
Cultus

THE JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL
MEDIATION AND COMMUNICATION

***MEDIATING LINGUA-CULTURAL SCENARIOS
IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION***

2018, Volume 11

ICONESOFT EDIZIONI - GRUPPO RADIVO HOLDING
BOLOGNA - ITALY

Registrazione al Tribunale di Terni
n. 11 del 24.09.2007

Direttore Responsabile Agostino Quero
Editore Iconesoft Edizioni – Radivo Holding

Anno 2018
ISSN 2035-3111
2035-2948

Policy: double-blind peer review

© *Iconesoft Edizioni – Radivo Holding srl*
via Ferrarese 3 – 40128 Bologna

CULTUS

the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication

MEDIATING LINGUA-CULTURAL SCENARIOS IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

2018, Volume 11

GENERAL EDITORS

David Katan

Cinzia Spinzi

GUEST EDITORS

Irene Ranzato

Serenella Zanotti

ICONESOFTE EDIZIONI – RADIVO HOLDING
BOLOGNA

CULTUS

the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication

Scientific Committee

Milton Bennet

Intercultural Development Research Institute, Italy

Patrick Boylan

SIETAR-Italy and past Professor at Roma Tre University, Rome

Ida Castiglioni

University of Milan (Bicocca), Intercultural Development Research Institute

Andrew Chesterman

University of Helsinki, Finland

Delia Chiaro

University of Bologna (SSLMIT), Forlì, Italy

Nigel Ewington

WorldWork Ltd, Cambridge, England

Peter Franklin

HTWG Konstanz University of Applied Sciences, dialogin-The Delta Intercultural Academy

Maria Grazia Guido

University of Salento, Italy

Xiaoping Jiang

University of Guangzhou, China

Raffaella Merlini
University of Macerata, Italy

Robert O'Dowd
University of León, Spain.

Anthony Pym
Intercultural Studies Group, Universidad Rovira I Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

Helen Spencer-Oatey
University of Warwick, England

Federica Scarpa
SSLMIT University of Trieste, Italy

Christopher Taylor
University of Trieste, Italy

David Trickey
TCO s.r.l., International Diversity Management, Bologna, Italy

Margherita Ulrych
University of Milan, Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

Table of Contents

Introduction – <i>Irene Ranzato and Serenella Zanotti</i>	7
The challenges and opportunities of audiovisual translation. An interview with Frederic Chaume <i>Frederic Chaume, Irene Ranzato and Serenella Zanotti</i>	10
The reception of professional and non professional subtitles: Agency, awareness and change <i>Elena Di Giovanni</i>	18
Leisure and culture accessibility. The OPERA-Project <i>Catalina Jiménez-Hurtado and Silvia Martínez-Martínez</i>	38
Product placement and screen translation. Transferring references to U.S.A. brands unknown to other cultural contexts <i>John D. Sanderson</i>	61
Different gender stereotypes for different subtitles: <i>Divorce – Italian Style</i> <i>Vincenzo Alfano</i>	77
Language and identity representation in the English subtitles of Almodóvar's films <i>Francisco Javier Díaz Pérez</i>	96
Subtitling Paolo Sorrentino's <i>Il divo</i> . The linguistic and cultural representation of Italy <i>Margherita Dore</i>	122
Translating non-native varieties of English in animated films: the Italian dubbing of <i>Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted</i> <i>Vincenza Minutella</i>	144
Notes on Contributors	158

Introduction

In our times of boundless video consumption across national, cultural and linguistic borders, audiovisual translation (AVT), to quote **Frederic Chaume** in the opening interview to this issue of *Cultus*, “is no longer confined to using one mode, but different modes, combined when necessary, fulfilling different needs”. The power of AVT of functioning as a mediating tool between the most diverse linguistic and cultural scenarios is highlighted by Chaume himself and by the rest of the contributions to this edited collection.

Aimed at evaluating the comprehension and appreciation of professional and non-professional subtitles of two popular TV series, **Elena Di Giovanni**’s article – “The Reception of professional and non professional subtitles: Agency, awareness and change” – revisits the concept of audience, at the core of media reception research, and after an assessment of reception studies in the specific domain of AVT, it examines the impact that the ‘guerrilla-type’ practice of non-professional subtitling has had on the industry. The article culminates in the illustration of a reception experiment on a selected sample of viewers in order to assess their appreciation of amateur and professional (Netflix) subtitles, highlighting the complex change which has taken place in society in both the consumption and the creation of non-translated and translated media products.

AVT as a modality of cultural transfer is a concept at the core of the following contribution by **Catalina Jiménez Hurtado** and **Silvia Martínez Martínez**, “The Opera Project”, centred on the illustration of a web portal designed to evaluate and disseminate accessible audiovisual resources pertaining to Spanish culture and heritage. In the framework of the efforts by the European Union to provide citizens with equal access to education, leisure and culture, the Opera Project is aimed at exploiting the resources of multimodal texts to bring new, and thus far disadvantaged, social groups closer to their heritage. The authors’ proposal entails observing communicative barriers in cultural heritage accessibility from an innovative perspective, going one step further with respect to customary strategies

for the visual and audio impaired, by reflecting also on the way that sensory impaired people achieve an aesthetic experience and to what extent translators are able to provide this experience for them.

Another interesting lingua-cultural scenario that has so far received limited attention in AVT is that of product placement. Verbal references to industrial brands and the strategies adopted to translate those which are unknown to the Spanish target culture are investigated by **John D. Sanderson** in his article on “Product placement and screen translation. Transferring references to USA brands unknown to other cultural contexts”. After a historical contextualisation of product placement, a practice which is common in the US film industry but not so widespread elsewhere, and through the illustration of examples from different periods of time, Sanderson discusses the most common strategies used to deal with these sometimes opaque items in the translation for dubbing, in order to transfer the implicatures of unknown brand names mentioned in films and television series to other target cultural contexts.

The way that the transfer of gender stereotypes can be influenced by different cultural perspectives is the theme of **Vincenzo Alfano**’s contribution: “Different gender stereotypes for different subtitles: *Divorce – Italian Style*”. The scholar compares two English subtitled versions of the classic Italian 1961 film by Pietro Germi. Conducting his analysis on the basis of the research framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, Alfano highlights several examples from the two sets of subtitles, which are particularly indicative of the different translation approaches adopted by the US and Italian studios. His investigation clearly shows how the different strategies produce instances of reinforcement of gender stereotypes, as well as other results which point to a different direction and which are duly and also quantitatively illustrated by the scholar.

Also exploring, among other linguistic features, gender issues, related this time to the language of homosexuality, “Language and identity representation in the English subtitles of Almodóvar’s films”, by **Francisco Javier Díaz Pérez**, again chooses the subtitling mode as a privileged site for investigation. As the scholar observes, the Spanish director’s emotionally-charged language is used in his films as a characterisation device and as means to represent identity, conveying geographical, social and gender features which are explored by Díaz Pérez through a series of examples taken from various Almodóvar films. Among the translation strategies analysed in his contribution, the scholar also considers those applied to swearwords, evaluating, within a Descriptive framework, the percentages of occurrences for each item. The differences in the representations of the various features, between source and target texts, are evidence of a complex process of mediation between the two lingua-cultural scenarios, at least as far as the subtitling mode is concerned.

As **Margherita Dore**, the author of the following contribution, states: “The linguistic and cultural peculiarities of *Il divo* have cast doubt on the likelihood of its success outside its country of origin”. Her article, “Subtitling Italian politics and

culture in Paolo Sorrentino's *Il divo*" goes at the heart of the underexplored topic (in AVT) of how language shapes context in politics and how this is represented on screen in both source and target texts. After identifying the film's specific genre, that of Italian *cinema d'impegno*, Dore analyses how the multiple challenges Sorrentino's film poses to its linguistic and cultural transfer have been dealt with when subtitled in English. However, the interest of this particular contribution lies also in the fact that it touches on codes, as well as the purely verbal, that enrich the texture of this particular audiovisual text: the posters used for marketing the film and the use of dynamic captions exploited by the director, for example, are two of the features that would encourage a multimodal analysis, and that are considered by the author in the course of her assessment.

This issue's final contribution, "Translating non-native varieties of English in animated films: The Italian dubbing of *Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted*", explores one of the staples of AVT research, the representation and translation of non-standard varieties of English. Its author, **Vincenza Minutella**, does so by analysing a genre which usually resists the dominant strategy of levelling out non-standard varieties which is most common in this type of language transfer: that of comedic cartoons such as the one analysed by Minutella, Dreamwork's *Madagascar 3*. As well as delving into a thorough analysis of suitable examples from dialogue excerpts spoken by non-native English characters, this contribution is enriched by the quotation of personal communications with dubbing professionals, offering an overview of dubbing practices in this specific field. It serves as a precious reminder of the various factors, related to the distribution and marketing strategies of the target versions of audiovisual texts, which influence the process of linguacultural transfer.

Irene Ranzato and Serenella Zanotti

The challenges and opportunities of audiovisual translation.

An interview with Frederic Chaume

Frederic Chaume, Irene Ranzato and Serenella Zanotti

I.R. & S.Z.: Professor Frederic Chaume, it is a real pleasure to welcome you to *Cultus*. The title of this special issue is *Mediating Lingua-Cultural Scenarios in Audiovisual Translation*. As a leading authority in the field, what is your opinion about the power and potentialities of AVT as cross-cultural mediation?

F.C.: We are witnessing a constantly growing repertoire of contemporary film and video delivery systems, like streaming services such as Netflix, HBO, Amazon, etc. which are having a dramatic impact on younger audiences, on top of the traditional ways of consuming film and TV shows, such as cinema, TV, DVD and Blu-Ray. The ease with which audiovisual content can be viewed across national, cultural, and linguistic borders has grown exponentially. In Media Studies, academics are speaking about the notion of ‘global cinema’, understood as the intersection of “large, displaced and globalized populations of both spectators and [film] producers” (Naficy 2010: 11), a cinema that is increasingly multilingual and multicultural from the first phases of its design. Both dubbing and subtitling, as well as all accessible AVT modes, have the potential to transfer culture and mediate between different communities, and neither of them are better or worse in achieving this (Rader, Neuendorf and Skalsky, 2016). Past research did privilege subtitling over dubbing both in terms of enjoyment and recall of audiovisual content and few investigations have seriously considered the viability and potential of dubbed content. These authors found dubbing is not “worse” overall in the production of cognitive and affective outcomes. Audiovisual content is no longer monocultural, audiences are no longer monocultural, and AVT is no longer confined to using one mode, but different modes, combined when necessary, fulfilling different needs. The potential of AVT to overcome cultural barriers in the age of cosmopolitanism is more powerful than ever.

I.R. & S.Z.: In your book *Audiovisual Translation: Dubbing* (2012: 7), you stated that “[t]he distinction between dubbing and subtitling countries has become blurred” and that audiences are becoming used to different AVT modes than those to which they have been accustomed in the past. More recently, you commented (Chaume, forthcoming) on a surge of interest in dubbing in countries that had previously favoured subtitling. Would you like to expand on that?

F.C.: The amazing number of hours of audiovisual content being localized – translated and adapted– every single day, and the speed at which this is occurring, as well as giving audiences a wider and better choice, have led to a growing diversity in audiovisual content consumption and in the use of different translation practices. This decisive role of digital technology is the main reason behind the present state of great activity in new ways of producing and consuming audiovisual products, in optimizing the use of new devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones), and also in new forms of communication (social networks, crowdsourcing). Dubbing is a deeply rooted practice in some countries all over the world, especially in the case of TV and VoD platforms, where it tends to be more popular than in cinema. However, while the market trend towards subtitling may not come as a surprise, perhaps the parallel growing tendency towards dubbing is less expected. For instance, despite the fact that Portugal has an outstanding subtitling tradition, the audience share for dubbed products is on the rise. Other primarily-subtitling countries, such as Denmark, have recently experimented with dubbed films for younger audiences. A further significant trend can be noticed in subtitling countries such as Greece, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and other North African countries which are now dubbing Latin American and Turkish soap operas. Furthermore, in Iran, there is a trend of reverse dubbing, that is, the industry has started to dub Persian products into English and Arabic. In Japan, films are dubbed on TV, though the same TV stations also broadcast subtitled films at midnight. In Africa, there have also been some instances of dubbing in the Nollywood scene. Videogames are dubbed even in cultures where dubbing was only restricted to cartoons for the younger kids and commercials continue to be dubbed and voiced-over in both dubbing and subtitling countries. This is only to mention some examples, but the list could be much longer.

I.R. & S.Z.: Spain has gone through some crucial historical moments which had a direct influence on AVT practices. Some of these moments were undoubtedly peculiar to its specific socio-cultural situation, some others paralleled and were closely intertwined with what other countries were experiencing more or less at the same time. Can you tell us about present-day audiovisual practices in your country? What is the current situation in terms of audiovisual translation: preferred modes, cinema and TV industry situation, anything you can think of, really. (for example: is there a censorship bureau? are tv programmes still censored in certain occasions?

are professionals organised in unions or similar associations? is there something you regard as a peculiarity of the Spanish scene which you think is not common in other countries, etc.)

F.C.: Global trends affect us in the same way as they affect other countries. Digitalization has luckily overridden the futile debate between dubbing vs subtitling, since everything can be accessed dubbed and subtitled in the main Spanish TV stations and in VoD platforms broadcasting in Spanish. People can now consume their preferred audiovisual content both dubbed and subtitled, or voiced-over and subtitled, or audiodescribed and subtitled for the deaf. Younger generations tend to watch YouTube clips in original version or subtitled, instead of watching TV. VoD platforms have entered our lives and our homes and changed our consumption habits. Still, TV stations and cinemas broadcast all shows and films in their dubbed versions, by default. This means that, if viewers want to consume subtitled versions, they have to either activate the subtitles by means of the remote control or go to particular cinema theatres where the subtitled versions are shown.

There is no censorship bureau. Censorship is performed in other ways, for example, by using broadcast delay, an intentional short delay when broadcasting live material, in order to prevent mistakes or “unacceptable” content from being broadcast, as happens to some events attended by the King of Spain. Other times some images are pixelated in the watershed period, like in the USA. And especially censorship is exerted by distribution companies, like Disney, which provide their translators, dialogue writers and dubbing companies with lists of forbidden words and expressions, which in their opinion may hurt the audience’s feelings. There is also linguistic censorship in some territories, for example in Valencia, where many Catalan words and expressions are not accepted in dubbing and subtitling, or in Galicia, where many Portuguese ones are not accepted either. Linguistic fragmentation is intentionally favoured in the media and it is applied in the form of linguistic censorship.

Actors and actresses are organised in unions and, especially, translators and dialogue writers are now organised in a new association called ATRAE (*Asociación de Traducción y Adaptación Audiovisual de España*), which has turned to be the best piece of news for our profession in Spain in the last few years, together with the advent of VoD platforms.

Maybe one of the peculiarities of Spain is its multilingual nature. Having four official languages in the same country definitely boosts the AVT industry. Also the fact that 25 universities are presently offering a BA in Translation and Interpreting – and almost the same amount of MAs, five of them in AVT – has had a huge impact on the young professionals, who now can offer a variety of AVT modes to their clients. This also means that the newly-trained professionals can do both translation and dialogue writing for dubbing, and some of them can even perform their own translations, or insert and edit their own subtitles in the clips, previously

translated and spotted by themselves. They can also provide their clients with AD and SDH, and some of them even with VGLOC. One can easily and safely say that AVT training in Spain is really at the forefront of the future.

I.R. & S.Z.: In your book you affirmed that “the single option of either dubbing, subtitling or voice-over” should give way to diversified modes of consumption: “The more options we have, the better for the consolidation of a freer, multilingual and diverse audience” (Chaume 2012: 7). Please tell us: how do you really like to watch your films and series? subtitled, dubbed or otherwise? (we won’t tell anyone)

F.C.: Ahahaha... I barely have time to watch TV series, unfortunately for me. I can only watch a few films per year, and I tend to watch them subtitled. However, we, translators, teachers, researchers, translator trainees, belong to a small community that love languages, enjoy foreign cultures, and usually prefer subtitling to dubbing for personal consumption. However, sometimes we also consume dubbing when the original language is not English or a language we command or understand. And, more importantly perhaps, we have to train translators and dialogue writers in dubbing, to fulfil the demands of the industry, to cater for the needs of older audiences or simply of people who don’t like subtitles, to provide dubbed cartoons for children, to dub AAA videogames, to voice-over reality shows, etc. Dubbing is more and more present on all screens and our private and personal tastes should not condition us or hold us against teaching it, doing it professionally, or even enjoying it. Many people prefer dubbing to subtitling for many reasons, not simply out of a reluctance to reading or ignorance of other cultures, and these people also want to consume audiovisual content on a daily basis.

I.R. & S.Z.: Do you watch films and follow TV series regularly? And how?

F.C.: I still think that sitting in a dark theatre staring at a massive white screen has the unique ability to transport you away into the film plot, to another parallel world that suspends you from your real life. One gets pulled into the movements, sound and colour in a different way from when one is sitting on their couches at home. There’s nothing wrong with watching any film on our phones, tablets, laptops, or TV sets. It’s just that watching a film in a theatre is still a unique, worthwhile experience.

I.R. & S.Z.: What is your educational background and how did you become interested in audiovisual translation?

I studied English and German Studies at the Universitat de Valencia. We didn't have translation classes in those days. The only personal experience I had was having translated some of the most famous songs by The Beatles for myself, for fun. One day, in my last year, a teacher told us that his brother was doing translation and dialogue writing for TV. When the class was over, I looked for him in the corridor and asked him to tell me more about what his brother was doing. He kindly provided me with the name of the company his brother was working for. So when I finished my BA, with great optimism, I decided to go there. I remember knocking at the door, and when they opened it I just said "I want to do translation for dubbing for you". They showed me in, asked me about my skills in translation and dialogue writing –which then were non-existent– and asked me to translate an episode of *The Monkeys*, a cartoon series, what we would call today the prequel to Dragon Ball. I did it, they didn't like it and paid me much less than this job was paid in those days, but they kept sending me more commissions. Since they had said they did not like my philological translation full of notes and double alternatives, I asked the dialogue writer of the company to give me the chance to sit beside her and to watch her do it. I learnt dialogue writing looking at her. I'm really grateful to this woman, Elvira Inigo Greus.

I.R. & S.Z.: So you have a professional experience in both dubbing and subtitling. How has this influenced your teaching?

F.C.: As I said, I have a long experience in the industry of audiovisual translation. I started translating for the screen in 1989... long, long time ago. I started translating and dialogue writing for dubbing and was involved into many cartoons, documentaries and TV series projects. Then I moved to films. In the late nineties I had the chance to subtitle many films from many nationalities, especially art films and blockbusters of all times. I haven't been able to do AD and SDH myself, though.

Being a professional translator before I entered academia gave me the tools and the know-how to design a syllabus of AVT oriented to the market and also to teach in my classes what I had learnt as a professional. I was very lucky to start out as a translator before I started teaching at university.

I.R. & S.Z.: The rise of amateurs in audiovisual translation has attracted much scholarly attention in recent times (Massidda 2015, Díaz-Cintas 2018, Dwyer 2018, Orrego Carmona 2018). Do you think fansubbing and fandubbing can have a valuable and longstanding didactic import, or do you think they might be just a passing fad?

F.C.: The conventions of fansubs and fandubs can affect and are really affecting the way commercial subtitling and dubbing is professionally performed. On the one hand, I recommend my students to do fandubs and fansubs (of clips free of copyright) as a portfolio for their prospective clients. On the other hand, younger generations sometimes prefer to consume fansubs and fandubs than to watch the official dubbings and subtitlings of the cartoons and series they like. We cannot ignore these new practices. The use of creative subtitles in the industry now obeys to the influence of funsubbing in commercial subtitling for example. The slow move towards more foreignizing translations too.

I.R. & S.Z.: What do you think are the most promising areas of research in AVT for the future?

F.C.: There are many, luckily for our discipline. One of them is the impact of **technology** on AVT processes. Cloud dubbing and subtitling are an example, especially if we consider how they have changed the way we carry out these processes. Or the manipulation of images to fit the target translation into the original actors' and actresses' mouths in dubbing, as they are already doing in **videogame localization**, another promising and still underexplored field of research. Or machine translation – and translation memories – applied to subtitling and dubbing.

Another one is **accessibility** from a twofold perspective: on the one hand, the useful concept of accessible filmmaking, which has a direct impact on the process of making films taking AVT into account from the very first stages of the filmmaking process (Romero Fresco 2013); and, on the other, reception studies with hard of hearing and visually impaired people involving the use of technology, of physiological instruments and measures, such as eye-trackers, galvanic skin response devices, electroencephalography, levels of cortisol in saliva and heart rate, among others (see Di Giovanni and Gambier 2018). These measures can also be applied to the way we consume subtitled or dubbed audiovisual products from a cognitive perspective.

Another promising field of research is that of **activism** (Díaz-Cintas 2018, Baker 2018) in its manifold manifestations: fandubs and fansubs, fundubs (gag dubbing) and funsubs (parodic subtitling), literal video versions, honest subtitles, etc. AVT for children is another field calling for academic attention: reception studies again would be welcome to see how children consume audiovisual contents dubbed and subtitled by adults.

And finally **censorship**, which is not an issue of the past, as we may tend to think (Ranzato, 2016). Censorship is present even in countries proud of their democratic system and institutions, paradoxically in countries of the so-called first world.

I.R. & S.Z.: Is there an area of research that you would like, that you even plan to explore in the future, which has nothing or not much to do with AVT? A secret longing to explore other directions...?

F.C.: Maybe the world of transmedia projects (Ferrer Simó, 2016). Maybe also the world of transcreation. Maybe the world of media localization, such as adaptations, franchises, remakes understood as forms of translation (Evans, 2014). I haven't thought about moving from AVT to other domains... Starting with a new discipline would require such a great effort now, that I think it is wiser to keep within the boundaries of Translation Studies, which, on the other hand, are constantly expanding and widening.

References

- Baker, M. 2018. "Audiovisual translation and activism". In L. Pérez-González (ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation*. New York: Routledge, 453-467.
- Chaume, F. 2012. *Audiovisual Translation: Dubbing*. Manchester: StJerome.
- Chaume, F. 2018a. "Is audiovisual translation putting the concept of translation up against the ropes?". *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 30 (September), 84-104.
- Chaume, F. 2018b. "An overview of audiovisual translation: Four methodological turns in a mature discipline". *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, 1 (1), 40-63.
- Chaume, F. Forthcoming. "Audiovisual translation in the age of digital transformation: industrial and social implications". In I. Ranzato and S. Zanotti (eds.). *Reassessing Dubbing: Historical Approaches and Current Trends*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Di Giovanni, E., and Gambier, Y. 2018. *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. 2018. "'Subtitling's a Carnival': New Practices in Cyberspace". *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 30, 127-49.
- Dwyer, T. 2017. *Speaking in subtitles: Revaluing screen translation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Dwyer, T. 2018. "Audiovisual translation and fandom". In L. Pérez-González (ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation*. New York: Routledge, 436-452.
- Evans, J. 2014. "Film remakes, the black sheep of translation". *Translation Studies* 7 (3), 300-314.
- Ferrer Simó, M. (2016). *La gestión de los proyectos de traducción audiovisual en España. Seis estudios de caso*. PhD Thesis. Universitat Jaume I.

-
- Naficy, H. 2010. "Multiplicity and multiplexing in today's cinemas: Diasporic cinema, art cinema, and mainstream cinema". *Journal of Media Practice*, 11, 11-20.
- Orrego Carmona, D. 2018. "Tracking the distribution of non-professional subtitles to study new audiences". *Observatorio (OBS*) Journal*, 12 (4), 64-86, online at <http://obs.obercom.pt/index.php/obs/article/view/1300/pdf> (last accessed December 27, 2018).
- Rader, K., Neuendorf, K. and Skalsky, P. 2016. "International film and audio-visual translation: Intercultural experience as moderator in audience recall and enjoyment". *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 42 (September), online at <https://www.immi.se/intercultural/> (last accessed December 27, 2018).
- Ranzato, I. 2016. *Translating Culture Specific References on Television: The Case of Dubbing*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Romero Fresco, P. (2013). "Accessible filmmaking: Joining the dots between audiovisual translation, accessibility and filmmaking". *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 20, 201-223.

The reception of professional and non professional subtitles:

Agency, awareness and change

Elena Di Giovanni

University of Macerata

Abstract

The article offers insights into media content consumption, especially through subtitling, from the point of view of the users' awareness and agency as key factors for change. Starting from a redefinition of audience in relation to today's media and their viewers' proactive attitude (prosumption), the article reports on an experiment aiming to test the comprehension and appreciation of professional and non-professional subtitles for two popular series by Netflix, namely Black Mirror and Narcos. In its conclusions, the article reflects on changes in viewing habits as inspired, among other factors, by the viewers' active participation in the making of subtitles.

Keywords: subtitling, reception, prosumption, agency, awareness

On 30 march, 2017, Netflix issued a call for “the best translators around the globe”¹, a slogan to advertise its new online subtitlers’ testing and indexing platform, Hermes. The next day, Forbes published an online article explaining why Netflix was looking for qualified translators, with its international market currently amounting to over 45% of the overall clients and bound to increase in the coming years. As Forbes put it, the new platform released by Netflix “will allow it to tap into translator talent across the globe”² and, hopefully, ensure smooth enjoyment of their entertainment media products. What Forbes did not mention, however, is the antecedent, i.e. the fast and occasionally fuzzy production of translations to accompany distribution of their products into non English-speaking countries,

¹ See Netflix public announcement here: <https://media.netflix.com/en/company-blog/netflix-is-looking-for-the-best-translators-around-the-globe> (accessed September 2018).

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2017/03/31/heres-why-netflix-is-looking-for-translators/-6fd86b454823> (accessed September 2018).

which resulted in waves of criticism³. As often happens when it comes to home entertainment or VOD, fansubbing communities in several countries developed parallel versions of subtitles for many Netflix series, making them available in short times and occasionally encouraging their use by means of easy-to-use technologies. This is the case of Italy where, relying on a Chrome plugin that allows users to watch Netflix audiovisual products with customized subtitles, Itasa⁴, i.e. one of the largest fansubbing communities, resynched all their subtitles to encourage a more widespread use with Netflix.

Due to the fast spreading of alternative subtitles such as those created by Itasa, we decided to embark on an experiment to test comprehension and overall reception of different subtitles for two popular Netflix series, namely *Black Mirror* and *Narcos*. This article reports on the experiment, but first of all it reflects on changes in the composition and role of media audiences in recent years, as well as on the growing importance of audience research in audiovisual translation studies (AVTS). A series of reflections on the role of non professional subtitling today is also offered in the following pages, with methodological suggestions for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and the analysis of subtitling reception, even in a predominantly dubbing country like Italy.

Keywords for this essay certainly include reception, but also agency, awareness and change, in relation to subtitling but also, more generally, to media content creation and consumption. Agency refers here to a major change in the audience role in today's consumption, or better *prosumption* (Toffler, 1980) of media texts, but also to the activity and force of fans as non professional subtitlers. Awareness applies to non professional subtitlers, their increasing tendency to claim, or conceive for themselves, a quasi-professional recognition, although preserving and complying with specific production standards. Awareness also refers to the viewers' acknowledgement of their foreign language competence and subtitling competence. As a matter of fact, it is a change in viewers' awareness that is here highlighted through the experiment results. As always happens with empirical research (Di Giovanni, 2018a), unexpected findings were obtained with this experiment and most of them are connected precisely with new or renewed awareness.

Last but not least, change here applies to all of the above, but also to AVTS and its mutation through audience reception studies. It encompasses changes in audience role when it comes to on-demand content and its consumption, to the overall subtitling production and fruition across legal and non-legal context, even in what are still predominantly dubbing countries.

³ See, for instance, consumers and critics protests at http://www.av-kaantajat.fi/in_english/netflix-s-translation-strategy-l/ or <http://cphpost.dk/news/culture/netflix-success-marred-by-poor-subtitles-high-cost-and-limited-stock.html> (accessed September 2018).

⁴ Itasa is the short name for italiansubs.net: <https://www.italiansubs.net>.

1. (Re)defining audience and its study

The concept of audience is at the core of media reception research and is undoubtedly one of the most difficult to define, especially in general terms. Many classifications of audience have been put forth by scholars in media and reception studies, according to age, education and often on the grounds of their attitude to media consumption. For instance, in *Researching Audiences* (2003: 114) Schroeder *et al.* classify audiences –mainly with reference to media advertisements– as *sympathetic*, *agnostic* or *cynical*, whereas in *Audiences* (1998: 40) Abercrombie and Longhurst define the concept of audience in relation to that of performance, which refers both to the show and to the active role of viewers as participants in that show. The authors make a distinction between *simple*, *mass* and *diffused* audience, all of them variously engaging in modes of performance, as is particularly relevant for the case discussed here.

Over the past decade or so, media and reception studies have been facing the challenge of audience (re)definition, especially with reference to mainstream, clear-cut media and their most recent and popular offspring, namely VOD platforms, internet-based series and streaming content. In particular, the linear model of communication - from producer to receiver - and the supposedly limited agency of the receivers have come to be increasingly challenged, to such an extent that the notions of producers and receivers are often blurred and the very word 'audience' may appear inappropriate:

At times, it seems that the term 'audiences' became somehow limiting for media scholars in their effort to address the rising visibility of audiences' productive practices, and new concepts have been proposed to cover particular aspects of being an audience. (Pavličková and Kleut, 2016: 350)

Today, audiences do not only hold power over meaning in the consumption/reception phase: they have a proactive attitude to meaning making even in some stages of the production process.

In fact, such an attitude does not seem to belong to our days only: in 1990, Willis (cited in Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 25) defined audiences as cultural producers, whereas in the early years of this new century many scholars have evoked the notions of active, or creative audience (see, for instance, Ritzer, 2014).

One particularly valuable term used to view audiences as active creators is that of *produsage*. Bruns offers a compelling discussion (see Bruns and Highfield, 2012; Bruns and Schmidt, 2011; Bruns, 2008a, 2008b), whereby produsage not only refers to the active involvement of consumers in the production stage, but it also highlights their creative effort. Thus, a produser is a user-turned-producer in creative, often innovative ways. This is the case also for non professional translators, in many contexts, especially in relation to streaming and VOD content.

Interestingly, scholars such as Picone (2011) have also explored audiences who engage in media content production somehow casually, remaining predominantly consumers. This was perhaps the case for early attempts at producing fansubs, for personal use or for sharing within small communities of fans. Today, the phenomenon has spread and evolved so much that it is far from casual and it very often reaches out to the general audience, beyond fan communities. However, in response to the question "are we all producers now?" formulated in relation to the pervasive phenomenon of fan alteration and innovation of media content, Pavlíčková and Kleut recall that the number of truly active audience members, classifiable as producers, is still very limited and confined to the internet population. The concept of producers, however, is indeed useful here and it will be borne in mind when exploring the agency of professional and non professional subtitlers in the following sections. Before proceeding to a more detailed analysis, let us reflect on the increasing importance and impact of reception research in AVTS.

2. The hype of reception studies in AVT

Although audiovisual translation has been practiced since the audiovisual media came into existence, well over a century ago, even before the advent of sound in cinema (Zanotti, 2018), the empirical study of its reception by the audience is a rather recent phenomenon, at least in an explicit, systematic way. If it is true that the audience reactions to translated versions of films, for instance, were often reflected in critics' accounts and printed press articles since the late 30s and 40s (Cornu, 2014: 15), and that film and media studies have touched upon crosscultural reception of translated audiovisual texts many times, the first experiments and investigations from translation scholars appeared at the end of the last century, mostly in the form of PhD research (Di Giovanni, 2018a).

Still in the last century, a lot of ground-breaking, pivotal research came in the form of experiments aiming to test and further develop specific AVT techniques, in particular those addressing special segments of the audience such as subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) and audio description (Romero Fresco, 2018; Jankowska, 2015).

In relation to the former, Romero Fresco (2018) recalls that research aiming to test SDH appeared even before subtitles were aired on television, in the USA:

Reception research on SDH started in the US in the early 1970s, a decade before subtitles were first used on TV, with a series of studies that have been largely overlooked in the AVT literature. Most of these were PhD theses analyzing the benefits of captions for deaf students. [...] The introduction of closed captions on US TV in 1980 led to the first large-scale research studies on user habits and preferences. In 1981, Blatt and Sulzer designed a national survey including

demographic variables, viewing habits and specific aspects of the Captioned ABC News. Data was obtained from 1475 people, primarily deaf (rather than hard of hearing) with a high level of education and TV viewing. (2018: 201)

In the case of audio description, significant research appeared in the USA in the late Fifties and in the Seventies, published respectively by a young scholar in the field of accessibility, Gregory Frazier, and by two early-day practitioners, Margaret and Cody Pfanstiehl (Di Giovanni, 2018b). However, in both SDH and audio description, steady research based on the end users' reception came before other more widespread and well-known techniques such as subtitling and dubbing, at the very dawn of this new century.

As the origins of AVTS are normally traced to the late Eighties/early Nineties (Pérez-González, 2014), making it a young sub-disciplinary area, it is understandable that reception studies were not immediately developed, all the more so as the investigation of consumption of audiovisual media, and the effects thereof, is indeed a complex matter and normally linked to idiosyncratic habits.

With reference to subtitling, reception studies were, once again, initiated by scholars outside translation-related research. Géry d'Ydewalle, a psychologist, started investigating subtitling reading patterns in the very early Nineties (early publications appeared in 1991 and 1992). However, although developed within cognitive psychology, his studies have been, and still are, among the most influential for subtitling scholars focusing on reception, as he foregrounded the onset of one of the most prolific strands to date, i.e. eye tracking research. Interestingly, AVTS scholars who started working steadily on eye tracking to gauge perception of subtitled audiovisual texts, are still constantly drawing inspiration from different areas of psychological research to better ground their studies (see, for instance, the work of Louise Fryer, Agnieszka Szarkowska, Jan Louis Kruger).

