But for Yuri, if she helps us out, it’s easier to live with us.*) the question mark is missing in the relative

4| The total of the two scenes examined is four minutes and thirty seconds.

question with the request for confirmation to the interlocutor and in line 33 (*Nandayo* → French.⁵ *C'est pas juste.*) where the question mark corresponding to the pseudo-offensive relative expression is abandoned. This choice, though, seems to contrast with line 9 (*Kiraika?* → Eng. *You don't like Yuri?*) and 21 (*Mmh?* → French. *c'est ta ...*) where the question mark is present to signal direct speech. Another element worth noting is the spaces evident within the lines which occur especially to stimulate mimetic processes related to the soundtrack and to signal the actors' pauses or specific prosodic focus. Clear examples of this are in line 7 (*Yuri shinpai shite zutto genkan ni suwattenno*)⁶ where the girl's name is separated from the rest of the phrase, line 9 (*Kiraika? Yuri no koto*) where the direct question with a question mark is separated from the rest of the following syntax by a phrasal alteration, and likewise in lines 4, 5, 12, 15, 23, 25 and 29 where the blank spaces are probably intended to improve the readability of the subtitle text (Image 1).



Image 1. Phrasal alteration with insertion of a space in subtitle line 9

A somewhat unusual element in European professional subtitles is the omission of dashes when there are two consecutive lines of dialogue: this can be seen in line 28 (*Ii/Ieyo hora*) which becomes rather complex in terms of legibility because at a cognitive level it hinders the understanding of the dialogue for the spectator/

5| In this study, following convention, the French translation is given in the absence of English.

6| This aspect is especially notable in the original Japanese and not in the transcription. To follow convention, transcriptions of the Japanese are used in the text.

reader. This strategy is, unsurprisingly, reverted to in all the translated versions of the four European languages examined here. One of the most distinctive elements of the captions in this sequence, however, is the presence of ellipses that appear in line 4 (*Ite itetete...*), line 20 (*Yuri wa omaeno...*), line 25 (*Ore was omaeno...*), line 26 (*To...to...*), line 27 (*Tō...tō...tō...*), line 32 (*Daa...chi*) and 35 (*Ja...itsukane*) mainly to encourage responses from the interlocutor in the scene. In contrast, the comparison between the four European languages highlights a tendency to maintain the three punctuation marks with the following prevalence: full stop (39.4% in English, 46.1% in Italian, 39.4% in French, 48.7% in Spanish); comma (28.9% in English, 17.9% in Italian, 28.9% in French, 28.2% in Spanish); ellipsis (13.1% in English, 12.8% in Italian, 10.5% in French, 23% in Spanish).⁷ First of all, there certainly seems to be a greater inclination towards the use of full stops in the Italian and Spanish versions, whereas the comma is more present in the French and English versions of the subtitles. The ellipsis, on the other hand – although far less common than the comma in all four European languages – appears relatively more present in Spanish. Below we will attempt to understand the reasons for this.

5.1.3. Qualitative analysis

As shown in Table 2, at the interlinguistic level it is significant that in the analysis of this scene the most commonly recurring punctuation mark in the four European languages is not the ellipsis but the full stop, used both to mark the succession of very short lines (such as in Spanish in lines 1, 3, 4, 5, 28, 29, 33, 34) or to enhance the smoothness of the text in the case of mini dialogues within the scene (particularly notable in lines 11, 12, 22, 23, 28 and 31 in all four European languages, despite slight differences in the subdivision of the text).

At the interlinguistic level, as was rightly noted by Mastrantonio and Ortore (2019), the Japanese captions confirm the assertion that ellipses are often identified as the most commonly used punctuation mark in subtitles. Among the four languages in this study though, it is clearly Spanish that makes the greatest use of ellipses with almost twice the frequency of the other three languages (23%); the main reason for this could be greater mimicry of speech and a precise intention to create anticipation in the spectator. Almost irrefutable evidence of this is in line 7 (*Yuri está preocupadísima anor...*), 7b (*...no le quita ojo a la anor*) as a similar punctuation solution is not found in the other three languages: in the same lines 7/7b in English, for example, there is a comma separating the main clause from the subordinate comparative (*Yuri's so worried, she's been waiting for you by the door the whole time.*), whereas the Italian combines two independent syntaxes with the comma, following the logic of *style coupé* (*Yuri è preoccupata, è tutta*

7| The percentages take into account the number of occurrences and the number of lines of subtitles for each language.

la sera che ti aspetta davanti alla porta.), while in French the same solution as the English version is recreated, but without the aid of any punctuation between the two phrases (*Yuri s'inquiète tellement pour toi qu'elle t'attend près de la porte.*). In Spanish, the same happens in line 13 (*Pero para Yuri...*), 14 (*...es ano que viva con nosotros.*) and 15 (*Además, también puede ayudarnos.*), presented in the following ways in the other languages: in English by merging it into a single subtitle using a conditional clause marked by commas (*But for Yuri, if she helps us out, it's easier to live with us.*), in Italian with a subdivision into two subtitles without punctuation between the initial focus and the two main clauses (*Ma per Yuri è più facile stare con noi e può anche rendersi utile.*), in French by maintaining three distinct subtitles (mirroring the Japanese) with the complement first followed by a comma (*Mais pour Yuri,*), the main clause marked by a comma at the end (*c'est plus simple de trouver sa place parmi nous,*), and the conditional at the conclusion of the line marked with a full stop at the end (*si elle peut se anor utile.*).

When comparing the captions with the four subtitles (Table 1), it is also significant to note that all four omit the original laughter which is transcribed in Japanese (lines 2, 6, 8, 19) and a certain tendency towards mirroring some translation solutions. This can be noted, for example, in the alignment of line 29 (*Hora ikkai chotto yondemiro tte*) which is translated as *Just trying saying it, once... Go ahead / Avanti, dimmelo almeno una volta. Forza. / Juste une fois. S'il te ano... / Venga, intenta decirlo una vez* respectively; or in line 37 (*Kaerō samui kara na*) which confirms the translational alignment: *Let's go home, it's cold. / Allez, on rentre, on se les gèle. / D'accordo. Rientriamo? Fa freddo, dai. / Vamos a casa, hace frío, venga.* In this case, while respecting a certain independence with punctuation, it is possible that previous translations influenced the interlinguistic rendering of the text or that the politics of distributing the film in Europe have probably imposed a *translation hierarchy* that substituted the Japanese source text with one or more of the aforementioned languages. Indeed, the complex relationship between the five languages in the context of this scene is also confirmed in the analysis of line 33 (*Nandayo*), 34 (*Ma itsuka oi*) and 35 (*Ja... itsuka ne*) as line 33 is completely eliminated in English and Italian, but is kept in the French-Spanish pair (*C'est pas juste. / No es justo.*), as well as an almost mirror-like solution in terms of translation in lines 34 and 35 in the English-Italian pair (*Oh, well. OK. Some day, then. / E va bene... un giorno.*) and the French-Spanish pair (*Bon, tant pis pour moi. Un jour, alors. / Da igual, no pasa nada. Ya lo dirás algún día.*). In particular, in this case the interlinguistic distance from the original is very clear because of the presence of the same oblique translation in line 33 in the French-Spanish pair which is very far from the pseudo-offensive Japanese expression (*Nandayo*, lit. *what the heck!* → *C'est pas juste. / No es justo.*). From the perspective of punctuation, the hypothesis of an alleged translation hierarchy between Spanish and French in the same passage could be proven by the mirrored use of the full stop that occurs in the same position in lines 33 and 35, while in Italian an

