

## Introduction: New Perspectives in Dialect and Multimedia Translation

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### Abstract & Keywords

#### Keywords:

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Dialects have always been considered a lesser version of a standard language or received pronunciation. As Halas (in this issue) rightly observes: '[s]tandard variety is associated with higher prestige, whereas dialectal varieties are regarded as either geographically or socially peripheral. Speakers of the standard language variety tend to treat people from remote regions or the lowest stratum of society with utter disdain'. However, the domestic and international movement of people has brought non-standard linguistic realisations to the fore. In today's globalised world, is it increasingly common to find younger generations with a bicultural (or even multicultural) background and they use code-switching and code-mixing to express and assert their identity (Monti 2016: 69). The phenomenon resulting from language contact have always been a part of literary texts, but multimodal productions and the present hyper-reality make them even more evident.

Consequently, these phenomenon have attracted the attention of many scholars in Sociolinguistics (cf. Swann et al. 2004 for an overview) as well as translation studies scholars (Delabastita and Grutman 2005; Armstrong and Federici 2006; Consiglio 2008, Federici 2009; Dore 2019). The interest in language variation in fictional texts is due to the way this device can be shrewdly exploited to shape characters, who become more rounded when they are more socially and geographically defined. As Hodson puts it: 'the way in which a character speaks will correlate directly with their social and geographical background, and as audiences or readers we are accustomed to using these clues to help us understand the film or novel' (Hodson 2014: 5-6). In her analysis of film dialogues, however, Kozloff (2000: 82) has warned of the flip side of this approach. Although using dialects on screen can help to convey a character's past and cultural heritage, as well as locate each person in terms of his or her financial standing, education level, geographical background, or ethnic group, it can also reinforce stereotypes (cf. Beal 2006: 25 on the stereotyping the Northern British accent onscreen and people's reactions).

Most recently, dialect and/in translation has been gaining momentum among AVT scholars. They have shown considerable interest in the representation of language varieties (i.e. accents and dialects) and their translation via subtitling, dubbing etc. (cf. Corrius and Zabalbeascoa 2011; O'Sullivan 2011; De Bonis 2015; Geyer 2015; Ranzato 2016, just to name a few). Many of them have problematised the way the underlying message is conveyed through translation, the type of strategies, procedures and manipulative processes employed and the possible reasons behind these choices. Understanding the main features and tendencies that the translation of language variation brings about is also the main focus of a major research projects such as TRAFILM.[1]

This Special Issue has been devised with similar objectives in mind. It continues the fruitful discussion on the translation of dialects, accents, and language variation that *InTRAlinea* began in 2010 with the publication of a Special Issue on 'The Translation of Dialects in Multimedia' (Giorgio Marrano, Nadiani and Rundle 2010), which was followed by the 2012 (Nadiani and Rundle) and 2016 (Brenner and Helin) issues on the same theme. As with the previous issues, this collection of articles stems from the scholarly debates and discussions that took place at the MultiMeDialecTranslation conference (MMDT7) in May 2017 at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, Denmark. In addition, it includes selected papers presented at MMDT6 in September 2014 at the ELTE in Budapest, Hungary. The articles herein deal with the wealth of issues connected to language variation from different perspectives, as well as its translation within audiovisual and literary contexts. As will become clear, most of the contributions focus on the translation of dialect in audiovisual works, some concentrating on captioning while others dealing with revoicing or even both (cf. Chaume 2013 for a detailed definition of these concepts). However, a number of articles also deal with other contexts such as theatre translation, literature and even lexicography.

Although the articles are written in English or German, they offer compelling discussions based on comparative studies of several language pairs (or sets), including Danish, English, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian, etc. The added value of this collection lies in its variety. The contributors have worked on different issues regarding dialect translation, which involves taking into account social, cultural and political issues. Their examination of different language codes and modes of translation brings about new stimulating insights into language variation, accent and dialect within translation practice.