The phenomenon of non professional subtitling has certainly contributed to the development of reception research in AVTS: several scholars have, in the past few years, engaged in putting fan-produced subtitles to the test in terms of reception, obtaining varying results across countries and years. Bruti and Zanotti, for instance, provided a hybrid contribution to reception research in relation to fansubbing with an article published in 2013. They carried out a study mixing a comparative linguistic analysis of three sets of subtitles for a pilot episode of the American TV series *Lost* (provided respectively by the two largest Italian fansubbing communities and by professional subtitlers for the commercial DVD), with a questionnaire administered to over 230 university students whose aim was to test comprehension and preferences. Questionnaire results reveal selective, but generally higher, comprehension for fansubs over DVD subtitles. By 'selective' we mean that in the presence of orality markers, such as vocatives and interjections, comprehension is higher for fan-created subtitles, and this is matched by a greater attention to coherence in the translation of such markers on the part of fansubbers rather than professional subtitles. Keeping an eye on definitions of fan translation

activities, especially in relation to the concepts of agency and awareness, it is interesting to observe that Bruti and Zanotti refer to fansubbing as ‘abusive, borrowing Marcus Nornes’s popular definition (1999), but they also repeatedly lay emphasis on the creative, participatory, pervasive nature of this activity (2013: 121). Abusive subtitling in relation to fansubbing is mentioned also by David Orrego Carmona (2016 and 2017), whose contribution to the study of reception of non professional subtitling has so far been conspicuous. In a 2016 article, he reported on an experiment aiming to evaluate reception of subtitles produced by professionals and pro-am subtitlers, i.e. amateurs whose communities aim for quasi-professional standards. This definition also applies to the fansubbing community whose subtitling output we analyse in the following sections, and it is particularly interesting as it impinges on issues of agency and awareness in relation to both professional and non professional subtitling practices. Orrego Carmona’s experiment starts from the general hypothesis, or “orthodox approach in audiovisual translation” (2016: 170), as he calls it, that professional subtitling is thought to be more easily and smoothly received by viewers. The experiment involved the viewing of 3-minute clips from *The Big Bang Theory* on an X120 Tobii eye tracker, with 3 different sets of Spanish subtitles, two from fansubbers and one from the Spanish DVD. The eye tracking tests were paired with questionnaires, mainly aiming to test reading efforts and what the author names reception capacity. The latter concept is inspired by Gambier’s definition of reception through the three Rs (2006), where one of them, *responses*, includes three elements: iconic, verbal and narrative attention. Like Gambier, Orrego Carmona relates iconic attention to the intake of visual stimuli, whereas verbal attention refers to the understanding of dialogues. Narrative attention, in turn, refers to the plot and its comprehension. In an updated contribution centred on this analytical model, Gambier (2018) mentions these three elements as ideally tested via “controlled experimental procedures”, including eye tracking and EEG. These tools, however, can account for an evaluation of perception rather than overall reception of subtitled media texts, and measuring responses as they are defined above requires more than an analysis of perception. Orrego Carmona, as said above, did complement his eye tracking experiment with a questionnaire.

At this stage, it may be worth expanding on perception and reception as they are intended in this essay. As discussed elsewhere (Di Giovanni, 2018a: 161), perception refers to “what is impressed on the eyes when watching media” and it “stops before any act of interpretation”. Reception, on the other hand, is a broader concept and can be defined as “the way/s in which individuals and groups interact with media content, how a text is interpreted, appreciated, remembered” (ibid.). Therefore, the study of reception can and should encompass perception, but it goes beyond it, to include comprehension, enjoyment, self-reported difficulties, memory, cognitive load, etc.

In the following sections, we will discuss results from an experiment aiming to map reception of professional and non professional subtitles in relation to

comprehension, self-reported difficulties, enjoyment, linguistic and subtitling awareness. Comprehension, in itself, will be related to iconic and verbal attention as defined by Gambier and Orrego Carmona, whereas narrative attention will not be discussed, as it seems to be embodied in the very concept of comprehension.

Before embarking on the experiment description, let us reflect on professional and non professional subtitling from yet another point of view.

3. The impact of non professional subtitles

Although not focusing explicitly on reception, a great contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon of non professional subtitling is offered by Tessa Dwyer in *Speaking in Subtitles. Revaluing Screen Translation* (2017). One of the main tenets of her book is the revision, or revaluation, of the notion of quality in relation to subtitling. In line with, and beyond, Orrego Carmona's idea of an orthodox approach which sees quality as more frequently attached to professional rather than non professional settings by scholars and practitioners, Dwyer advocates for an overall revaluation of this notion "by elucidating connections between abstraction and practice" (2017: 5), i.e. by considering all possible variables and elements which have a bearing on translation and its assessment. Quite effectively, to this end, Dwyer evokes the notion of errancy as a complement to that of quality, as "it activates a process of reflection or re-conceptualisation by forcing a question as to where the value of translation lies" (ibid. 7). Errancy, to Dwyer, is related to "translation faults - errors, failures, mistranslations and misrepresentations" (Ibid: 109), which are to be taken as signals for pressure points or cracks vital to an overall revaluation of subtitling. In elaborating on quality and errancy, Dwyer always keeps in mind both professional and non professional settings, the latter more commonly defined by her as *amateur* practices. Her definition of amateur subtitling brings up the notions of agency and awareness yet again: fansubbing is, to Dwyer, "a guerrilla-type practice that rebels against legal media and translation frameworks" (ibid. 123), but it also occasionally claims recognition and aims for standardization. Also, in Dwyer's terms, errancy and the faults thereof stimulate rethinking, therefore renewed awareness and agency.

Guerrilla fan translation, just like Orrego Carmona's pro-am subtitling, occasionally mimics commercial norms: as Dwyer further asserts, "through such forms of imitation, guerrilla translation aims to achieve a level of invisibility. Instead, however, the act of translation is made doubly visible. Despite aiming to pass as professional and mainstream, guerrilla practices tend to announce themselves via overt flaws" (ibid. 125).

Dwyer's notion of errancy, seen mainly in terms of translation failures and misrepresentations, will be useful for the following analysis of questionnaire results. After focusing on reception as comprehension, self-reported difficulties,

enjoyment, linguistic and subtitling awareness, a reflection on the concept of errancy will lead us to conclusions and stimulate further research and action.

4. A reception experiment with Netflix series

These days, the debate on fansubbing versus professional subtitling is possibly more heated than ever: while the volume of subtitles produced worldwide increases and subtitling rates paid by large, multinational companies to professional translators hit bottom level, occasionally forcing them to a take-it-or-leave-it choice, fan communities expand in several directions, generally either increasing their shadowed competition with the professional world or defining a niche community for themselves, away from market circles and visibility.

As fast-growing, international colossi like Netflix become ever more pervasive, undoubtedly re-shaping our viewing habits, radical changes to the creation, distribution and consumption of subtitled texts proceed in parallel.

As mentioned above, Netflix has recently shown some efforts towards enhancing subtitling quality and the working conditions of their subtitlers, especially in the wake of complaints from viewers⁵. At the same time, fansubbing communities have been producing their own subtitles for Netflix series and made them not-so-covertly available to users in many countries. Itasa (<https://www.italiansubs.net>)⁶, as anticipated, fastly resynched their subtitles for Netflix products so as they could be used by all viewers through Super Netflix, a Chrome plugin allowing for the replacement of Netflix official subtitles. This popular instance of pro-am attitude stimulated our curiosity as researchers, also considering the difficulties in reading Netflix-produced subtitles often expressed by viewers and critics⁷.

A small team at the University of Macerata thus decided to choose two Netflix popular series, namely *Black Mirror* and *Narcos*, and test a selected sample of viewers for their comprehension and overall reception of subtitles by Netflix and Itasa. Use was made of a three-section questionnaire, comprising both open and closed questions and requiring on average 11.8 minutes to be filled out. The first and second section referred to either the clip from *Black Mirror* or from *Narcos*, according to randomization (see details below) and it comprised 9 questions, 5

⁵ It may be worth mentioning, however, that the platform developed by Netflix for testing subtitling competence - Hermes - is no longer in use.

⁶ As of 15 September 2018, after 13 years of activity, the Itasa community made its own platform inactive.

⁷ See, for instance, <http://cphpost.dk/news/culture/netflix-success-marred-by-poor-subtitles-high-cost-and-limited-stock.html> (accessed September 2018) or https://www.reddit.com/r/netflix/comments/3z7aig/subtitle_quality_has_been_going_downhill_us/ (accessed September 2018).

open and 4 closed. 6 out of 9 of these questions focused specifically on comprehension as elicited through iconic and/or verbal attention for the selected clip, whereas the final 3 were repeated for both clips and aimed at eliciting overall comprehension. The third and final section of the questionnaire comprised 6 questions, with replies based on a 5-point Likert scale, aiming to stimulate further reflection on reception through self-reported difficulties, enjoyment, linguistic and subtitling awareness.

Before moving any further, let us recall here that the experiment did not aim at supporting, or even putting to the test, what Orrego Carmona calls the orthodox approach to subtitling, nor did it aim at showcasing fansubbing as a valid alternative to professionally created subtitles. Our aim was to evaluate audience response to viewing and understanding *à la page* media texts such as Netflix most popular series through two different sets of subtitles openly available to all.

Upon viewing several episodes of the above-mentioned series with subtitles both from Netflix and from Itasa, and noticing potential errancy issues in both, we aimed to see to what extent comprehension was supported, enhanced or hampered by the subtitles and the overall effect (reception, awareness) on the viewers.

The experiment set up and administration is detailed in the following section.

4.1 Set up and administration

Netflix is nowadays popular with people of all ages worldwide, although its active users tend to be mainly in the 20 to 40 age range⁸. We thus decided to limit our experiment to participants in the 20 to 30 age group, with an equal share of men and women. We were resolute in avoiding the so-called "student bias" (Di Giovanni, 2018a and b) in empirical research, therefore we planned our experiment away from the university premises. Students were not utterly excluded from our experiment, but they were not especially recruited. All language and translation students, however, were refused participation due to a potentially higher than average linguistic and translation competence. Overall, we had 30 participants, 15 male and 15 female, with an average age of 26.2. 60% of them declared to be university students, the remaining 40% were either looking for a job or in a professional position.

As stated above, our aim was to test comprehension and overall reception for two excerpts from *Black Mirror* and *Narvos*. The clips were selected on the grounds of the following parameters:

⁸ US figures for 2017 show that 77% of individuals in the 19 to 29 age group are active Netflix users, and for the 30 to 44 age group the percentage remains similarly high, i.e. 66%, much higher than older groups (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/720723/netflix-members-usa-by-age-group/> accessed September 2018).

- 1) they were self-contained scenes,
- 2) they contained dialogue between two or more characters and additional verbal stimuli in the form of written text on screen,
- 3) they were essential for overall narrative comprehension,
- 4) they were of equal length.

The 3 minutes 20 second clip from *Black Mirror* was excerpted from episode 3 of season 3: it features a rather fast exchange between Hector and Karol at a gas station. The two are joined by teenager Kenny, who is running on a dangerous mission with Hector: they are guided by short, threatening text messages coming into Kenny's mobile phone. Hector and Kenny are about to hastily leave the gas station to reach their destination, but they are slowed down by Karol who asks for a lift. Hector does not manage to refuse it and the three embark on a very fast car ride. During the ride, Kenny's phone displays a mixture of navigator prompts and text messages guiding him and Hector to their destination.

The clip from *Narcos*, on the other hand, is taken from the opening scene in episode one of the very first series. It was chosen as it contains a variety of verbal stimuli beyond short dialogue exchanges, including initial scrolling text, voices off screen either from a narrator or through the phone, a few lines and names in Spanish. Basically, the scene introduces some of the series main tenets, i.e. drug traffic from Colombia to the United States, and some of the key agents involved: officers from DEA, the US government anti drug agency, men from the Pablo Escobar team. The scene also contains flashbacks and flash forwards, all elements being essential for an understanding of the overall narrative development.

The experiment was set up in the large, ground floor hall of a public library in the centre of Macerata and carried out over two days (11 a.m. to 6 p.m.). It featured four clips (two for each series, one with Netflix and one with Itasa subtitles), which were randomized as follows:

Narcos pro + *Black Mirror* pro-am
Narcos pro-am + *Black Mirror* pro
Black Mirror pro + *Narcos* pro-am
Black Mirror pro-am + *Narcos* pro

In terms of initial instructions, participants were told that we were working on research on translation for television series and that they would be required to watch two sequences and reply to short sets of questions after viewing each sequence. They were asked to wear headsets so as to avoid interference with room noise and so as not to bother other readers in the hall. In order to make each participant familiarize with the setting and the experiment, general demographic questions were asked prior to the first clip viewing, to elicit the participant's age, occupation and self-reported knowledge of English. The whole experiment remained anonymous and lasted on average 18.2 minutes.

The three sections below discuss results from the questions related to *Black Mirror* (BM), those related to *Narcos* (NA) and the final set of general questions.

4.2 Questions about Black Mirror with pro and pro-am subtitles

As anticipated, the specific section of the questionnaire on BM contained 9 questions, both closed and open. The first two aimed at measuring verbal attention in relation to the opening sequence of the clip. Question one was closed and asked, "At the gas station, what does Karen ask Hector when Kenny is approaching?" The questionnaire offered four options, one of them being "I don't know"⁹. Participants who had watched the clip with Netflix subtitles provided only 33% of correct replies, whereas 27% of them chose "I don't know". The remaining replies were incorrect. Itasa subtitles generated 66% correct replies, with 20% of participants opting for "I don't know" and the remaining replies being incorrect.

The second question was open and asked participants to state how Karen describes herself to Kenny, still in the opening exchange. Several correct options were possible: Karen says she is head of the PTA in her kids' school, and she also remarks that Kenny's name and her own both start with K. On the whole, participants who watched the clip with Netflix subtitles provided only 27% correct replies, with a considerable 53% of "I don't know". Once again, the clip with subtitles from Itasa scored better results: 47% correct replies and only 33% "I don't know". Subtitle length is worth here mentioning as an influential issue: the original line by Karen is very short ("we're both Ks") and Itasa subtitles translate it as "entrambi con la K", whereas Netflix subtitles have a much longer "i nostri nomi iniziano tutti e due per K".

With question 3, iconic and verbal attention are both steadily called into play, although understanding speech through subtitles does also imply iconic attention. Question 3 was open, asking about the content of the first text messages sent to Kenny's phone. Once again, more than one option was correct and in counting all correct replies the percentages is higher for viewers of the clip with Itasa subtitles: 93% over 80% for Netflix subtitles. A similar, but closed question, asked about the content of the messages reaching Kenny's phone as Karen is enquiring about the boy's origins: with four options available, correct replies for Netflix subtitles amount to 86%, whereas for Itasa they scored 80%. When verbal attention is more central again, as in question 5 ("Where is Kenny going?"), participants watching the clip with Netflix subtitles provided 87% correct replies, whereas the percentage amounts to 80% in relation to Itasa subtitles. The sixth and final closed question stimulating iconic and verbal attention scored 47% correct replies for Itasa subtitles, whereas Netflix subtitles led to 40% of correct replies only.

⁹ For all closed questions, the four options included one correct reply, two wrong replies (connected to the visual and/or verbal stimuli) and "I don't know".

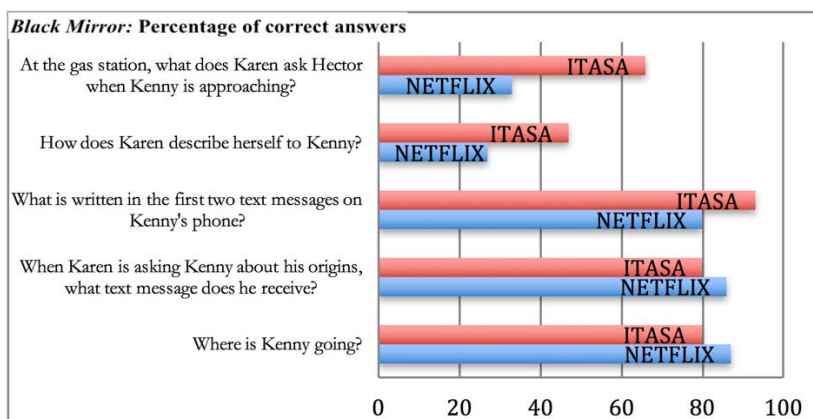


Figure 1. *Black Mirror* - The first five questions.

The three following questions aimed at eliciting reflections on comprehension, also through self-reported difficulties and subtitling awareness. Two were open (7 and 9) and one was closed (8). Question 7 asked participants to state if there was anything they thought they had not understood. Starting from those who watched the clip with Netflix subtitles, 6 out of 15 replied negatively, stating they thought all was clear. One specified that it was clear Hector and Kenny were being threatened. One participant only stated that s/he had perhaps missed something, without further specification. The remaining 8 participants all reported difficulties, focusing on several sections of the clip: 3 on the initial sequence at the gas station, 3 on the text messages, one on the relationship between Hector and Karen, and one on “what was actually happening throughout”. These last two replies point to difficulties which may have been increased by using a clip which is not initial in an episode, although before the start participants were provided with a short recap of what had happened in the episode prior to the scene under analysis.

As for the clip with Netflix subtitles, participants who declared they had probably not missed anything were only 4. The other replies offer an array of self-reported difficulties: the initial sequence was not understood by 3, the text messages are reported to be impossible to grasp by 2, the overall scene is said to have been difficult by 2 more. Additionally, 2 participants said they had found the dialogues too fast and another said Karen's accent was difficult to understand. The last two replies are particularly interesting as they point to the confusion generated by fast sequences with equally fast subtitles. They may be viewed as attempts to grasp as much meaning as possible: to this end, it would seem that viewers try to rely on the original version, self-increasing cognitive load and probably losing even more of the overall comprehension.

Question 8 was closed and asked, “Do you think you were always able to read the subtitles?” The replies given seem to be coherent with the results from the clip-specific questions reported above: 60% of viewers who had followed the Netflix subtitles said “no”, whereas the percentage is lower (52%) for those who relied on Itasa subtitles. To close this section, a final question asked to express the reasons for the inability to read the subtitles (if any), thus stimulating further reflection on this issue. Participants who had watched the clip with Itasa subtitles provided 7 replies, mostly focusing on the difficulty of reading and listening, or reading + listening + reading (the text messages). For Netflix subtitles, 9 replies, were provided, of which 4 are particularly worth recalling: 2 participants stated that they decided to focus on the original audio, avoiding the subtitles, one declared that s/he doesn't normally use subtitles and this made comprehension through them more difficult. Finally, one person stated that the time given to read the subtitles was insufficient and this made overall comprehension of the sequence difficult.

These last replies provide valuable food for thought in relation to the linguistic and subtitling awareness which is stimulated by this type of experiment, both in positive and negative terms, and indeed call for further investigation across texts, genres and subtitles.

4.3 Questions about Narcos with pro and pro-am subtitles

For the NA clip, initial questions related to verbal but also iconic attention, elicited through the scrolling written text on screen in different colours appearing in the opening 30 seconds of the sequence.

Question 1 was closed, with four options provided as a possible reply to “Is the series inspired by fictional or real people and events?” Viewers of the clip with Netflix subtitles provided 73% correct replies, whereas the percentage goes up to 86% with Itasa subtitles. Question 2 was open, asking for a definition of magical realism, which again is provided in the scrolling text, in white and red types. For Netflix subtitles, viewers provided 33% correct replies, whereas for Itasa subtitles correct replies amount to 28%. Verbal attention is at the core of the following two questions, related to the voice off screen narrating the initial sequence in flash forward. Question 3 was closed and asked, “Who controls our phones and computers?” With four options offered, viewers of the Netflix subtitles provided 66% correct replies, whereas viewers of the Itasa subtitles amounted to 73%. Question 4 was open and asked where the episode takes place, and correct replies were higher for Netflix subtitles (60%) rather than Itasa (40%). In this case, however, Itasa subtitles overlap with the text on screen (Colombia, 1989), whereas Netflix professional subtitles appear at the top of the screen, thus allowing viewers to comfortably take in both pieces of information.

Question 5 involved both iconic and verbal attention, as participants were asked, through a closed question, how the American government controls certain

people's voices and the correct reply could be inferred from the images and the voice off screen: 80% of viewers of the clip with Itasa subtitles provided correct replies, whereas 67% of viewers of the Netflix subtitles were able to do the same. The final content-specific question asked, through a closed question, who is Steve Murphy. In this case, a striking 100% correct replies were given for the clip with Netflix subtitles, whereas Itasa subtitles yielded 86%.

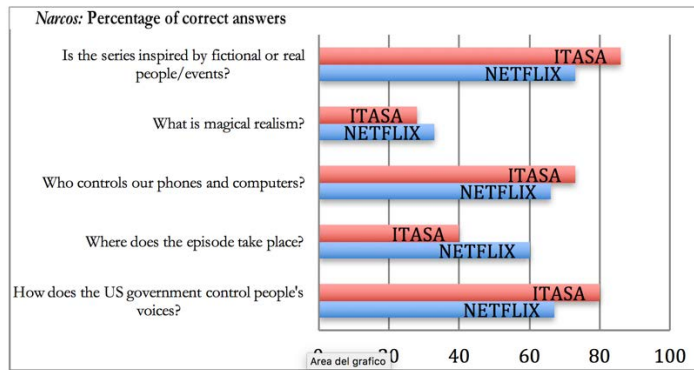


Figure 2. *Narcos* - The first five questions.

As for the *Black Mirror* clip, question 7 asked participants to state if there was anything they thought they had not understood. For the Netflix subtitles, 8 out of 15 participants declared they thought they had fully understood, one stated s/he was almost sure, but not 100%. Of the remaining participants, 3 stated they had not understood the off-screen voice, which again points to the recourse to the original version, in this case not motivated by particularly fast subtitles. 2 participants mentioned they had not understood what magical realism was, but these remarks were probably stimulated by the content-specific question on the issue, which may have otherwise been lost altogether.

Interesting results come, in this case, from the replies to question 8: when asked whether they thought they could always read the subtitles, 60% of viewers of the clip with Itasa subtitles replied no, whereas the percentage goes down to 53% with Netflix subtitles. Although this scene is generally slower in verbal and narrative pace than the other, thus allowing for more subtitle reading time, Netflix subtitles were generally longer for this clip, as for the one from BM. However, comprehension of the Itasa subtitles may here have been hampered by the lack of change of positions for titles which overlapped with written text onscreen, and by occasionally more radical translation solutions: some proper names are domesticated from the very beginning (Lagarto becomes Lucertola even before the character is shown), some foreign words are left in the Italian subtitles (guapa).

Finally, when asked to specify the reason for possibly not following the subtitles, 2 participants relying on the Netflix subtitles specified that they were too

fast in disappearing. More interestingly, 5 participants mentioned a greater attention to the images in this clip, to the detriment of the subtitles, but only one refers to the original dialogue as a source of comprehension for the verbal information. For Itasa subtitles, 3 respondents remarked that subtitles were fast and only one said s/he mainly concentrated on the images. Two participants, on the other hand, referred to a greater interest for original dialogue rather than subtitles, which they declared not to use, normally preferring dubbing.

4.4 Difficulties, enjoyment, linguistic and subtitling awareness

The final section of the questionnaire invited participants to add comments to their overall experience and provided us with their own views of the reception of the two clips. Questions stimulating reflections on language competence, subtitling competence and enjoyment were also added. The results from this short sequence of questions, based on a 5-point Likert scale, are indeed worth considering.

First of all, participants were asked to rate their comprehension of the *Black Mirror* clip, from very low (1) to very high (5). Those who had to rely on the Netflix subtitles provided 20% of replies for the lower values (1/2), whereas point 3 (average) scored 46.7% of replies, point 4 (high) 13.3% and very high 20%. With Itasa subtitles, points 1 and 2 scored 26.7% taken together, point 3 26.7%, whereas option 4 (high) scored 46.7% and option five was not selected at all.

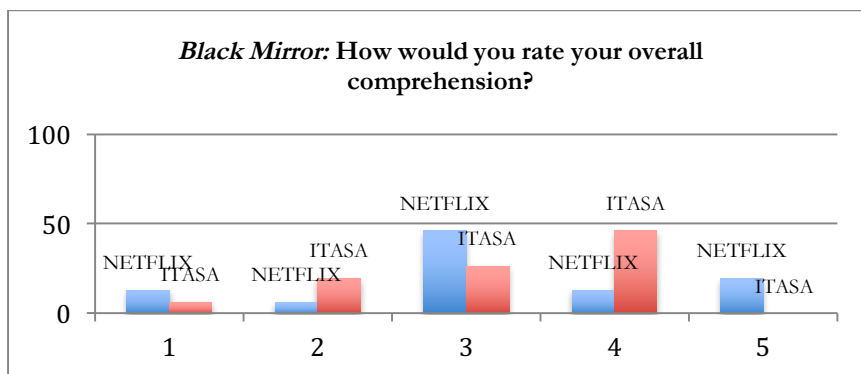


Figure 3. Self reported comprehension for *Black Mirror* (Likert scale)

For *Narvos*, viewers of the clip with Netflix subtitles scored 6.7% for the lower points (1 and 2), whereas the intermediate option scored 26.7%. Options 4 and 5 (high/very high) yielded 33.3% each. For Itasa subtitles, the two lower points scored 0%, whereas the middle point (3) scored 20%. Options high/very high (4 and 5) yielded 46.7% and 33.3% respectively, thus confirming overall higher scores

for the clip viewed with Itasa rather than Netflix subtitles, even more than for the *Black Mirror* clip.

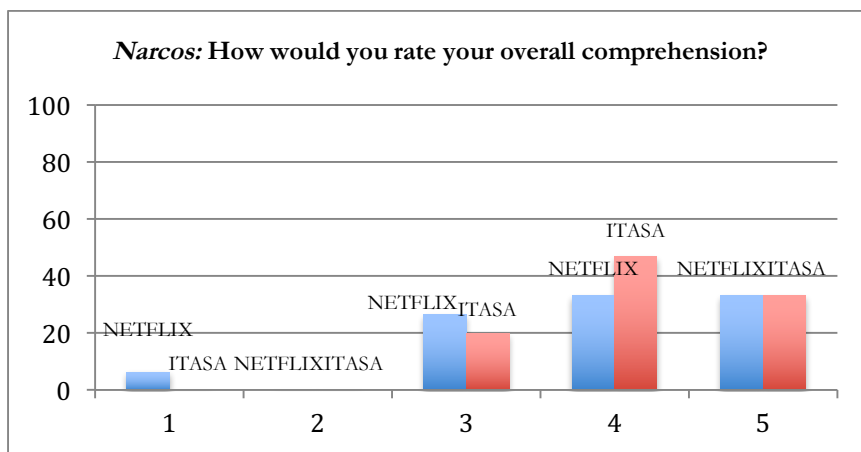


Figure 4. Self reported comprehension for *Narcos* (Likert scale)

The next question asked all 30 respondents¹⁰ to generally rate the usefulness of subtitles in watching the clips: 10% of the participants rated it as very low (1), 13.3% as low (2), 23.3% as medium (3), whereas a rather striking 53.3% opted for high and very high (4 and 5). This datum, stimulated by a direct question, is somehow in contrast with several open replies provided in the first two sections of the questionnaire, which refer about the urge to resort to images or to the original dialogue. By way of explanation, we may argue that the open replies above were provided as an immediate reaction to watching the clip, whereas this question was part of a more comprehensive, non-content based section. The next question, on the other hand, provided coherent responses, as participants were asked to state how useful the images were for the overall comprehension of both clips: from very low (1) to medium (3), participants scored 46.7%, thus proving that more than half of them (53.3% opted for 4 and 5) are well aware of the overall importance of subtitles with and over the images. Further asked to specify if they thought their comprehension would have been higher if they had watched the clips in the original version without subtitles, participants selecting “absolutely not” (1) and “probably not” (2) amounted to 63.3% of the total, with a further 30% selecting

¹⁰ From this question onwards, all replies referred to the same object, without any separation between viewers of one clip (Itasa subtitles) or the other (Netflix subtitles).

the middle point (3). The following question asked whether they thought watching the clips with Italian dubbing would have increased comprehension: suffice it to say that 46.7% of the participants selected the highest value, 5, corresponding to “absolutely yes”.

These last replies are particularly interesting in that they point to an essential element to be considered when evaluating the impact of subtitles on audiences, even the younger generations: exposure to dubbing or subtitling for mainstream media texts, from childhood onwards, keeps playing a major role in preferences and enjoyment of translated media texts, but also on foreign language competence and awareness.

5. Discussion

One of the most surprising results of this experiment concerns self-reported foreign language competence. When asked, prior to watching the clips, to rate their knowledge of English from very low to very high, again on a 5-point Likert scale, participants mostly replied either average (point 3) or high (point 4), for an overall 76.7%. (22 people out of 30). At the end of the experiment, perhaps stimulated by the final set of questions, 12 out of 30 participants spontaneously added comments, stating that they should review the declared language competence and that their knowledge of English was clearly lower. This may be the result of frustration generated by the experiment in many ways: clips were rather dynamic and fast, on the visual and verbal level, and no familiarizing excerpt had been presented before those used for the questionnaire. However, most participants declared they were generally familiar with the series and often exposed to Netflix products. Another reason for this revised linguistic awareness almost certainly lies in the use of subtitles over dubbing, as anticipated in the previous sections. Although another orthodox approach generally accepted in AVT today claims that younger generations in dubbing countries are more inclined to use subtitles, this is hardly what emerges from empirical research to date, either as a result of direct questions or experiments like the one here discussed. Furthermore, such final considerations are most likely to have been stimulated by cases of errancy found throughout the subtitled clips, both with Netflix and with Itasa subtitles. In the case of Netflix subtitles, lack of understanding, as reported through the questionnaire results, is very often connected to excessive length: subtitles are either as long as the original dialogue, or even considerably longer. When confronted with the presence of text messages and dialogues as essential verbal information, Netflix subtitles just seem to fall short of readability. Even in the clip from NA, the overall tendency of Netflix translators is to be explanatory and detailed, hardly considering condensation. In the clip from BM, moreover, Netflix subtitles display another important case of errancy: segmentation appears to be random, thus making the reading process more difficult.

With Itasa subtitles, the BM clip reveals fairly good condensation, although typical examples of non professional subtitlers' deviations from generally accepted professional standards can be found, such as the use of repetitions (“No, no, no”) and interjections (“Oh”, “Ah”). As the clip is taken from the third series of BM, subtitles are generally more accurate than those found on the first, even within the fansubbing context only. Subtitle position can vary, as happens in the case of text messages, for which they appear at the top of the screen. In the clip from NA, errancy in Itasa subtitles is more pervasive, probably due to this being the first ever subtitled episode of what was to become an extremely popular Netflix product. As anticipated above, subtitles are always placed at the bottom of the screen, occasionally overlapping with written text. More significantly, some translation solutions seem to more clearly address 'specialized' viewers, i.e. fans not expecting full meaning explication. This, notwithstanding generally acceptable segmentation and condensation, may have hampered comprehension and overall reception from non-fans. This last example, like the use of translated proper names and untranslated foreign words mentioned in section 4.3, stimulate a reflection on the very notion of errancy when seen across the spectrum of subtitling producers and consumers: faults are indeed to be seen as relative, according to audience type, knowledge and expectations.

6. Conclusions

After reflecting on reception, agency and awareness in the previous sections, let us come to a conclusion by focusing on change. This essay has, in fact, highlighted change from the very beginning: from prosumers to producers, a complex change has been discussed in relation to the very consumption/creation of non translated and translated media products.

Within the realm of subtitling, besides the well-known, nowadays reductive pair (not necessarily opposition) of professional and non professional subtitling, change has been identified in the form of varying attitudes on the part of both, but mostly non professional subtitlers, whose aims and aspirations are manifold.

Changes in viewing habits have also been discussed in the early sections of this essay, mainly spurred by new media colossi like Netflix. Yet, such changes come with some sort of price, as has emerged from the questionnaire results: creative and innovative as they may be, they require time and adaptation on the part of the receivers, and indeed constant monitoring, and a dynamic, critical approach, on the part of scholars.

Although some of the limitations of the study here presented are quite evident, such as the number of participants and the recourse to two clips/texts only, its results are nonetheless interesting, calling for replication and expansion of empirical research on the produsage and reception of subtitling today, in dubbing and non-dubbing countries.

As the results point to various types of changes in foreign language and subtitling competence, within and beyond the experiment presented here, this will be a preferred point of departure for further studies in the near future.

References

- Abercrombie, N., Longhurst, B. 1998. *Audiences. A sociological theory of performance and imagination*. London/Thousand Oaks/Dehli: Sage.
- Bruns, A. 2008a. "Reconfiguring television for a networked, produsage context". *Media International Australia*, 126 (1), 82-94.
- Bruns, A. 2008b. "The future is user-led: the path towards widespread produsage". *Fibreculture Journal*, 11, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/6623/1/6623.pdf>.
- Bruns, A., Schmidt, J. K. 2011. "Produsage: A closer look at continuing developments". *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 17 (1), 3-7.
- Bruns, A., Highfield, T. 2012. "Blogs, Twitter and breaking news: the produsage of citizen journalism". *Produsing Theory in a Digital World: The Intersection of Audiences and Production in Contemporary Theory*, 80, 15-32.
- Bruti, S., Zanotti, S. 2013. "Frontiere della traduzione audiovisiva: il fenomeno del fansubbing e i suoi aspetti linguistici". In C. Bosisio and S. Cavagnoli (eds.). *Comunicare le discipline attraverso le lingue: prospettive traduttiva, didattica, socioculturale, Atti del 12° Congresso dell'Associazione Italiana di Linguistica Applicata, Macerata, 23-24 febbraio 2012*. Perugia: Guerra, 119-142.
- Cornu, J. F. 2014. *Le doublage et le sous-titrage. Histoire et esthétique*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Di Giovanni, E. 2018a. "Dubbing, perception and reception". In E. Di Giovanni and Y. Gambier (eds.). *Reception Studies in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 159-178.
- Di Giovanni, E. 2018b. "Audio description and reception-centred research". In E. Di Giovanni and Y. Gambier (eds.). *Reception Studies in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 225-252.
- Dwyer, T. 2017. *Speaking in Subtitles. Revaluing Screen Translation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- D'Ydewalle, G., Praet, C., Verfaillie, K., and Van Rensbergen, J. 1991. "Watching subtitled television automatic reading behaviour". *Communication Research*, 18 (5), 650-666.
- D'Ydewalle, G., and Gielen, I. 1992. "Attention allocation with overlapping sound, image, and text". In K. Rayner (ed.). *Eye Movements and Visual Cognition: Scene Perception and Reading*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 415-427.
- Gambier, Y. 2006. "Multimodality and audiovisual translation". In M. Carroll, H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast, and S. Nauert (eds.). *Audiovisual Translation Scenarios*,

- http://euroconferences.info/proceedings/2006_Proceedings/2006_Gambier_Yves.pdf (accessed September 2018).
- Gambier, Y. 2018. "Translation studies, audiovisual translation and reception". In Di Giovanni E. and Gambier Y. (eds.). *Reception Studies in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 43-67.
- Jankowska, A. 2015. *Translating Audio Description Scripts*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Nornes, A. M. 1999. "For an abusive subtitling". *Film Quarterly*, 52 (3), 17-34.
- Orrego Carmona, D. 2016. "A reception study on non professional subtitling. Do audiences notice any difference?". *Across Languages and Cultures*, 17 (2), 163-181.
- Orrego Carmona, D., Lee, Y. 2017. "Non professional subtitling". In Lee Y. and Orrego Carmona D. (eds.). *Non Professional Subtitling*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 1-12.
- Pavličková, T., Kleut, J. 2016. "Produsage as experience and interpretation". *Participations. Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 13 (1), 349-351.
- Pérez-González, Luis. 2014. *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, Methods and Issues*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Picone, I. 2011. "Produsage as a form of self-publication. A qualitative study of casual news produsage". *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 17 (1), 99-120.
- Ritzer, G. 2014. "Prosumption: evolution, revolution, or eternal return of the same?". *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 14 (1), 3-24.
- Romero Fresco, P. 2018. "Reception studies in live and pre-recorded subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing". In E. Di Giovanni and Y. Gambier (eds.). *Reception Studies in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 199-224.
- Schroeder, K., Drotner, K., Kline, S., and Murray C. 2003. *Researching Audiences*. London: Arnold.
- Toffler, A. 1980. *The Third Wave: the Classic Study of Tomorrow*. New York: Bantam.
- Zanotti, S. 2018. "Historical approaches to AVT reception: methods, issues and perspectives". In E. Di Giovanni and Y. Gambier (eds.), *Reception Studies in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 133-157.
- Willis, P. 1990. *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young*. Boulder, CO, US: Westview Press

Filmography

- Abrams, J.J., Lindelof, D. and Lieber, J. 2004-2010. *Lost*. USA.
- Brancato, C., Bernard, C. and Miro, D. 2015-2017. *Narcos*. USA/Colombia.
- Brooker, C. 2011-in production. *Black Mirror*. UK.
- Lorre, C. and Prady, B. 2007-2019. *The Big Bang Theory*. USA.