idiomatic expression is introduced followed by an ellipsis and an expression in an evocative tone in the gap between line 34 and 35 (*E va bene...un giorno.*) In English, however, the period is articulated in a different way using three full stops in the same passage but inserted in a phrasal solution which is very similar to the Italian version (*Oh, well. OK. Some day, then.*). In this context, the reason for inserting the full stops in these positions is unknown, but one of the numerous hypotheses could be traced back to the specific needs of the clients who often prefer full stops to ellipses in order to save space within the line of subtitles. Here, it is interesting to note how a quick comparison with the two versions of *fansubs* found online confirms the tendency of amateur Spanish subtitlers towards keeping the full stop, even if there is a slight alteration of the text at a lexical level (*Da igual, no pasa nada. Ya lo dirás algún día. ~ Oh bien. De acuerdo. Algún día, entonces.*

Table 1. Japanese captions and European prosubs

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
1	いたいた <i>Ita ita</i>	Here you are!	Eccoti qua!	Je t'ai trouvé !	Aquí estás.
2	へへへっ <i>Hehehe</i>	-	-	-	-
3	やっぱな <i>Yappa na</i>	I figured...	Lo sapevo.	Je savais que tu serais là.	Me lo he imaginado.
4	イテッ イテテテ... <i>Ite itetete...</i>	Ouch!	Ahia!	Aïe, ma jambe.	Vaya, qué difícil.
5	ああっ 寒い! <i>Aa samui!</i>	It's so cold!	Che freddo!	Ça caille !	Y qué frío.
6	へへへへっ <i>Hehehehe</i>	-	-	-	-
7	ゆり 心配してず-つと玄関に座ってんの <i>Yuri shinpai shite zūtto genkan ni suwattenno</i>	Yuri's so worried, she's been waiting for you by the door the whole time.	Yuri è preoccupata,	Yuri s'inquiète tellement pour toi qu'elle t'attend près de la porte.	Yuri está preocupadísima anor...

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
7b		-	è tutta la sera che ti aspetta davanti alla porta.	-	...no le quita ojo a la anor.
8	へへっ <i>Hehe</i>	-	-	-	-
9	嫌いか？ ゆりのこと <i>Kiraika? Yuri no koto</i>	You don't like Yuri?	Non ti piace Yuri, vero?	Tu l'aimes pas, c'est ça ?	¿Es porque Yuri no anor bien?
10	じゃあ なんで <i>Ja nande</i>	So, what's wrong?	Che c'è che non va?	Alors, c'est quoi le souci ?	Entonces, ¿qué es?
11	男二人のほ うが楽しい <i>Otoko futari no hō ga tanoshī</i>	It's more fun with just us guys.	È più divertente se siamo tra maschi.	C'est plus drôle quand on est entre mecs.	- Lo paso ano si estamos solos. - Claro, y yo también.
12	まあ そりゃ そうだけだよ <i>Ma sorya sōdakedo yo</i>	Of course, it is.	Hai ragione.	Oui, évidemment.	-
13	ゆりもな <i>Yuri mo na</i>	But for Yuri, if she helps us out, it's easier to live with us.	Ma per Yuri è più facile stare con noi	Mais pour Yuri,	Pero para Yuri...
14	何か役に立った ほうが <i>Nanka yakunitatta hō ga</i>	-	e può anche rendersi utile.	c'est plus simple de trouver sa place parmi nous,	...es ano que viva con nosotros.
15	あの家に いやすいだ ろ <i>Ano ie ni iyasui daro?</i>	-	-	si elle peut se anor utile.	Además, también puede ayudarnos.

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
16	なっ <i>Na</i>	Right?	Giusto?	Tu crois pas ?	¿No crees?
17	分かった？ <i>Wakatta?</i>	- Got it? - Got it.	- Hai capito? - Ho capito.	T'as compris ?	¿Me anor?
18	分かった <i>Wakatta</i>	-	-	Oui, j'ai compris.	Sí, te sigo.
19	へへっ <i>Hehe</i>	-	-	-	-
20	ゆりは お前の... <i>Yuri wa omae-no...</i>	Yuri is your what?	Yuri è tua...?	Yuri,	¿Qué es Yuri...
21	ん？ <i>Mmh?</i>	-	-	c'est ta...	...para ti?
22	妹 <i>Imōto</i>	My sister.	- Mia sorella. - Giusto, bravo.	Petite sœur.	Mi hermana.
23	そうだよ そうだ そうだ そうだ <i>Sōdayo ano ano sōda</i>	That's right. Right, right.	-	Exactement ! C'est bien.	Eso es, muy bien, muy bien.
24	じゃあな <i>Jaa na</i>	In that case, what am I?	E quindi, io sono...sono tuo...	Et moi, je suis quoi ?	Y entonces, ¿qué soy yo?
25	俺は お前の... <i>Ore wa omae-no...</i>	I'm your...	-	Ton...	Soy tu...
26	と...と... <i>To...to...</i>	-	-	-	-
27	とう...とう... とう <i>Tō...tō...tō...</i>	Da...Da... Da...	Pa...	Pa... Pa...	Pa... pa...