**Mariagrazia De Meo's** study on 'Subtitling dialect in *Inspector Montalbano*' is twofold in scope. On the one hand, it explores the sociocultural function and effect expressed by Sicilian dialects on the representation of identity in the popular and widely exported Italian TV series *Il Commissario Montalbano* and of its prequel *Il Giovane Montalbano/ Young Montalbano*. On the other hand, it analyses the strategies used to convey such linguistic variations in the English subtitles. The comparative examination of the ST and TT clearly shows that standardization and omission are the preferred translation strategies when dealing with language variation and code-switching that stresses the Sicilianness and Italianness of the ST. De Meo also remarks that the deletion of specific dialectal features (e.g. repetition and register alteration) is likely to project a misperception of the emotional impact of characters and of the context in which they are embedded into the foreign audience.

Interestingly, she also explains that a number of references to food and organized crime appear in the subtitles, but they are likely to reinforce the stereotypical traits normally associated with the Sicilian culture.

The concept of Sicilianness is also part of **Margherita Dore's** study, which focuses on 'Revoicing Otherness and Stereotypes via Dialects and Accents in Disney's *Zootopia* and its Italian Dubbed Version'. This contribution investigates how foreign accents and diatopic varieties of US English have been employed in the 2017 Academy Award-winning movie *Zootopia* (Byron Howard and Rich Moore, 2016) and dealt with by the Italian dubbing team during its translation. As the analysis demonstrates, some of the translation choices adopted for the Italian target text (i.e. using local dialects and accents) help to maintain the light-hearted atmosphere of the original text (and its entertaining function). However, others appear to foster stereotypes regarding the receiving culture and its social stratification, thus subverting in part the ST's moral message of inclusion and mutual tolerance.

The translation of language variation in animated films is also the focus of **Danguolė Satkauskaitė and Eglė Alosevičienė's** 'Fremdsprachliche Akzente im Animationsfilm *Cars 2: Vier synchronisierte Sprachfassungen im Vergleich*'. By conducting an in-depth analysis of phonetic, prosodic, morpho-syntactic, and lexical features in the US-English original as well as in the German, Lithuanian, and Russian dubbed versions of the cartoon film *Cars 2*, the authors show how the different foreign accents – Italian, French, Slavic, German – in several of the characters (personified cars) are treated in translation. All characters provided with foreign accents in the original film remain foreign in the dubbed versions, mostly by means of phonetic peculiarities. The different dubbed versions display, however, different preferences regarding which other linguistic levels are employed for rendering foreignness. Attention is also drawn to the interplay of other semiotic modes such as images and music, which help to depict characters of different nationalities.

The translation of language variation for humorous purposes is discussed in **Kwiryna Proczkowska's** contribution titled 'The translatability of accent humour: Canadian English in *How I Met Your Mother*'. In this US-American sitcom, the Canadian accent of one of the central characters is used as a source of humour due to its bizarreness and incomprehensibility to US-American ears. The article examines how the Canadian-themed jokes are treated in the Polish voice-over and in the German dubbed versions by employing phonetic and lexical features. Selected sequences show examples of felicitous strategies, where the Canadian momentum is transported in different ways, and some less felicitous examples, where the audio-visual translation becomes incoherent and – at least partly – fails to render the accent-based humour.

Moving to the analysis of topics that are part of audio-visual content addressing an adult audience, **Guillermo Parra's** 'Mr Treehorn treats objects like women, man!' A map of drug-induced language variation in cinema and its translation' broadens the concept of language variation by looking at instances of drug-induced speech in a corpus of English-language films. Most importantly, it seeks to verify what resources are at the translator's disposal when they have to deal with this phenomenon. To this end, Parra carries out a comparative examination of the original and Spanish dubbed and subtitled versions of the films in his corpus. All in all, the author finds that pragmatic and conversational disorderly speech (DIS) markers can be easily maintained through a literal rendering while lexical-semantic markers require more creativity. When this is not possible, they are widely neutralized, as tends to happen with morphological features.

**Klaus Geyer's** article on 'Semikommunikation als Herausforderung für audiovisuelle Translation: die skandinavische Krimi-Miniserie *Broen – Bron* ('Die Brücke')) sheds light on the issue of semi-communication in the context of audio-visual translation. Semi-communication, understood as receptive multilingualism in combination with productive monolingualism without previous foreign language learning, is reported to occur to a wide extent between the Scandinavian languages Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian, even spoken Danish has proved to be especially hard for Swedes to understand. This issue is highlighted in a cooperation between Danish and Swedish police in some sequences of the successful Swedish-Danish serial crime drama *Broen – Bron* ('The Bridge'). The Translation strategies used for the Scandinavian and Finnish subtitles, as well as for the German dubbed version and for the English subtitles, show how difficult it is to get across the essence of this semi-communication, which is so familiar to Scandinavians and Finns, when, as in the German and English versions, cultural hints fail or, at least, cannot be taken for granted.