Leisure and culture accessibility

The OPERA Project

Catalina Jiménez Hurtado and Silvia Martínez Martínez

University of Granada

Abstract

The OPERA-Project is a web portal for the evaluation and dissemination of accessible audiovisual resources pertaining to Spanish culture and heritage. It also contains an evaluation framework and model that not only detects malpractices but is also designed to raise quality standards for accessible resources. This project is an expansion and improvement of PRA2, a portal created in a previous R&D Project (Plataforma de Recursos Audiovisuales Accesibles). Whereas PRA2 originally targeted audiovisual media accessibility, OPERA has a wider scope and also focuses on accessible tourism and museology. Project goals include the following: (1) evaluation of both new and existing accessibility resources by means of reception studies; (2) enhanced visibility of accessibility resources and of the agencies and professionals that create them; (3) publication of research project results for the effective transfer of knowledge to users of accessible audiovisual resources.

Keywords: Online reception studies, Audio description, SDHH, accessible Tourism and Museology.

1. Introduction

European countries have become increasingly aware that inequality paralyses the development of society, damages the economy, and reduces the capacity for innovation and research. The European Union is thus committed to providing citizens with equal access to education, leisure, and culture. This has led to initiatives to foment the dissemination of the cultural heritage of EU member states. For example, the H2020 Horizon program, which actively promotes *ICT Research and Innovation for Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage*, has following objectives:

EU research and innovation will address social exclusion, discriminations and various forms of inequalities. It will explore new forms of innovation and strengthen the evidence base for the Innovation Union, the European Research Area and other relevant EU policies. It will promote coherent and effective cooperation with third countries. Finally, it will address the issues of memories, identities, tolerance and cultural heritage¹.

Currently, there are many citizens at risk of social exclusion. This negative situation could be alleviated by fostering the cultural integration of different social groups. However, active participation in cultural life requires the creation of planned actions that motivate users, incite their curiosity, and capture their interest (Verdugo, 2015: 12). This signifies rethinking and redefining the concept of access.

Inclusion through cultural heritage entails a social identification that contributes to self-integration. In other words, people must seek to become an active member of society. A society is more inclusive when it promotes accessibility and universal design in its heritage plans. Nevertheless, an accessible culture is not always inclusive if it lacks a targeted social group and a specific communicative situation (Espinosa and Bonmartí, 2013).

Constant multimodal diversification in the creation of texts is a basic characteristic of communication strategies in modern society. Not surprisingly, the types and quantity of multimodal content have soared in the last ten years. Díaz-Cintas and Baños (2015: 1) write:

Today's exposure to and interaction with audiovisual content is far greater now than ever before, and this has obvious repercussions for audiovisual translation (AVT), both as a professional practice and as an academic discipline.

The increased demand for audiovisual translation is a clear indication of the huge quantity of multimodal texts in our daily lives. When such texts are written, they have to be translated in order to reach a larger target audience. For example, tourism, education, computing, and businesses widely employ multimedia (and multimedia translation) for the international dissemination of their activities and products.

The cultural sphere has also adapted to this new reality. Most museums now provide audiovisual texts to guide and explain their on-site or virtual displays and exhibits. For this purpose, a wide range of semiotic modes is used. Museums are also experimenting with digital learning², and the use of “mobile technology from Wi-Fi in galleries and multimedia tours to smartphone apps and QR codes” with

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/europe-changing-world-inclusive-innovative-and-reflective-societies>.

² <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/digital-learning>

a view to “enhancing the visitor experience and reaching new audiences”³. The same is true in the case of visitor centres for archaeological and heritage tourism where it is common to find audiovisuals with additional explanations and historical contextualisations (Binoy, 2011; Ponce and Romero, 2012).

One of the main purposes of these multimodal texts is to bring new social groups closer to their heritage. There is no doubt that they are also an important source of knowledge acquisition, given the fact that they are entertaining and thus capture the attention of users, inviting them to learn. However, the negative side is that this has created an unbridgeable gulf for other social groups such as senior citizens, who are not familiar with digitalisation and digital resources, people with sensory impairments (i.e. Blind and Deaf people), and even individuals that are cognitively diverse.

Although multidimensional and multimodal text types are initially designed to bring people closer to the cultural object, this does not always occur. Some of these texts are more successful than others. In many cases, it is a question of finding the optimal design for each user group. To promote accessibility for such users, cultural institutions are currently using traditional translation modalities that have been shown to partially eliminate communication barriers. Standard resources include audio description for blind and visually impaired people or subtitling and sign language interpreting for the deaf and hard of hearing. The question is whether these modalities are as helpful as they should be. This article presents a framework for the evaluation of cultural resources that target people with sensory impairments. The objective was to assess the quality of the information provided by multimodal texts.

2. Accessibility through translation

In a given cultural context, an accessibility plan is considerably more complex than simply explaining a static or dynamic image to a blind person via audio description, or subtitling an aural text to someone with hearing difficulties. There is an increasing demand for a more ambitious vision that not only encompasses the multimodality or multidimensionality of these texts, but which also understands each cultural experience as an experience that should be integrated in a global and socially inclusive process. Reich *et al.* (2011: ii) states⁴:

Overarching findings from the focus groups indicate that participants who are blind or have low vision [...] value the positive feelings gained at museums from being socially involved, intellectually and emotionally stimulated, welcomed, and enabled to explore independently.

³ <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/mobile-projects>

⁴ https://www.imamuseum.org/sites/default/files/attachments/IMA_ABS_Speaking_Out_on_Art_and_Museums_Report_1.pdf

Sensory and cognitive accessibility should not be confined to the basic distinction between communicative events with barriers and those without barriers. This is not a matter of black or white, but rather of intermediate shades of grey because human competencies or capacities are measured in degrees. Furthermore, the sensory or cognitive capacity of a person can vary during his/her life. Accordingly, measures for eliminating potential barriers must be oriented towards this new conception of diversity and text recipient (Jekat *et al.*, 2014).

Our proposal entails observing communicative barriers in cultural heritage accessibility from an innovative perspective. In other words, the umbrella of accessible translation should not only include subtitling for the deaf and audio description for the blind, but should also go one step further and reflect on the way that sensory impaired people achieve an aesthetic experience and to what extent translators are able to provide this experience for them. For example, the blind experience art in a unique way, and this is reflected in the language used to describe it.

Besides describing the high value they place on learning at museums, several [blind] participants also searched for words to express their meaningful intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic experiences with art (Reich *et al.*, 2011: 44).

It would thus be necessary to analyse whether complex grammatical structures in a text make it difficult for sensory impaired end users to understand. If this were indeed the case, a possible solution would be to simplify semantic and syntactic structures to reduce the cognitive effort required to process them. This means that translators, language experts, and art specialists should join forces and work together because making culture accessible through translation is both an artistic and linguistic process. When the texts are multimodal, then the process is even more complex.

For this purpose, the OPERA project developed an online evaluation framework in order to ascertain the kind of artistic and cultural information that sensory disabled people can process. It also gathers information regarding their degree of satisfaction with the aesthetic and cultural experience provided by multimodal texts. Various types of instruments are used to collect these data. The project also organises meetings between art specialists, translators, and linguists in order to study artwork and analyse the aesthetic experience provided. Experts in art and language also discuss how this artistic experience can be most effectively recreated in language.

3. The OPERA project

As previously mentioned, OPERA is enhancing and improving the PRA2 platform⁵. PRA2 is a web portal that contains accessible audiovisual content for people with a sensory disability. To the best of our knowledge, it is the first online platform for the consultation and online assessment of accessible audiovisual resources for people with sensory impairments⁶. It maximises the visibility of existing resources and facilitates their evaluation by means of a series of online reception studies.

The assessment of the quality of accessibility resources has been a priority ever since the initial implementation of audio description, subtitling for the deaf, and sign language interpreting in culture and communications media. However, previous research on assessment, mostly focused on audio description and subtitling for the deaf in film and television.

In audio description for television, the first studies were performed in the 1990s. They targeted the use of audio description in audiovisual media. After collecting data on the preferences and habits of potential users, they evaluated the reception of audio descriptions (Peli *et al.*, 1996; Navarrete, 1997). In the last ten years, this research has been complemented by studies performed in the academic sphere (Bourne and Lachat, 2010; Luque, 2009; Cabeza, 2013; Iglesias *et al.*, 2015; Ramos, 2013) and the professional sector (Fryer and Freeman, 2012).

In 2012, the European project, *DTV4All (Digital Television for All)*, assessed subtitling, audio description, audio subtitling and sign language interpreting services in four EU member states. In line with this research, the *Pear Tree Project* (Mazur and Kruger, 2012) studied the reception of audiovisual material with a view to creating a set of pan-European audio description guidelines.

Regarding subtitling for the deaf in television and film, the SUBORDIG project developed and evaluated criteria to create subtitles for people with impaired hearing. Reception studies were also designed and subsequently implemented in a pilot study in Spain. They were also employed in *D'Artagnan*, a research project within *DTV4ALL* on subtitling for the deaf (Romero Fresco, 2010). Furthermore, in Pereira (2010), the reception studies on subtitling for the deaf focused on technical, orthotypographical and linguistic parameters in order to formulate recommendations for best practices. Although our previous project focused on audiovisual communication (e.g. DVD, TV), OPERA broadens these horizons, and includes accessible exhibitions or partially accessible exhibits at museums and tourism events.

New studies are based on the social model of disability and the principles of Universal Design. They are also in consonance with the theory-methodology of emancipating research into disability (Darcy *et al.*, 2010; Buhalis and Darcy, 2011;

⁵ In Spanish, *Plataforma de Recursos Audiovisuales Accesibles*.

⁶ <http://pra2.es/nueva/index.php>

Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Shakespeare, 2010), which underlines the lack of research that actually gives a voice to visitors with disabilities and allows them to assess the accessibility of museum institutions. Moussouri (2007: 90) argues:

Museum professionals have long held the view that their institutions can play a central role in supporting learning and inclusion but evidence seems to be in short supply in the case of visitors with disabilities. Until recently, most of the work conducted in museums relating to learning and access for this particular visitor group has been about developing products and services rather than assessing their impact. The lack of research in this area reflects the slow development of disability studies as a distinct field.

Within the OPERA framework, accessible audiovisual resources on the web portal are analysed and revised from a multidisciplinary perspective. Our methodology focuses on Tourism and Heritage Interpreting (Alcañiz and Simó, 2004; Moscardo, 1996), and the History of Art, Artistic Education, Museology and visitor studies (Everett and Barrett, 2009; Asensio *et al.*, 2001; Falk and Dierking, 2000). Pérez (2016: 13) points out that in today's world, user studies have become increasingly important in museology. This is a reflection of the dynamicity and democratisation of museums as cultural spaces. Our methodology improves and extends reception studies (Helal *et al.*, 2013; Filippini-Fantoni *et al.*, 2011; Fleming *et al.*, 2011; Stein, 2010; Castellanos, 2008). In line with this, Dawson and Jensen (2011: 127) write:

Research and theory from education, sociology, and cultural studies extends existing visitor research approaches by acknowledging complexity, change over time, and the interwoven and developmental nature of sociocultural variables influencing visitors' appropriation of new ideas and experiences (Dawson and Jensen, 2011: 127).

Nonetheless, there is a lack of research that analyses the reception of audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDHH), and sign language interpreting (SLI) in the spheres of museography and accessible tourism (Soler and Chica, 2014). An exception in this regard is pioneering work such as *The Multi-site Museum Accessibility Study*, in which an audience research study was performed based on focus groups of visitors who had low vision or who were totally blind⁷.

Another study was carried out by the RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) and VocalEyes, in which groups of blind people evaluated the quality of the resources in museums and English heritage (RNIB & VocalEyes, 2003). The findings highlight the urgent need for accessible technology.

These findings illustrate that when done well, an audio guide can be an excellent way to improve access for visitors with sight problems. Just

⁷ <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/mei/advisory-board-for-the-multi-site-museum-accessibility-study/>

because a guide is in audio, however, does not necessarily mean that it will be accessible to blind and partially sighted people. Inaccessible technology, badly written descriptions, poor recording quality or added acoustic features made for frustrating visits. (ibid. 64)

Despite these initiatives, such resources have traditionally been categorized as *audiovisual media*, namely, television programmes or DVDs of films or documentaries with audio description or subtitling for the deaf, and sign language interpreting. As an innovation, OPERA not only covers new areas (e.g. accessible tourism), but also accessible resource types such as sign guides, audio descriptive museum guides, as well as audio guides of monuments and natural spaces. This wider scope is known as *Access to Heritage*.

4. The PRA2 platform

4.1. Assessment of film, TV, and documentaries

The PRA2 platform includes the translation modalities of audio description (AD), subtitling for the deaf (SDHH), and sign language interpreting (SLI). In the near future, easy-to-read texts and simplified language will be incorporated for users with cognitive diversity.

When users first access the platform, depending on their type of impairment, they are asked to choose between visual accessibility and hearing accessibility (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. PRA2 platform homepage⁸.

⁸ This home page is currently being redesigned.

Once they have clicked on their choice, they access a survey that collects their personal data. Variables measured include the type and degree of disability, education level, and profession. The survey also includes general questions related to cultural consumption and the use of new technologies. These questions only appear the first time that the users access the platform since the data provided are saved with a user code and password. The survey is in Spanish though an English version of the platform will soon be implemented. Examples of items include the following.

1. How old are you?
 - a. 5-11
 - b. 12-25
 - c. 26-40
 - d. 41-64
 - e. 65 and over
2. What level of education do you have?
 - a. None
 - b. School leaver
 - c. Secondary school
 - d. Vocational training
 - e. University
3. What type of sight loss do you have?
 - a. Totally blind
 - b. Serious visual deficiency
 - c. Moderate visual deficiency⁹

After the survey has been completed, users are then redirected to the resources that correspond to their functional diversity. More specifically, if they are blind, they only access audio description resources, and if their hearing is impaired, they only access resources containing SDHH or sign language interpreting (SLI). This part of the platform is divided into two sections:

The first section of the platform contains accessible audiovisual resources assessed by users on our platform and resources provided by user associations. These resources are given as examples of accessible tools. This has the advantage of enhancing their visibility and increasing public awareness of their existence (Fig. 2).

⁹ English translation.

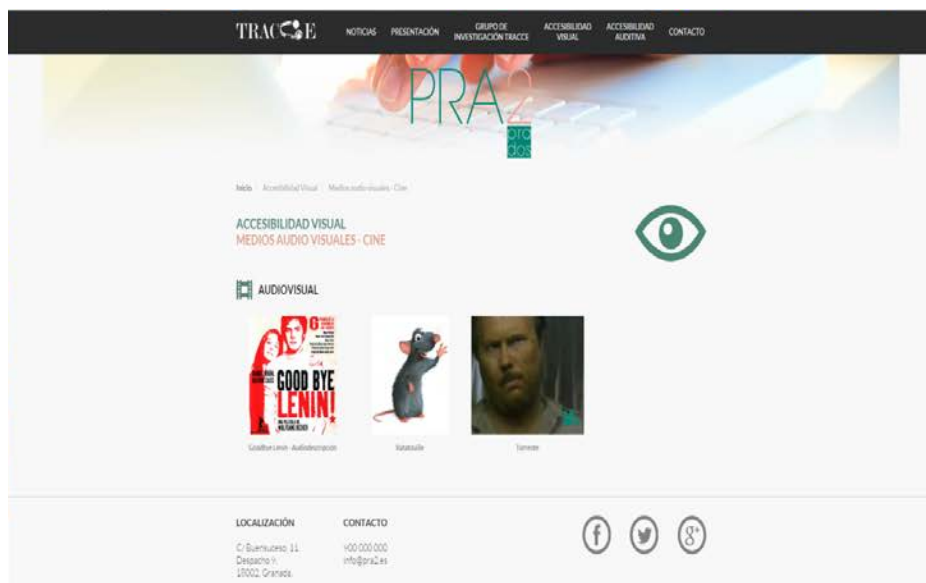


Fig. 2. Screenshot of positively assessed resources.

The second section of the platform contains reception studies (RSs). Users who wish to evaluate resources are encouraged to rate their accessibility. Until very recently, this section only had resources on media accessibility, but recently it has been enhanced with resources on museum accessibility and accessible tourism.

Once users agree to participate in the reception study, they must select one of the following: (i) audiovisual media (films and documentaries); (ii) accessible museums; (iii) accessible tourism. Depending on their choice, they then answer another short questionnaire with items pertaining to their tastes. This questionnaire provides information about their cultural habits. It includes questions such as the following:

- (1) Do you watch films often?
 - a) Yes, often (1 or 2 per week)
 - b) Yes, sometimes (1 or 2 per month)
 - c) Only during holidays
 - d) No, never

This questionnaire does not reappear in subsequent visits to the website since presumably the cultural habits of the users will not vary from one visit to another.

As an example, the following diagram shows the initial data collected in a pilot study of blind subjects for the previous question.

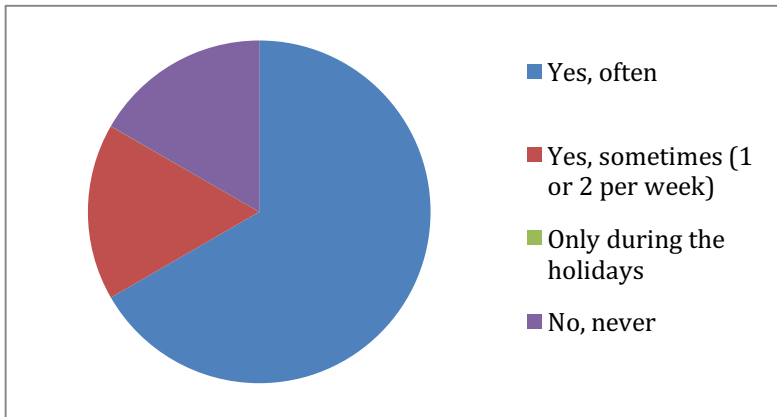


Fig. 3. Frequency data regarding film viewing.

After completing the questionnaire, users must then select a film segment that they wish to assess. Needless to say, all images and resources links have audio description and are accessible for the blind.

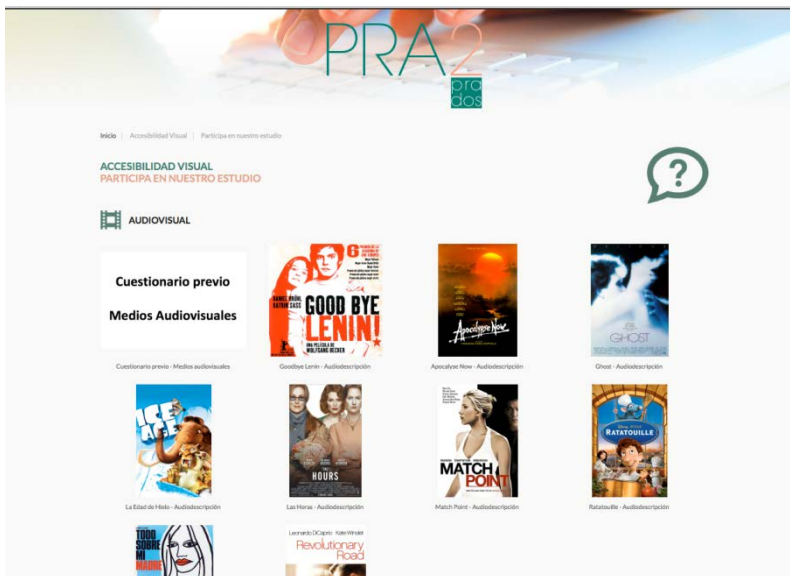


Fig. 4. Screenshot of webpage for the assessment of audiovisual media

Users must choose one film segment from a selection of ten to twelve. After watching/hearing it, they then respond to a series of questions on what they have perceived. Each resource is linked to a specific assessment questionnaire that is composed of a set of closed-ended questions. The items not only evaluate access to a particular element but also assess a specific variable. The questionnaire is divided into three sections, depending on the independent variable that is the target of measurement:

- (a) This part of this questionnaire focuses on opinion and rating. It contains general evaluation questions about the resource as well as specific questions regarding its content and language, as well as the lexical and syntactic difficulty perceived by the user.

**DISCAPACIDAD VISUAL - MEDIOS AUDIOVISUALES - GOODBYE LENIN -
AUDIODESCRIPCIÓN**

1. VALORA LA CALIDAD GLOBAL DE LA AUDIODESCRIPCIÓN.

☒ a. Muy mala

☐ b. Mala

☐ c. Aceptable

☐ d. Buena

☐ e. Muy buena

2. VALORA EL LENGUAJE DE LA AUDIODESCRIPCIÓN.

☒ a. Demasiado fácil

☐ b. Fácil

☐ c. Adecuado

☐ d. Difícil

☐ e. Demasiado difícil

3. VALORA LA CANTIDAD DE INFORMACIÓN DE LA AUDIODESCRIPCIÓN.

☒ a. Muy poca

☐ b. Algo escasa

☐ c. Adecuada

☐ d. Mucha

☐ e. Excesiva

Fig. 5. Extract of the audiovisual media assessment questionnaire

Examples of questions are the following:

- (2) The length of the audio-description was:
- a) Too long
 - b) Just right
 - c) Too short

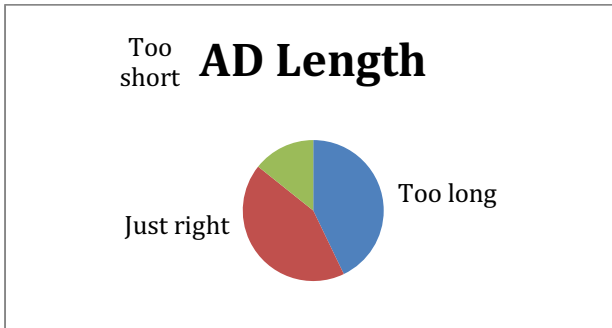


Figure 6. Results for question on audiodescription length

- (3) The speech extracts were:
- a) Too long and complex
 - b) Just right
 - c) Too concise

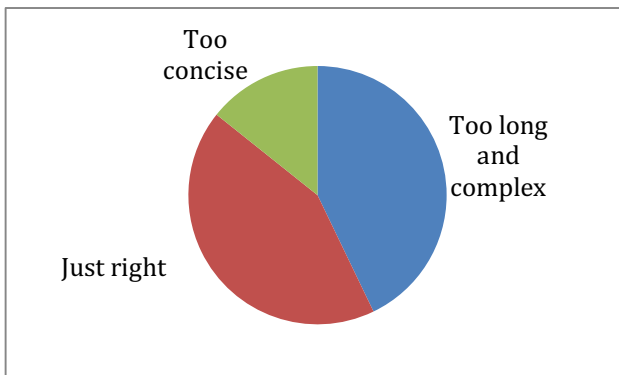


Fig. 7. Results of question on speech extract length.

(b) The second part of this questionnaire consists of closed questions that rate the quality of the recorded information in the segment. An example is shown below.

- (4) Where are they playing ping-pong?
- a) In the garden
 - b) In the courtyard
 - c) In the living room
 - d) I don't know

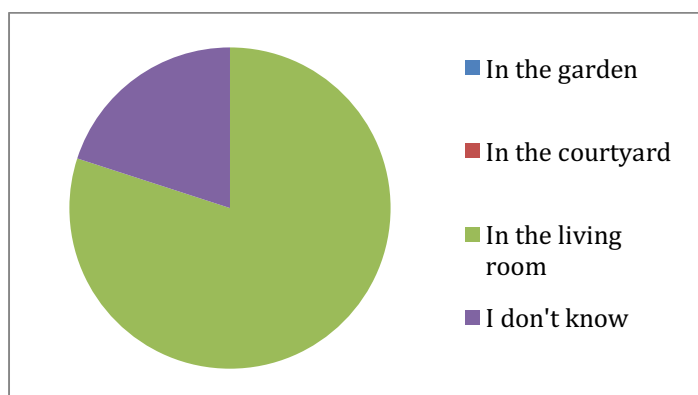


Fig. 8. Results of question on location of ping-pong game

(c) This part of the questionnaire is composed of closed-end questions that assess user comprehension of a certain element in the film segment. The items focus on a specific aspect that corresponds to a linguistic, textual, translational, or technical variable. An example is shown below.

- (5) Which audio description do you prefer?
- a) She lights a cigarette with a tilt of her head. She looks at Chris and half-opens her mouth, provocatively.
 - b) She lights a cigarette with a tilt of her head. She looks at Chris and half-opens her mouth.
 - c) She lights a cigarette. She looks at Chris.

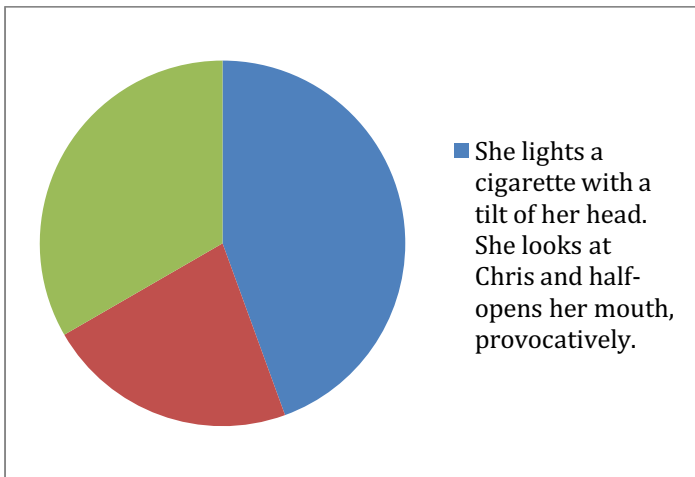


Fig. 9. Results for question on audio description preference.

At the end of the study, users can access the resource sheet with information regarding the resource as well as information about the study. Users do not receive this information beforehand so that it will not bias their responses. Questionnaire results are automatically saved by the platform and made available to researchers. Companies can also have access to the results upon request.

Until now, these reception studies have been used to evaluate the methods implemented to create accessible resources and ascertain whether existing guidelines were respected (AENOR 2005). They have also been used to validate the tool by verifying whether the users were able to successfully access the information. Finally, the reception studies facilitated the collection of data pertaining to audience preferences concerning audio description techniques, strategies or types of language used in SDHH, etc.

4.2. Improving research methods and expanding the project scope

OPERA is currently dealing with new challenges. The first challenge is the improvement of previous research methods, and the second is the expanded scope of the project. This means that it is necessary to adapt our research framework to include new areas of study.

The results obtained in the past showed that even though our questionnaires were reasonably well adapted to research goals, there was room for improvement. More specifically, one issue was the language of the questionnaires since certain sensory-impaired users claimed that it was sometimes difficult to understand the

items. For this reason, the questions are currently being rewritten in more simplified language.

On the other hand, OPERA has widened its focus to include accessible museum exhibits and accessible tourism. This means that it was necessary to contact museums and cultural institutions with accessible resources for sensory-impaired people in order to compile a corpus. Each resource was associated with a questionnaire composed of items pertaining to the following: (i) general quality of the accessible resource; (ii) elements in the segment that the users remembered; (iii) information regarding a specific variable. In what follows, we describe how subjects access the area of accessible museology and give their opinion on a specific resource.

Users that wish to enter the platform to assess museums must select *Museum accessibility*. They are then asked to fill out a questionnaire that collects information about their general habits when they visit museums. The following is an example of one of the items:

- (6) When you visit a museum, what type of visit do you prefer?
- a) Independent visit with an audio description guide
 - b) Guided audio-described visit
 - c) Guided audio-descriptive visit with tactile exploration
 - a) Other [_____]

As in the case of audiovisual media, this questionnaire only has to be filled out once. Users who return to the platform will not see it again. The following diagram shows the results for this question.

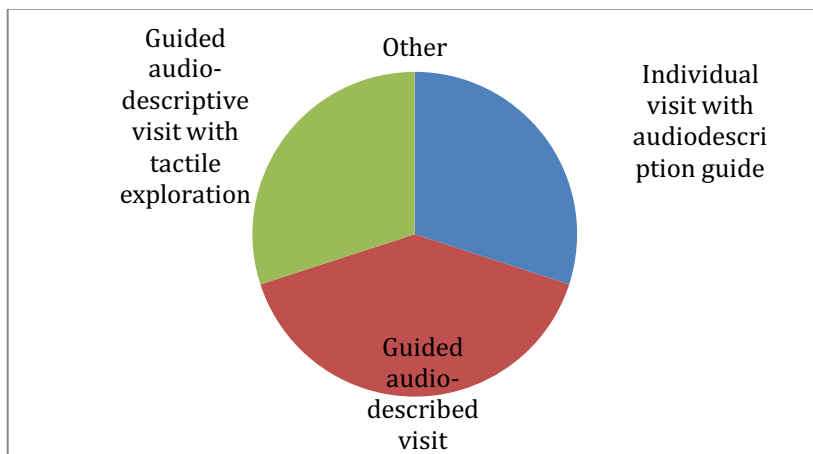


Fig. 10. Results of question on museum habits

(7) What type of navigation do you prefer?

- a) Button panel
- b) Touchscreen with screen reader

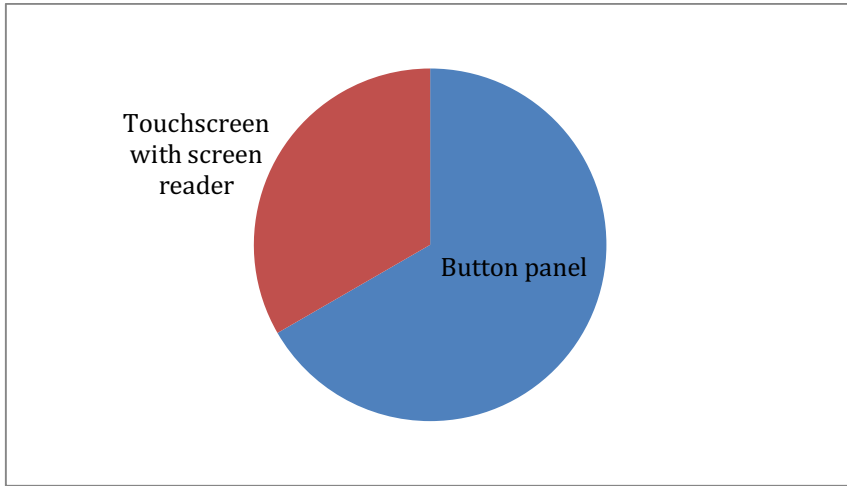


Fig. 11. Results of question on navigation preferences.

Although these are only preliminary results of a pilot study, they are indicative of the preferences of blind people in Spain, who visit the platform. In the next stage, users view a resource on accessible museology. For example, if they are blind, they listen to an audio description of a painting, such as the following:



Fig. 12. *The Lane from East Bergholt to Flatford* (John Constable, 1812).
Museum of the *Fundación Lázaro Galdiano* (Madrid, Spain).

The Lane from East Bergholt to Flatford was painted by John Constable in 1812. It is a small rectangular oil painting on linen paper, which is wider than it is tall. It shows a rural landscape. In the centre of the painting is a curve in the road between East Bergholt and Flatford, two small villages in England [...]. The painting is divided into various horizontal planes. The lower part is the space nearest to us. Higher up in the painting, the distance between our position and that of the objects in the painting increases. This makes them seem smaller and less clear-cut. In the space nearest to us at the centre of the painting, there is a yellow-coloured path that disappears as it curves to the right. On the left, there is a person sitting on the grass. On the right, there are bushes and two tall trees on each side of the path. Behind the person on the grass, there is a stone wall about one meter high that runs from left to right along the path. Beyond the wall, there is the English countryside with a scattering of trees. The countryside stretches to a far-off forest that occupies the farthest horizontal area of the canvas. Above this forest, there is the sky¹⁰.

The audio description is played as an accessible audio file. After listening to it, users answer the items in a questionnaire centred exclusively on the painting and its audio description. As in the case of the film segments, the questionnaire for the painting has three sections. The items in the first section focus on the quality of the audio description. The questions in the second section test the users' ability to

¹⁰ Translation of the original Spanish text.

remember aspects of the painting, and those in the third section pertain to a research variable directly related to the painting and its audio description. All questions are formulated in easy-to-read language. The first section on the users' general impression of quality is the same in all of the questionnaires. Examples of items in the second section are the following:

- (8) What element appears in the first horizontal plane?
 - a) Path
 - b) Forest
 - c) Country side
 - d) I don't know

- (9) What element appears in the second horizontal plane?
 - a) Path
 - b) Forest
 - c) Countryside
 - d) I don't know

In the third section of the questionnaire, which targets a specific variable, the items vary. In reference to the Constable painting, this section consists of true-false questions. The objective was to analyse whether the perception strategy in the text helped users to discern perspective.

- (10) Elements that are closer are of larger size and are represented in greater detail.
 - a) True
 - b) False

- (11) Elements that are farther away are of smaller size and are represented in less detail.
 - a) True
 - b) False

As an added feature, OPERA includes descriptive studies as well as reception studies. Descriptive studies are centred on a certain feature from one of the following groups:

- linguistic features (vocabulary, syntax, spelling)
- paralinguistic features (voice),
- textual features (coherence, cohesion, discursive organisation, extension),
 - translation-related features (translation and interpreting techniques for each specific modality)

- technical or presentation-related features (typology, colour, subtitle segmentation and exposure time, location of the SLI window).

These elements are the dependent variables of the studies, and are directly related to the communicative context. As such, they include the characteristics of the end users as well as those in existing guidelines (AENOR, 2005; Royal National Institute for the Blind, 2003; Snyder, 2010) with a view to formulating research hypotheses on the adaptation of translation modalities and the possibility of employing alternative techniques (Di Giovanni, 2011; Jiménez *et al.*, 2010).

As part of the OPERA project, we have thus begun to reflect on whether the information accessed is the most artistically relevant. Above all, an aesthetic experience should be evaluated as a process that can be enjoyed and which the user finds enriching. Enhanced access to the cultural object will undoubtedly add to the attractiveness of the heritage that it belongs to.

Research in the first stage of the project is currently being performed by a multidisciplinary team composed of museologists, museum educators, art specialists, experts in museological mediation, and directors of tourist agencies. The first step is the analysis and revision of reception studies based on the questionnaires designed.

This signifies a workflow that is the object of experimentation. In the initial phase, art experts analyse the source text (i.e. the artistic object). These experts generate a report that specifies the key artistic elements in the resource, as well as the semantic and pragmatic elements necessary to successfully process and understand the object.

A team of translators and translation experts then use this report to create new questionnaires. These questionnaires are subsequently revised by the experts, to confirm that the items effectively target the most relevant semantic, functional, and artistic elements. In the final stage, a team of linguists analyses the language used in the questionnaires to verify its simplicity and appropriateness for visually impaired and hearing-impaired users.

In our opinion, these new questionnaires will ultimately provide valuable insights into the capacities of sensory-impaired individuals from a formal perspective (linguistic formulation of the questions), as well as a functional perspective (pragmatic-communicative and artistic elements in the original text).