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
28	いい 言えよ ほら <i>Ii</i> <i>Ieyo hora</i>	– It's OK. – Say it, come on.	– E dai. – Dillo.	– J'ai pas envie. – Allez !	– Eso. – Venga, dilo.
29	ほら 1回 ちょっと 呼んでみろ って <i>Hora ikkai</i> <i>chotto yon-</i> <i>demiro tte</i>	Just trying saying it, once...Go ahead.	Avanti, dimmelo almeno una volta. Forza.	Juste une fois. S'il te ano...	Venga, intenta decirlo una vez.
30	ほら <i>Hora</i>	–	–	–	–
31	いつかね <i>Itsuka ne</i>	– I will, some day. – Shoot! Not fair.	– Un giorno, forse. – Accidenti. Che testa dura.	Un jour.	– Ya lo ano algún día. – ¡Mierda!
32	だあ...チツ <i>Daa...chi</i>	–	–	–	–
33	何だよ <i>Nandayo</i>	–	–	C'est pas juste.	No es justo.
34	まいっか おい <i>Ma itsuka oi</i>	Oh, well.	E va bene...	Bon, tant pis pour moi.	Da igual, no pasa nada.
35	じゃ...いつ かな <i>Ja...itsuka ne</i>	OK. Some day, then.	un giorno.	Un jour, alors.	Ya lo dirás algún día.
36	はい <i>Hai</i>	–	–	–	–
37	帰ろう 寒 いから な っ <i>Kaerō samui</i> <i>kara na</i>	Let's go home, it's cold.	D'accordo. Rientriamo? Fa freddo, dai.	Allez, on rentre, on se les gèle.	Vamos a casa, hace frío, venga.
38	イテテテ... <i>Itetete...</i>	–	Vieni, vieni.	–	–

Table 2. European prosubs

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
1	Osamu	Here you are!	Eccoti qua!	Je t'ai trouvé !	Aquí estás.
2	Osamu	–	–	–	–
3	Osamu	I figured...	Lo sapevo.	Je savais que tu serais là.	Me lo he imaginado.
4	Osamu	Ouch!	Ahia!	Aïe, ma jambe.	Vaya, qué difícil.
5	Osamu	It's so cold!	Che freddo!	Ça caille!	Y qué frío.
6	Osamu	–	–	–	–
7	Osamu	Yuri's so worried, she's been waiting for you by the door the whole time.	Yuri è preoccupata,	Yuri s'inquiète tellement pour toi qu'elle t'attend près de la porte.	Yuri está preocupadísima anor...
7b	Osamu	–	è tutta la sera che ti aspetta davanti alla porta.	–	...no le quita ojo a la anor.
8	Osamu	–	–	–	–
9	Osamu	You don't like Yuri?	Non ti piace Yuri, vero?	Tu l'aimes pas, c'est ça ?	¿Es porque Yuri no anor bien?
10	Osamu	So, what's wrong?	Che c'è che non va?	Alors, c'est quoi le souci ?	Entonces, ¿qué es?
11	Shōta	It's more fun with just us guys.	È più divertente se siamo tra maschi.	C'est plus drôle quand on est entre mecs.	– Lo paso ano si estamos solos. – Claro, y yo también.
12	Osamu	Of course, it is.	Hai ragione.	Oui, évidemment.	–
13	Osamu	But for Yuri, if she helps us out, it's easier to live with us.	Ma per Yuri è più facile stare con noi	Mais pour Yuri,	Pero para Yuri...

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
14	Osamu	–	e può anche rendersi utile.	c'est plus simple de trouver sa place parmi nous,	...es ano que viva con nosotros.
15	Osamu	–	–	si elle peut se anor utile.	Además, también puede ayudarnos.
16	Osamu	Right?	Giusto?	Tu crois pas ?	¿No crees?
17	Osamu/ Shōta	– Got it? – Got it.	– Hai capito? – Ho capito.	T'as compris ?	¿Me anor?
18	Shōta	–	–	Oui, j'ai compris.	Sí, te sigo.
19	Osamu	–	–	–	–
20	Osamu	Yuri is your what?	Yuri è tua...?	Yuri,	¿Qué es Yuri...
21	Osamu	–	–	c'est ta...	...para ti?
22	Shōta	My sister.	– Mia sorella. – Giusto, bravo.	Petite sœur.	Mi hermana.
23	Osamu	That's right. Right, right.	–	Exactement ! C'est bien.	Eso es, muy bien, muy bien.
24	Osamu	In that case, what am I?	E quindi, io sono...sono tuo...	Et moi, je suis quoi ?	Y entonces, ¿qué soy yo?
25	Osamu	I'm your...	–	Ton...	Soy tu...
26	Osamu	–	–	–	–
27	Osamu	Da...Da... Da...	Pa...	Pa... Pa...	Pa... pa...
28	Shōta/ Osamu	– It's OK. – Say it, come on.	– E dai. – Dillo.	– J'ai pas envie. – Allez !	– Eso. – Venga, dilo.
29	Osamu	Just trying saying it, once... Go ahead.	Avanti, dimmelo almeno una volta. Forza.	Juste une fois. S'il te ano...	Venga, intenta decirlo una vez.

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
30	Osamu	–	–	–	–
31	Shōta/ Osamu	– I will, some day. – Shoot! Not fair.	– Un giorno, forse. – Accidenti. Che testa dura.	Un jour.	– Ya lo ano algún día. – ¡Mierda!
32	Osamu	–	–	–	–
33	Osamu	–	–	C'est pas juste.	No es justo.
34	Osamu	Oh, well.	E va bene...	Bon, tant pis pour moi.	Da igual, no pasa nada.
35	Osamu	OK. Some day, then.	un giorno.	Un jour, alors.	Ya lo dirás algún día.
36	Osamu	–	–	–	–
37	Osamu	Let's go home, it's cold.	D'accordo. Rientriamo? Fa freddo, dai.	Allez, on rentre, on se les gèle.	Vamos a casa, hace frío, venga.
38	Osamu	–	Vieni, vieni.	–	–

5.2. Scene 2. The police interrogation (min. 1:31:15–1:34:05)

5.2.1. Description

The scene's protagonists are two police investigators, Miyabe and Maezono, who are interrogating, in order, little Juri (nicknamed Yuri) who they believe was kidnapped by Osamu and Nobuya, Shōta who is in hospital after an accidental fall, and Aki, the girl who makes her living in adult clubs despite living with Osamu and Nobuyo. In the second part of the interrogation, the same investigators question Nobuyo and her partner Osamu: the former is asked to recount the murder of her husband, while the latter is asked about kidnapping Juri.

5.2.2. Interlinguistic and quantitative analysis

As can be seen in Table 3, the analysis of the Japanese captions again reveals the almost total abandonment of punctuation with a slightly unorthodox use of question marks that are inserted in a good number of direct questions (lines 9, 11, 14, 15, 18, 29, 35, 38, 44), but omitted in indirect questions which include speculation, like in line 6 (*Umi ni wa nannin de ittanokana* → Eng. *How many of*

you went to the beach?),⁸ surprise, as in line 17 (*Kuruma no naka de* → Eng. *In a car?*), or doubt, such as in line 20 (*Kabatteru no kana* → Eng. *Are you covering up for someone?*). At the interlinguistic level, it is also notable that the subtitles are aligned left when organised over two lines, like in subtitle 24 (*Minna nimotsu matomete nigeyō to shiteru toko dattanda yo* → Eng. *They were all packing their things up and trying to run away*) which, for translation needs, is subdivided into two separate subtitles in the other four languages analysed here (Image 2, left). In order to enhance readability, it is worth noting the insertion of the reading aid characters (*rubi*) corresponding to a few terms, which are placed under the word when related to the second line of the subtitle, instead of above as usually happens in standard written Japanese. An example of this is in subtitle 38 in Image 2 on the right where we also see left alignment again (*Sore to konkai no ken to ano kankei ga arundesuka?* → Eng. *And what does that have to do with this situation?*). As for punctuation marks, the abovementioned scene more or less confirms the trend identified in the previous one: full stop (45% in English, 49% in Italian, 45% in French, 52.8% in Spanish); comma (21.5% in English, 21.5% in Italian, 29.4% in French, 22.6% in Spanish); ellipsis (5% in English, 9.8% in Italian, 7.8% in French, none in Spanish). Just as in the first scene analysed, in Italian and Spanish there certainly appears to be more inclination towards the use of full stops, whereas in this case the comma is more commonly used in the French and Spanish versions of the subtitles. Ellipses, on the other hand – again with a far inferior usage than the full stop or comma in all four European languages – appear relatively more frequently in the Italian version in this case.⁹