**Anna Halas's** article on the 'Ideological dimensions of linguistic hybridity in Ukrainian theatre translation' is an illuminating example of the way an interdisciplinary approach can truly help to deal with the transfer of language variation. The author reflects on the possibility of using a hybrid language or its elements in translation so as to better understand the procedures and practices applied to this fascinating phenomenon. By examining a corpus of English-Ukrainian and English-Russian-Ukrainian theatre translations completed over the last two decades, she demonstrates how the dominant ideology in a receiving culture can influence professional practice, which is more prone to follow the established norms and to sustain language purity. However, the composite post-Soviet landscape also allowed a number of amateur Ukrainian translators to adopt more daring linguistic alternatives, including the use of colloquial and linguistic variants such as Surzhyk (a Russian-Ukrainian hybrid language). According to Halas, these attempts at retaining the linguistic diversity of the target text can be seen as a possible method of translating dialects in theatre.

Moving into the sphere of literary translation, **María Clemencia Sánchez García's** contribution focuses on 'The orality features of Parlache in the novel *Rosario Tijeras*, by Jorge Franco, and their German and English translations'. It discusses some features (i.e. phraseological units and vocabulary) of Parlache, which is a diatopic, diastratic variety present in the novel. Most importantly, the comparative analysis of the original Spanish version and its German and English translations shows that the translators have striven to retain the same communicative function of the source text, since the linguistic features of Parlache were inevitably lost, due to their uniqueness.

**Günter Koch's** 'Sprachliche Varietäten und Variationen in der Science-Fiction – mit Fokussierung auf das Bairische' concentrates on linguistic varieties and variation in science fiction. The author demonstrates how the employment of dialect varieties exceeds the basic functions of giving authenticity and a stereotyped distribution of the characters but can be described as meta-symbolization within the fictive world and thus contributes to text interpretation. Several novels written by Carl Amery are analysed, amongst them *Der Untergang der Stadt Passau* (1975), which is an adaptation of Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959), a text that is extremely challenging for translators because of its extensive use of language varieties and language games. As the adaptation by Carl Amery shows, a dialectal continuum can be used to create certain constellations of the characters.

Two further novels written by Carl Amery – *Das Königsprojekt* (1974) and *An den Feuern der Leyermark* (1979) – as well as two science fiction movies – *Xaver* (Germany 1985) and *Zombies from outer space* (Germany 2012) – are regarded within this context in order to provide more evidence and a more detailed picture.

Finally, **Oksana Havryliv** reports, in her article titled ‘Zur Übersetzung dialektaler Pejorative – am Beispiel des Wienerischen und des Lviver Urbanolekts’, on the lexicographic work on pejorative expressions in two urban dialects: Viennese and the urbanlect of the city of Lviv in Ukraine. Four criteria for adequately translating pejoratives and aggressive or hostile language are proposed: intensity, semantic and/or morphological characteristics, frequency, and stylistic quality; whereas the literal translation of the expressions’ denotative meaning is seen as less relevant. Following a functional grouping of pejorative expressions in terms of speech acts like insult, threat, or curse, plenty of examples are discussed against cultural contexts and tendencies for certain types of pejoratives (metaphors, metonymies) are established, foregrounding the connotative, i.e. negative-emotive value of the TT expressions.

To conclude, we would like to observe that all the authors have benefitted from the discussions and debates that took place during the MultiMeDialectTranslation (MMDT) conferences. In addition, their work has been fruitfully and positively improved by the feedback the anonymous reviewers gave them. As editors of this volume, we would like to thank in particular all our reviewers for their useful comments and insights into the issues these papers deal with.

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### Notes

[1] The TRAFILM project is research project funded by the Spanish government that has been developed by the group of scholars based at the Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona. It investigates the features and tendencies that arise from rendering linguistic diversity for dubbing, subtitling and accessibility; more information can be obtained visiting the project’s website: <http://trafilm.net> (last accessed: 06/02/2019).

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