5. Conclusions

A commitment to cultural inclusion signifies that European citizens must become more socially integrated. Both functional sensory and cognitive diversity, and the adaptation of heritage to different social sectors require accessible translation, which is multisensory and multimodal. Once this need is acknowledged, it is then necessary to reflect on what it means to access artistic and

heritage elements. Although translating semantic and discursive information is a priority, translating the potential enjoyment of aesthetic experience is just as crucial.

At present, both the governments/institutions that control accessibility tools in multimedia environments and the companies that create these tools need to better understand the purpose and function of these resources. Moreover, there is little information that indicates whether what is being offered is optimal in terms of the degree and level of accessibility provided. In this regard, OPERA plays a vital role since it assesses different resources from widely diverse cultural spheres and from different quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

The dissemination of the results and the participation of businesses, institutions, and end users contribute to the accurate evaluation of the process and the effectiveness of the evaluation. This in turn means that improvement and innovation are guaranteed.

Achieving OPERA project goals will not only contribute to the wider use of existing resources, but will also facilitate the evaluation and management of their quality. The social impact of the results will allow companies that create accessible audiovisual products to assess the reception of users. The ultimate goal is for researchers, institutions, and entrepreneurs to combine efforts to create quality standards in this specific production area.

The platform will also promote communication between cultural institutions (e.g. museums, exhibition galleries, town halls, cultural foundations, and tourist routes), private companies dedicated to the dissemination of art and culture (film, TV and DVD producers, tourism promoters) and consultants and development services for accessibility to leisure and culture.

The social impact of OPERA will foster a wider dissemination of the principles of universal accessibility. This will benefit institutions and businesses that promote of culture and knowledge, and considerably increase measures to improve access to their products and services for people with disabilities.

* Acknowledgements

This research was carried out within the framework of the project OPERA [Leisure and culture accessibility. Online portal for the dissemination and evaluation of accessible audiovisual resources (FFI2015-65934-R)], funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness.

References

- AENOR. 2005. *Norma UNE 153020: Audiodescripción para personas con discapacidad visual. Requisitos para la audiodescripción y elaboración de audioguías*. Madrid: AENOR.
- Alcañiz, J. E. and Simó, L. 2004. "Modelo cognitivo-afectivo de la satisfacción en servicios de ocio y turismo". *Cuadernos de economía y dirección de la empresa*, 21, 89-120.

- Asensio, M., Pol, E. and Gomís, M. 2001. *Memoria de Evaluación de los Programas Educativos del Museu Maritim*. Research memory, not published. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.
- Binoy, T. 2011. "Archaeological and heritage tourism interpretation: A study". *South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage*, 4 (1), 100-105.
- Bourne, J. and Lachat, C. 2010. "Impacto de la norma AENOR: Valoración del usuario". In C. Jiménez, A. Rodríguez, and C. Seibel (eds.). *Un corpus de cine. Teoría y práctica de la audiodescripción*. Granada: Ediciones Tragacanto, 315-333.
- Buhalis, D. and Darcy, S. (eds.). 2011. *Accessible Tourism: Concepts and Issues*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Cabeza, C. 2013. *Audiodescripció i recepció. Efecte de la velocitat de narració, l'entonació i l'explicitació en la comprensió fílmica*. PhD. Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.
- Castellanos, P. 2008. *Los Museos de Ciencias y el consumo cultural. Una mirada desde la comunicación*. Barcelona: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.
- Darcy, S., Cameron, B. and Pegg S. 2010. "Accessible tourism and sustainability: A discussion and business case study". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18 (4), 515-537.
- Dawson, E. and Jensen E. 2011. "A contextual turn in visitor studies: Evaluating visitor segmentation and identity-related motivation". *Visitor Studies*, 14 (2), 127-140.
- Díaz Cintas, J. and Baños R. (eds.) 2015. *Audiovisual Translation in a Global Context. Mapping an Ever-changing Landscape*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Di Giovanni, E. 2011. "Connecting the dots in audiovisual translation research: Translation, reception, accessibility and children". In E. Di Giovanni (ed.). *Diálogos Intertextuales 5: Between Text and Receiver: Translation and Accessibility. Entre texto y receptor: traducción y accesibilidad*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Brussels, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 7-20.
- Espinosa, A. and Bonmartí C. (eds.) 2013. *Manual de accesibilidad e inclusión en museos y lugares del patrimonio cultural y natural*. Gijón: Trea.
- Everett M. and Barrett M. S. 2009. "Investigating sustained visitor/museum relationships: Employing narrative research in the field of museum visitor studies". *Visitor Studies*, 12 (1), 2-15.
- Falk, J. H. and Dierking, L. D. 2000. *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- Filippini-Fantoni, S., McDaid, S. and Cock M. 2011. "Mobile devices for orientation and way finding: The case of the British Museum multimedia guide". In J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds.). *Museums and the Web 2011: Proceedings*. Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics.
- Fleming, J., Kochis, J. and Getchel P. 2011. "Launching the MFA multimedia guide: Lessons learned". In J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds.). *Museums and the Web 2011: Proceedings*. Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics.
- Fryer, L. and Freeman J. 2012. "Presence of those with and without sight: Audio description and its potential for virtual reality applications". *Journal of Cyber Therapy & Rehabilitation*, 5 (1), 15-23.

- Helal, D., Maxson, H. and Ancelet J. 2013. "Lessons learned: Evaluating the Whitney's multimedia guide". In J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds.). *Museums and the Web 2011: Proceedings*. Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics.
- Iglesias, E., Martínez, S. and Chica A. J. 2015. "Cross-fertilization between reception studies in audio description and interpreting quality assessment: The role of the describer's voice". In J. Díaz Cintas and R. Baños (eds.). *Audiovisual Translation in a Global Context. Mapping an Ever-changing Landscape*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 72-95.
- Jekat, S. J., Jüngst H., Schbert K. and Villiger C. (eds.) 2014. *Sprache barrierefrei gestalten*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.
- Jiménez, C., Rodríguez, A. and Seibel, C. (eds.) 2010. *Un corpus de cine. Teoría y práctica de la audiodescripción*. Granada: Ediciones Tragacanto.
- Kokkola, S. and Ketola, A. 2015. "Thinking outside the "Methods Box": New avenues for research in multimodal translation". In D. Rellstab and N. Siponkoski (eds.). *Rajojen dynamiikkaa, Gränsernas dynamik, Borders under Negotiation, Grenzen und ihre Dynamik. VAKKI-symposiumi XXXV. Vaasa 12.-13.2.2015*. Vaasa: Vaasan yliopisto, 250-259.
- Luque, M. O. 2009. *El papel de la metáfora en la recepción de los guiones de audiodescripción por parte de los discapacitados visuales*. Master's Dissertation. University of Granada.
- Mazur, I. and Kruger, J. L. (eds.). 2012. *Pear Stories and Audio Description: Language, Perception and Cognition across Cultures*. Special issue of *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 20 (1), 1-5.
- Moscardo, G. 1996. "Mindful visitors: Heritage and tourism". *Annals of tourism research*, 23 (2), 376-397.
- Moussouri, T. 2007. "Implications of the social model of disability for visitor research". *Visitor Studies*, 10 (1), 90-106.
- Navarrete, J. 1997. "Sistema AUDESC: el arte de hablar en imágenes". *Integración*, 23, 70-75.
- Oliver, M., Sapey, B. and Thomas, P. 2012. *Social Work with Disabled People*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Peli, E., Fine, E. M. and Labianca, A. T. 1996. "Evaluating visual information provided by Audio Description". *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 90 (5), 378-385.
- Pettitt, B., Sharpe, K. and Steven, C. 1996. "AUDETEL: enhancing telesight for visually impaired people". *British Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 14 (2), 48-52.
- Pereira, A. 2010. "Criteria for elaborating subtitles for deaf and hard of hearing adults in Spain. Description of a case study". In A. Matamala and P. Orero (eds.). *Listening to Subtitles. Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*. Bern: Peter Lang, 87-101.
- Pérez, L. 2016. *Estudios sobre públicos y museos. Vol. I. Públicos y museos: ¿qué hemos aprendido?* México: NCRyM_INAH.

-
- Ponce, D. and Romero, E. M. 2012. “Los medios audiovisuales como difusores del patrimonio geológico-minero en los museos y centros de interpretación”. *Gestión turística*, 17, 9-22.
- Ramos, M. 2013. *El impacto emocional de la audiodescripción*. PhD. University of Murcia.
- Reich, C. et al. 2011. *Speaking Out on Art and Museums: A Study on the Needs and Preferences of Adults who Are Blind or Have Low Vision*. Report 2011. [https://www.imamuseum.org/sites/default/files/attachments/IMA_ABS_Speaking_Out_on_Art_and_Museums_Report_1.pdf].
- Romero Fresco, P. 2010. “D’Artagnan and the Seven Musketeers: SUBSORDIG travels to Europe 175”. In A. Matamala and P. Orero (eds.). *Listening to Subtitles. Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*. Bern: Peter Lang, 175-190.
- Royal National Institute for the Blind. 2003. *Museums, Galleries and Heritage Sites: Improving Access for Blind and Partially sighted People. The Talking Images Guide*. RNIB and Vocaleyes, London.
- Shakespeare, T. 2010. “The social model of disability”. In L.J. Davis (ed.). *The Disabilities Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 266-273.
- Snyder, J. (ed.) 2010. *Guidelines for Audio Description Standards*. <http://www.acb.org/adp/about.html>.
- Soler, S. 2012. *Traducción y accesibilidad en el museo del siglo XXI*. Granada: Ediciones Tragacanto.
- Soler, S. 2014. “Audio description in art museums: Genre and intermediality”. In P. Requeijo and C. Gaona (eds.). *Contenidos innovadores en la universidad actual*. Madrid: McGraw Hill, 675–685.
- Soler, S. and Chica, A. 2014. “Museos para todos: evaluación de una guía audiodescriptiva para personas con discapacidad visual en el museo de ciencias”. *Revista Española de Discapacidad*, 2 (2), 145-167.
- Stein, R. 2010. “Have it your way: Results from our 2 minute mobile survey”. In *Indianapolis Museum of Art Blog*, <http://www.imamuseum.org/blog/2010/06/22/have-it-your-way-results-from-our-2-minute-mobile-survey/>.
- Verdugo, A. 2015. “Presentation”. In R. M. Cacheda Barreiro et al. *La accesibilidad de los museos: visiones y perspectivas*. Santiago de Compostela: Andavira ediciones, 11-12.

Product placement and screen translation.

Transferring references to U.S. brands unknown to other cultural contexts

John D. Sanderson

University of Alicante

Abstract

Spoken references to brands are common in American films and sitcoms, allegedly to make dialogues more realistic, but also favored by the fact that major studios have become conglomerate companies which try to maximize profits with indirect advertising. These legal formalities are rarely mentioned in audiovisual translation studies, and this paper will analyze how product placement of American food and beverage brands still trans-nationally unknown are dealt with by Spanish dubbing translators, since they might require some degree of linguistic manipulation to provide equivalent implicatures (Grice, 1975). Following Franco Aixelá's (1996) taxonomy of translation of culture specific items, absolute universalization is the most widespread strategy, but the erasure of source text dialogues in dubbed productions allows for more daring approaches to replace opaque brands.

Keywords: screen translation; dubbing; culture specific items; product placement; advertising; implicatures; film; television

1. Introduction

Brand names in films and television sitcoms may involve big business for American major studios nowadays, since, if a commercial agreement is reached in the source context, commonly known as product placement, it implies a commitment to a the visual and/or spoken presence of a brand on screen in exchange for a payment that will contribute to the funding of the production. And even if the inclusion of a commercial product is not legally binding, and is considered solely for narrative purposes, producers still generally ask for clearance from the companies involved in order to avoid legal trouble.

Product placement is not so widespread in other cultural contexts, whose national film industries do not resort to this kind of indirect funding.: “With respect to product placement in Europe, the EU as a whole and individual

European countries have enacted much stricter limitations compared with those in the USA” (Lowrey *et al.*, 2005: 117). When American films are exported to these countries, the visual or spoken inclusion of brands might produce an alienating effect due to the perceived exposure to unwanted advertising by foreign audiences customarily protected from it¹. Concerning audiovisual translation, the alienating effect of spoken product placement would be heightened by the fact that, according to Russell (2002: 308): “As compared to visual stimulation, auditory information is often characterized by its greater intrusiveness and intrinsic alerting properties”. And if the brands are unknown to these target cultures, some degree of linguistic manipulation can be expected on behalf of the screen translator in order to avoid further estrangement, to contribute to the decoding of the opaque term or to merely maintain the cohesion of the dialogue in the target language.

A greater liberty is taken by dubbing translators, as compared to subtitlers, since the disappearance of the *gossiping effect* (Törnqvist, 1995), that is, the echo of the brand name in the original soundtrack, allows for a wider range of options. One is the use of alternative brands in the target text, a strategy not so commonly considered by the subtitler, since audiences might expect to hear in the original dialogue the brands printed in the subtitle, even if they did not understand a word of the source language. However, this dubbing option might interfere with economic agreements reached in the source context, so the chosen solution for translators would ideally be a term that transfers the implicatures without trespassing any legal boundaries. We shall see in the following pages how this issue is dealt with in the professional practice of translation for dubbing in Spain. In the corpus of analysis used for this article, we will focus exclusively on brand names of food and beverages, since they are the typology of products which most have contributed to pivotal moments in the blending of advertising and film production. I have brought together a glossary of 128 brand names from 46 American films and sitcom episodes produced between 1985 and 2012 and dubbed into Spanish for commercial distribution in Spain, and will be analyzing throughout this article some representative examples of the most widely used translation strategies, and also some very highly revealing exceptions.

¹ The European Audiovisual Media Services Directive published on 11 December 2007 permitted product placement in cinematographic works, but established in Article 3g (3) that viewers had to be informed of its existence at the beginning and the end of the audiovisual production. Ginosar and Levi-Faur (2010: 9) emphasise: “The new Directive allows EU member states to set stricter rules, which means that the long list of restrictions included in the AVMSD creates only minimum standards, and member states may preserve the policy of total prohibition of product placement.” This is not currently happening with imported U.S. productions.

2. Product placement

The intentional presence of brand names can be tracked down to the very beginning of film history. In *Laveuses* (Louis Lumière, 1896), two cases of the Lever soap *Sunlight* are so blatantly located in the foreground while three women are doing their washing in a washtub that it could be considered the first product placement ever (Newell *et al.*, 2006).

For the purposes of this article, it is obviously the advent of sound which makes this practice more relevant, and will also allow us to narrow our scope to the food and drink industry as the most active in this field. Reportedly, it was in 1933 when Coca-Cola signed a half-a-million dollar contract with MGM for including their beverage visually and verbally in film productions (Eckert, 1978). The first documented case of a spoken reference to this brand in an American film, *Imitation of Life* (John M. Stahl, 1934), did not pose a problem for its translation for dubbing in Spain when it was released the following year, since the popular drink had started being commercialized there in 1926.

However, at least an earlier example of a spoken reference to a brand name can be found, in this case of a ring-shaped hard candy, in the film *Horse Feathers* (Norman Z. McLeod, 1932), a comedy feature of the popular Marx Brothers. In a canoe scene, Groucho Marx and his romantic interest try to embrace, which results in her falling into the lake. She then screams (46'42"): "Throw me the life-saver! The life-saver!" and he unwraps a piece of *Life Saver* candy and throws it at her. The polysemic use of a brand name with a denotative meaning (in this case, candy and also a life preserver stored in boats) is the humorous resource applied. As far as the Spanish target cultural context is concerned, the product was unknown, and the translation for dubbing simply focused on the denotative meaning ("¡Tíreme un salvavidas! ¡Un salvavidas!"), therefore omitting the cultural reference and the polysemy, which significantly reduces the coherence of the dubbed dialogue.

An easily remembered example of the period was Popeye's contemporary spinach consumption², which made a huge impact on children's healthy diets; even though no commercial brand was related to it, it still had a very positive effect in the food industry. Many other food and drink product placements would be either subtly or blatantly present in cinema and television for the following decades, from *Budweiser* [*A Slight Case of Murder* (Lloyd Bacon, 1938)] to *McDonald's* [*Black Belt Jones* (Robert Clouse, 1974)].

But in 1982 a commercial situation concerning a very popular film became a milestone that changed the relationship between the audiovisual industry and advertising. Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment were looking for copyright clearance to use candy in the film *E.T. the Extraterrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1982). Mars Company turned down the request to use their *M&M's* for

² Paramount Pictures started producing cartoon shorts of *Popeye the Sailor* in 1933 (Dave Fleischer).

unspecified reasons, and Hershey supplied *Reese's Pieces* without any money being exchanged, though the chocolate company did launch a million-dollar advertising campaign to spread the word that E.T. was eating *Reese's Pieces* (Segrave, 2004). As a result, their sales reportedly rose 65% within one month of the release of the film in the U.S. (Nitins, 2006), and two months later over 800 movie theatres that had never sold *Reese's Pieces* in their premises were placing orders because of requests from spectators. In this case, there was no spoken reference to the product in the film, only its visual presence, so Spanish dubbing translators did not have to struggle with yet another brand unknown to the target context.

Since then, product placement has been working the other way round from the pattern established in the 1930s. Hollywood studios set up specific units to start offering deals to manufacturers in order to place their products on yet-to-be-made films and sitcoms. In this way, they could fund a substantial amount of the production budget, and film, television and advertising companies have not looked back since. We shall now see how this practice has affected the work of audiovisual translators.

3. Translation strategies for culture-specific items

“Foreignization” and “domestication” (Venuti, 1998) as generalized translation strategies have been the two terms most commonly used to refer to archetypically opposed tendencies in academic literature. In the field of translation for dubbing, the image sets the audience in a “foreignised” location, whereas the dialogue in the target language allows for a spoken “domestication” in order to grant coherence to an audiovisual narrative that might not be grasped if spoken *culturemes* (Nord, 1997) are not suitably decoded by the new target audience.

As far as the field of analysis of this paper is concerned, the film industry of the U.S.A. is so overwhelmingly powerful in the Western world that its standardized narrative might be even more easily recognizable for many foreign audiences than their own national audiovisual production. And concerning American food and beverage brands, some of them have become so ingrained commercially worldwide that younger generations might not even perceive them as foreign, as they find them so substantial to their existential routine. This could actually be the reason why, when brands unknown to Spanish audiences are mentioned in American films, there is a greater tendency to erase the ‘foreignization’ by means of translation strategies, and adapt the lexical element so that it can admit the same easiness of decoding as other better known products. Therefore, Spanish dubbing translators are willing to give a helping hand in those cases where the mere repetition of the opaque brand may produce a semiotic noise (Jakobson, 1961), i.e. the perception of a translation loss, in the dialogues.

I will now pick out from the seminal catalogue of translation strategies for culture specific items developed by Franco Aixelá (1996), the ones which are customarily applied by Spanish dubbing translators in these cases. They are:

- a. Intratextual gloss: In order to solve an ambiguity, the brand name is preceded by a hyperonym that clarifies the typology of the product (*Budweiser* becomes *cerveza Budweiser*, that is, ‘Budweiser beer’).
- b. Limited universalization: The brand name is replaced by another brand name from the same typology of products, which also belongs to the source cultural context but might be more familiar for the target context (a fast-food franchise such as *White Castle*, unknown for to the target context, would become *McDonald’s*).
- c. Absolute universalization: The brand name is replaced by a hyperonym, and all cultural nuances are erased (using *cerveza*, ‘beer’, instead of *Budweiser* in the target text).
- d. Naturalization: The brand name from the source text is replaced by a brand name that belongs to the target cultural context. It is hardly used nowadays, but the television sitcom *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (1990-96) was a sensation at the time in Spain because of its tendency to replace American culture specific items with Spanish ones). For instance, in the first episode of season 5 (6’35”), the reference to international pop star Janet Jackson was replaced by one to Spanish rock singer Ramoncín.
- e. Autonomous creation: The use of an ad-hoc coinage that refers to a brand name in the target text which is non-existent in the source text. For instance, in the dubbed Spanish version of the sixth episode of season 1 of *How I Met your Mother* (2005-2014) we can find *Bucanero King* (8’30”), that is, ‘Buccaneer King’, a paronymic reference to *Burger King*, not present in the source text, which produced a suitable humorous effect in the target text.

When dealing with unknown brands, the safest and most widespread choice is absolute universalization, that is, the inclusion of a hyperonym as a replacement, since keeping the brand name untouched may disrupt the coherence of the target text, and using other brand names may involve legal issues. At the other end of the scale, there is a thin line between relative universalization and autonomous creation, since the implicatures supplied by a brand name in the source text unknown to the target context could be conveyed by another product not directly related to it. As well as this, ad-hoc polysemies or paronyms prove to be more effective from an illocutionary perspective than a straightforward hyperonym. According to Gould *et al.* (2000: 42): “Although many American movies are widely exported, their product placements usually are not culturally adapted. Therefore, the result is generally either standardization or nothing”. Nothing would not be a common option for dubbing translators in Spain.

Actually, screen translators give the impression of being free to manipulate brand names in order to meet their ideal target of a coherent dialogue, and we shall be seeing in the following pages some examples of the application of this variety of strategies. However, with so many legal issues at stake, it is remarkable that, sometimes, commercially doubtful translation options have been taken in the Spanish context with no apparent concern from all the parties involved. The interdisciplinary approach proposed by Chaume (2004) concerning audiovisual translation and film studies could, therefore, consider including law as well.

From a translation perspective, as we shall see, most examples prove the high standards of dubbing professionals in Spain. However, self-restraint may eventually become the norm if subliminal or blatant advertising keeps on taking over American audiovisual productions, and film distributors, multinational companies, or European government agencies have a closer commercial look at the resulting dubbed movies and sitcoms.

4. Product placement nowadays

Two years after *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* unexpectedly shook film and advertising history, its producers, Amblin Entertainment and Universal, were looking for products that had changed their appearance between 1955 and 1985 for *Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985), a full feature film in which the main character, Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) travelled to the past and found life so different. They landed a lucrative deal with PepsiCo, whose main beverage container had gone through very noticeable changes, which was not the case of their rivals, Coca-Cola, whose bottle had kept the same design over that period. However, there was a serious commercial drawback. By the time the legal agreement was sealed with PepsiCo, the script had almost reached a final draft, and there was a polysemic joke involving a brand name from the Coca-Cola company which Zemeckis refused to withdraw. When McFly walked into a 1950s bar, the bar tender asked (36'45''):

-Are you going to order, kid?

-Give me a *Tab*.

-I can't give you a tab unless you order something.

Tab is a diet cola soft drink launched by Coca-Cola in 1962, seven years after the scene is set in, therefore unknown for the bar tender, and the denotative meaning of the brand made for an ideal polysemic joke. In order to compensate PepsiCo for the inclusion of the rival company's brand, the following two lines were added:

-Right. Give me a *Pepsi Free*.

-You want a *Pepsi*, pal, you're going to pay for it.

Caffeine-free *Pepsi* was introduced in 1982 with that brand name, therefore it would also be unknown in the 1950's, allowing for yet another humorous misunderstanding.

The Spanish translation for the dubbing of the whole segment was the following:

- ¿Vas a tomar algo, chico?
- Deme una Fanta.
- Una Fanta. ¿Qué diablos es una Fanta?
- Pues deme una Pepsi Sin.
- ¿Sin? ¿Sin qué? ¿Sin pagar? Aquí todo se paga.
- A Fanta. What the hell is a Fanta?
- Then, give me a *Pepsi Without*.
- Without? Without what? Without paying? You pay for everything here.

In the first case we can see an example of limited universalization, which also proved that the translator had done some homework: a Coca-Cola product, *Tab*, was replaced by another drink, *Fanta*, manufactured by the same company. Unfortunately, the polysemy was non-existent and, therefore, the humorous illocutionary effect was practically lost³. As for the second example, *Pepsi Free* was commercialized at the time in Spain as *Pepsi sin* ('Pepsi without'), which had to be glossed intratextually with '*pagar*' ('paying') in order to achieve a successful equivalent humorous effect. More importantly, in both cases there had been a suitable commercial adjustment to the references of the source text, also made easier by the absence of visual references to the brands.

This was not so in the following example. A step further was had been taken when technology made it possible to erase, replace or insert advertising in post-production, opening a wide range of commercial possibilities. The landmark of virtual manipulation took place in the futuristic film *Demolition Man* (Marco Brambilla, 1993) after its production company, Warner Bros, agreed on a deal to place visually and orally a restaurant chain that belongs to PepsiCo (Papp-Vary, 2015). In its American release, the following dialogue took place between the two lead stars while they drove past a logo of *Taco Bell* heading to one of its franchised premises (54'56'"):

- Taco Bell* is the only restaurant to survive the Franchise Wars.

³ Actually, the Spanish subtitled of the DVD versión was far more effective, and daring, with the same choice of *Fanta*. The bar tender's reply was: "¿Para qué quieres una manta? ¿Tienes frío?" ('What do you want a blanket for? Are you cold?'), establishing a witty paronymy between *Fanta* and *manta* ('blanket'), and taking no notice of the much dreaded *gossiping effect*.

-So?

-Now all restaurants are *Taco Bell*.

-No way.

However, for its international release, *Taco Bell* was replaced by *Pizza Hut*, another chain restaurant from PepsiCo, due to the fact that a first attempt to open up franchises of the former abroad had been unsuccessful and the commercial boost would have fallen flat, for instance, in Europe. This decision implied a digital replacement of the logo in the background, and also the fact that the actors had to dub themselves the modified fragment scripted for international distribution, including a previous reference to Mexican food that, obviously, became Italian. It did not pose a problem in Spain, where the translator simply stuck to the international version (the first *Pizza Hut* had opened there in 1980), but it generated a backlash in some non-dubbing countries such as England and Australia, where the perception of the artificial rewording produced an estranging effect. There have been no more documented instances of this dubbing practice in the U.S. since then, something that cannot be said of post-production visual manipulation.

Two revealing cases of unauthorized use of a brand name took place the following year. One of the iconic dialogues in *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino 1994), prior to a gruesome scene, is between two murderers who have a casual conversation about how some varieties of McDonald's hamburgers bear a different name in France (08'05"). Even though there was no commercial arrangement (Lehu 2007), no complaints were filed by the franchise in spite of the negative nature of the characters involved; it eventually became a cult scene⁴. And in another film released the same year, *Natural Born Killers* (Oliver Stone, 1994), a remarkably violent murder was committed with a Coca-Cola billboard in the background which had not received commercial clearance. According to Nitins (2006: 14): "The only reason Coca-Cola refused to sue was to avoid drawing greater attention to the placement."

Two years later, Reebok did sue TriStar pictures over an alleged derogatory portrayal of its brand in the film *Jerry McGuire* (Cameron Crowe, 1996) after having originally invested 1.5 million dollars for product placement (Nitins, *ibid.*). Throughout the plot, a sportsman complained permanently that Reebok did not acknowledge his merits, and the preconceived legal agreement between the two companies was that, during the credits at the end of the film, a fictional commercial would be shown establishing that the sportsman and Reebok had come to terms with each other. But Crowe decided to remove it in post-production because it did not fit in with the overall narrative of the film, leaving Reebok without the

⁴ The dialogue did not pose a problem for Spanish dubbing because a *Quarter Pounder* is commercialized locally as *Cuarto de libra* even though this measurement unit is not used in the country. On the other hand, *McRoyal*, the French alternative, retained its "foreignizing" effect in Spain.

possibility of getting involved in any promotional campaigns, so they sued (Karr *et al.*, 2003). An out of court settlement was reached, with TriStar having to pay 10 million dollars for compensation.

Even though these cases did not compromise the work of dubbing translators, with all these serious legal issues happening in the American source context concerning brand names in films, a greater care could be taken with screen translation choices in Spain. The headquarters of the *Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market*, concerned with the protection of trade mark rights in the European Union, is based in Alicante, and when I consulted them about some of these cases, they referred to a *Trade Practices Act* (Whish, 2001; Howe, 2005) claim that protects manufacturers from a misrepresentation of their product on the grounds of intellectual property. Concerning audiovisual translation, however, there is still no documented proof of a successful claim related to a hypothetically derogatory manipulated reference of a brand name in a dubbed or subtitled film.

As for film and television international distribution companies, there is a so-called *Key Names and Phrases Master Glossary* document (KNP for short)⁵ which they submit for translation purposes with a thorough explanation of supposedly unclear terms. The translation into the foreign language and the back translation into English have to be sent back for approval before the post-production process of the dubbing or subtitling of the film or sitcom actually gets started. Interestingly enough, according to Spanish professional screen translation circles, only Walt Disney Studio Motion Picture and Netflix seem to follow this practice regularly. In most other cases, translators would theoretically be free to act according to their own will in the scripts they submit to Spanish studios for the post-production process, where those in charge would have the final word. We shall see now some examples of the strategies they tend to follow.

5. Commonly applied translation strategies for the dubbing of opaque brand names

In the *Back to the Future* fragment featured above, we have already seen examples of both limited universalization (*Fanta* for *Tab*) and intratextual gloss (*Pepsi sin pagar* for *Pepsi Free*). However, the most commonly used strategy is absolute universalization, that is, the erasure of the brand name and its replacement by a hyperonym. In *27 Dresses* (Anne Fletcher, 2008), for instance, we can find it in two separate fragments:

- You got them champagne glasses and a bottle of *Cristal*. (21'48'')

⁵ A template of the KNP document of Netflix can be requested and downloaded from <https://backlothelp.netflix.com/hc/en-us/articles/219048698>.

- Let me give you some advice. Do not drink *Moët* on an empty stomach. (07'07")

In both cases the brand names were replaced in the dubbed Spanish version by the hyperonym *champán*. It might be understandable that, in the first case, the *Cristal* brand might be difficult to identify in Spain, and the polysemic term resulting from its denotative meaning in Spanish could cause further confusion. However, *Moët & Chandon* has been commercialized in the target context for decades and would have been easily decoded. And, macrotextually, considering that the film itself is located in a trendy setting where sophisticated brand names seem to be so important, the removal of both brands does not seem to be so effective from a marketing perspective, resulting in a far less colorful target text. In any case, with the use of a hyperonym the visual absence (in these two fragments) or presence of brands is rendered irrelevant.

It must also be pointed out that Spanish legislation on advertising of alcoholic drinks (Law 34/1988)⁶ is far stricter than in the U.S., so applying an absolute universalization would always be safer, since there would be no grounds for a legal intervention against the two companies whose brands were featured in the source text.

Sometimes brand names have added implicatures that go beyond the typology of the product, requiring further manipulation in the form of the intratextual glosses previously mentioned. An interesting example can be found in the film *Funny People* (Judd Apatow, 2009), when a stand-up comedian sees yet another spectator leave the venue half-way through his performance and utters (17'02"): "Save some *Kool-Aid* for me". This spoken reference to a brand of flavored drink mix (visually absent on screen) carries with it an implicature of desperation, since it was historically ingested with cyanide by followers of a religious cult in a mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978. So this culture specific item would ironically imply, in the film, that those spectators want to commit suicide after listening to the jokes, and that the comedian himself is willing to join them.

The Spanish dubbing translator decided on ¡Guardadme *un poco de cianuro*, por favor!, with the inclusion of the intratextual gloss "cyanide" as an actual replacement for *Kool-Aid*. The reference to Jonestown is lost (it is hardly known in Spain), and *Kool-Aid* is not commercialized in the target context anyway, so this might have been the most suitable choice available in order to produce an equivalent illocutionary effect. The explicit reference to cyanide could be considered derogatory but, since the brand name is erased, there are no grounds for complaints.

Television sitcoms are also open to product placement, even more so than films, since the medium is traditionally more prone to advertising. Audience rates on free television have generally determined the survival or cancelling of series based on the economic turnover during commercial breaks. With the advent of

⁶ http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-1988-26156

technological devices that allow the viewer to skip commercials, placing the brand within the programme has eventually become a more common tool for advertising.

How I Met your Mother (2005-2014) has been one of the most referred to shows in academic research of product placement on television for various reasons (Brasel 2012). From the very first season we can find several instances, and I would like to analyze one fragment in order to exemplify two translation strategies that still have not been mentioned in this analysis. In episode 6 (8'30") from season 1, we find two of the characters dressed up as pirates for a fancy dress party. The dialogue is the following:

- And what'd be a pirate's favorite fast food restaurant?
- Arr-by's.
- "I would think it would be *Arby's*. But, actually, it's *Long John Silver's*.

These are references to two fast food chain restaurants in the U.S. not visible on screen. The first one is a false etymology that relates the customary onomatopoeic sound of pirate talk⁷ to the name of a meat restaurant chain in the U.S. and Canada, whereas the latter is an obvious reference to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), but also to another U.S. based fast food restaurant chain specialized in seafood, which would fit in much better with their costumes. The Spanish dubbing translation of the fragment that included these two brand names unknown to the target context was as follows:

- ¿Y cuál es el restaurante favorito de comida rápida de un pirata?
- Bucanero King.
- Lo lógico sería pensar que es Bucanero King, pero en realidad es Corsario Fried Chicken.

The ad-hoc coinages *Buccaneer King* and *Corsair Fried Chicken* are obvious paronymical references to *Burger King* and *Kentucky Fried Chicken*, a blending of translation strategies that would include a partial universalization (replacing an opaque culture specific item of the source context with another one more easily identifiable from the same context) and an autonomous creation, since technically there is no connection between the seafood, hamburger and chicken chain restaurants. In any case, the dubbing translation wittily manages to achieve an equivalent humorous illocutionary effect, and the reference to two varieties of privateers could not be considered derogatory either within the context of a fancy dress party⁸.

⁷ In the same way as "Ho, ho, ho!" is traditionally related to Santa Claus or "Booo!" to ghosts.

⁸ A landmark product placement in *How I Met your Mother* has been widely referred to (see Brasel, 2012). Episode 18 from season 2 (2006) was re-aired in 2011 with a digitally inserted magazine on a shelf in the background which included an advert of the film *Zookeeper*

Finally, I will give two remarkable examples from *Harold and Kumar go to White Castle* (Danny Leiner, 2004) concerning brand name replacements in translation for dubbing. The project got to a highly unusual start in the U.S. Five film production companies jointly produced this comedy about two cannabis smokers who decide to go out to find food. It is reported that *Krispy Kreme*, a chain of doughnut stores, was asked for clearance but they refused to take part in the film. Eventually, *White Castle*, a fast-food hamburger restaurant chain, agreed without any payment involved (they ran their own campaign of collectibles related to the movie), and ended up in the title of the film. Only in the U.S., though, since the franchise is unknown elsewhere; even in the U.K. the title was changed to *Harold & Kumar get the Munchies*. In any case, such a blatant placement would not have been popular in European box-offices: “The centrality of the brand/product to the plot can alert the viewers to the placement effort and even cause resentment” (Karniouchina *et al.*, 2006: 31).

Other brand names are mentioned during the film as well, but under a not extremely positive light. In the following fragment (13’19”), in order to quench their thirst, one character suggested: “Let’s get ourselves some fucking *Mountain Dew*”, an American carbonated soft drink not commercialized in Spain. The dubbed equivalent was: “*¡Vamos a tomarnos un puto Aquarius!*”. The reference to this brand, a mineral sports drink launched in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, would be considered a naturalization, since a culture specific item of the source context without any visual presence on screen is replaced by one of the target context (*Aquarius* is sold in a dozen countries, but none of them English-speaking). The only problem that could have arisen was the fact that, whereas *Mountain Dew* belongs to PepsiCo, *Aquarius* is produced by the European branch of Coca-Cola, their main rivals. No complaints were filed, and the expletive terms that precedes both brand names would not have been perceived as derogatory considering the nature of the characters involved.