Image 2. Left alignment and unification of the original line.

5.2.3. Qualitative analysis

In the four languages analysed in this study, it is interesting to note first of all how exclamation marks are introduced in the English, Italian and French versions,

8| In the transcriptions in the alphabet, the punctuation marks are not shown in the table.

9| The usage of ellipses in Japanese, however, is 26% in the first scene and 7.8% in the second.

while they are completely absent in the Japanese and Spanish versions. A good example of this is subtitle 1 (*Wow, what a pretty colour! / Ma che bel disegno che hai fatto! / Quelles jolies couleurs!*); in contrast, in all four of the European languages the elimination of laughter is significant (confirmed in the previous scene too) and the elimination of some interjections expressing surprise, as seen in subtitle 2 (*Fufu*) and 13 (*Mmh*). Concerning the transcription and order of Japanese proper nouns, it is significant that there is a lack of vowel elongation in the names Shōta and Yūko in English, Italian and Spanish in subtitles 27–28 (*The man's real name is Enoki Shota, the woman is Tanabe Yuko. / Il vero nome dell'uomo è Enoki Shota, quello della donna invece è Tanabe Yuko. / El hombre se llama Enoki Shota, y el nombre de la mujer es Tanabe Yuko.*), as well as the inversion of surname-name order in the only French version of the same subtitles, 27–28 (*L'homme s'appelle en réalité Shōta Enoki. La femme, Yūko Tanabe.*).

Regarding punctuation in this scene, one can note a clear predominance of the full stop in the Spanish version (52.8%), which is presumably related to the type of text translated (interrogatory) and the widespread presence of adjacent pairs (question/response) that allow the subtitler to build an almost mimetic relationship with the soundtrack, enhancing immersion in the film's diegesis and synchronisation with the actors' speech through the use of question marks in the questions and full stops in the responses.¹⁰ This hypothesis is confirmed in subtitles 6–7 (*¿Cuántos fuistes a la playa? Cinco.*), 9–10 (*¿Qué hicisteis en la playa? Saltamos.*), 15–16 (*¿Dónde has vivido hasta ahora? En un coche.*), 18–19 (*¿Vivías solo? Sí.*), 29–30 (*¿Mataron a alguien hace tiempo? A su anterior marido.*) and 44–45 (*¿Cuándo fue eso? En febrero pasado.*). As mentioned earlier though, the full stop fulfils other functions in Spanish, such as concluding medium/long periods that develop over consecutive lines organised according to the widespread practice of parataxis. There are examples of this in subtitles 23, 23b, 24, 25 and 26 where, although the brief monologue by Miyabe develops with a temporal focus at the start characterised by the comma in line 23 (*Cuando llegamos a la casa,*) and with an isolated main clause without any punctuation in 23b (*le pillamos a todos*), it is marked by a modal subordinate with a full stop at the end in line 24 (*recogiendo sus pertenencias y preparándose para huir.*) and by two isolated main clauses marked by full stops in subtitles 25 (*Tè abandonaban.*) and 26 (*Una familia de verdad nunca te trataría así.*). It is significant that the aforementioned passage undergoes a different reworking of punctuation in the other languages: in English, for example, while the temporal beginning remains almost the same in line 23 (*When we got to the house,*), the main clause in line 24 is not marked with a full stop (*They were all packing their things up*) and the subordination takes place

10| This phenomenon is found in all four languages examined here. Spanish is cited because in this language the full stop is also present in other contexts of usage.

in line 25 through the insertion of a comma after a new main clause with a full stop at the end (*and trying to run away, abandoning you.*). On the other hand, the paratactic solution continues, mirroring the Spanish version, in line 26 with the clause marked by a full stop at the end of the phrase (*A real family would never treat you like that.*). Unlike the English version, the Italian one, which also tends to rely heavily on full stops (49%), has a different strategy as it maintains two focuses marked by commas – one after the subject, one the time – in line 23 (*Quelle persone, quando siamo arrivati a casa vostra,*) then continues with the main clause and a second independent clause, again separated by a comma in an additional modality and the latter is marked by a full stop in line 24 (*stavano scappando via senza di te, ti avrebbero abbandonato.*); in line 25, however, a textual dislocation is aided by an independent clause with a full stop (*Avevano fatto le valigie.*) and a solution that almost mirrors the other languages in line 26 (*Una vera famiglia non si sarebbe comportata così.*). Conversely, the French version appears to be more independent in terms of punctuation as an imperative clause is introduced in line 23 followed by an ellipsis and then the temporal subordinate marked by a comma (*Figure-toi que... quand on est arrivés à la maison,*) before evolving into an independent clause in line 24, again marked by a comma (*ils étaient en train de s'enfuir avec leurs bagages,*) which is concluded in line 25 by a modal subordinate with a full stop at the end (*en t'abandonnant.*). In the same way as the other languages (Japanese included), the rendering of line 26 appears mirror-like in terms of both punctuation and semantics (*Une vraie famille ne ferait jamais une chose pareille.*). As for readability (Díaz Cintas/Remael 2021), or understanding of the semantic content with respect to the syntactic complexity typical of spontaneous speech, in this context it is difficult to establish which of the four translations is most effective as all four of the European languages have attempted to remain equivalent to the source text. Nevertheless, of the four, Italian is probably the least coherent because investing in the paratactic juxtaposition using the comma does not allow the viewer to grasp the logical connection between the temporal subordinate and the two main clauses that follow (*Quelle persone, quando siamo arrivati a casa vostra, stavano scappando via senza di te, ti avrebbero abbandonato.*). This example represents a clear phenomenon of over-extension because, although it suggests the syntactic-punctuative intonation of the text, it results in the flattening of the semantic hierarchies without indicating the overall structural design. As previously illustrated, in the other languages this connection is clarified by more streamlined punctuation and syntactic solutions in lines 25 and 26. Another area for attention from a punctuation standpoint could probably emerge from a comparison of the prosubs and the amateur fansub versions. In the case of Spanish, for example, in one of the two versions available online the same scene reveals the substitution of the comma with an ellipsis. The rendering of the aforementioned passage therefore appears as: *Cuando llegamos*