Far more remarkable was the dubbed fragment (10’32”) in which a suggestion is made about having something to eat. The dialogue in the source text was:

- What about *KFC*?
- We’ve been there too many times.

Kentucky Fried Chicken has been established in Spain for decades, and is also referred to as *Kentucky* for short, which would have contributed to the lip synchrony of the dubbed version. However, the translator astoundingly opted for: “*¿Y un Guarronalds?*” The blending of the word *guarro* (“filthy”) and *McDonald’s* results in a derogatory ad-hoc coinage with an obvious paronymical reference to the burger

(Frank Coraci, 2011), which was just about to be released. This anachronistic practice opens up a wide range of possibilities for product placement, even though it would not affect, so far, translators for dubbing or subtitling.

chain restaurant, which is witty, and also offensive (the back translation I would suggest is *MuckDonald's*, though I have not asked for commercial clearance either!). This would have caused a legal stir in the U.S., but there were no reports of filed complaints in Spain. No KNPs had been sent over by the film producers, though KFC had such an obvious solution that nobody would have expected a different option. As for McDonald's, no Trade Practices Act claim was reportedly made either, perhaps in the belief that drawing attention to this misrepresentation of their product could only make matters worse. So yet another talented dubbing translator, Kenneth Post, got away with humorous manipulation, but with so many globalised legal issues concerning advertising at stake, we may start wondering how long this 'free for all' attitude will last.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, the purpose of this paper has been mainly to foreground the different translation strategies that may be applied to transfer the implicatures of unknown brand names mentioned in films and television sitcoms to other target cultural contexts. At the same time, I have also pointed out the contrast between the legal issues which arise in the U.S. concerning product placement and the, so far, laid back attitude to the required manipulative translation of some of these opaque products for the dubbing process in Spain⁹. The most common strategy applied is absolute universalization (71 of the 128 cases put together in my glossary follow that pattern, 55.4%), which is the safest choice even if it might fail to comply with commercial agreements reached in the source legal context concerning the spoken reference to a brand. But other choices made, such as limited universalizations (28 cases, 21%), especially when the alternative brand chosen belongs to a rival company, or autonomous creations (15 cases, 11.7%) which might turn out to be derogatory towards a brand that is not even mentioned in the source text, would make us wonder if these liberties can be taken so randomly much longer. The current evolution in translation practices, as proven by these statistic figures, is towards a legally safer use of absolute universalization.

Another important issue is that 105 cases (85,7%) are related to comedy, either because the production belongs to that genre or it is a comical relief fragment in a production from a different genre. According to Karniouchina *et al.* (2006: 42), this is due to an overall advertising strategy: "Dramas are usually more cognitively demanding, and romance films tend to send the viewers on an emotional roller

⁹ In Spain, the *Ley General de Comunicación Audiovisual* passed on March 31st 2010 regulates product placement (Article 17) and, following the pattern of the European Union, requires an announcement of this practice at the beginning and the end of the audiovisual production. The seemingly uncertain legal territory is that the regulation would not apply to a production of a country that does not belong to the EU and, even though the dubbing and/or subtitling is performed in Spain, it would still be American.

coaster, leaving little room for processing secondary information”. But comedy is far more demanding for audiovisual translators, since humorous resources are based on plays on words and immediate decoding of subtextual implicatures which require hard work to transfer them interlinguistically, as we have seen in most cases with opaque brands mentioned above.

By no means do I want to spoil the fun of both the talented Spanish dubbing translators and the audiences who watch these productions by remarking on some of these very extreme cases that could have legal consequences. It would seem, however, that, in the international market, U.S. companies are not willing to take the trouble to survey how their brand is portrayed in dubbed or subtitled audiovisual productions, if only to avoid giving greater publicity to derogatory presentations or drawing legal attention from foreign governmental institutions. Or, perhaps, they also believe, as Oscar Wilde (1891: 2) once wrote, that: “There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about”.

References

- Brasel, S.A. 2012. “How focused identities can help brands navigate a changing media landscape”. *Business Horizons*, 55 (3), 283-291.
- Chaume, F. 2004. “Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two disciplines at stake in audiovisual translation”. *Meta: journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 49 (1), 12-24.
- Eckert, C. 1978. “The Carole Lombard in Macy’s Window.” *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 3 (1): 7-12
- Franco Aixelá, J. 1996. “Culture-specific items in translation.”. In R. Álvarez and M.C.A. Vidal (eds.). *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 52-78.
- Ginosar, A. and Levi-Faur, D. 2010. “Regulating product placement in the European Union & Canada: Explaining regime change and diversity”. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 12 (5), 467-490.
- Gould, S.J., Gupta, P.B. and Grabner-Kruter, S. 2000. “Product placements in movies: A cross-cultural analysis of Austrian, French and American consumers’ attitudes toward this emerging, international promotional medium”. *Journal of Advertising*, 29 (4), 41-58.
- Grice, H.P. 1975. “Logic and Conversation”. *Syntax and Semantics 3. Speech Arts*, 41-58.
- Howe, S. 2005. “United Kingdom”. In S. Howe (ed.). *Retailing in the European Union: Structures, Competition and Performance*. London & New York: Routledge, 155-187.
- Jakobson, R. 1961. “Linguistics and communication theory”. In R. Jakobson (ed.). *On the Structure of Language and Its Mathematical Aspects*. Providence (R.I.): American Mathematical Society, 245-252.

- Karrh, J.A., McKee, K.B. and Pardun, C.J. 2003. "Practitioners evolving views on product placement effectiveness". *Journal of Advertising Research*, 43 (2), 138-149.
- Lehu, J.M. 2007. *Branded Entertainment: Product Placement & Brand Strategy in the Entertainment Business*. Philadelphia: Kogan Page Limited.
- Lowrey, T.M., Shrum, L.J. and McCarty, J.A. 2005. "The Future of Television Advertising". In A.J. Kimmel (ed.). *Marketing Communication: New Approaches, Technologies and Styles*. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 113-132.
- Newell, J., Salmon, C.T. and Chang, S. 2006: "The hidden history of product placement". *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 50 (4), 575-594.
- Nitins, T. 2006. "Are we selling out our culture? An examination of the product placement industry and adverse implications for the film industry". *Civilisations*, 8, 9-24.
- Nord, C. 1997. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity. Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Papp-Vary, A. 2015. "Which way is product placement going? 11 expected trends". In D. Primorac, I. Pihir, and K. Detelj (eds.). *Economic and Social Development*. Koprivnica: Varazdin, 313-323.
- Russell, C.A. 2002. "Investigating the effectiveness of product placements in television shows: The role of modality and plot connection congruence on brand memory and attitude". *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (3), 306-318.
- Segrave, K. 2004. *Product Placement in Hollywood Films: A History*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Törnqvist, E. 1995. "Fixed pictures, changing words. Subtitling and dubbing the film". *Babettes Gästebud. Tidskrift för Skandinavistik*, 16 (1), 47-64.
- Venuti, L. 1998. "Strategies of translation". In M. Baker (ed.). *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 240-244.
- Whish, R. 2001. "Developments in European antitrust". In F. Hanks and P. L. Williams (eds.). *Trade Practices Act: A Twenty Five Year Stocktake*. Sidney: The Federation Press, 22-49.
- Wilde, O. 1993 [1891]. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London: Dover.

Filmography

- Apatow, J. 2009. *Funny People*. USA.
- Bacon, L. 1938. *A Slight Case of Murder*. USA.
- Bays, C. and Thomas, C. 2005-2014. *How I Met your Mother*. USA.
- Borowitz, A. and S. 1990-1996. *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. USA.
- Brambilla, M. 1993. *Demolition Man*. USA.
- Clouse, R. 1974. *Black Belt Jones*. USA.
- Coraci, F. 2011. *Zookeeper*. USA.
- Crowe, C. 1996. *Jerry McGuire*. USA.
- Fleischer, D. 1933. *Popeye the Sailor*. USA.

- Fletcher, A. 2008. *27 Dresses*. USA.
Leiner, D. 2004. *Harold and Kumar go to White Castle*. USA.
Lumière, L. 1896. *Laveuses*. France.
McLeod, N.Z. 1932. *Horse Feathers*. USA.
Spielberg, S. 1982. *E.T. the Extraterrestrial*. USA.
Stahl, J. M. 1934. *Imitation of Life*. USA.
Stone, O. 1994. *Natural Born Killers*. USA.
Tarantino, Q. 1994. *Pulp Fiction*. USA.
Zemeckis, R. 1985. *Back to the Future*. USA.

Web Resources

Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2007/65/EC).
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3A124101a>

Ley 34/1988, de 11 de noviembre, General de Publicidad.
<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1988-26156>

Key Names and Phrases Master Glossary Netflix Template.
<https://backlothelp.netflix.com/hc/en-us/articles/219048698>

Different gender stereotypes for different subtitles:

Divorce – Italian style

Vincenzo Alfano

University College London

Abstract

Building on the research framework of the Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1980, 1995), this paper compares and contrasts the way in which gender stereotypes in the Italian classic film Divorce – Italian Style have been translated in two English subtitled versions – one produced by an Italian translation company (Cristaldi) and the other one released by a US film studio (Criterion). As specific analytical tools, the study avails itself of Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007: 200-207) taxonomy of translation strategies for culture-specific references, slightly modified and adapted for the translation of gender stereotypes, and also considers the issues of semiotic cohesion in the context of translating gender. Assuming that the transfer of gender stereotypes can be influenced by different cultural perspectives and specific translation practices, the analysis concentrates both on the translation process and the product by looking at the translation strategies used and their effect on the representation of gender.

Keywords: gender stereotypes, subtitling, AVT, translation strategies, Italian cinema

1. Introduction

Long excluded from debates in Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has finally started to attract considerable academic interest and research over the last three decades. In the same period, and within the wider framework of cultural theories of translation postulated by authors such as Snell-Hornby (1988) and Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), issues of gender and translation have come to the fore in such studies as von Flotow's (1991, 1997), Simon's (1996) and Santaemilia's (2005). As a new academic discipline, however, AVT's intersection with gender has so far remained almost uncharted territory with the notable exception of De Marco's (2012) comprehensive investigation of the sexist nature of gender stereotype manipulation in Italian and Spanish dubbing of UK and US cinema. Two further interesting studies on gender in AVT have been conducted by Feral (2011a, 2011b) who has explored ideological manipulation in the French

dubbing of US TV series on the basis of the target culture gender construction. In relation to the other main mode of AVT, i.e. subtitling, one study which has produced similar findings to De Marco's and Feral's research is the analysis of how gender discourse in the English subtitling and dubbing of the Spanish film *¡Átame!* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1990) is made to conform to society's male-dominated discourse (Joyce, 1997).

Building on previous research, this paper aims to make a further contribution to the exploration of the issues and challenges involved in the translation of gender in the area of AVT by comparing and contrasting two English subtitled versions of the classic Italian film *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce – Italian Style*) directed by Pietro Germi in 1961. The main objective is to look at how gender stereotypes have been translated in two subtitled versions of the same film – one produced by an Italian translation company, Cristaldi, and the second one by the US film studio Criterion – assuming that the translation process can be influenced by different cultural perspectives as well as by certain subtitling practices. In order to carry out such analysis, the nature of gender stereotypes will firstly be clarified following the definitions provided by some of the main experts on the subject. Subsequently, the research frameworks of Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar, 1978) and Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1980, 1995) in which the study is rooted will be briefly discussed. In addition to these two overarching frameworks, the methodology also draws upon the articulation of various translation strategies that are commonly used to describe the transfer of culture-specific references (CSRs) and will be used as heuristic tools to delve into the analysis of the subtitling of gender stereotypes. The discussion will then proceed to a microlevel analysis by looking at specific translation examples, which will then allow for the drawing of some general conclusions at a macrolevel and the unveiling of some potential general trends. The issue of semiotic cohesion among the various audio and visual layers of meaning and the likely interference with the subtitling of gender will also be analysed. Finally, the nature of the various translation processes at play will be foregrounded and the way in which they may be influenced by different cultural perspectives and subtitling practices will be summarised in the conclusions.

2. Gender stereotypes: some definitions

Although stereotypes in general and gender stereotypes in particular often emerge from various types of discourse in society and, particularly, the media, the nature of such stereotypes is only rarely defined. Before analysing the subtitling strategies applied to gender stereotypes in *Divorce – Italian Style*, it is therefore essential to provide clear definitions of such key concepts.

Deaux *et al.* (1985: 145) write that “the human race can be divided rather easily into the two groups of males and females. A consequence of this fact is the development of cognitive categories to describe and process gender-related

information, a categorization process that can be termed ‘gender stereotyping’”. Along the same lines but also in keeping with their main research tool, i.e. a list of adjectives to be rated in their study as “more characteristic of one sex than another”, Williams and Best (1990: 15) define gender stereotypes as “generally held beliefs concerning differences in the ‘psychological makeup’ of women and men”. Most researchers agree that an essential characteristic of these gender stereotypes is that they “are strongly held overgeneralizations” (Basow, 1992: 3); that is, they are applied to all women and men regardless of individual differences, such as the stereotyping of all men as “aggressive” and all women as “nurturant”. For the purposes of the present article, the latter is a simple, working definition which allows the reader to understand the nature of the gender stereotypes discussed.

3. The film and the subtitling studios

Before discussing the methodology, the film as well as the subtitling studios under discussion should be presented to the readers so that they can familiarize themselves with the object of analysis. *Divorce – Italian Style* (the translated title of both DVD versions) is a classic of the *Commedia all’italiana* – Comedy Italian Style – a cinematic genre of the 1960s which centres on the satire of a rapidly changing society and frequently sends up old gender stereotypes and new sexual mores (d’Amico, 2008; Comand, 2010). In this particular film, the story develops in Sicily around the main protagonist, Don Ferdinando Cefalù, who, after twelve years of marriage, has grown tired of his relationship with his wife Rosalia. Since divorce was not legal at the time in Italy, he devises a cunning plot to rid himself of his wife by exploiting a piece of legislation known as *delitto d’onore* [crime of honour]. According to the Italian legal system of the period, the man who, following an outburst of fury and indignation, killed his wife, sister or daughter, after having found them *in flagrante delicto* with their lover, was the subject of special consideration by the court. Gender representation in *Divorce – Italian Style* revolves to a great extent around sexuality, the rigid and fixed roles of women and men in a patriarchal society and the code of honour of an archaic and deceitful society that is driven by double standards. In such a traditional and androcentric scenario, men exert absolute power over women, whose sexuality and sexual behaviour are kept under strict surveillance by fathers, husbands and brothers. On the other hand, ironically, not only do men flaunt their masculinity and transgress the standard code of honour by having extra-marital sexual relationships but they also take every opportunity to laugh at the ‘dishonoured cuckold’ of *Divorce*, Don Ferdinando.

Belonging to a genre deeply rooted in Italian culture and society which did not normally export well (Günsberg, 2005), *Divorce – Italian Style* was one of the few films of Comedy Italian Style to gain international recognition. In the US, the film obtained Oscar nominations for Best Director and Best Film but it was actually the screenplay which won the Academy Award and was for some time discussed

in US cinema circles as a brilliant, modern approach to narrative devices (Sesti, 1997: 238). As aforementioned, the plot is based on the law on *delitto d'onore* [crime of honour]. A crucial cultural concept upon which the stereotypes of the cuckolded man and the licentious woman hinge, the *delitto d'onore* is translated differently by the two subtitling companies. While the Italian studio translates the term literally, using 'crime of honour', the US studio's cultural equivalent, i.e. 'crime of passion', arguably conforms to the stereotypes of unbridled passion associated with the Latin lover and familiar to US society. As Díaz Cintas (2004: 27) points out, different companies bring with them different subtitling practices which have an influence on their normative behaviour. The films included in the online catalogues of the subtitling companies under analysis clearly show that both aim for art cinema, Italian in the case of the Italian studio and international in the case of the US studio, whose artistic vocation seems even more pronounced. Indeed, the US studio's website includes special features such as theatrical trailers, interviews and commentaries by actors and directors and even essays by film critics in the presentations of the films they distribute (www.criterion.com). From a translational perspective, the indication on the back cover of the DVD that this is a "new and improved English subtitle version" is a most interesting feature and acknowledgement. Yet what is really important for the purposes of the present discussion is to analyse how this claim is actually substantiated in practice by comparing the translation approach observed in the US studio's subtitled version with the one released by the Italian studio, in the context of gender stereotypes.

4. Methodology

From a methodological perspective, the analysis of *Divorce – Italian Style* follows the main study of this kind already published, i.e. the above mentioned investigation of gender issues and their translation for dubbing conducted by De Marco (2012) and based on the research frameworks of the Polysystem Theory and Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). As Even-Zohar (1978) explains, far from being a marginal phenomenon which has tended to be considered in terms of its single translation instances per se, translated literature can be a literary system in its own right and therefore constitute a driving and innovative force in the literary Polysystem in specific circumstances, such as the introduction of new literary models into a young literature. Applying the theory to the field of cinema, Díaz Cintas (2004: 22-23) suggests that this paradigm opens the way for dubbed and subtitled films to no longer be viewed as inferior by-products of the original films and instead allows them to acquire the same cultural status as the products of national cinema. Building on the Polysystem model, DTS break away from traditional approaches that consider translations according to the structuralist/linguistic theory of equivalence and propose to view translation as a "norm-governed activity" (Toury, 1995: 56) where regularities can be detected.

One of the greatest advantages of this approach is that it allows the investigation of actual translation practice with the ultimate goal of using empirical data in order to inform the debate about translation theory. From this perspective, the present study constitutes a snapshot of a wider research project, which aims to contribute to “a clear map of translation practice” (Díaz Cintas, 2004: 26) in the field of subtitling from Italian into English.

In addition to the above mentioned general theoretical framework, the study also makes use of the taxonomy of translation strategies put forward by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 200-207), devised originally for the transfer of CSRs in subtitling and slightly modified in this study to better cater for the analysis of the translation of gender stereotypes. This taxonomy has been preferred to others such as Pedersen’s (2011) or Ranzato’s (2016) because the latter have been partly designed to account for the findings of their studies. Díaz Cintas and Remael’s, on the other hand, is a general taxonomy for the transfer of CSRs in subtitling which can more easily be adapted to deal with the translation of gender stereotypes in the context of the present and future studies. The taxonomy consists of the original ten strategies, to which erasure has been added to supplement Díaz Cintas and Remael’s (ibid.) and the concept of addition has been expanded:

- 1) **Loan**, where the ST word is borrowed from the ST language and incorporated into the translation.
- 2) **Literal translation** is a word for word translation.
- 3) **Calque** is a literal translation that sounds unnatural in the TL. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 202) give the example of “*Secretario de Estado* in Spanish for *Secretary of State*, when *Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores* [Minister of Foreign Affairs] would be a more common and transparent title”.
- 4) **Explicitation** is a strategy whereby the translation explains more than the original, usually by means of hypernyms (generalization) or hyponyms (specification).
- 5) **Substitution** is similar to explicitation and refers to the use of a hypernym or hyponym for space limitations rather than lack of a corresponding word in the TL.
- 6) **Transposition** consists in the replacement of a gender stereotype belonging to the ST culture with one belonging to the TT culture.
- 7) **Lexical recreation**, as can be deduced from the wording, involves the creation of a neologism on the basis of the ST (invented) word.
- 8) **Compensation** aims to make up for translation loss in an exchange by “overtranslating or adding something in another” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 206). It is very useful in the translation of humour and could therefore be interesting to examine its potential in the case of sexual references with humorous intent, although none have been observed in *Divorce – Italian Style*.

-
- 9) **Omission** is used here to indicate that a gender stereotype has been omitted in order to comply with the technical constraints of subtitling and is distinguished from the strategy of erasure. It is not much of a strategy as Díaz Cintas and Remael point out (2007: 206) but is often imposed by space and time constraints.
 - 10) **Erasure** differs from omission in that the disappearance of the gender stereotype cannot be justified by technical constraints.
 - 11) **Addition** is encountered usually in the form of supplementary information which is added to the 'TT' in order to make the gender stereotype more comprehensible to the 'TT' audience. In this article, however, addition is also used to refer to a translation which generates a gender stereotype in the subtitled version where there is none in the original.

Finally, the general trends detected in De Marco's study (2012) on dubbing as a result of the manipulation process and categorised here under reinforcement, similar impact or softening of gender stereotypes, have been found useful for summarizing the results of the manipulation process produced by different translation strategies in the present study.

5. Microanalysis of translation examples

By comparing and contrasting the two subtitled versions, several examples emerge as particularly indicative of the different translation approach adopted by the US and Italian studios. The first example occurs in a scene where Don Calogero, after having read the personal diary of his daughter Angela, rails against her and demands to know the name of her secret lover. Since the only amorous relationship a single daughter is allowed is the official engagement with a fiancé approved by her family, the father repeatedly labels the daughter *svergognata* [shameless woman] for her inappropriate conduct. In other words, she has transgressed the socially shared code of honour, which automatically brings the risk of the whole family falling into disrepute and being branded 'dishonoured'. *Svergognata* is a Sicilian dysphemism used to refer to a woman who has violated a social code, expressing disapproval though it is not a strong insult. It may designate a woman of loose morals. Therefore, the transposition operated by the US studio with the term "hussy" stays arguably closer to the source text, while the nouns "bitch" and "slut" employed by the Italian studio are examples of transpositions with clearly stronger overtones. Further instances of pejorative gender stereotype reinforcement can be observed on several occasions in the Italian studio's subtitled version. Another case in point is the scene where the old baron (Don Ferdinando's father) harasses the maid and responds to her protests by saying: *Stai zitta. Tu provochi* [Be quiet. You are provocative]. Using the strategy of explicitation, the

Italian studio's translation, "Shut up. You ask for it", turns the gender stereotype of the provoking woman more specifically into one who not only likes but even deserves sexual harassment. On the other hand, the US studio's "Be quiet. You're a tease", translates the concept literally, although the word *tease*, indicating "a person who tempts someone sexually with no intention of satisfying the desire aroused" (ODE), is only slightly softer than the original "provocative".

US Criterion's subtitled version features further instances of a different way of translating gender stereotypes in comparison with Italian Cristaldi. One example comes from the scene where Agnese, left by Rosario after the whole family has been dishonoured by the cuckold Don Ferdinando, accuses the latter of being *curnutu cuntentu* [cuckold happy] with his situation, because he has not reacted to the disgrace in the traditional and expected manner, i.e. by killing his wife. In this case, the Italian studio's translation, "You're a cuckold and you like it!" is closer to the original literal meaning. On the other hand, the US studio's explication, "You're a cuckold, and proud of it!", clearly goes beyond the literal meaning, introducing the idea of personal pride which could suggest, to some extent, a resistance to the tribal code of honour (Brunetta, 2008) and be interpreted as an instance of "hijacking". According to von Flotow (1991: 79), the latter is a translation practice which consists in the appropriation of the text in order to make it reflect one's own political intentions. Here, it is the term *cornuto* which has been appropriated with a feminist agenda. Furthermore, the US studio employs the strategy of lexical recreation to translate the disparaging Italian term *cornuta* [cuckold woman], which is normally only used in the masculine form *cornuto* to insult the husband. Thus, while the Italian studio opts for the standard "cuckold", the US studio prefers to translate the term with the interestingly creative "cuckoldess". In the androcentric sexist society depicted in *Divorce*, this may be seen as a further instance of "hijacking" in order to highlight how the woman who reacts to the betrayal by killing her husband is treated very differently from the man who does the same. It is the character of Mariannina who represents the *cornuta*, a lowly born woman who lived with the man to whom she was not married and later killed for cheating on her. Inspired by what he has heard at her trial, Don Ferdinando develops his astute plan to push his wife into the arms of an old admirer, Carmelo Patanè, with the ultimate goal of killing her and exploit the law on the "crime of honour". In the film, Don Ferdinando calculates that his case would be substantially different from Mariannina's since he belongs to a noble family, holds a university degree and has been a model husband for thirteen years. Above all, however, he is a man in a male dominated society rooted in gender inequality, as demonstrated by the different verdicts of the court which sentences Mariannina to eight years in prison and Don Ferdinando to only three.

A further example of the US studio's approach can be found in one of the frequent scenes in which Don Ferdinando's sister, Agnese, is found in compromising circumstances with her fiancé, Rosario. In this particular scene she tries to justify herself by declaring *non devi pensare male* [you must not think badly]

with a voice and expression which denote her sense of guilt and embarrassment toward her brother, Don Ferdinando. Here, the Italian studio's literal translation "do not think badly" becomes in the US version "don't get any ideas", which portrays Agnese in a very different light, much more confident and assertive. On the other hand, this linguistic characterization risks clashing with the submissiveness expressed through the acoustic and visual channels, which in turn results in an instance of semiotic incoherence.

Indeed, the issue of semiotic cohesion also interferes with the translation approach of the Italian studio, as can be observed in a scene recalled by Carmelo Patanè. It is Rosalia – Don Ferdinando's wife – who forms the object of his amorous and nostalgic recollections and whom he recalls seeing one day during the town's traditional procession, while he was helping to carry the statue of the Virgin:

Example 1

<p>CARMELO: Ieri t'ho vista, Rosalia, durante la processione. Eri bella e pura come una Madonna^a. Avrei voluto morire in quel momento, morire così, con quell'immagine di te, con te dentro l'anima, con quel desiderio immenso che ho di sentirti mia e che mai la vita potrà concedermi.</p> <p>[Yesterday I saw you, Rosalia, during the procession. You were beautiful and pure like a Madonna. I would have liked to die in that moment, die so, with that image of you, with you inside my soul, with that immense desire which I have of feeling you mine and which never will life be able to grant me.]</p>	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
<p>342 - 00:44:21,287 --> 00:44:24,563 I saw you, Rosalia,</p> <p>343 - 00:44:24,607 --> 00:44:27,075 as pure and beautiful as the Madonna.</p>	<p>407 - 00:46:16,340 --> 00:46:20,071 I saw you yesterday, Rosalia, during the procession.</p> <p>408 - 00:46:20,377 --> 00:46:22,675 You were as beautiful and pure as the Virgin Mary.</p>

<p>344 - 00:44:32,767 --> 00:44:35,679 I wanted to die with that image of you</p>	<p>409 - 00:46:28,585 --> 00:46:30,450 I wanted to die on the spot.</p> <p>410 - 00:46:30,554 --> 00:46:34,251 To die with that image of you in my soul,</p>
--	--

345 - 00:44:35,727 --> 00:44:39,686 with you in my heart, craving to make you mine.	411 - 00:46:34,358 --> 00:46:36,485 with this immense desire to know you were mine,
346 - 00:44:39,727 --> 00:44:44,278 but that will never be, alas!	412 - 00:46:36,593 --> 00:46:39,687 which life will never grant me.

^a Bold added do draw attention to the parts of the original speech and the corresponding subtitles which are of particular interest.

This scene features a close-up of the statue of the Virgin Mary alternating with a close-up of Rosalia clad in a traditional white dress and a veil. The subsequent scene in which Rosalia is instead described as a “pagan divinity” further helps to contextualize and reinforce the cinematic construction of the gender stereotype of the woman as a virginal Madonna. Therefore, the choice of translating *immenso desiderio* [immense desire] with the sexually connoted verb “craving” clashes with the textual and visual discourse of the director, producing once again an instance of semiotic inconsistency. One interpretation for such a mishap, i.e. that the subtitlers did not fully appreciate the interplay between the different channels of communication, seems to confirm the traditional view of some authors (Titford, 1982: 115; Mayoral *et al.*, 1988: 363) who consider such polysemiotic interplay one of the potential pitfalls faced by audiovisual translators. Indeed, these examples seem to reinforce evidence of a previous study on semiotic cohesion in subtitling (Alfano, 2014), which highlights the difficulty faced by the professional to produce a translation which does justice both to the issues of gender and semiotic cohesion, especially when the latter is further compounded by other important considerations such as humour and culture-specific references.

Besides foregrounding the complexity of managing semiotic cohesion onscreen, the scene under analysis also provides evidence of the various factors at play when it comes to gender representation and perception by the audience in the two subtitled versions, namely, the impact of translation strategies such as omission and addition, the choice of particular lexical solutions and the limit on the extension of the subtitles, based on the maximum number of characters per second that the viewer can be assumed to be able to read in a comfortable manner. In this sense, the Italian studio, for example, omits redundant linguistic information such as the repetition of the verb “to die”, the verb “you were” (as pure and beautiful as the Madonna) and the information available from the visual channel, i.e. the actual procession of people in the streets, but, curiously enough, it adds to the translation the interjection “alas” (subtitle 346), which cannot be found in the original speech. Such addition further strengthens the stereotype of the woman as the object of sexual desire which has the effect of leading to the frustration of the male and is created by the translation of *immenso desiderio* [immense desire] with the verb “craving”, resulting thus in semiotic inconsistency.

Unlike the Italian studio, US Criterion translates these phrases literally – *immenso desiderio* with “immense desire” and *dentro l'anima* with “in my soul” (as opposed to Cristaldi’s “in my heart”) – adhering more closely to the textual and visual cinematic discourse. The US version also translates the verbs “to die” and “you were” (as pure and beautiful as the Madonna) omitted in the Italian version. By including such redundant information, US Criterion accelerates the reading speed of the text, as the number of characters per second has been increased, making the subtitles more difficult to process. For instance,

408 - 00:46:20,377 --> 00:46:22,675

You were as beautiful
and pure as the Virgin Mary.

lasts 2 seconds and 7 frames, has 49 characters and a reading speed of 21 characters per second (cps) which goes over the current professional convention of approximately 15 cps. On some occasions, however, the opposite happens with the Italian studio condensing far too much:

342 - 00:44:21,287 --> 00:44:24,563

I saw you, Rosalia,

lasts 3 seconds and 7 frames and has only 19 characters, when it could easily have over 45 characters in total. By contrast, US Criterion’s subtitle,

407 - 00:46:16,340 --> 00:46:20,071

I saw you yesterday, Rosalia,
during the procession

lasts 3 seconds and 18 frames and has 50 characters, which is roughly 15 cps and more in tune with current professional practice. A further instance of the problem of upping the reading speed can be found at the beginning of *Divorce – Italian Style*:

Example 2

Voice off: Le favolose, invisibili donne di Agramonte, che celavano la loro bellezza e il loro ardore dietro le grate, pardon, dietro le stecche di vereconde persiane. [The fabulous, invisible women of Agramonte, who hid their beauty and their ardour behind the grating, pardon me, behind the slats of bashful shutters.]	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO

24 - 00:04:11,727 --> 00:04:15,686 The invisible women of Agramonte hid their beauty	33 - 00:04:24,230 --> 00:04:25,891 The marvelous, invisible women of Agramonte,
25 - 00:04:15,727 --> 00:04:19,242 behind the slats of chaste shutters.	34 - 00:04:25,999 --> 00:04:28,763 who hid their beauty and ardor behind the grating –
	35 - 00:04:28,868 --> 00:04:31,769 pardon me – behind the slats of bashful shutters.

Here, the subjective point of view of Don Ferdinando describing the women of his town as *favolose* [fabulous] has been translated with “marvelous” by US Criterion but has been omitted by Italian Cristaldi, thereby erasing to some extent the point of view of the male narrator on his female fellow citizens. Moreover, while the US studio has reproduced the director’s pun on the gender stereotypes of the beautiful and sexually ardent women who need to be literally kept behind bars *dietro le grate* [behind the grating], so that they do not pose a threat of cuckoldry to their husbands or temptation to other men, the Italian studio has deleted such ironic allusions by omitting *ardore* [ardour] and *dietro le grate* [behind the grating]. Overall, Italian Cristaldi’s omissions, some of which do not seem technically driven by the issue of reading speed, soften the original gender representation significantly in this case, while US Criterion stays closer quantitatively speaking to the original and manages to reproduce the gender stereotypes and the claustrophobic and strict environment in which women are kept in a fairly literal manner. However, in order to incorporate all this information, the US studio has produced a subtitle (number 33) which consists of 43 characters, stays on the screen for only 1 second and 16 frames, and requires a reading speed of 27 characters per second, which may be too fast to be processed by some viewers.

Following on from this description of the women of the town where the story unfolds, Don Ferdinando goes on to describe his relatives including his sister and her fiancé:

Example 3

Voice off: Mia sorella Agnese, nubile e a carico , ufficialmente compromessa, cioè fidanzata, con Rosario Mulè, della onorata ditta Mulè e figlio, agenzia di pompe funebri.	
[My sister Agnese, single and dependent, officially compromised, that is engaged, with Rosario Mulè, from the honoured firm Mulè and Son, funeral parlour]	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
38 00:05:29,167 --> 00:05:32,284 My sister Agnese,	50 00:05:44,744 --> 00:05:47,372 My sister Agnese,

officially promised	unmarried and still dependent
39 00:05:32,327 --> 00:05:35,444 that is, engaged, to Rosario Mulè,	51 00:05:47,480 --> 00:05:51,280 officially compromised – i.e. engaged – to Rosario Mulè,
40 00:05:35,927 --> 00:05:40,125 of Mulè & Son, Funeral Directors.	52 00:05:51,384 --> 00:05:54,353 of the respected firm Mulè and Sons, 53 00:05:54,454 --> 00:05:56,354 a funeral parlor.

In a few lines Don Ferdinando encapsulates the gender stereotype of the daughter of an aristocratic Sicilian family of the 1960s. Agnese is dependent, as she would not be allowed to work and is therefore waiting to be married off to a suitable party to whom she is engaged. The sarcastic “officially compromised” in the US studio’s literal translation probably refers to the compromising circumstances in which Agnese and Rosario are repeatedly found by Don Ferdinando, which the Italian studio transposes to the familiar gender stereotype of the woman promised in marriage. A crucial component of the stereotype is that Agnese is dependent on her family, which also means that her life has already been decided upon by arranging her marriage with Rosario, thus ensuring the strict control of women with which this society is obsessed. Again, the stereotype is omitted by the Italian studio, Cristaldi, due to the time constraints of subtitling. Interestingly, the US studio, Criterion, translates the stereotype by transposing it to the US society’s equivalent, i.e. that of a daughter who is *still* dependent, the implication being that she is waiting to become independent.

Two more such examples can be observed in which the Italian studio resorts to the translation strategy of omission because of time constraints, whereas the US studio fully translates the original. The third example comes from the scene in which Don Ferdinando’s mother brings him breakfast to his room, where he has secluded himself after having an argument with his wife Rosalia:

Example 4

Voice off: Ferdinando, t’ho portato a colazione, a mamma.	
[Ferdinando, I’ve brought you breakfast, your mom]	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
332 00:40:58,247 --> 00:41:01,557 I’ve brought your breakfast.	396 00:42:46,096 --> 00:42:47,996 Mama’s brought you some breakfast.

Here, whereas the US studio translates fully, the Italian studio omits this use of the word “mom” which derives from the Sicilian dialect, can be understood to express affection between a mother and her children and could be translated with an equivalent going beyond the literal translation such as “my son”. However, this loses the connotations of the gender stereotype implicit in the original, i.e. that every Italian man is an eternal boy depending on his mom, who in turn will attend to him forever, and which is well rendered by the US studio’s translation “mama”.