*a la casa... / ...los atrapamos a todos... / ...recogiendo sus pertenencias y preparándose para huir*¹¹. This tendency is also found in the comparison of the original subtitles 33 (*Es el vínculo*) and 34 (*que les une a ambos.*) with both the amateur versions available online (*Es el vínculo.../...que los une a ambos. ~ Así es como esos dos... / estan conectados.*). Unlike the previous scene, in the context of fansubbing the type of text in the examined passage (recounting/flow of consciousness) has influenced the choice of punctuation differently: in this case, the use of ellipses has allowed the amateur subtitler to enhance the immersion in the film's diegesis, guaranteeing viewers the chance to gradually add pieces of meaning to the scene while remaining in sync with the spoken text and the actor's pauses.

Table 3. Japanese captions and European prosubs

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
1	わあ きれいな色だねえ <i>Waa kireina iro danee</i>	Wow, what a pretty colour!	Ma che bel disegno che hai fatto!	Quelles jolies couleurs!	Qué color tan bonito.
2	ふふっ わっ <i>Fufu wa</i>	-	-	-	-
3	これ いいお天気だったんだ <i>Kore ii otenki dattanda!</i>	So it was a beautiful day.	Dev'essere stata proprio una bella giornata.	On dirait qu'il faisait beau, ce jour-là.	Así que fue un día maravilloso.
4	すごいねえ <i>Sugoi nee</i>	Amazing.	Bravissima!	C'est magnifique.	Genial.
5	じゅりちゃん <i>Juri chan</i>	Juri...	Senti, Juri...	Juri.	Juri, guapa.
6	海には何人で行ったのかな <i>Umi ni wa nannin de itta-nokana</i>	How many of you went to the beach?	quanti eravate quando siete andati al mare?	Vous étiez combien au bord de la mer ?	¿Cuántos fuiste a la playa?

11| In the other Spanish version available online there are no ellipses, instead a somewhat mirror-like solution to the prosubs version that uses the comma after the temporal focus of the first period and after the second gerund: *Cuando llegamos a la casa, / estaban todos. / empacando sus cosas y tratando de huir, / abandonandote.*

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
7	5人 <i>Gonin</i>	Five people.	– Cinque. – Cinque.	Cinq per- sonnes.	Cinco.
8	5人 5人 <i>Gonin</i> <i>Gonin</i>	– Five people. – Five people.	–	Cinq per- sonnes...	– Cinco. – Cinco.
9	何して遊ん だの？ <i>Nani shite</i> <i>asondano?</i>	What were you doing at the beach?	E a cosa avete giocato?	À quoi tu as joué ?	¿Qué hicisteis en la playa?
10	ジャンプ <i>Jampu</i>	– Jumping. – Jumping?	– Abbiamo saltato. – Avete sal- tato?	À sauter.	– Saltamos. – ¿Saltasteis?
11	ジャンプ？ <i>Jampu?</i>	–	–	À sauter?	–
12	ふーん <i>Mmh</i>	-Hm? -Hm.	–	–	–
13	ふーん <i>Mmh</i>	–	–	–	–
14	この時は おばあちゃん いなか った？ <i>Kono toki</i> <i>wa obāchan</i> <i>inakatta?</i>	Was your grandma with you then?	E sulla spiag- gia con voi c'era anche la nonna?	Ce jour-là, ta mamie n'était pas là ?	¿Estaba tu abuela con vosotros aquel día?
15	君は どこ で生活して たの？ <i>Kimi wa doko</i> <i>de seikatsu</i> <i>shitetano?</i>	Where were you living?	Shota... tu dove abitavi, prima?	Où est-ce que tu vivais ?	¿Dónde
15b		–	–	–	has vivido hasta ahora?

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
16	車の中で <i>Kuruma no naka de</i>	In a car.	In una macchina.	Dans une voiture.	En un coche.
17	車の中で <i>Kuruma no naka de</i>	In a car?	In una macchina?	Dans une voiture ?	¿En un coche?
18	それは一人で？ <i>Sore wa hitori de?</i>	- All alone? - Yes.	- E stavi da solo? - Sì.	Tout seul ?	¿Vivías solo?
19	うん <i>Uhm</i>	-	-	-	Sí.
20	かばってるのかな <i>Kabatteru no kana</i>	Are you covering up for someone?	Stai coprendo qualcuno? Puoi dirmelo.	Tu protèges quelqu'un, je me trompe ?	¿Proteges a alguien?
21	誰かを <i>Dareka wo</i>	-	-	-	¿Es eso?
22	あの人たちね <i>Ano hitotachi ne</i>	-	-	-	-
23	私たちが家に着いた時 <i>Watashitachi ga ie ni tsuita toki</i>	When we got to the house,	Quelle personne, quando siamo arrivati a casa vostra,	Figure-toi que... quand on est arrivés à la maison,	Cuando llegamos a la casa,
23b		-	-	-	le pillamos a todos
24	みんな荷物まとめて逃げようとしてるところだったんだよ <i>Minna nimotsu matomete nigeyō to shiteru toko dattanda yo</i>	They were all packing their things up	stavano scappando via senza di te, ti avrebbero abbandonato.	ils étaient en train de s'enfuir avec leurs bagages,	recogiendo sus pertenencias y preparándose para huir.

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
25	あなたを置いて <i>Anata wo oite</i>	and trying to run away, abandoning you.	Avevano fatto le valigie.	en t'abandonnant.	Te abandonaban.
26	ほんとうの家族だったらそんなことしないでしょ <i>Hontō no kazoku dattara sonna koto shinai desho</i>	A real family would never treat you like that.	Una vera famiglia non si sarebbe comportata così.	Une vraie famille ne ferait jamais une chose pareille.	Una familia de verdad nunca te trataría así.
27	男の本名は榎 勝太 <i>Otoko no honmyō wa Enoki Shōta</i>	The man's real name is Enoki Shota, the woman is Tanabe Yuko.	Il vero nome dell'uomo è Enoki Shota,	L'homme s'appelle en réalité Shōta Enoki.	El hombre se llama Enoki Shota,
28	女のほうは田辺由布子 <i>Onna no hō wa Tanabe Yūko</i>	–	quello della donna invece è Tanabe Yuko.	La femme, Yūko Tanabe.	y el nombre de la mujer es Tanabe Yuko.
29	人を...殺してたんですか？ <i>Hito wo...koroshitetandesuka?</i>	They had killed someone?	E loro... hanno ucciso qualcuno?	Ils avaient tué quelqu'un ?	¿Mataron a alguien hace tiempo?
30	前の夫をね <i>Mae no otto ne</i>	Her previous husband.	L'ex marito di lei.	Son précédent mari.	A su anterior marido.
31	刺して殺して埋めてるの <i>Sashite koroshite umeteruno</i>	Stabbed him, killed him and buried him.	L'hanno accoltellato e poi l'hanno seppellito.	Ils l'ont poignardé, tué et enterré.	Apuñalado hasta la muerte y enterrado.