The fourth and final example can be observed in the scene of the film which shows the whole population of the town flocking en masse to the screening of Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* (1960):

Example 5

<p>Voice off: Erano arrivati anche dalle campagne, percorrendo decine di chilometri a dorso di cavallo e creando problemi di promiscuità per i galantuomini di Agramonte.</p> <p>[They had arrived even from the countryside, going tens of kilometers on horseback and creating problems of promiscuity for the gentlemen of Agramonte]</p>	
ITALIAN STUDIO	US STUDIO
<p>609 01:14:23,007 --> 01:14:27,478 people had poured in from miles around</p>	<p>734 01:17:35,217 --> 01:17:37,048 They even came from the countryside,</p>
<p>610 01:14:27,727 --> 01:14:31,117 creating problems for the gentlemen of Agramonte</p>	<p>735 01:17:37,152 --> 01:17:39,814 riding for miles on horseback,</p> <p>736 01:17:39,921 --> 01:17:43,584 making the gentlemen of Agramonte anxious for their wives' virtue.</p>

The gender stereotype of the jealous Sicilian men obsessed with the control of women is deleted here by the Italian studio, which omits the word “promiscuity” from the translation, and generalised by the US studio, which utilizes the translation strategy of explicitation.

In all the aforementioned examples, the Italian studio’s use of omission as a translation strategy seems to have been dictated by the technical considerations of subtitling, i.e. the need for a comfortable reading speed. Indeed, the US studio’s tendency to translate the original message fully, on the other hand, produces faster reading speeds than those normally allowed in current professional practice (15 cps): 27, 18, 19 and 18 cps respectively. Hence, as the above discussion clearly shows, the two studios have adopted very different strategies, and, in order to appreciate the possible reasons for these differences, it is necessary to refer back

to the translation practices of the two subtitling companies under discussion and their influence on normative behaviour (Díaz Cintas, 2004: 27). The analysis of *Divorce – Italian Style* shows that the “improved subtitle version” by US Criterion consists of 994 subtitles and 6,435 words as opposed to Italian Cristaldi’s 825 subtitles and 4,717 words, a reduction of approximately 17 per cent in terms of subtitles and 26 per cent words respectively. Consequently, the two studios have followed different “matricial norms” which determine the “fullness” of the translation (Toury, 1995: 58-9). The dynamics of the “retranslation theory” postulated by Berman (1990) and Gambier (1994) may also help to explain such important differences. According to this theory, the first translation tends to assimilate the ST to the TT conventions and culture, whereas subsequent translations tend to compensate for this departure from the source by going back to the original with a more literal version. To a certain extent, the retranslation theory arguably explains the translation approach of the US studio, i.e. its tendency to translate the original speech fully and literally. But, on the other hand, US Criterion also features frequent instances of translations which tend to assimilate the ST to the TT culture. Such are the cases of *delitto d’onore* [crime of honour] translated with “crime of passion”, *onore* [honour] with “respect”, *cornuto contento* [cuckold happy] with “You’re a cuckold, and proud of it!” or *concubina* [concubine] with “common-law wife”. These concrete translation examples partly complicate the retranslation argument and make *Divorce* an interesting testing ground for this theory, which could be further pursued by looking at other film retranslations, whether in the field of gender stereotypes or otherwise. In any case, as suggested earlier, the tendency to omit or subtitle more or less of the original speech also has a direct impact on the extent to which gender stereotypes are translated or omitted and, consequently, on gender representation in general.

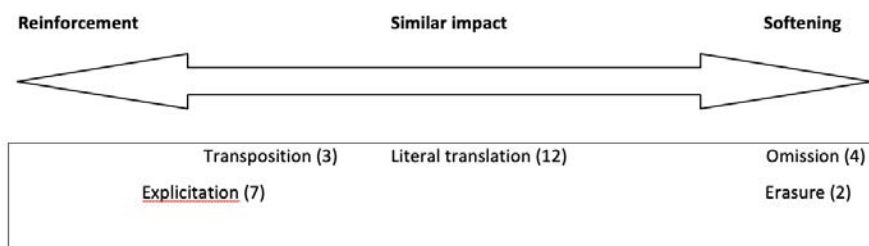
6. Conclusions

In order to draw some conclusions from this analysis of the approaches taken by the two studios, it is also essential to examine some quantitative data and find potential links with the previously discussed trends in the translation of gender stereotypes. This investigation has already shown how the translation strategies used in the two studios’ subtitled versions may produce instances of gender stereotype reinforcement but also softened stereotypes or a similar impact, i.e. neither reinforcement nor softening, for example in the case of literal translation¹.

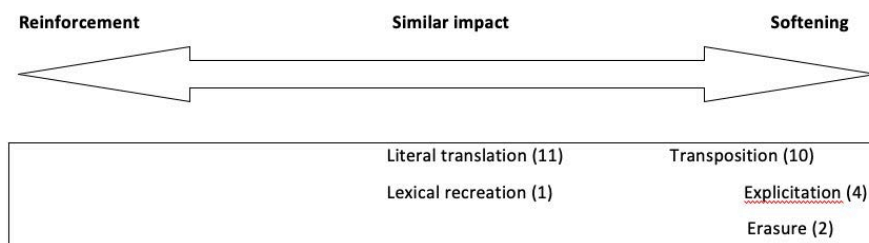
¹ I prefer the definition of ‘similar’ rather than ‘equal impact’ because the translation of such culture-specific concepts as gender stereotypes cannot arguably have an identical effect on the target audience as it has on the original viewers. For example, even when translated literally as ‘crime of honour’, the concept of *delitto d’onore* is likely to be received differently by the US audience who will not be able to relate to the cultural, social and

Graphs 1 and 2 show the different strategies adopted by the subtitlers of the two versions with the number of instances that each translation strategy has been employed. The continuum diagram helps visualize where the various strategies sit depending on their tendency toward reinforcement or softening of gender stereotypes:

Graph 1 – Cristaldi (Italian studio)



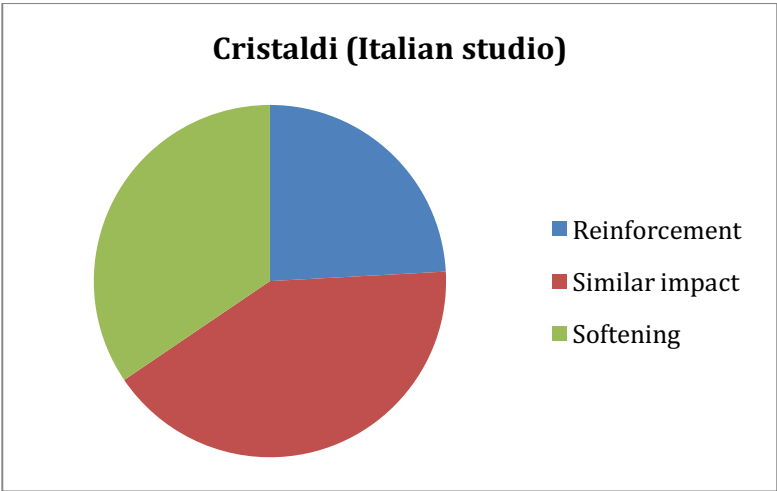
Graph 2 – Criterion (US studio)



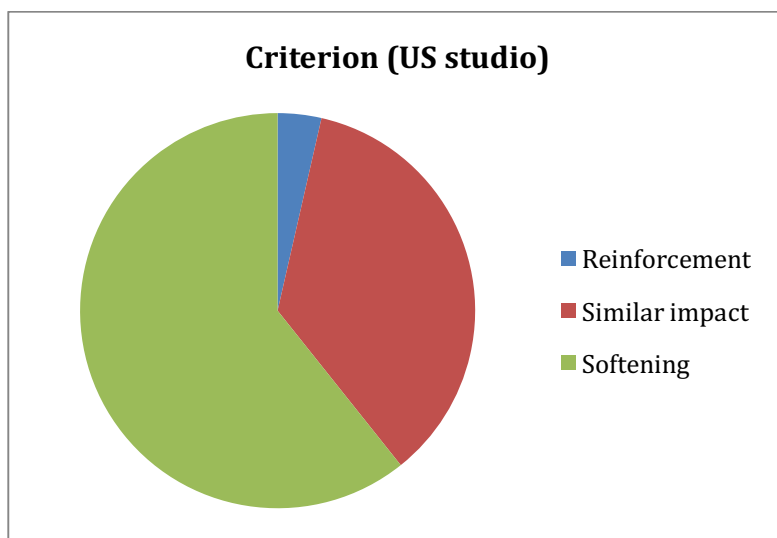
For some of the strategies the results are clear-cut: literal translation ought to create a similar impact, whereas omission and erasure tend to lead to softening. Strategies such as explicitation and transposition, on the other hand, are the ones most likely to produce different results. For instance, of the seven instances of explicitation found in the Italian studio's subtitled version, five lead to reinforcement and two to softening, while all four examples of explicitation observed in the US studio's subtitled version soften the gender stereotypes. The same can be said of transposition: of the ten instances of this translation strategy in the US studio's version nine lead to softened gender stereotypes and one to reinforcement, while of the three instances of transposition present in the Italian studio's version two lead to reinforcement and one to softening.

affective associations it retains in the Italian context.

On the whole, the US studio’s version features one translation producing gender stereotype reinforcement, seventeen instances of softening and ten of similar impact. The Italian studio’s version features seven examples of gender stereotype reinforcement, ten of softening and twelve of similar impact. The results are visualized in graphs 3 and 4:



Graph 3



Graph 4

Admittedly, some of the results are not as clear-cut as one might wish, as both studios use strategies leading to softer, similar or stronger gender stereotypes. However, the analysis has also provided sufficient evidence to support the argument for different trends in the subtitling approach of the two studios. Although quantitatively speaking, the Italian studio's subtitled version features slightly more instances of softening than reinforcement, some of the softened gender stereotypes, though not all of them, are the result of omissions which can be traced back to technical requirements such as a comfortable reading speed. Most importantly, however, from a qualitative viewpoint the nature of the manipulation process of the Italian studio often leads to a sexist reinforcement of the represented gender stereotypes. For the US studio, on the other hand, the findings suggest a more balanced approach to the translation of gender and a tendency to soften the stereotypes with only one isolated instance of reinforcement in the whole film. Regarding the interaction between the different channels of communication, the analysis has shown how the challenges faced by audiovisual translators when having to deal with the preservation of semiotic cohesion can be further complicated when issues of gender come into the equation.

To sum up, while the analysis of the Italian studio's subtitled version supports De Marco's (2012) and Joyce's (1997) argument on the sexist nature of the manipulation process, the results from the US subtitled version show a different trend toward the softening of gender stereotypes with some instances of lexical hijacking, which may be interpreted as examples of feminist translation (von Flotow, 1991). Hence, the findings suggest that different cultural perspectives as

well as subtitling companies' diverse practices affect the nature and extent of the manipulation process by producing different gender representations through translation. Clearly, the validity of these findings is limited to the film in question and will need to be corroborated by further research on a wider corpus. It is therefore hoped that the analysis of other films belonging to the same genre and subtitled by both studios such as *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Mario Monicelli, 1958) and *Seduced and Abandoned* (Piero Germi, 1963) will shed more light on the results obtained from the present study.

References

- Alfano, V. 2014. "Semiotic cohesion in the English subtitling of gender stereotype: the case of the *Commedia all'italiana*". Paper presented at the Conference *Subtitling and Intercultural Communication*, Università per Stranieri di Siena, 27-28 February.
- Basow, S. 1992. *Gender Stereotypes and Roles*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Bassnett, S. and Lefevere, M. (1990). *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Pinter.
- Berman, A. 1990. "La retraduction comme espace de traduction". *Palimpsestes*, 4, 1-7.
- Brunetta, G. P. 1991. *Cent'anni di cinema italiano*. Roma: Laterza
- Comand, M. 2010. *Commedia all'italiana*. Milano: Il Castoro.
- D'Amico, M. 2008. *La commedia all'Italiana. Il cinema comico in Italia dal 1945 al 1975*. Milano: Il Saggiatore.
- Deaux, K., Winton, W., Crowley, M. and Lewis, L. L. 1985. "Level of categorization and content of gender stereotypes". *Social Cognition* 3 (2), 145-167.
- De Marco, M. 2012. *Audiovisual Translation through a Gender Lens*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Díaz Cintas, J. 2004. "In search of a theoretical framework for the study of audiovisual translation". In P. Orero, (ed.). *Topics in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 21-34.
- Díaz Cintas, J. and Remael, A. 2007. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Even-Zohar, I. 1978. "The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem". In J. Holmes, J. Lambert, and R. van den Broeck (eds.). *Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies*. Leuven: Acco, 117-27.
- Feral, A.-L. 2011a. "Sexuality and femininity in translated chick texts". In L. von Flotow (eds.). *Translating Women*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 183-201.
- Feral, A.-L. 2011b. "Gender in audiovisual translation: Naturalizing feminine voices in the French *Sex and the City*". *European Journal of Women's Studies* 18 (4), 391-407.

- von Flotow, Louise. 1991. "Feminist translation: contexts, practices and theories". *TTR* 4 (2), 69-84.
- von Flotow, L. 1997. *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Gambier, Y. 1994. "La retraduction, retour et détour". *Meta*, 39 (3), 413-417.
- Günsberg, M. 2005. *Italian Cinema: Gender and Genre*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Joyce, J. 1997. "¡Átame! significa "te quiero": media-mediated genderlect and film translation". In J.M. Santamaría, E. Pajares, V. Olsen, R. Merino, and R. Eguíluz (eds.). *Trasvases culturales: literatura, cine, traducción* 2. Vitoria-Gasteiz: UPV/EHU, 175-184.
- Mayoral, A., Kelly, D. and Gallardo, N. 1988. "Concept of constrained translation. Non-linguistic perspectives of translation". *Meta*, 33 (3), 356-67.
- Ranzato, I. 2016. *Translating Culture Specific References on Television: The Case of Dubbing*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Simon, S. 1996. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London: Routledge.
- Santaemilia, J. (ed.) 2005. *Gender, Sex and Translation: The Manipulation of Identities*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Sesti, M. 1997. *Tutto il cinema di Pietro Germi*. Milano: Baldini & Castoldi
- Simon, S. 1996. *Gender in Translation. Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London & New York: Routledge
- Snell-Hornby, M. 1988. *Translation Studies. An Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Titford, C. 1982. "Sub-titling: constrained translation". *Lebende Sprachen*, 27 (3), 113-6.
- Toury, G. 1980. *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University.
- Toury, G. 1995. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Williams, J. E. and Best, D. L. 1990. *Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Multination Study*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Filmography

- Germi, P. 1961. *Divorzio all'italiana/Divorce – Italian Style*. Italy.
- Almodóvar, P. 1990. *¡Átame!* Spain.
- Monicelli, M. 1958. *I soliti ignoti/Big Deal on Madonna Street*. Italy.
- Germi, P. 1963. *Seduced and Abandoned*. Italy.

Language and identity representation in the English subtitles of Almodóvar's films

Francisco Javier Díaz Pérez

University of Jaen

Abstract

Language in Almodóvar's films is very frequently used as an important characterization method and as an identity constructor. In this sense, the main objective of the present paper is to analyse language and identity representation in twelve films by the Manchego filmmaker and in the English subtitles for DVD. More specifically, the article focuses on aspects of language and identity representation both in ST and TT, such as dialectal features, characteristics of gayspeak and use of swearwords. It has been observed that in the English subtitles there is a tendency to standardization of dialectal features and of sanitization of swearwords. Moreover, certain features of gayspeak –such as the reversal of derogatory terms or the use of cross-gender reference or girl talk– tend to be omitted in the English TT as well. These observed tendencies have an obvious effect both on identity representation and on characterization, and consequently, on the way in which monolingual English viewers perceive certain characters in Almodóvar's films.

Keywords: Pedro Almodóvar, subtitling, identity, dialectal features, gayspeak, swearwords

1. Introduction

The relevance of language in Almodóvar's films has been emphasized more than once (Díaz Cintas, 2001; Lakatos, 1999; Santamaría Ciorda, 2012; Strauss, 2001). The film-maker himself, on an official webpage which no longer exists, said the following:

For me, two good dialogue lines, coming from the mouth of a well-constructed character, fulfil the same function as special effects in *Terminator 2*, and they can achieve the same impact. (Almodóvar, 1991, quoted in Santamaría Ciorda 2012: 60; my translation)

In this sense, language in Almodóvar's films is emotionally-charged language, as described by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014: 195-198), and it is also employed as a

characterization device, as an identity constructor, which reflects not only geographical origin, but also social class, gender, or even sexual orientation.

The main purpose of this paper, in this connection, is to analyse language and identity representation in Almodóvar's films and in the English subtitles of their DVD versions.¹ In other words, in the present paper I aim to analyse the linguistic resources used both in source text (ST) and in target text (TT) to represent identity, as well as the devices used in the TT to represent certain features of the ST language. In order to reach this main purpose, the following specific objectives will be pursued:

- To analyse the representation of dialectal features in Almodóvar's films and their English subtitles.
- To study the defining features of gayspeak in Almodóvar's films and its representation in the TT.
- To focus on the use of swearwords, namely *joder* and *coño*, in Almodóvar's films and their translation in the English subtitles.

2. On language and identity representation

Film dialogues normally try to represent real-life language and, in that sense, language in films is one of the devices used to build and portray characters. Characters' identities are hence represented, among other means, by the type of language they speak. Among the identity traits represented in the language a character speaks, all those aspects related to gender play an essential role. As mentioned more than once (De Marco, 2012; Díaz-Cintas, 2012; Pérez-González, 2014), both subtitling and dubbing can perpetuate gender stereotypes. In Díaz Cintas's (2012: 281-282) words,

As a site of discursive practice, audiovisual media and its translation play a special role in the articulation of cultural concepts such as *femininity*, *masculinity*, *race*, and *Otherness*, among others. It can contribute greatly to perpetuating certain racial stereotypes, framing ethnic and gender prejudices [...].

De Marco (2012) shows how film dialogues represent women and men in same-sex and cross-gendered conversations. She focuses, for instance, on compliments, insults, and swearwords related to sex in women's and men's speech. Likewise, Díaz Cintas (2001) and Santamaría Ciorda (2016) concentrate on the translation of swearwords with sexual connotations uttered by female characters in two films by

¹ The films which constitute the corpus of this study are *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980), *Laberinto de pasiones* (1982), *Entre tinieblas* (1983), *La ley del deseo* (1987), *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (1988), *¡Átame!* (1990), *Kika* (1993), *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999), *Hable con ella* (2002), *La mala educación* (2004), *Volver* (2006), and *Los amantes pasajeros* (2013).

Almodóvar: *La flor de mi secreto* in Díaz Cintas (2001) and *¡Átame!* in Santamaría Giorda (2016). As Díaz Cintas (2001) highlights, Almodóvar's female characters try to liberate themselves from social conventions and one way of achieving it is by means of language freedom. Thus, they freely use swearwords – traditionally considered acceptable in male speech – and refer to their sexual activity.

Other studies, such as Ranzato (2012) and Asimakoulas (2012), describe filmic representations of respectively gayspeak and transgenderism and how those representations are affected by translation. Ranzato concludes that the fact that Italian culture has opened up to homosexual themes much more slowly than Anglo-Saxon cultures has inevitably conditioned the rendering of gayspeak in Italian dubbed versions of TV series. The scarcity of homosexual terms of common usage in Italian has often resulted in the translation of specific gay terms as heterosexual lexicon. Similarly, Asimakoulas (2012) defends that transgender characters in *Strella* built their own identity by appropriating certain expressive resources from the dominant discourses around them and changing their semiotic functions. Subtitling, however, Asimakoulas states, produces changes in the semiotic load of those expressive resources.

Another essential aspect in any individual's identity is his/her geographical origin, which is normally reflected in the geographical variety of language spoken by that individual. As stated by Federici (2011: 8), characters “are made recognizable through the language that portrays some features of their identity”. Regarding the feasibility of transferring dialectal differences, Pérez-González (2014: 131) argues, scholars may be divided into two groups. The first group is formed by those scholars who believe that recreating dialectal variation in a different linguaculture is incompatible with the industry's emphasis on readability and standard language usage, whereas the second group consists of advocates of more creative approaches (e.g., a dialect-for-dialect strategy). Gambier (1994), within the first group, considers that readability explains why sociolinguistic variation and particular linguistic features which characterize film protagonists are often neutralized in subtitles, whereas Federici (2011), as a representative of the second group, maintains that it is advisable to undertake experimental approaches in translating dialectal features. In his opinion, “[t]he infinite combinatory possibilities of creatively rendering dialects with dialects, or sociolects with sociolects, allow translators to surprise and challenge readers and should be embraced not shied away from” (Federici 2011: 16).

Scholars' attention has also been addressed to identity representation in those communities which simultaneously belong to two different cultures and which, in this sense, are said to inhabit a *frontera*, using the Spanish term.² This sometimes conflicting identity is represented in the language used in texts written, for example, by Latino and Latina writers living in the United States. Their hybrid identity is

² See in this respect, for instance, Joysmith (1996), Pascual Soler (1999), Godayol i Nogué (2000), López Ponz (2009), or Díaz-Pérez (2014).

reflected in a border tongue which is constantly changing from English to Spanish, in such a way that code-switching becomes one of their identity hallmarks. This identity forged between cultures, as argued in Díaz-Pérez (2014: 343), is mainly represented through language in the 'T' by means of code-switching, although other linguistic resources are also employed, such as the use of non-standard grammar and spelling, the presence of dialectalisms, or the resort to calques and other borrowings.

Among all the linguistic resources used in fictional orality, and particularly in filmic dialogue, to represent identity, I decided to focus on geographical dialects (section 3), gayspeak (section 4) and swearwords (section 5), because these are essential features of the language used in Almodóvar's films.

3. Geographical dialects

As stated by Alsina (2011: 138),

One of the features associated with spoken language which is typically found in fictive orality is linguistic variation, in other words, the use of sociolectal, dialectal and idiolectal – that is to say, non-standard – elements.

In a paper about social variation, Alsina (2011) recognizes that it is difficult to separate it from geographical dialects. Among the functions of non-standard elements (Alsina, 2011: 138; Cadera, 2011: 290) – both dialectal and sociolectal – in narrative dialogue, the following could be mentioned:

- to make dialogue sound real and spontaneous,
- to help to contextualize the narrative socially and geographically,
- to contribute to the depiction of characters,
- to help to support a given ideology.

Although both Alsina (2011) and Cadera (2011) refer to narrative dialogue in literary works, geographical and social dialects may be said to perform the same function in film dialogues. As mentioned above, one important function of geographical and social dialects is to help to depict and delineate the characters, but together with and related to this characterization function, these non-standard elements are also ideologically charged, as described by Alsina (2011: 138). In this sense, those characters who speak a non-standard and geographically-marked variety of Spanish in Almodóvar's films are normally common people who tend to be imbued with positive traits, such as solidarity or honesty. Agustina or La Agrado, the two characters illustrating the use of dialectal features below, may also serve to exemplify this ideology-supporting function.

Volver, as described by Almodóvar himself, is, among his films, that which is most characteristic of La Mancha, Almodóvar's homeland. In his own words,

To me, 'Volver' is a title that comprises so many ups and downs. I came back to comedy a bit more. I came back to the feminine universe, to La Mancha (there is no doubt that this is my more strict *manchega* movie, the language, the habits, the patios, the soberness of the façades, the paved streets). [...] And certainly I went back to my mother. Coming back to La Mancha is always coming back to my mother's womb.³

In *Volver* some of the characters' language presents certain features typical of the dialect of Spanish spoken in La Mancha. Among those dialectal features – some of which are shared by other geographical varieties of Spanish and some of which are difficult to separate from features of a social variety –, the following are represented in Agustina's speech in example 1:

- Use of the definite article before proper nouns (e.g. *la Paula*)
- Dialectal lexical terms (e.g. *mociquilla*)
- *-illa* diminutive suffix (e.g. *regularcilla*)
- Use of non-standard expressions (e.g. *No estoy buena; he venido a darle una vuelta*)

Example 1

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
AGUSTINA	¿Esta es la Paula?/	Is this Paula?/
RAIMUNDA	¡Claro!/	Of course./
AGUSTINA	¡Pero si está hecha una	- She's all grown up!
RAIMUNDA	mociquilla !/	- Give her a kiss./
AGUSTINA	Dale un beso./	She's got your father's eyes./
	No lo puede ocultar, ha sacado	
RAIMUNDA	los mismos ojos de tu padre./	How are you?/
AGUSTINA	¿Cómo estás?/	
	Regular cilla ./	Not good./
SOLE	No estoy buena ./	Don't say that./
AGUSTINA	No digas eso./	I want to give my grave
	Que he venido	the once-over . /
	a darle una vuelta a mi tumba./	With this wind,
	Con este airazo	you can't keep it clean.
	no hay manera de tenerla limpia.	

3

http://www.clubcultura.com/clubcine/clubcineastas/almodovar/volverlapelicula/enpalabras02_eng.htm

(*Volver* 00:01:54 --> 00:02:12)⁴

As regards the representation of these dialectal features, which are characteristic of a geographical variety that is so closely related to identity in the target language (TL) subtitles, the type of language is basically standard English with some occasional colloquialisms, such as *I want to give my grave the once-over*.

Another Almodovarian character that is depicted or characterized by the type of language she speaks, and particularly by dialectal features, is La Agrado, a transvestite from the Canary Islands in *Todo sobre mi madre*. The following two textual fragments may serve to illustrate La Agrado's speech:

Example 2

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
AGRADO	Y una mañana, cuando volví del "Campo", jarta' de trabajar/ descubro que me había desvalijao' toda la casa./ Relojes, joyas, revistas de los 70, donde yo me inspiro./ 300.000 pesetas./ Lo que más me duele es que se llevara/ una talla de la Virgen del Pino que mi madre me había regalao'./ ¡Que pa' qué coño la querrá, si no cree en na' !/ A no ser que esté metía' en una secta satánica/ y la quiera pa' una ceremonia de ésas.	I came back from working the Field all night/ and she'd cleaned the place out./ Watches, jewels, '70s magazines that were my inspiration./ 300,000 pesetas./ What hurt most was/ she took a statue of the Virgin that my mother gave me./ What for? She doesn't believe in anything./ Unless she's in a satanic sect and wanted it for some ritual.

(*Todo sobre mi madre*: 00:24:21 --> 00:24:41)⁵

Example 3

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
AGRADO	Si os quedáis/ yo prometo entreteneros contando la historia de mi vida./	If you stay, I promise to entertain you with my life story./

⁴ In all the examples the relevant elements appear in bold type. Emphasis is mine. Slashes (/) mark subtitle boundaries.

⁵ All the dialectal features in this example are represented in the SL subtitles. The apostrophes also appear in the subtitles.

	<p>Adiós, lo siento, ¿eh?/ Si les aburro hagan como que roncan. Así.../ Yo me cosco enseguida. Y para nada herís mi sensibilidad, ¿eh?/ De verdad/ [...] ¡Miren qué cuerpo!/ ¡To' hecho a medida!/ Rasgao' de ojos, 80.000./ Nariz, 200.000. Tiradas a la basura/ porque un año después me la pusieron así de otro palizón./ Ya sé que me da mucha personalidad,/ pero si llego a saberlo no me la toco./ Continúo. Tetas, dos, porque no soy ningún monstruo./ 70.000 cada una. Pero éstas las tengo ya super-amortizadas.</p>	<p>Goodbye. I'm very sorry./ Well, if I bore you, you can pretend to snore, like this./ I'll get the idea, and you certainly won't hurt my feelings./ Honestly. [...] Look at this body! All made to measure./ Almond-shaped eyes, 80,000./ Nose, 200,000./ A waste of money. The next year another beating left it like this./ It gives me character, but if I'd known/ I wouldn't have touched it./ I'll continue./ Tits, two, because I'm no monster./ 70,000 each, but I've more than earned that back./</p>
--	--	--

(*Todo sobre mi madre*: 01:13:37 --> 01:14:37)⁶

Among the phonetic dialectal features typical of the variety of Spanish spoken in the Canary Islands and represented in La Agrado's speech, the following can be highlighted:

- elision of intervocalic /d/: *desvalijao'*, *regalao'*, *metía'*, *to'* (as opposed to standard *desvalijado*, *regalado*, *metida*, *todo*);
- elision of intervocalic /r/: *pa'* (*para* in standard Spanish);
- aspiration of h: *jarta'* (*barta* in standard Spanish);
- aspiration of /s/ in implosive or syllable-final position: *amortisáh*; *si oh quedái* (*amortizadas*; *si os quedáis* in standard Spanish);
- seseo (pronunciation of /θ/ as /s/): *palisón*, *amortisáh*, *parese* (*palizón*, *amortizadas*, *parece* in standard Spanish);

⁶ Aspiration of implosive *s*, *seseo*, and elision of final /θ/ and /ð/ are not represented in the SL subtitles. Therefore, although in the subtitles the viewer may read *os*, *quedáis*, *entreteneros*, *adiós*, *cosco*, *sensibilidad*, *verdad*, *nariz*, *tiradas*, *después*, *palizón*, *personalidad*, *tetas*, *dos*, *estas*, *las*, and *amortizadas*, what La Agrado actually pronounces is *oh*, *quedái*, *entreteneroh*, *adióh*, *cobco*, *sensibilidá*, *verdá*, *narí*, *tiráh*, *dehpueh*, *palisón*, *personalidá*, *tetab*, *doh*, *ebtab*, *lah*, and *amortisáh*.

-
- elision of certain final consonants, such as /θ/ or /ð/: *narí*, *verdá* (*nariz*, *verdad* in standard Spanish).

Of these phonetic features, the first three are represented in the Spanish subtitles, whereas the other three are not. In the English subtitles, in turn, all the phonetic features represented in La Agrado's speech have been omitted, in such a way that the TL subtitles are written in standard spelling. The type of language spoken by La Agrado, which is used as a characterization device in the ST, has been standardized in the TT, which corresponds to the solution proposed by the first group of scholars which Pérez González (2014) referred to, as described above.

4. The translation of gayspeak

As defined by Ranzato, *gayspeak* is the idiolect of a speech community, or “the modes and ways of homosexual communication” (Ranzato, 2012: 371). In spite of the fact that diversity within the homosexual community makes it a simplification to identify gayspeak with gays in general, some common characteristics of this idiolect in English are shared by gayspeak in Spanish as well and are reflected in Almodóvar's films, namely:

- Reversal of derogatory homosexual terms, such as *maricón* (Hayes, 1981/2006),
- Inversion of gender-specific terms, or girl talk (Harvey, 1998/2004, 2000a, 2002; Ranzato, 2012),
- Use of French (Harvey, 1998/2004, 2000a; Ranzato, 2012),
- Presence of specific lexical terms and expressions (Hayes, 1981/2006; Ranzato, 2012).

4.1. *Reversal of derogatory terms*

According to Hayes (1981/2006: 72), “[a]s the feminist and black movements have worked out a new set of values for the terms *woman* and *black*, the task of value redefinition occupies a central position in gay liberation theory”. Thus, traditionally insulting terms used to address and to refer to gay men, such as *fag* or *faggot*, acquire new affirmative meanings within the gay community. In this connection, Stanley (1974/2006) states that after 1969, when the gays started marching, terms which had been pejorative became from that moment politically charged and began to be used to affirm the new identity of gays. This reversal of derogatory terms occurred not only in American (and British) English, but also in Peninsular Spanish, in which the term *maricón*, originally a derogatory term, is very

frequently used as a vocative indicating membership to the same in-group. As explained by Martín (2016),

When two gays call each other *maricón*, we are using what is called a “linguistic mark”: an expression that denotes a non-explicit reality, but which is understood by both speakers. It is, in this case, a mark of complicity: that which exists between two men who share the great lines of their biographies and who can understand each other much better than other men. It is also a word we use to place ourselves above its insulting use, to express we are no longer hurt by words, but by intentions. *Maricón* is a term we use frequently and with affection.

This trait is reflected in several Almodovarian films, such as *Los amantes pasajeros* and *La mala educación*, as illustrated by examples 4 to 6. Whereas in two of the cases it has been translated as *bitch* (in example 4) and as *fag* (in one of its occurrences in example 5), in the other two cases the term has been omitted in the TT.

Example 4

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSERRA FAJAS JOSERRA	Está hirviendo./ ¿Tanto? ¿Tú crees? ¡ Maricón , el Novio, no! ¡El agua!	Boiling over. Really? That much? Bitch , not the Groom! The water!

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:13:11 --> 00:13:17)

Example 5

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
PACA/PAQUITO ZAHARA/ÁNGEL PACA/PAQUITO	¡Ay, maricón ! Saca un poquito, venga./ ¿Aquí?/ Aquí, pues claro que sí./ Las calles no están ni puestas. Estamos solitas./ ¡Ay, maricón !/ Vamos.	C'mon, let's have some!/ -Here? -Of course!/ They haven't rolled out the streets yet./ Oh, fag !/ Come on.

(*La mala educación* 00:18:23 --> 00:18:33)

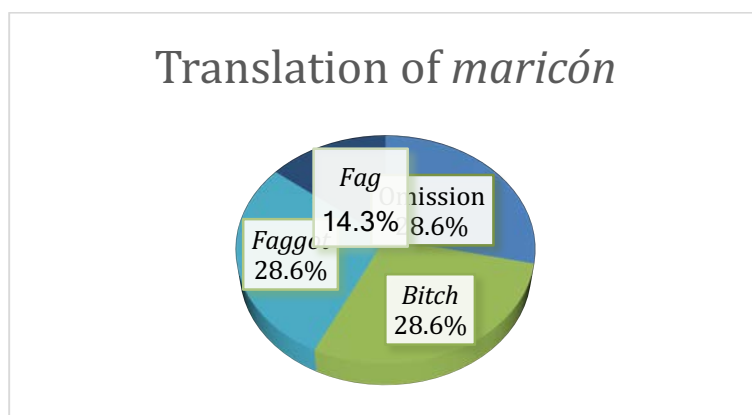
Example 6

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSERRA	Ha entrado una loca que dice que es vidente/	A crazy woman came in and said she's a psychic./

FAJAS JOSERRA	y se ha conectado al más allá a/ través de los paquetes de Alex y Benito/ y dice que durante este viaje va a ocurrir algo muy gordo/ que nos afectará a todos./ ¡Eso es lo mío!/ ¡ Maricón , algo muy gordo/ que nos afectará a todos!	Then she contacted the beyond through Alex and Benito's crotches/ and she says that something very big will happen on this trip/ - and affect all of us. - She was talking about me./ Something very big that'll affect all of us.
------------------	---	---

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:12:48 --> 00:13:04)

The term *maricón*, whose value has been reversed to express solidarity and a sense of belonging to the same group, has been translated in different ways, as illustrated by the previous examples (See Graph 1 below). Thus, in 28.6% of the cases it was rendered as *bitch*.⁷ As David Toussaint says in his blog on *The Huffington Post*, *bitch* “is a word that gay men can use ad nauseam with their male friends and their close girlfriends, with no objection”. The same percentage is reached by *faggot* and by the omission of the term from the subtitles. Finally, *maricón* has been translated as *fag* in 14.3% of its occurrences.



Graph 1. Translation of *maricón* in Almodóvar's films.

⁷http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-toussaint/the-8-things-gay-men-need-to-say-less-often_b_5628296.html.

Apart from highlighting the high frequency of *bitch* as an in-group vocative, the author of this blog also criticises this use of this term, as it may be denigratory to women.

4.2. *Girl talk*

The inversion of gender-specific terms, also referred to as “girl-talk”, has been identified as one of the most characteristic traits of gayspeak (Legman, 1941/2006; Crew, 1978/2006; Harvey, 1998/2004; etc.). According to Crew (1978: 60), “[f]rom one gay male perspective, cross-gender identification is a gesture of defiance of the hetero culture which defines all males as feminine who do not want sexual intercourse with women”. Crew (1978: 60) also establishes that a “very recurrent use of cross-gender reference is the establishing of supportive bonds of non-genital friendship”, as happens with the use of *chicas* in example 7, term deleted from the English TT.

All the female-marked terms appearing in bold in the ST in examples 7 to 12 either have been deleted in the English subtitles or have been translated by means of terms which are not female-marked, with the only two exceptions of *marrana* and *ésta*, which have been respectively translated as *slut* and *madame*. *Slut* is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “[a] woman of dirty, slovenly, or untidy habits or appearance; a foul slattern”⁸, so in this case the use of a term, which is in general use reserved to women, has been maintained in the TT.

Example 7

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSERRA	Chicas , hacemos un “escote” y se las pagamos./	- We’ll all chip in and pay him.
ULLOA	Esto no se paga con dinero.	- Money couldn’t pay for this./
JOSERRA	¡Pero se las pagamos, mezquina !	- But we’ll still pay him, miser !

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:44:26 --> 00:44:32)

Example 8

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
FAJAS	¡Estás hablando con un apóstata, que lo sepas!./	You’re talking to an heretic, so there./
JOSERRA	Pues a mí me gustaba tener una creyente en la tripulación.	I like having a believer in the crew.

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 01:03:38 --> 01:03:43)

⁸ www.oed.com/view/Entry/182346?rskey=pzOblr&result=1&isAdvanced=false#id

Example 9

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSEERRA	Vosotras , como sois amorales, no tenéis ningún problema.	Of course! You 're amoral, you've got no problem.

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:44:47 --> 00:44:50)

Example 10

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
FAJAS	Hazte así, que te chorrea algo./ ¡Lefa! ¡Ya sé lo que te ha pasado!/ ¡Cochina, marrana!	- Do this./ Cum! I know what happened. Pig! Slut!

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 01:03:02 --> 01:03:11)

Example 11

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSEERRA	¿Tú a mí no tienes que decir nada, Alex Acero?/	- Have you nothing to tell me?
ALEX	¿De qué?	- Me?/ - About what?
JOSEERRA	¡De ésta !/ A mí no me hables en femenino,	- About madame !/ - I'm not female.
BENITO	¿vale?	- Shut up, experimental cock
JOSEERRA	¡Tú cállate, mamadora experimental!	sucker!

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:17:51 --> 00:17:58)

Example 12

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
ZAHARA/ÁNGEL	Es el Padre Manolo./ ¡Uy, qué mayor está!	That's Fr. Manolo./ -He looks so old!
PACA/PAQUITO	Es que no es una niña ./	-Well, he's no chicken./
ZAHARA/ÁNGEL	Claro.	I guess.

(*La mala educación* 00:19:26 --> 00:19:31)

Girl talk, so frequent in the ST gayspeak, is much less frequent in the English subtitles. The fact that English practically has no grammatical gender partly accounts for this finding. In addition, there are examples in which a female-marked term is used to refer to a third person who is not involved in the conversation – as in example 12 – and whose TT version not only lacks a female-marked term, but,

on the contrary, it uses the masculine third person singular pronoun to refer to that person. Any cross-gender reference, therefore, completely disappears from the English subtitles in this case. The occasional use of *bitch* as an in-group vocative compensates for the very limited use of female-marked terms to translate those terms presenting gender inversion.

4.3. Use of French

The frequent use of French has been highlighted more than once (Harvey, 1998/2004, 2000a, 2002; Ranzato, 2012) as one of the defining features of English gayspeak or camp talk. As Harvey (1998/2004: 407) points out, the use of French “accomplishes a humorous nod to sophistication and cosmopolitanism, French language and culture being saturated for the Anglo-Saxon world with the qualities of style and urbanity”. In the Spanish ST in example 13, a French sentence (*je suis désolé*) is also used as a feature of gayspeak, which is also reflected in the TT. In addition, the utterance of this French sentence is used as a humorous device and it is taken advantage of to introduce a pun on *francés*, which is also reproduced in the TT.

Regarding the use of French as a defining characteristic of English gayspeak, the use of *madame* in the English subtitles in example 11 above may be considered as an attempt at compensation for all those instances in which gayspeak features have disappeared from the TT.

Example 13

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSEERRA	Como dicen los franceses, “ je suis désolé ”./ ¿No sé si me...? ¿Eh? ¿Si me entiendes?/ Hablando de los de franceses. Mejor dicho, ¡del francés!	As the French say, Je suis désolé . I don’t know.../ if you understand me./ Speaking of the French, or rather... “French culture”!

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:17:42 --> 00:17:51)

4.4. Specific lexicon

According to Hayes (1981/2006: 71), “[a]s we would expect from the process of categorization, the richest features of social Gayspeak are found in the lexicon”. In examples 14 and 15, the ST contains a lexical term and a phrase which are specific to the gay community, namely *cuartos oscuros* and *sacar del armario*. These homosexuality-related terms correspond to terms also belonging to the English lexicon of homosexuality in the subtitles, namely *dark rooms* and *to be outed*.

Example 14

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
FAJAS	¿Yo? Yo no puedo. Yo tengo que rezar./	Me? I can't. I have to pray./
ULLOA	- Para lo que te ha servido...	- It hasn't helped you much.
FAJAS	- ¡A mí, de mucho!/ - ¡Y a ti también!	- It's helped me a lot, and you too./
ULLOA	- ¿A mí de qué?/	
FAJAS	Qué hubiera sido de tu vida si yo no hubiera pedido por ti.../	Me? How?/ Where would you be now without my prayers?/
ULLOA	¿Ah, sí? ¿Y qué pedías?/	What did you pray for?/
FAJAS	Pues que dejaras las drogas, el alcohol y los cuartos oscuros ./	That you'd give up drink, drugs and dark rooms . That's what./
ULLOA	¡Anda que las únicas alegrías que tiene la vida...!/ ¡Ya podías haber pedido que encontrara un buen marido!/ Si eso también, pero, hija mía, con tu carácter me lo pones muy difícil.	The only pleasures in life!/ Why not pray for a husband for me?/ I did, but with your temper it isn't easy.

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:07:42 --> 00:08:08)

Example 15

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
JOSEERRA	Es que el comandante Alex Acero está casado y tiene dos niños./ Uno de once y otro de trece y es una edad muy complicada,/ para que le saquen al padre del armario y... y... ¿Me entienden?	Captain Alex Acero is married with two children,/ aged 11 and 13. Very difficult ages,/ as you can understand, for their father to be outed .

(*Los amantes pasajeros* 00:15:53 --> 00:16:03)

5. The translation of swearwords

In an attempt to reflect the way people speak, the language used in Almodóvar's films stands out for containing a considerable amount of swearwords and taboo words. Apart from being used as a characterization method, the main function of these swearwords is to express emotions, as stated by Jay and Janschewitz (2008: 268). As Ghassempur (2011: 55) states, swearing may also be used to reinforce social bonds, a phenomenon referred to as "social swearing" by Crystal (1995: 173), who asserts that it is the commonest swearing pattern, which may mark social solidarity. According to Wajnryb (2005), swearing can be classified into three categories: catharsis, aggression and social connection.

The discourse phenomenon of swearing, Greenall (2011: 45) argues, provides important information about people, characters, and settings. In other words, as Greenall states following Mao (1996), swearing generates social implicature, which indicates that "it gives valuable hints regarding aspects of individuality and class membership, information which is crucial in understanding where someone comes from". As stated by Díaz Cintas (2001) and Santamaría Ciorda (2016), the use of swearing by female characters in Almodóvar's films responds to the film-maker's interest in challenging certain traditional male-chauvinistic conceptions related to women. Díaz Cintas (2001: 54) highlights in this sense that "Almodóvar's films rely heavily on women characters and quite particularly on their linguistic freedom and creativity". Thus, women's use of politically incorrect language is paramount to Almodóvar's characterizations and at the same time may be understood as a reflection of women's fight for liberation from the conventions and oppressions of a male-chauvinistic and puritan society.

As put forward more than once (Díaz Cintas, 2001; Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2014; Greenall, 2011; Han and Wang, 2014; Santamaría Ciorda, 2016), swearing and taboo words tend to be toned down in interlanguage subtitling due to several reasons. One of the hypothesis from which Díaz Cintas departs in his study on the translation of taboo terms and expressions in *La flor de mi secreto* is "that a Spanish film containing sexually explicit terms might be pruned of (some of) them in order to make it more palatable to British moral sensibilities" (Díaz Cintas, 2001: 53.) According to Díaz Cintas (2001: 51), the context where reading takes place might have an effect on the translation of swearwords, since even though it is always an individual act, reading on one's own, in private, is quite different from reading and watching a film within a gregarious group.

Joder and *coño* are two of the most frequent swearwords in Spanish, and it is on these two swearwords that this study has focused. In the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA) frequency list, the only swearword which precedes *coño* and *joder* is the much softer *mierda*.⁹ Should it be for cross-cultural differences, for time

⁹ The CREA frequency list can be found at <http://corpus.rae.es/lfrecuencias.html>. *Coño* occupies the 8379th position, whereas *joder* occupies the 10502th position.

and space constraints in subtitling, for the change of mode from spoken to written language, or for the fact that a film is not normally watched in private, the fact is that the most frequent solution has been the omission of the swearwords analysed (See Graph 2 and Graph 3). Omission reached a percentage of 42.4% in the case of *joder* and 51.7% in the case of *coño*. In the cases in which these two swearwords are translated, there is a diversity of TT lexical items used as counterparts. Thus, *joder* is translated by means of seven different swearwords, whereas *coño* has eight different equivalents in the English subtitles. The swearword most frequently used to translate *joder* in our corpus is its direct English counterpart, *fuck*, described in Andersson and Trudgill (1990: 60) as “one of the most interesting and colourful words in the English language today”. According to Andersson and Trudgill (1990), this swearword may be used to describe many different emotional states. This versatility is also reflected in the different grammatical functions this swearword may fulfil as well as in its morphological flexibility. Moreover, as indicated for instance by Jay (2009: 156), *fuck* – together with its morphological variants – is the commonest swearword in English. Its frequency of use, added to the fact that *coño* has no direct counterpart in English as an expletive, may explain why, in those cases in which *coño* is translated, its most frequent TT equivalent is *the fuck*.

According to the explanation offered by the *Cambridge Dictionary* online, “[i]n English, swearing which involves ‘religious’ taboo expressions is likely to be weaker than swearing that involves ‘parts of the body’ taboo expressions”¹⁰. In this sense, it could be said that when *joder* is translated as *God* or *Christ*, or when *coño* is translated as *for Christ’s sake*, *dammit* or *the hell*, the ST swearwords have been toned down. In other words, they have been replaced by weaker swearwords in the TT. This softening solution has also been applied in the translation of *joder* as *shit*, or in the translation of *coño* as *shit* or *body shit*. In this sense, *shit* is described in Ofcom (2005: 82; cited in Santamaría Ciorda, 2016: 296)¹¹ as “mild, toilet word, everyday language, not really offensive (though could be if used about a child/young person)”. In the same report (Ofcom 2005: 84; cited in Santamaría Ciorda, 2016: 296), *fuck* is defined as “[s]trongly disliked by many, very offensive most of time, but occasional toe-stubbing use appears tolerated”. All in all, the translation of *joder* involves some degree of sanitation in 60.5% of the cases, whereas in the case of *coño* this percentage rises to 70.9%. As mentioned above, when used as an interjection, *coño* lacks a direct counterpart in English. This fact, together with the

¹⁰ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/swearing-and-taboo-expressions>

¹¹ *Ofcom* stands for the *Office of Communications* – the UK regulatory and competition authority for the broadcasting, telecommunications and postal industries – which commissioned research from the Fuse Group about viewers’ attitudes regarding offensive language in broadcasting.

extremely high degree of offensiveness of the dictionary equivalent of *coño*,¹² may explain the difference in the solutions adopted to translate the two swearwords focused on in this paper. The images included below portray some of the translations of the two swearwords analysed.

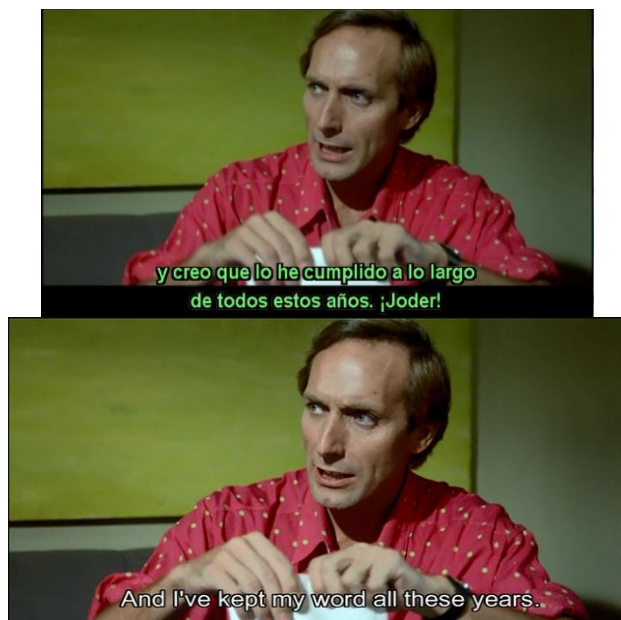


Image 1. Translation of *joder*: omission. (*La ley del deseo* 00:49:18)

¹² See in this respect The Slang Online Dictionary (<http://onlineslangdictionary.com/meaning-definition-of/cunt>), according to which *cunt* “is widely considered to be one of the most offensive words in the English language. It is referred to as the ‘c’ word”.



Image 2. Translation of *joder: fuck*. (*Hable con ella* 01:23:15)



Image 3. Translation of *joder: shit*. (*Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* 00:32:59)



Image 4. Translation of *coño*: omission. (*Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* 01:16:01)



Image 5. Translation of *coño*: *the fuck*. (*Kika* 00:26:29)



Image 6. Translation of *coño*: *dammit*. (*Todo sobre mi madre* 01:18:01)



Graph 2. Translation of *joder* in Almodóvar's films.



Graph 3. Translation of *coño* in Almodóvar's films.

In spite of what has been said above regarding the translation of swearwords, it is also true that some occasional examples have been found in which a swearword is introduced in the TT corresponding to source textual fragments which contained no swearword at all. Aware of all the instances in which ST swearwords have been sanitized in the TT, translators may have decided to compensate for all those cases by introducing swearwords at some other points in the text. Examples 16 to 18

illustrate this type of compensation. Thus, in example 16, *mala*, used here as an intensifier, is translated as a swearword also functioning as an intensifier, *fucking*. Likewise, the intensifier *gran* in example 17 is also rendered as *fucking* in the TT¹³. In example 18, the adjective *imposible* is not intensified in the ST, whereas in the ST *fucking* is also introduced to precede *imposible*. In example 19, *me vais a tocar el fandango* – a quite vulgar but also euphemistic expression – is translated into English as *are getting on my fucking nerves*, an expression containing a much stronger swearword.

Example 16

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
AGRADO	Dieciocho años sin decir ni mú, ni una carta, ni una mala llamada.	18 years, not a word, not a letter, not a fucking call.

(*Todo sobre mi madre*: 00:23:00 --> 00:23:03)

Example 17

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
ROSA MANUELA	Fue tu paisana, Lola./ ¡Lola! ¡Lola!/ ¡Hija de la gran puta!	It was your compatriot Lola. That lousy fucking bitch!

(*Todo sobre mi madre*: 00:41:31 --> 00:41:39)

Example 18

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
NINA	Eres igualita que Eva Harrington/ y te aprendiste el texto de memoria a propósito./ ¡Es imposible aprendérselo sólo oyéndolo por los altavoces!	Just like Eve Harrington. You learned the text on purpose./ It's fucking impossible to learn it over the loudspeakers!

(*Todo sobre mi madre*: 00:54:38 --> 00:54:44)

Example 19

Speaker	ST subtitles	TT subtitles
RAIMUNDA	Mira, me vais a tocar el fandango tú y tu tía, las dos.	You and your aunt are getting on my fucking nerves!

(*Volver*: 01:24:56 --> 01:24:59)

¹³ For the translation of insults from a relevance-theoretic perspective, see Mateo and Yus (2000).

6. Concluding remarks

Concerning the representation of language and identity in the English subtitles of Almodóvar's films, it can be asserted that, in general terms, the ST features analysed in this paper are not represented at the same level in the TT. Some differences may be found, however, across the different features which have been studied. Thus, geographical varieties of the SL are not represented in the English subtitles at all. At most, some occasional colloquialisms are introduced. The general tendency, therefore, implies a standardisation of the dialectal features present in the ST. Consequently, a great deal of the information about the characters whose speech presents dialectal features is not available to the TT monolingual viewer.

Gayspeak is represented in the ST by the reversal of derogatory terms – more specifically by the reversal of the originally derogatory and insulting *maricón* –, cross-gender reference or girl talk, a specific homosexuality-related lexicon, and an occasional use of French. Only the latter two achieve an equivalent level of representation in the TT as compared to that of the ST, whereas the reversal of derogatory terms and girl talk are much less common in the English subtitles than in the ST. The representation of gay identity through language, hence, is much less evident in the TT than in the ST, which has an obvious effect on characterization as well.

Regarding swearwords, such as *joder* and *coño*, the most frequent translation solution is omission. Moreover, when these words are translated, the ST swearwords are rendered by means of different swearwords and expressions in English and on some occasions they are replaced by weaker swearwords in the TL. A tendency to sanitation, then, can be perceived in the English subtitles of Almodóvar's films. A multiplicity of reasons might be adduced to explain this finding. Thus, one of them is related to the change from oral to written language. The fact that films are normally viewed in public and the time and space restrictions in subtitling may also account for the less significant presence of swearwords in the English TT. In spite of this general tendency to sanitation, some differences have been found regarding the translation of the two swearwords analysed. Thus, for instance, although in both cases the most frequent solution has been omission, the percentage of use of this solution has been higher in the case of *coño* (51.7%) than in the case of *fuck* (42.2%). Cross-cultural differences may account for this finding. Thus, whereas *joder* used as an expletive has a direct counterpart in English, this is not the case with *coño*. In addition, the English equivalent of *coño* offered by bilingual dictionaries is considered as a really offensive word. As mentioned for the translation of geographical dialects and for gayspeak, this general tendency to the sanitation of swearwords in the English subtitles may have consequences for the way in which monolingual English viewers perceive some characters in Almodóvar's films. It is also true, though, that some occasional cases of compensation have been found, so that some swearwords introduced in the TT correspond to non-swearing ST fragments.

References

- Alsina, V. 2011. "Issues in the translation of social variation in narrative dialogue." In J. Brumme and A. Espunya (eds.). *Translation of Fictive Dialogue*. New York: Rodopi, 137-154.
- Andersson, L. and Trudgill, P. 1990. *Bad Language*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Asimakoulas, D. 2012. "Dude (looks like a lady): Hijacking transsexual identity in the subtitled version of *Strella* by Panos Koutras". *The Translator*, 18, 45-75.
- Cadera, S. M. "Representing phonetic features". In J. Brumme and A. Espunya (eds.). *Translation of Fictive Dialogue*. New York: Rodopi, 289-304.
- Crew, L. 1978/2006. "Honey, let's talk about the queens' English". In D. Cameron and D. Kulick (eds.). *The Language and Sexuality Reader*. London: Routledge, 56-62.
- Crystal, D. 1995. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- De Marco, M. 2012. *Audiovisual Translation through a Gender Lens*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Díaz Cintas, J. 2001. "Sex, (sub)titles and videotapes". In L. Lorenzo and A.M. Pereira (eds.). *Traducción subordinada (II) El subtitulado (inglés-español/galego)*. Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, 47-67.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. 2012. "Clearing the smoke to see the screen: Ideological manipulation in audiovisual translation". *Meta*, 57 (2), 279-293.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. and Remael, A. 2014. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge.
- Díaz-Pérez, F. J. 2014. "The translation of identity on the *frontera*". *Babel*, 60 (3), 325-346.
- Federici, F. 2011. "Introduction: Dialects, idiolects, sociolects: Translation problems or creative stimuli?" In F. Federici (ed.). *Translating Dialects and Languages of Minorities*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1-20.
- Ghassempur, S. 2011. "Fuckin' hell! Dublin soul goes German: A functional approach to the translation of 'fuck' in Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments*". In F. Federici (ed.). *Translating Dialects and Languages of Minorities*. Bern: Peter Lang, 49-64.
- Godayol i Nogué, M. P. 2000. *Espais de frontera: Gènere i traducció*. Vic: Eumo Editorial.
- Greenall, A. K. 2011. "The non-translation of swearing in subtitling: Loss of social implicature?" In A. Serban, A. Matamala, and J.M. Lavour (eds.). *Audiovisual Translation in Close-Up: Practical and Theoretical Approaches*. Bern: Peter Lang, 45-60.
- Han, C., and Wang, K. 2014. "Subtitling swearwords in reality TV series from English into Chinese: A corpus-based study of *The Family*". *The International Journal for Translation & Interpreting Research*, 6 (2), 1-17.

-
- Harvey, K. 1998/2004. "Translating camp talk: Gay identities and cultural transfer." In Venuti, L. (ed.). *The Translation Studies Reader*. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge, 401-422.
- Harvey, K. 2000a. "Describing camp talk: language/pragmatics/politics". *Language and Literature*, 9 (3), 240-260.
- Harvey, K. 2000b. "Gay Community, Gay Identity and the 'Translated Text'". *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 13 (1), 137-165.
- Harvey, Keith. 20002. "Camp talk and citationality: a queer take on 'authentic' and 'represented' utterance". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 1145-1165.
- Hayes, J. 1981/2006. "Gayspeak". In D. Cameron and D. Kulick (eds.). *The Language and Sexuality Reader*. London: Routledge, 68-77.
- Jay, T., and Janschewitz, K. 2008. "The pragmatics of swearing". *Journal of Politeness Research*, 4, 267-288.
- Jay, T. 2009. "The utility and ubiquity of taboo words". *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4 (2), 153-161.
- Joysmith, C. 1996. "Bordering culture: traduciendo a las chicanas". *Voices of Mexico*, 37, 103-108.
- Lakatos, S. 1999. "El lenguaje de las películas de Pedro Almodóvar: experiencias sobre su traducción al húngaro". In J. C. Garrido Medina (ed.). *La lengua y los medios de comunicación: actas del Congreso Internacional celebrado en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid en 1996*, Vol. 2, 816-824.
- Legman, G. 1941/2006. "The language of homosexuality. An American glossary." In D. Cameron and D. Kulick (eds.). *The Language and Sexuality Reader*. London: Routledge, 19-32.
- López Ponz, M. 2009. *Traducción y Literatura Chicana: Nuevas perspectivas desde la hibridación*. Granada: Comares.
- Mao, L. R. 1996. "Chinese first person pronoun and social implicature", *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 7, 106-128.
- Martín, G. J. 2016. *Quiérete mucho, maricón: Manual de éxito psicoemocional para hombres homosexuales*. Barcelona: Roca editorial. Kindle edition.
- Mateo, J. and Yus, F. 2000. "Insults: A relevance-theoretic taxonomical approach to their translation". *International Journal of Translation*, 12 (1), 97-130.
- Ofcom Office of Communications. *Language and Sexual Imagery in Broadcasting: A Contextual Investigation*, 2005.
- https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/24015/language.pdf
- Pascual Soler, M. N. 1999. "Linguistic terrorism at the juncture of cultures: Code-switching in U.S. Latina self-narratives". In T. Hoenselaars and M. Buning (eds.). *English Literature and the Other Languages*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 269-282.
- Pérez-González, L. 2014. *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, Methods and Issues*. London: Routledge.
- Ranzato, I. 2012. "Gayspeak and gay subjects in audiovisual translation: Strategies in Italian dubbing". *Meta*, 57 (2), 369-384.

- Santamaría Ciordia, L. 2012. "La idiosincrasia del lenguaje almodovariano y su repercusión sobre la traducción. Análisis de algunas de las soluciones en el campo de la variación lingüística del subtitulado en polaco de *Volver* (2006)". *Studia Romanica Posnaniensia*, 39 (2), 57-70.
- Santamaría Ciordia, L. 2016. "A contrastive and sociolinguistic approach to the translation of vulgarity from Spanish into English and Polish in the film *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1990)". *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 11 (2), 287–305.
- Stanley, J. P. 1974/2006. "When we say 'out of the closets!'" In D. Cameron and D. Kulick, (eds.). *The Language and Sexuality Reader*. London: Routledge, 49-55.
- Strauss, F. 2001. *Conversaciones con Pedro Almodóvar*. Madrid: Akal.
- Wajnryb, R. 2005. *Expletive Deleted: A Good Look at Bad Language*. New York: Free Press.

Filmography

- Almodóvar, P. 1990. *¡Átame!*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1983. *Entre tinieblas*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 2002. *Hable con ella*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1993. *Kika*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1987. *La ley del deseo*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 2004. *La mala educación*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1982. *Laberinto de pasiones*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 2013. *Los amantes pasajeros*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1988. *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1980. *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 1999. *Todo sobre mi madre*. Spain.
- Almodóvar, P. 2006. *Volver*. Spain.

Subtitling Italian politics and culture in

Paolo Sorrentino's *Il divo*

Margherita Dore

University of Roma Sapienza

Abstract

Paolo Sorrentino's film Il divo. La Spettacolare vita di Giulio Andreotti (2008) is based on the political career of Giulio Andreotti, the most prominent and controversial figure in modern Italian political history. To some extent, Andreotti's sharply ironic and enigmatic persona reflects the contradictions of Italian society, thus corroborating existing stereotypes. It is therefore not surprising that this movie has fomented a great deal of scholarly debate over the issue of political corruption, which seems inherently part of Italian culture (Antonello 2010, Marcus 2010a and 20120b, Marlow-Mann, 2010). More importantly, the film has become the focus of the debate regarding the ways recent audiovisual works by the new wave of young Italian directors have dealt with such a phenomenon (Holdaway, 2011).

The linguistic and cultural peculiarities of Il divo have cast doubt on the likelihood of its success outside its country of origin, which Sorrentino believed could be offset by his innovative cinematic approach to Italy's so-called cinema of 'civic engagement' (or cinema d'impegno) (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009). Hence, this study concentrates on the comparative analysis of Il divo (Source Text, ST) and its English subtitled version (Target Text, TT). In particular, it considers the challenges that this film poses to its transfer. The examination of the two datasets shows that the translator has retained the language- and culture-specific references to Italian politics and related events in most parts of the text. However, this may require a substantial processing effort on the part of the target viewer and might be detrimental to the appreciation of the film itself.

Keywords: AVT, *Il divo*, Subtitling, Language-Bound References, Culture-Specific References

“La simpatia in politica è una pregiudiziale”¹
Cirino Pomicino, *Il divo*.

¹ “Niceness is detrimental in politics”.

1. Introduction

In his book-length study on political discourse, Chilton (2004: 3) has rightly pointed out that politics is essentially based on a power struggle between those who attempt to assert and maintain power and those who try to resist it. Furthermore, he claims that politics can also be seen as cooperation, “practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty and the like” (ibid. 3). In the introduction to his translation of Aristotle’s *The Politics*, Sinclair (1962) explains that this cooperation among humans can be achieved through language. To this end, he discusses Aristotle’s famous claim that humans are political animals and stresses that:

[M]an is a political animal, in a sense in which a bee is not, or any other gregarious animal. Nature, as we say, does nothing without some purpose; and she has endowed man alone among the animals with the power of speech. (ibid. 3)

Moreover, Schäffner and Bassnett (2010: 2) have observed that the language of political discourse, as a complex form of human activity, is shaped by specific political situations and processes.

Interestingly, none of these authors provide a definition of the way in which language shapes context in politics. From a cinematic point of view, dealing with such a fascinating issue is certainly difficult. Sorrentino’s 2008 film *Il divo. La spettacolare vita di Giulio Andreotti* (henceforth, *Il divo*) represents a case in point. It concentrates on Giulio Andreotti’s controversial political career, as well as the many unspoken secrets of Italy’s so-called ‘first republic’ (1946-1994)². The narration spans the period from Andreotti’s seventh time being elected in 1992, his failed bid for the presidency of the Italian Republic, the *Tangentopoli* bribe scandal (a.k.a. ‘Bribesville’; cf. Koff and Koff, 1999: 175-178 for an overview), and up to his trial in 1995. Andreotti’s decades-long political career amounted to a constant struggle to assert and maintain power and thwart those who opposed him. Hence, *Il divo* can be seen as an attempt to reflect on the power politicians can exert on society and how political discourse can be used manipulatively to shape reality. The film refers to major Italian scandals Andreotti was allegedly involved in, including the assassinations of the journalist Carmine (a.k.a. Mino) Pecorelli and judge Giovanni Falcone, politician Aldo Moro’s kidnapping and murder, as well as bank scandals. It also deals with the so-called ‘strategy of tension’: killings and bombings were carried out and then credited to anarchist and communist groups to spread panic among the citizenry, so Italians would call for the suppression of the Communist and left-wing parties in general (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009:

² After World War II and the overthrow of the Fascist regime, Italian people voted for the abolition of the monarchy and introduction of the Republic. The term ‘First Republic’ describes Italy’s political history from the 1946 election until the 1994 election.

33; Koff and Koff, 1999: 95). This strategy was supposedly orchestrated by the Italian secret services and allegedly supported by NATO-controlled and CIA-financed organizations, including neo-fascist groups.

Scholars interested in Italian Studies and Cinema Studies such as Antonello (2010), Marlow-Mann (2010) and Marcus (2010a and 2010b) have devoted much discussion to the way *Il divo* deals with political corruption and crime within Italian culture. More importantly, they have debated at length the ways recent audiovisual works by the new wave of young Italian directors have dealt with such a phenomenon, thus taking Italy's so-called cinema of 'civic engagement' (or *cinema d'impegno*) to a whole new level (cf. also Holdaway, 2011).

Sorrentino's film received rave reviews nationally (D'Avanzo, 2009) and internationally (Jeffries, 2009 and Weissberg, 2008), winning sixteen David di Donatello Awards in Italy as well as the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, and earning over \$11m (while its production budget was \$6.7m). Nonetheless, the culture specificity of this film has cast doubt on the likelihood of its success outside Italy. Brunette (2008) contends that: "the big question is how well the film will play to audiences outside of Italy, since even in its home territory many viewers will be baffled by the overwhelming cast of characters and the sheer complexity of Andreotti's many entanglements". In his response to Crowdus's question regarding the movie's international reception, Sorrentino suggested that there was no need for the audience to focus on the details of Italian politics as such; rather they should ponder on the metaphorical meaning of power in the film (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 37). This is consistent with the general idea that politics is the quintessential terrain of power struggles, as suggested above.

From a linguistic and cultural standpoint, *Il divo* is certainly an interesting case study. It is characterised by dense dialogues and monologues that are imbued with a vast amount of culture-specific references to Italian political scandals and crimes, which convey an extremely negative yet also fascinating image of Italy. Moreover, to some extent, Andreotti's sharply ironic and enigmatic *persona*, along with his vision of politics and truth, reflects the contradictions inherent in Italian society, thus corroborating existing stereotypes such as the Italians' tendency to bend the law or interpret rules to their own advantage.

Hence, it is worth investigating how the multiple challenges this film poses to its linguistic and cultural transfer have been dealt with and overcome when subtitled in English. To this end, the following section briefly discusses the characteristics of Italy's so-called *cinema d'impegno*, a genre to which *Il divo* can be said to belong (Marcus, 2010a: 246, Holdaway, 2011: 24). This can help us understand the importance of Sorrentino's cinematic style. Section 3 deals briefly with today's fast-growing audiovisual market, with a particular focus on the subtitling of culture-specific references. Section 4, with its comparative analysis of the Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT), has a twofold aim. On the one hand, it seeks to show the function(s) culture-specific items have within the Italian ST. On the other hand, it seeks to explore how these items have been tackled by the

subtitler. Section 5 concludes this work by suggesting that the translator has very often been forced to retain the culture-specific references in most parts of the text. This may require a substantial processing effort on the part of the viewer, which might be partly offset by the innovative cinematic approach to Italy's cinema of 'civic engagement' that this film represents.

2. Italian *Cinema d'impegno*

Due to space limitations, an extensive analysis of the Italian film industry in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries cannot be offered here, and also falls beyond the scope of this study. Suffice here to recollect that Italian film output reached its peak between the mid-1960s and 1970s; yet, imported movies have constantly amounted to three times the domestic production, especially in recent decades (Holdaway, 2012: 279).

In his lucid analysis of the many crises Italian cinema has undergone, Holdaway nonetheless appears confident that these cyclical 'deaths and rebirths' can offer new possibilities for the industry's regeneration (ibid. 281). Examples of possible 'deaths' in Italian cinema are the so-called *cinepanettoni* (low-brow popular comedy), while the *commedia sentimentale* (rom-coms such as *Scusa, ma ti chiamo amore*, Federico Moccia, 2008) may be seen as an instance of the industry's merely 'vegetative state'. Dead or not, both these strands of Italian film production have so far met with huge popular success (Bayman and Rigoletto, 2010: 312). Nonetheless, Italian cinema can also boast noteworthy examples of 'rebirths' such as *Un eroe Borghese* (*Ordinary Hero*, Michele Placido, 1995), *Giovanni Falcone* (Giuseppe Ferrara, 1993), *Placido Rizzotto* (Pasquale Scimeca, 2000) and *I cento passi* (*One Hundred Steps*, Marco Tullio Giordana, 2000), which belong to the long-standing cinematic tradition of *cinema d'impegno* or *cinema politico*.

Holdaway (2011: 24) has subsumed *Il divo* under this latter category while, in a special issue of *The Italianist*, Marcus (2010a: 246) has hailed this film as marking a new phase in Italian cinema, one she has dubbed 'post-realist', since it comes after the realism that characterised the Italian cinema of the twentieth century. In addition, from a characterisation standpoint, Marcus has also highlighted Sorrentino's notable use of irony as part of Andreotti's *persona*. To this end, she has pinpointed the several moments when this feature becomes more evident (e.g. the subtitle to the film's title, the many scenes in which other characters admit their inability to comprehend Andreotti's impenetrable psychological makeup, his own continuous headaches, his avoidance of the truth).

Marcus's claims have stirred a lively debate among scholars in Italian Film Studies. In his response to Marcus, Marlow-Mann (2010: 263) has questioned the need for the 'post-realist' label and suggested moving beyond the realism vs. neo-realism paradigm. Moreover, he maintains that, rather than being a depiction of Andreotti's sharp irony, Sorrentino's *Il divo* should be seen as an instance of

fantapolitica, a movie that employs fictitious situations (e.g. the kiss between Andreotti and Riina, the former chief of the Sicilian mafia) to shed light on real political events and ultimately condemn Andreotti. Conversely, Marcus (2010a: 254) has suggested that Sorrentino leaves his cinematographic verdict on Andreotti's guilt open, whereas Antonello (2010: 261) has claimed that the director leaves the viewer "the freedom and responsibility to make a critical judgement". For his part, Gotor (2008) has explained that: "Sorrentino does not judge; he wants to tell a story. Indeed, this is not a movie against Andreotti but on Andreotti as a metaphor of Italian power, its boredom and solitude, and on the audience's duty to reflect on it [the metaphor] because it is not unfamiliar, quite the opposite" (my translation; cf. also Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 37 for a similar reading of the movie).