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
32	まあ 痴情 のもつれね <i>Maa chijō no motsure ne</i>	Tangled up in a crime of passion.	Un delitto passionale, forse.	Un crime passionnel.	Fue un crimen pasional.
33	あの2人は <i>Ano futari wa</i>	That's how those two are connected.	Però è su questo...che si basa il loro legame.	C'est ça, le lien qui les unit l'un à l'autre.	Es el vínculo
34	そういうつ ながり <i>Sō iu tsunagari</i>	-	-	-	que les une a ambos.
35	あれは正当防 衛でしょ？ <i>Are wa seitōbōei desho?</i>	That was self-defence, right?	Ma è stata le- gittima difesa.	C'était de la légitime défense.	Fue en au- todefensa, ¿verdad?
36	殺さなかつ たら2人とも やられて たわけだし <i>Korosanakat- tara futarito- mo yarareteta wake dashi</i>	If we hadn't killed him, he would've killed us both.	Se non l'aves- simo ucciso noi, ci avrebbe ammazzati lui.	Si on l'avait pas tué, on serait morts tous les deux.	Si no le ma- tamos, nos habría matado a los dos.
37	まあ 判決で は そうでし たけどね <i>Maa hanketsu dewa sō deshi- ta kedo ne</i>	Well, that's how the judge ruled.	Sì, la sentenza dice questo.	Oui, et l'ac- quittement a été prononcé par le juge.	Sí, eso mismo falló el juez.
38	それと今回 の件と何の 関係がある んですか？ <i>Sore to konkai no ken to nan- no kankei ga arundesuka?</i>	And what does that have to do with this situation?	Ma comunque che c'entra con quello che è successo ora?	Et pourquoi on en parle maintenant ?	¿Qué tiene que ver eso con lo de aho- ra?

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
39	いや 誘拐 じゃないん ですよ <i>Iya yūkai ja- naindesu yo</i>	No, it wasn't a kidnapping.	Che dite? Ma quale rapi- mento.	Non, ce n'est pas un enlève- ment.	No, nunca se trató de un se- cuestro.
40	えっと... <i>Etto...</i>	-	-	-	-
41	腹透かして んの見かね て <i>Hara sukashit- enno mikanete</i>	She looked like she was starving,	Noi abbiamo visto che aveva fame	Elle était affa- mée, donc...	Para nada, estaba des- nutrida, tenía hambre.
42	信代が連れ てきて <i>Nobuyo ga tsurete kite</i>	so Nobuyo brought her home...	e allora Nobuyo l'ha portata a casa.	Nobuyo l'a ra- menée.	Por eso, No- buyo la trajo a casa.
43	いや でも それ...無理 やりとかじ ゃなくて <i>Iya demo sore...mu- riyari toka janakute</i>	and the girl was happy to come with her.	Sì, però...non l'ha costretta con la forza.	Mais sans la forcer, ni quoi que ce soit.	La niña vino voluntaria- mente, era feliz.
44	それは い つ? <i>Sore wa itsu?</i>	When was that?	E questo quando è suc- cesso?	C'était quand ?	¿Cuándo fue eso?
45	今年の 2 月 <i>Kotoshi no nigatsu</i>	Last February.	Lo scorso febbraio.	En février dernier.	En febrero pasado.
46	そういうの を誘拐って 言うんです よ <i>Sō iu no wo yūkai tte iundesu yo</i>	That's what we call kid- napping.	Per noi questo si chiama rapimento.	C'est ce qu'on appelle un en- lèvement.	A eso lo consideramos secuestro.

Line	Captions and transcriptions	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
47	うん... <i>Mmh...</i>	-	-	-	-
48	いや 俺も そう言った ただけど <i>Iya ore mo sō ittanda kedo</i>	That's what I told her too,	Sì, infatti è quello che ho detto anch'io,	C'est ce que je lui ai dit,	Bueno, tam- bién se lo dije.
49	あいつが <i>Aitsu ga</i>	but she said...	ma lei diceva che era di- verso	mais elle m'a dit...	Pero dijo
50	身代金とか 要求してな いから違っ て <i>Minoshirokin toka yōkyū shitenai kara chigau tte</i>	We weren't demanding a ransom,	perché non avevamo chie- sto un riscatto.	que comme on ne de- mandait pas de rançon, c'était diffé- rent,	que no pedíamos un rescate, al contrario,
51	保護してる んだって <i>Hogo shiteru ndatte</i>	so we were protecting her.	Noi volevamo solo proteg- gerla.	et qu'on l'avait recueillie.	la protegía- mos.

Table 4. European prosubs

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
1	Miyabe	Wow, what a pretty col- our!	Ma che bel disegno che hai fatto!	Quelles jolies couleurs!	Qué color tan bonito.
2	Miyabe	-	-	-	-
3	Miyabe	So it was a beautiful day.	Dev'essere sta- ta proprio una bella giornata.	On dirait qu'il faisait beau, ce jour-là.	Así que fue un día mara- villoso.
4	Miyabe	Amazing.	Bravissima!	C'est magni- fique.	Genial.

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
5	Miyabe	Juri...	Senti, Juri...	Juri.	Juri, guapa.
6	Miyabe	– How many of you went to the beach?	quanti eravate quando siete andati al mare?	Vous étiez combien au bord de la mer ?	¿Cuántos fuistesi a la playa?
7	Juri (Yuri)	Five people.	– Cinque. – Cinque.	Cinq personnes.	Cinco.
8	Miyabe/ Maazono	– Five people. – Five people.	–	Cinq personnes...	– Cinco. – Cinco.
9	Maazono	What were you doing at the beach?	E a cosa avete giocato?	À quoi tu as joué?	¿Qué hicisteis en la playa?
10	Juri (Yuri)	– Jumping. – Jumping?	– Abbiamo saltato. – Avete saltato?	À sauter.	– Saltamos. – ¿Saltasteis?
11	Maazono	–	–	À sauter?	–
12	Miyabe	– Hm? – Hm.	–	–	–
13	Maazono	–	–	–	–
14	Miyabe	Was your grandma with you then?	E sulla spiaggia con voi c'era anche la nonna?	Ce jour-là, ta mamie n'était pas là ?	¿Estaba tu abuela con vosotros aquel día?
15	Maazono	Where were you living?	Shota... tu dove abitavi, prima?	Où est-ce que tu vivais ?	¿Dónde
15b	Maazono	–	–	–	has vivido hasta ahora?
16	Shōta	In a car.	In una macchina.	Dans une voiture.	En un coche.
17	Maazono	In a car?	In una macchina?	Dans une voiture ?	¿En un coche?

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
18	Maezono	– All alone? – Yes.	– E stavi da solo? – Sì.	Tout seul?	¿Vivías solo?
19	Shōta	–	–	–	Sí.
20	Maezono	Are you covering up for someone?	Stai coprendo qualcuno? Puoi dirmelo.	Tu protèges quelqu'un, je me trompe?	¿Proteges a alguien?
21	Maezono	–	–	–	¿Es eso?
22	Miyabe	–	–	–	–
23	Miyabe	When we got to the house,	Quelle persone, quando siamo arrivati a casa vostra,	Figure-toi que... quand on est arrivés à la maison,	Cuando llegamos a la casa,
23b	Miyabe	–	–	–	le pillamos a todos
24	Miyabe	They were all packing their things up	stavano scappando via senza di te, ti avrebbero abbandonato.	ils étaient en train de s'enfuir avec leurs bagages,	recogiendo sus pertenencias y preparándose para huir.
25	Miyabe	and trying to run away, abandoning you.	Avevano fatto le valigie.	en t'abandonnant.	Te abandonaban.
26	Miyabe	A real family would never treat you like that.	Una vera famiglia non si sarebbe comportata così.	Une vraie famille ne ferait jamais une chose pareille.	Una familia de verdad nunca te trataría así.
27	Miyabe	The man's real name is Enoki Shota, the woman is Tanabe Yuko.	Il vero nome dell'uomo è Enoki Shota,	L'homme s'appelle en réalité Shōta Enoki.	El hombre se llama Enoki Shota,

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
28	Miyabe	–	quello della donna invece è Tanabe Yuko.	La femme, Yûko Tanabe.	y el nombre de la mujer es Tanabe Yuko.
29	Aki	They had killed someone?	E loro... hanno ucciso qualcuno?	Ils avaient tué quelqu'un ?	¿Mataron a alguien hace tiempo?
30	Miyabe	Her previous husband.	L'ex marito di lei.	Son précédent mari.	A su anterior marido.
31	Miyabe	Stabbed him, killed him and buried him.	L'hanno accoltellato e poi l'hanno seppellito.	Ils l'ont poignardé, tué et enterré.	Apuñalado hasta la muerte y enterrado.
32	Miyabe	Tangled up in a crime of passion.	Un delitto passionale, forse.	Un crime passionnel.	Fue un crimen pasional.
33	Miyabe	That's how those two are connected.	Però è su questo...che si basa il loro legame.	C'est ça, le lien qui les unit l'un à l'autre.	Es el vínculo
34	Miyabe	Oh, well.	–	–	que les une a ambos.
35	Nobuyo	That was self-defence, right?	Ma è stata legittima difesa.	C'était de la légitime défense.	Fue en autodefensa, ¿verdad?
36	Nobuyo	If we hadn't killed him, he would've killed us both.	Se non l'avessimo ucciso noi, ci avrebbe ammazzati lui.	Si on l'avait pas tué, on serait morts tous les deux.	Si no le matamos, nos habría matado a los dos.
37	Miyabe	Well, that's how the judge ruled.	Sì, la sentenza dice questo.	Oui, et l'acquittement a été prononcé par le juge.	Sí, eso mismo falló el juez.

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
38	Nobuyo	And what does that have to do with this situation?	Ma comunque che c'entra con quello che è successo ora?	Et pourquoi on en parle maintenant ?	¿Qué tiene que ver eso con lo de ahora?
39	Osamu	No, it wasn't a kidnapping.	Che dite? Ma quale rapimento.	Non, ce n'est pas un enlèvement.	No, nunca se trató de un secuestro.
40	Osamu	-	-	-	-
41	Osamu	She looked like she was starving,	Noi abbiamo visto che aveva fame	Elle était affamée, donc...	Para nada, estaba desnutrida, tenía hambre.
42	Osamu	so Nobuyo brought her home...	e allora Nobuyo l'ha portata a casa.	Nobuyo l'a ramenée.	Por eso, Nobuyo la trajo a casa.
43	Osamu	and the girl was happy to come with her.	Sì, però... non l'ha costretta con la forza.	Mais sans la forcer, ni quoi que ce soit.	La niña vino voluntariamente, era feliz.
44	Maezono	When was that?	E questo quando è successo?	C'était quand ?	¿Cuándo fue eso?
45	Osamu	Last February.	Lo scorso febbraio.	En février dernier.	En febrero pasado.
46	Maezono	That's what we call kidnapping.	Per noi questo si chiama rapimento.	C'est ce qu'on appelle un enlèvement.	A eso lo consideramos secuestro.
47	Osamu	-	-	-	-
48	Osamu	That's what I told her too,	Sì, infatti è quello che ho detto anch'io,	C'est ce que je lui ai dit,	Bueno, también se lo dije.
49	Osamu	but she said...	ma lei diceva che era diverso	mais elle m'a dit...	Pero dijo

Line	Speakers	English prosubs	Italian prosubs	French prosubs	Spanish prosubs
50	Osamu	We weren't demanding a ransom,	perché non avevamo chiesto un riscatto.	que comme on ne demandait pas de rançon, c'était différent,	que no pedíamos un rescate, al contrario,
51	Osamu	so we were protecting her.	Noi volevamo solo proteggerla.	et qu'on l'avait recueillie.	la protegíamos.

6. Final considerations

The comparison of punctuation in the Italian prosubs with those in English, French, and Spanish and the Japanese captions in the two scenes examined here has provided several useful points for reflection on the use of punctuation in the context of translating subtitles. First, what emerges from this analysis is the exclusive character of Japanese punctuation which – unlike European languages – almost completely disinvests in the use of punctuation marks in the subtitled texts. In the film *Manbiki kazoku*, it was possible to observe a total lack of commas and full stops, offset by a parsimonious use of ellipses and a now standardised use of blank spaces to aid the readability of the text. As already suggested in some Japanese studies, this disinvestment could be due to the late arrival of punctuation marks in written Japanese (Wakabayashi 2021), as well as an unusual development of these within Japanese interlinguistic subtitles (Nakamura 2013; Ōta 2007). Also worth noting are the left alignment of the text and the insertion of reading aids under the second line when the subtitles are organised over two separate lines.

In contrast, the four European languages analysed in this study appear to express themselves through a common identity of punctuation that necessarily links them to subtitling practices, just as emerges from recent professional audiovisual translations. Nevertheless, the politics of distribution of audiovisual works in Europe seems to have pushed the subtitlers of *Manbiki kazoku* towards mirror-like punctuation practices that do not contribute to the development of a truly distinct identity for each individual language. The risk, as has been noted by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021), is confirmed in this study too. Truth be told, some differences were observed only in the context of fansubbing where the punctuation of the aforementioned film in some languages (in Spanish for instance) showed a more relaxed use of ellipses and full stops, often in place of

commas. The reason for this is likely to be found in the desire to recreate greater intersemiotic cohesion between the subtitle text, the soundtrack and the images: in fact, as has been illustrated, the full stop aids the juxtaposition of autonomous syntaxes and phrasal fragmentation, facilitates inferential pauses, erases the syntactic-pragmatic hierarchies, and helps to focus the semantic component of the content of the clause. Equally, ellipses seem to stimulate more mimetic relationships with speech, facilitating the viewers' processes of inference: most of all when they are related to pauses in the actors' speech (recitative suspense) or when they are produced by the actors' current actions (specifically extra verbal). Another point worth noting, which deserves to be investigated in more depth, is the relationship that the four analysed languages develop with the transcription of the original text: in fact, we have seen how in the case of Japanese proper nouns, English, Italian and Spanish have not yet adopted a shared method for rendering elongated vowels, leaving the precedence to French to render them with specific diacritic marks (*Shôta*, *Yûko*). As they are not yet shared by the European languages, it could be interesting to reflect upon an eventual common usage of these. Moreover, another significant element is the alteration of the order of Japanese surname and name in the French version (*Shôta Enoki*, *Yûko Tanabe*) which is not found in the other three European languages. Even though the criteria of the other languages certainly appear to be based on the principle of *high translatability*, from this perspective the French version confirms a kind of stylistic independence, already observed in previous studies conducted by the author (Vitucci 2021b).

To return to punctuation, concerning the prosubs analysed here, it is significant to note that the full stop is confirmed as the most frequently used punctuation mark in translation (43.4% occurrence on average in the four languages in the first scene, 47.9% occurrence on average in the four languages in the second scene) with various aims: in the context of this film it is particularly useful in marking the succession of very short lines in mini dialogues within the first scene, marking dry responses during the interrogations in the second scene, or concluding medium/long periods that develop over consecutive lines organised according to clear paratactic strategies. In our view, this final example appears extremely helpful in enhancing the climax of the scenes: of the analysed languages, it is without a doubt Spanish that makes the most use of full stops with this aim. As regards the comma, in the context of this study the average occurrence in the first scene is 25.9% compared to 23.7% in the second. Calculating the typological distance of the two texts chosen and analysed here, it can be noted how the comma is mainly used in proximity to circumstantial elements that precede the focus of the utterance and in its so-called *passe-partout* function in the act of separating utterances that should be divided by other punctuation marks, such as the colon or semi-colon. Purely as an example, there is an instance in Italian in subtitle 23

(*Quelle persone, quando siamo arrivati a casa vostra,*) and 24 (*stavano scappando via senza di te, ti avrebbero abbandonato.*) that first isolates the time complement at the start with a comma and then merges two independent clauses in an additional modality to avoid semantic hierarchisation and move the text towards a flattening of the intonation, with neither a real overall structural design nor semantic-pragmatic. The same type of over-extension is also visible in English and French, but with less frequency in Spanish given the more extended use of the full stop.¹² Even though Díaz Cintas and Remael advise against using it at the end of a sentence (especially in instances of frame changes), in the prosubs context presented here there are cases of commas being used in frame changes, but only on occasions when the passage is a pseudo-monologue. English and French appear to be the two languages most inclined to the use of the comma in any case. Regarding ellipses, however, the analysis of the two scenes shows an average usage of 14.85% in the first scene with a higher percentage in Spanish, whereas an average of 5.6% is found in the second scene and there is a complete absence of this punctuation mark in Spanish. Certainly, this discrepancy is motivated by the typological difference of the two passages studied here, but – as was previously illustrated – it is equally important to remember that in the context of fansubbing there was a significant use of ellipses in the same passages and, moreover, precisely in Spanish. In the prosubs analysed here, Italian is the language that uses them most often (with an average occurrence of 11.3% in the two scenes).

The rather similar use of punctuation in some linguistic pairs, in our opinion, is not to be explained by the internal causes of the translation (Díaz Cintas 2012; Von Flotow/Josephy-Hernández 2018), for example the space for and speed of the subtitles, but rather by the external causes, such as the conditions in which the various subtitles are produced, the subtitlers' hypothetical experience of translating Japanese films, as well as the source text provided by the clients. In particular, this final element seems to have a profound influence on the punctuation practice of the European languages examined here in terms of quantity and quality: indeed, if it is true that the occurrence of each punctuation mark is different in the four languages in the two textual genres analysed here, it is also possible to find cases of punctuation calques that do not refer to the Japanese captions, but always to one of the European languages that played the role of *bridge text*. This hypothesis could be supported by the mirror-like occurrence of the comma and full stop in the English and French versions of the first scene (28.9% and 39.4% respectively), or of the full stop and comma in the second scene (45% in English and French, 21.5% in English and Italian). In this context though, it is not possible to establish what the translational hierarchy was between the four languages presented. Nonetheless, as the punctuation rules differ from one language to

12| Regarding this, the comparison of the same lines (23 and 24) could be interesting.

another, it would be advisable for the punctuation marks to be translated in the future, thus avoiding imitation of *bridge texts* which often function as a reference for subtitlers. In our view, it does not seem sustainable if subtitling does not start from the original source text and, while respecting translation practices, refuses to make use of punctuation due to the assumption that what needs to be translated is the mere syntactic-semantic content of the texts. The almost mirroring practice of punctuation found in this study raises the issue of training in the context of audiovisual translation, which is often debated in the literature related to this field (Pederson 2019; Orrego-Carmona 2018, 2019; Orrego-Carmona/Lee 2017; Vitucci 2021). Despite the differences with Japanese, in our opinion, as well as guaranteeing the smoothness of the text, punctuation should preserve the flavour of diegetic immersion in every target language which is itself the fruit of the semiotic interaction between the written word and the images. As suggested by Nornes (1999), the time is now ripe for an abusing writing, if for no other reason than the fact that we are in an era in which alphabetisation in audiovisual translation already allows for the management of complex relationships that develop between the written text and images. The fact that subtitles render pseudo-spontaneous speech constructed by screenwriters in a way that reduces redundancies and maintains a consistently high density of information and effectiveness should help us to reflect upon the importance of the diamesic dimension between the visual code and the written word, as well as the effects of the rendering of punctuation. In order to further explore these themes, however, it will be necessary to analyse a wider database, making comparisons from a diachronic perspective too. Surely, the comparison with Asian languages will assist scholars and viewers to reflect upon possible future horizons of punctuation in Europe.

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