Cinematically speaking, Holdaway (2011: 27) has remarked that *Il divo* retains some traditional features of old-style *cinema d'impegno*. For instance, it provides a 'foreword' (called Italian Glossary in the film) that serves as background information to the Italian context and a post-script that is used as a referent to Andreotti's story after *Tangentopoli*. Yet, both Holdaway and Crowdus seem to agree that *Il divo* only touches upon historical events in favour of a more innovative approach to cinematic narration. Sorrentino himself has claimed that he wanted to create a "rock opera" (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 34), a term which Marcus (2010a: 251) has criticised as inappropriate to the subject matter. Without launching into such a theoretical and technical discussion, it is nevertheless clear that Sorrentino's cinematic skills have helped create a more intriguing audiovisual work that moves away from the most traditional ways of depicting Italian political history. This film features a restless rock 'n' roll soundtrack matched by innovative cinematographic effects. Crowdus has pointed out the distinctive visual style of *Il divo*, which features "exaggerated camera angles, extraordinary compositions, slo-mo and state-of the art CGI effects, impressive editing (...) and long silky-smooth Steadycam" (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 32). In this regard, Sorrentino has remarked on the need for "packaging [films] in a more compelling, tricked-out visual style" (ibid. 34). I shall return to this later as it will prove to be relevant to the issues under scrutiny here.

While a lengthy multimodal analysis of the text is unfeasible here, due to space limitations, before proceeding with the comparative analysis of the two datasets, the following brief analysis of the DVD covers for the Italian and UK/American markets respectively may be of interest.



Figure 1. DVD covers of the Italian and UK/US releases

As can be seen in Figure 1, the Italian version (on the left-hand side) features the silhouette of Andreotti in the dark, which probably seeks to underscore the controversy swirling around this political figure. He is shown praying, as it is a well-known fact that Andreotti was a fervent Catholic who would regularly attend mass. However, this image also recalls the moment of confession, a theme that is a central to the film. Confessing implies telling the truth in an act of repentance, in order to seek absolution of one's sins. As far as Andreotti is concerned, Sorrentino has cast doubt on whether the truth about his career is ever to be revealed (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 37). As Coviello (2010: 9) has shrewdly pointed out, Andreotti is pictured while confessing to the priest Mario in many scenes, yet his confessions become a sort of outlet for the former's secrets and political aims and desires. The message that we perceive is that these are not confessions *stricto sensu*, which also explains why Don Mario is never portrayed while absolving Andreotti. In one scene Sorrentino imagines the politician, alone, confessing his wrongdoings to his absent wife Livia, in a breath-taking monologue. What is important, however, is that his confession does not even require the presence of another person because political power here appears to absolve itself (ibid.). The Machiavellian idea that the ends justify the means, be they legal or perverse (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 35), is also supported by Andreotti's belief that his political deeds are part of the divine mandate he received, when he fiercely claims: "Questo lo sa Dio e lo so anche io" (subtitled as "God knows this, I know it too" in the film) (Coviello, 2010: 9).

As for the English version (on the right-hand side), it is interesting to note that Andreotti is pictured along with the affiliates to his political faction of the Christian Democrats, which may suggest these figures were his accomplices. Interestingly,

the cover also features a quote by Guido Bonsaver claiming that Sorrentino is where Fellini and Tarantino meet. Marlow-Mann (2010: 264) and Holdaway (2011: 28) seem to agree with this, as they have also remarked on the intertextual reference to Quentin Tarantino's 1991 *Reservoir Dogs*, along with a wealth of references to Fellini's movies in Sorrentino's film (cf. in particular Marcus 2010a: 252). Interestingly, neither version of the cover includes the film's subtitle; indeed, *La spettacolare vita di Giulio Andreotti* (or *The spectacular life of Giulio Andreotti*, which is an example of acceptable replicated idiomaticity in English) serves to mould the film's aesthetics in adherence to the ironic 'spettacolarità' surrounding Andreotti (Holdaway 2011: 30).

3. Audiovisual Translation in the New Millennium

In his 1989 study, Delabastita described AVT as a "virgin area of research" (ibid. 202). Yet, the continuously growing interest in AVT among scholars in Translation Studies has enabled it to develop "its very own theoretical and methodological approaches, allowing it to claim the status of a scholarly area of research in its own right" (Díaz-Cintas, 2009: 7). For his part, Chaume (2004) has placed particular emphasis on the need to integrate research in AVT with insights from film and communication studies, along with the classic translation-related disciplines like linguistics, literature and philology. To this end, he has pinpointed the elements that compose an AVT text, which are conveyed through acoustic and visual channels. The verbal text (i.e. what is said), para-verbal features (i.e. how the verbal text is uttered) and the non-verbal text (e.g. soundtrack, special effects, etc.) are received by the viewers through the acoustic channel. Conversely, the elements pertaining to the iconographic (e. g. icons, symbols), photographic (e.g. colour, light, etc.), planning (types of shots) and mobility codes (e.g. proxemic and kinetic signs) are conveyed through the visual channel. Consequently, he has remarked the importance of the non-verbal elements when multimodal products are transferred across languages and cultures through this mode (ibid. 22-23).

Chaume's analysis has focused particularly on dubbing, yet his reflections can be extended to AVT in a broader sense, since today's rapid advances in digital technologies have helped to develop new creative processes tailored to film production, which also affect the intralingual, interlingual and intercultural transfer. Directors and scriptwriters can make use of new communication tools on and off screen to convey their message by means of the multisemiotic texts they have conceived in their minds. For instance, animated writing has become an increasingly frequent feature of audiovisual works: text message conversations are reported on the screen while the audience sees the characters typing on their smartphones (cf. Pérez-González, 2012: 14 who defines this practice as 'authorial titles' – or titling – and demonstrates its application to the British TV series *Sherlock*). Pérez-González (2014: 194) has described animated writing as 'dynamic'

in order to distinguish it from the ‘static’ writing that can be traditionally found in audiovisual texts (e.g. intertitles, subtitles, etc. that flash on and off the screen). Dynamic writing exploits the intersemiotic features of audiovisual texts by changing their layout, font, colour, rhythm, speed, etc. (ibid. 203). As he explains, this innovative use of superimposed text “can influence the audience’s engagement with and immersion in the modal text” (ibid. 204). When translated, this particular feature of the original is often retained. A noteworthy example of retention is found in Pérez-González’s (2014: 195-198) discussion of the English translation of the Russian film *Nochnoi Dozor* (*Night Watch*, Timur Bekmambetov, 2004). In this case, the flowing messages in Russian have been replaced with their English counterparts.

The use, and translation, of dynamic writing in audiovisual productions is particularly relevant to the study at hand. Sorrentino’s insertion of this feature has been described as one of the elements that sets *Il divo* apart from traditional Italian filmmaking, especially when it deals with controversial issues such as politics, corruption and the Mafia (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009). As shown in Figure 2, Sorrentino inserts captions that strategically accompany the images (or actors’ lines) so as to provide background information as the story unfolds. Frenetically used, they mostly refer to the figures (be they perpetrators or victims) that have been involved in the dramatic events the film alludes to. Sorrentino’s decision to use a blood-like red colour for these captions is therefore unsurprising and consistent with the whole text. According to Holdaway (2011: 30), the audience is “visually assaulted” by these informative captions. Conversely, Marcus (2010a: 253) sees them in a more positive light, observing that they “dance about the screen in a kind of free-floating semiotic abandon”.



Figure 2. Dynamic and static subtitles in *Il divo*

As can be noted, these captions have been transferred into English by means of conventional static subtitles (cf. Figure 2), which follow the norms of the industry (i.e. white writing on transparent background, one or two lines at the bottom of the screen that do not exceed 35-40 characters per line; Chaume, 2013: 112). Subtitling is normally subsumed under the captioning category since the spoken ST is rendered in writing (ibid.). Yet, in the case of dynamic writing, the interlingual transfer takes place via the same semiotic sign, as is usually achieved through specific types of captions (e.g. newspaper headlines, written notes, window signs, text messages). Considering the importance of this stylistic addition, *Il divo* could

have probably benefitted from the application of a similar approach to further enhance the reception of this film by the TTT viewers.

As mentioned earlier, AVT is a type of specialised profession that has to be carried out by taking into account several factors and constraints. In considering interlingual subtitling, which is also the AVT mode under investigation here, the technical constraints mentioned above have been shown to be the reason behind some degree of *medium-restricted* textual manipulation (Díaz-Cintas, 2012: 284). However, if we were to look at manipulation in a more positive light, we might well consider it as an opportunity to stimulate the translator's creativity, especially when the translation task at hand is heavily connoted by culture-specific references, as in the case of *Il divo*. Gottlieb (2014: 36) has remarked that subtitling is an addictive type of translation, as it always includes the ST (as opposed to non-addictive types such as literary translation, in which the original is not normally present), and the ST may also be influenced by factors such as the status of the source text or the knowledge of the source language and culture in the target culture, etc. The *cinema d'impegno* and *Il divo* in particular are imbued with specific linguistic and cultural references to Italian political events that are clearly bound to influence the subtitling process, and therefore also worth investigating.

The translation of culture-specific material (be it proper names, or more general linguistic references to the culture within which the material has developed, such as idioms, nursery rhymes etc.) has long been debated in Translation Studies in general and AVT in particular (Leppihalme, 1997, Davies González and Scott-Tennent, 2005, Pedersen, 2007 and 2011, Dore, 2010, Ranzato, 2016, just to name a few). These scholars have proposed categorisation frameworks and procedures to deal with such issues, particularly when dealing with either dubbing or subtitling. In a *medium-restricted* (Holmes 1988) mode of AVT such as subtitling, the original text can be heard along with the reading of the subtitles. Hence, Extralinguistic Cultural References (or ECRs, to use Pedersen's terminology) may be replaced by a series of procedures, including retention, literal translation, specification, generalization, substitution or even omission, when deemed possible (cf. Pedersen, 2007: 31-32 and Gottlieb, 2014: 38). In particular, Pedersen (2007, 2011) contends that culture-specific references can be replaced by transcultural ERCs, which are general references that can be grasped by a broader audience because they are internationally known. Conversely, Dore (2010: 20-21) has suggested the preferable practice of using a better-known reference that still springs from the original culture (e.g. translating 'Mr. Potato Head' as 'E.T'.) wherever possible. Lastly, subtitlers may resort to the use of references proceeding from the target culture, thus turning to the most *domesticating* solution (Venuti, 1998). With this in mind, the analysis of the two datasets in the following section serves to verify which types of *ad hoc* procedures and more general strategies have been used to transfer the culture-specific references from Italian into English in Sorrentino's *Il divo*.

4. Subtitling *Il Divo*

Il Divo was released few years before Sorrentino's Academy Award winning film *La Grande Bellezza* (*The Great Beauty*, 2013). The latter represented a continuation of Sorrentino's commitment to providing deep insights into Italian culture and politics by showing this nation's inertial and cultural decline (Picarelli, 2015). Viano (2010) has discussed *Il divo* through its depiction of Rome, a city which has often been seen as a symbol of eternity, or a "reminder of "eternity"" (ibid. 344). His reading of Sorrentino's account of Andreotti's political rise and fall is compared to the city itself and some of its most important places, such as *Via del Corso* and the palaces where Andreotti lived and worked. In his review titled "Bottom Line: Supremely entertaining political cartoon that may not play beyond its native Italy", Brunette's (2008) choice of the term "cartoon" for use in his title to refer to Andreotti's unappealing appearance (i.e. his stoop, his stiff torso, his impassive expression, with the actor all the while wearing a pair of ludicrous ear prosthetics) is not random. Caricatures and masks have often been used to represent the connection between power and the grotesque in Italian cinema (cf. Coviello, 2010 for an extensive discussion).

Earlier in this paper, I mentioned the fact that in *Il divo* the dialogues and monologues are dense, meaning that they are extremely loaded in terms of the information conveyed. In subtitling, this has often been regarded as a major issue since it entails the condensation of the spoken text. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) and Lomheim (1995) have reported percentages of text reduction ranging from 22% to 40%. Conversely, in the case of the text under scrutiny, the comparison I have carried out between the spoken ST and the English subtitled TT shows that the original Italian version amounts to 8,162 words whereas the English subtitles comprise a total of 7,542 words. Clearly, there is no extremely significant difference between the two datasets; less than 10% of text is not transferred in the TT. This may be explained by the fact that the actors almost always speak at a reasonably slow pace, thus conveying the idea that a thoughtful statement in the script is well pondered, especially in Andreotti's case. This probably helps keep the amount of omitted text to the minimum.

According to Gottlieb's (2014: 28) definition, the translation of *Il divo* from Italian into English can be defined as an upstream translation (i.e. from a dominated into a dominant language). Being subtitled, the original soundtrack "aurally influences the choices of the subtitler [...] with a potential outcome less idiomatic than what is most likely seen in monosemiotic translation" (e.g. literary translation; ibid. 31). Hence, idiomaticity and culture-specific allusions (Dore 2010) (or Extralinguistic Cultural References, to use Pedersen's 2007 terminology) can be used to gauge the level of *foreignisation* and/or *domestication* (Venuti, 1998) in AVT.

Before proceeding, it seems important to point out that the analysis that follows has been carried out on the subtitled version of the DVD marketed in the

USA and UK by a UK-based company named Artificial Eye. Interestingly, though, the subtitles themselves were produced by Laser S. Film s.r.l., a subtitling company based in Rome. Since it has not been possible to contact either the distributor or the subtitling company, the hypotheses put forward below are solely based on the contrastive examination of the two datasets.

As mentioned above, the film comprises a large number of linguistic and cultural references that need careful handling in order to transmit the necessary contextual and textual clues for the understanding of the film. In other words, I attempt here to establish how the translator has tackled the substantial amount of ‘Italianness’ that the film entails and what strategies and procedures they have used to convey it in the English language. In general, there is a high number of culture-specific references comprising one or more words in *Il divo*. As Marcus (2010a: 253) has pointed out, Sorrentino’s penchant for enumeration is evident in the many lists that can be found in the film, especially in the ‘foreword’ (and the post-script) to the film and the many captions and intertitles in it. The following is a minute description and analysis of the Italian original and the English subtitled version of part of the foreword of *Il divo*, since it serves to exemplify the complexity of the translation task at hand.

Ex. No.	Italian ST	English TT
1	<p>Brigate Rosse (BR): Organizzazione terroristica marxista-leninista nata nel 1970. Nel 1978 le BR sequestrano il presidente della DC, Aldo Moro. Dopo 55 giorni Moro sarà ucciso. I <u>brigatisti</u> hanno sempre sostenuto di avere agito in autonomia, ma le indagini per individuare la prigionia di Moro possono essere state pregiudicate della loggia P2.</p>	<p>RED BRIGADES (BR): Marxist-Leninist terrorist group founded in 1970. Kidnapped DC president Aldo Moro in 1978, killed him after 55 days. <u>Terrorists</u> always maintained they acted independently, but search for Moro perhaps influenced by P2 lodge.</p>

2	<p>Democrazia Cristiana (DC) Partito d'ispirazione cristiana, fondato nel 1942 da Alcide De Gaspari. Organizzato in correnti, ha governato l'Italia dal dopoguerra ai primi Anni Novanta, quando fu sciolto travolto dalle <u>inchieste di corruzione e finanziamento illecito dei partiti</u>, comunemente chiamata "<u>Tangentopoli</u>". I maggiori leader sono stati Aldo Moro, Amintore Fanfani, Giulio Andreotti.</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC): Christian ethics party founded by De Gasperi. Organized in factions, governed Italy from 1946 to early '90s, when, along with other parties, it was swept away by "<u>Bribesville</u>" scandal. Main leaders: Aldo Moro, Amintore Fanfani, Giulio Andreotti.</p>
3	<p>Loggia P2: La <u>loggia massonica</u> "Propaganda due" è stata un'associazione segreta nata durante la Guerra Fredda <u>in chiave anti-comunista</u>. Gestita da Lucio Gelli, si conoscono i nomi di 972 iscritti. Ha raccolto politici, giornalisti, uomini di d'affari, delle Forze Armate e dei servizi segreti, <u>con l'obiettivo di realizzare il piano di rinascita nazionale: un programma di trasformazione autoritaria dello stato</u>. Anche Silvio Berlusconi, <u>poi presidente del Consiglio</u>, è stato iscritto alla Loggia.</p>	<p>P2 LODGE: <u>Anti-Communist</u> Masonic secret society founded during Cold War. Run by Lucio Gelli, 972 known members: Politicians, reporters, businessmen, military, secret service personnel. <u>Objective was to install an authoritarian government</u>. Silvio Berlusconi was also member.</p>

Table 1. Translation of the Italian Glossary in *Il divo*

As can be seen in Table 1, each of the three sections in the ST aims to assist viewers in understanding the complex topic at hand. Sorrentino probably felt

compelled to provide such information, as he has stated that most Italians are likely unaware of these details (Crowdus and Sorrentino, 2009: 37). The TT clearly appears reduced in terms of number of words used. The reason for this is that each section of the ST remains on the screen while the TT subtitles flash on and off so as to cover only a minimum portion of the screen. Regarding the oft-debated issues of text reduction and omission, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 148) point out that “[i]t is the balance between the effort required by the viewer to process an item, and its relevance for the understanding of the film narrative that determines whether or not it [the item] is to be included in the translation”. Clearly, here the translator has had to determine how much could be omitted or condensed in order to allow the foreign viewer to understand the film narrative and, most importantly, the culture-specific references to the Italian political landscape of that time.

As can be noted, in both (1) and (2) the translator has opted for translating “Brigate Rosse” (Red Brigades) and “Democrazia Cristiana” (Christian Democrats), while retaining the original acronyms (respectively, BR and DC). This may depend on the fact that both acronyms, which are easily understood by Italians, are extensively used in the movie. More interestingly, in (1) the translator has opted to neutralise the word “brigatista” (i.e. BR members) by using its superordinate (Terrorist) probably in the attempt to explicate its meaning (defined as ‘generalization’ in Pedersen, 2011 and Gottlieb, 2014). In (2), “Tangentopoli” is correctly conveyed by its calque “Bribesville”, which has been used by the International English-speaking press to refer to this scandal concerning corrupt Italian politicians, as mentioned in the ST (“inchieste di corruzione e finanziamento illecito dei partiti”). Instead, the latter piece of information has been omitted in the TT. Although the word “Bribesville” is itself sufficiently self-explanatory, the TT viewers may need to acquire more information regarding it. However, it stands to reason that this choice has been made on the grounds that the film makes various references to these scandals as the story unfolds. Hence, omitting it may be felt as a viable solution.

In (3) the ST refers to P2, a Masonic lodge. In principle, Masonic lodges are fraternal organisations pursuing a common aim. They were based on Freemasonry and open to the public; some still exist in London¹. Conversely, the Italian P2 Lodge had the secret intent to install an authoritarian government in the country and oppose any possible Communist-based government that might have been established in Italy, as explained in detail in the ST (and partly omitted in the TT). In the TT, the reference to Silvio Berlusconi’s future political career has been omitted, although the reasons for this omission cannot easily be explained. Both the ST and the TT are superimposed respectively in the centre and at the bottom of the screen, meaning that processing time could be equal for both source and target viewers. It could be suggested that space limitations may have influenced the

³ Cf. the website devoted to Freemasonry: <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/> (last accessed 01.12.2016)

translator's choice, but such possibilities at this point amount to mere speculation. Clearly, all these examples reveal the high level of cultural specificity that they entail.

To provide a systematic account of the large number of culture-specific references in the ST, I employ below a framework that I have used elsewhere to categorise these items (Dore, 2010). This framework is based on Leppihalme's (1997) seminal work on the translation of allusions. She uses 'allusion' as an umbrella term that includes: "a variety of uses of preformed linguistic material in either its original or modified form, and of proper names, to convey often implicit meaning" (ibid. 3). Hence, reference and allusion are used interchangeably here. Moreover, my taxonomy is an extended version of González Davies and Scott-Tennent's (2005: 166-167) categorisation of the sources of reference, which are defined as: 1) material: sources related to everyday objects; 2) ecological: sources related to places; 3) social: sources related to social organization and its manifestations in the arts, politics, history, leisure, etc., 4) religious: sources related to rituals and ideological manifestations; and 5) linguistic: understood as the means to express all of the above and which refers to attitudinal and conversational clues. These categories have been revised to include items such as popular culture (e.g. sports, show business, music, etc.) as opposed to high culture (e.g. institutions, literature, art, etc.) (Dore, 2010: 16).

Table 3 examines the four categories used for the comparative analysis of the culture-specific references in the original and translated text. I have not included here the many references to religion (e.g. Dio, Gesù, Giuda, San Bernardo), as they have been consistently translated with their English counterparts (e.g. God, Jesus, Judas, St. Bernard).

Type of reference	Italian ST	English TT
Material (drinks, food, measures, various types of products available on the market, etc.)	Optalidon; Tedax; La ragazza bella di Mondragone (mozzarella cheese)	Optalidon; Tedax; The fat girl;

Popular culture (nursery rhymes, nicknames, sport, show business)	Il divo Giulio; la prima lettera dell'alfabeto; il gobbo; la volpe; il Moloch; la salamandra; il Papa nero; l'eternità; l'uomo delle tenebre; Belzebu; Il fanciullo; Limone; Lo squalo; Sua Sanità; Sua Eccellenza; Tarzan; La bestia	The Divine Julius; The First Letter of the Alphabet; The Hunchback; The Fox; Moloch; The Salamander; The Black Pope; Eternity; Man of Darkness; Beelzebub; The Lad; The Lemon; The Shark; His Healthiness; His Excellency; Tarzan; The Beast
Ecological (places, flora and fauna, etc.)	“il Lazio era vostro, la Campania mia la Sicilia di Lima e il Piemonte di Cristofori”; Piazzale Loreto;	Each one of us always took care of our own regions; --
High culture/ Institutions (literature, institutions, politics, art, history, honorifics, etc.)	Guerre puniche; “I dorotei”; IOR; Istituto di studi ciceroniani; Presidenza dei circoli musicali lauree onoris causa; Ministro al Bilancio; Corte d'Assise; Corte di Cassazione; il Quirinale	Punic wars; the other Christian Democrat faction; Vatican Bank; Institute of Ciceronian Studies; President of Music Society honorary degrees; Chancellor of the Exchequer; Assizes Court; Cassation Court; The Quirinal

Table 3. Summary of references in *Il divo*

Categories are seldom clear-cut and often overlap. For example, “the Quirinal” refers to the Quirinal Hill in Rome, which is the location of the official residence of Italy’s head of state. However, in the text it synecdochically alludes to the Presidency of Italy and it has therefore been subsumed under the “Institutions”

category. Also, Piazzale Loreto is a square in Milan that became the scene of one the most well-known events in the modern history of Italy, namely the public display of Benito Mussolini's corpse on 29 April 1945. Although the characters uttering the name of the square are indirectly referring to the historical event, I have chosen to subsume this item under the ecological category for the sake of clarity.

In general, proper names have been retained in the subtitles and are therefore not included here. Although the TT audience is unlikely to know whom most of these names refer to (e.g. Calvi, Dalla Chiesa, De Mita), the context may help them to understand. Moreover, the dynamic written text added on the screen is often used to describe the important role of these figures within the political and historical context that the film describes (cf. Figure 2 above). As for the items included in the 'material culture' category, the names of the medicines Optalidon and Tedax have been transferred directly. Andreotti used to take two medicines to alleviate his constant migraines. In the film, he repeatedly asks Cardinal Fiorenzo Angelini (see the explanation below) to make sure that these drugs are kept in the national health system's catalogue of authorized medications, despite debates as to their effectiveness. The fact that Andreotti initially succeeds in keeping the medicines on the list, while they are subsequently withdrawn, seems to be metaphorically employed to demonstrate first Andreotti's power and then his loss of influence. Interestingly enough, the mozzarella cheese in the Italian ST is described as "bella" ('beautiful') consistently with the Italians' passion for food. Conversely, the English version describes it as "fat", maybe because in the scene this term is used, all the characters are sharing a large mozzarella that one of Andreotti's affiliates had brought as a present.

The nicknames used to refer to Andreotti and his affiliates are noteworthy examples, as they show that both the source and target audience may need a substantial amount of background knowledge in order to process them. Moreover, the nicknames attest to the different procedures applied to their transfer into English. "Il divo Giulio" (The Divine Julius) was first coined by the journalist Mino Pecorelli, who compared Andreotti's charismatic persona to Julius Caesar's⁴. In this case, translating Andreotti's first name as Julius may be an attempt to make this reference clearer. Conversely, all the other nicknames have been translated literally to convey the images adopted in the original. "La prima lettera dell'alfabeto" (The First Letter of the Alphabet) was used by the other Christian Democrats leaders to show his importance. Similarly, "il gobbo" (The Hunchback) refers to Andreotti's deformed spine, but it also seems to reinforce existing (and time-old) stereotypes regarding hunchbacks as being evil creatures. Another easy-to-grasp metaphor is "la volpe" (The Fox), which was used to refer to Andreotti's political cunning. Interestingly, "il Moloch" (Moloch) – the biblical name of a

⁴ For an overview of the origin of Andreotti's nicknames, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giulio_Andreotti (last access 12/07/2017)

Canaanite dog – along with “il Papa nero” (The Black Pope), “Belzebu” (Beelzebub, used by Bettino Craxi, another important Italian politician at that time), “l’uomo delle tenebre” (Man of Darkness) and “la salamandra” (The Salamander) were all used to refer to Andreotti’s ability to pull the strings even from behind the scenes, manipulating events in a nefarious manner to perpetuate his leadership within the Italian political landscape. Finally, “l’eternità” (Eternity) and “il fanciullo” (The Lad) referred to his long-standing and enduring ability to remain in power despite the political turmoil Italy faced during the ‘first republic’.

The nicknames of his affiliates (respectively, “Limone”; “Lo squalo”; “Sua Sanità”; “Sua Eccellenza”; “Tarzan”; “La bestia”) have also been transferred literally. In particular, the translator has successfully transferred the nickname given to Cardinal Fiorenzo Angelini, at that time the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Health Care Workers. The paronymous wordplay in “Sua Sanità”, which both refers to “sanità” (“healthcare”) and plays on “Sua Santità” (His Holiness), has been aptly conveyed as “His Healthiness”.

As for the ecological references, all the names referring to the Italian regions have been generalised (Lazio, Campania, Piemonte). The time and space within which all this information had to be conveyed have probably dictated this condensing approach. The highly culture-specific reference to “Piazzale Loreto” has not been included in the subtitles; as mentioned earlier, it recalls the public display of Mussolini’s corpse on 29 April 1945 after he was captured and shot dead by the Italian Partisans. The words “Piazzale Loreto” are shouted several times by a number of politicians who are protesting against Andreotti in the Parliament, equating the latter to Mussolini and his betrayal of the nation. The subtitler may have thought that TT receivers are mostly unaware of the name of the square and its connection to the related historical event.

The “high culture/institutions” category includes various allusions to well-known Italian (and Vatican) institutions or historical events that are easily recognizable to the ST audience. The reference to the Punic Wars has been retained by using its English equivalent, while “il Quirinale” has been directly transferred as “the Quirinal” probably because the visual and verbal context and co-text can help to disambiguate the reference. The reference to the Vatican Bank (IOR) has been made explicit. Conversely, the references to cultural institutions and honorifics have been literally translated (Institute of Ciceronian Studies”; “President of Music Society, Chancellor of the Exchequer). Interestingly, “I Dorotei” has been made explicit with “the other Christian Democrats faction” – in fact, the Italian name derived from the convent dedicated to St. Dorothy, where the members of the faction opposing Andreotti used to meet. Such information is likely to escape most Italians, let alone foreigners; hence this procedure has effectively served its explicatory purpose.

As for the importance of the judiciary system within the context of *Il divo*, two noteworthy examples are the “Corte d’Assise” (Assizes Court) and “Corte di Cassazione” (Cassation Court) above. In England, the courts of assize were

periodic courts held in the main county towns and presided over by visiting judges from the higher courts based in London. They were abolished in 1972 and replaced by a single permanent Crown Court; they normally dealt with major crimes such as murders, forgery, rapes, etc.² Albeit no longer in existence, the use of this term to refer to this type of court might still be grasped by (part of) the TT audience; yet the North American audience might not be at all familiar with it. Conversely, the Courts of Cassation exist only in some judicial systems and are only competent – as in Italy – for verifying the interpretation of the law, not the facts as such, after an appeal trial has been completed. They differ substantially from the Supreme Court in many countries, as the latter can rule on the facts and the law³. In both cases, the references to the judiciary system may require fairly high amounts of encyclopaedic knowledge to be appropriately processed. More research is certainly needed to verify whether or not the target audience can understand these references and their relevance within the text. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the subtitles were created by Laser S. Film s.r.l. in Rome. This factor may have therefore influenced the translator's decision-making process as well as the briefing a translator would receive from the translation agency or the client commissioning the subtitles. Such speculation has certainly to be proven by further research, which could concentrate on those cases in which the translator's socio-cultural schemata (e.g. being a native speaker of English living in Italy for many years) may influence their choices and perhaps explain the reasons behind translation choices such as those reported above.

5. Concluding Remarks

This study has focused on the many highly specific cultural references with which Paolo Sorrentino's film *Il divo* is imbued, and how they have been tackled in this film's subtitling into English. These references span from historical and political events to the nicknames Andreotti was given as well as more general but still culture-bound allusions. The analysis has been prompted by several considerations. The themes Sorrentino deals with are part of the social, cultural and historical heritage of most Italians; the Mafia, the 'strategy of tension', the political scandals of the so-called 'first republic' and, most importantly, the impenetrable secrets underlying Andreotti's political career have always been subjects of heated debate in Italy. Considering that such a multifaceted historical period is still difficult for many Italians to really comprehend, one rightly wonders

² Cf. The UK Parliament website on the courts of Assizes at: <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/laworder/court/overview/assizes/> (last accessed 12.12.2016)

³ Cf. the UK Supreme Court website <https://www.supremecourt.uk/> and the USA Supreme Court website <https://www.supremecourt.gov/> (last accessed 12.12.2016)

how it can be effectively transferred or conveyed abroad. The feasibility of this endeavour has been questioned by journalists and critics alike (Brunette, 2008, Crowds and Sorrentino, 2009). As mentioned earlier (Section 1), Sorrentino has minimised such difficulties by pointing out that the details can be overlooked in favour of the bigger picture *Il divo* offers.

Sorrentino's point is certainly well taken; indeed, he has created a cinematic masterpiece that serves as a disheartening critique of Italian society. At the same time, it has seemed to me equally interesting to investigate how the translator has navigated the seas of linguistic and cultural references that the film represents. Hence, the present study's comparative analysis of the Italian and English texts has shown that the subtitles have attempted to strike a balance between the need to convey relevant information regarding the social, historical and political context within which the film is embedded and the technical constraints the act of subtitling poses. What certainly shines through the analysis of the two datasets is that they both convincingly convey a complex picture – negative yet also powerful – of the Italian politics of that time, along with the peculiarities of Italian culture and society. However, given the enormous complexity of the subject matter for non-Italian audiences, the translator has been forced to opt primarily for a *foreignizing* approach, thus retaining the culture-specific references in most parts of the text.

By and large, the approach used to translate *Il divo* appears to be an attempt to maintain certain associations that convey, to some extent, the uniquely Italian ingredients of this cinematic meditation on power, which is, after all, a universal theme. Yet, such an approach may require fairly high amounts of encyclopaedic knowledge on the target audience's part, thus making the comprehension and appreciation of the movie a real challenge. Those willing to take on this challenge may not be many, but they will certainly be rewarded.

Clearly, more research is needed on both the production and reception of subtitling and AVT at large. Besides, it stands to reason that future AVT practice and scholarly research should pay more attention to the fast-changing landscape of audiovisual production (as in the case of dynamic writing). This may provide an exciting new impetus for creative and innovative output with an aim, as well, to enhancing viewers' experience of some of the complex films being turned out by today's auteur (and non) filmmakers. Finally, it can offer stimulating food for thought concerning the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the discipline.

References

- Antonello, P. 2010. "The ambiguity of realism and its posts: A response to Millicent Marcus". *The Italianist*, 30 (2), 257-261.
- Bayman, L. and Rigoletto, S. 2010, "Conference report. Popular Italian cinema: An International Conference". *The Italianist* 30 (2), 309-314.

- Brunette, P. 2008. "Il Divo" *The Hollywood Reporter*, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/il-divo-125690> (last visited: 02/07/2017).
- Chaume, F. 2004. "Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two disciplines at stake in Audiovisual Translation". *Meta* 49 (1), 12-24.
- Chaume, F. 2013. "The turn of Audiovisual Translation. New audiences and new technologies". *Translation Spaces* 2, 105-123.
- Chilton, P. 2004. *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Coviello, M. 2010. "Le forme del discorso politico nel cinema italiano contemporaneo: Il divo (2008) di Polo Sorrentino". *AISS*, http://www.ec-aiss.it/index_d.php?recordID=486 (last visited: 02/07/2017).
- Crowdus, G. and Sorrentino, P. 2009. "Exposing the dark secrets of Italian political history: An interview with Paolo Sorrentino". *Cinéaste* 34 (3), 32-37.
- Delabastita, D. 1989. "Translation and mass-communication: film and TV translation as evidence of cultural dynamics". *Babel* 35 (4), 193-218.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. 2009. "Introduction – Audiovisual Translation: An overview of its potential". In J. Díaz-Cintas (ed.). *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 1-18.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. 2012. "Clearing the smoke to see the screen: Ideological manipulation in Audiovisual Translation". *Meta* 57 (2), 279-293.
- Díaz-Cintas, J. and Remael, A. 2007. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing.
- Dore, M. 2010. "Manipulation of humorous culture-specific allusions in AVT". In S.A. Harding and A. Elimam (eds.). *CTIS Occasional Papers*, Vol.6. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- D'Avanzo, G. 2009. "Giulio e il volto del potere". *L'Espresso*, <http://espresso.repubblica.it/palazzo/2009/10/22/news/giulio-e-il-volto-del-potere-1.27392> (last visited: 02/07/2017).
- González Davies, M. and Scott-Tennent, C. 2005. "A problem-solving and student-centred approach to the translation of cultural references". *Meta* 50 (1), 160-179.
- Gotor, M. 2008. "Il 'divo Giulio', il grande concimatore". *La Stampa*, http://miguelgotor.italianieuropei.it/2008/05/il_divo_giulio_il_grande_conci/ (last visited: 02/07/2017).
- Gottlieb, H. 2014. "Foreign voices, local lines: in defense of visibility and domestication in subtitling". In B. Garzelli and M. Baldo (eds.). *Subtitling and Intercultural Communication. European languages and Beyond*. Pisa: Edizioni EST, 27-54.
- Holdaway, D. 2011. "Da fatti realmente accaduti: Performing history in contemporary Italian cinema". *New Readings* 11, 17-36.
- Holdaway, D. 2012. "L'esperienza del passato: Situating crisis in Italian film history". *Italian Studies*, 67 (2), 267-282.

-
- Holmes, J. 1988. *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Rodopi: Amsterdam.
- Jeffries, S. 2009. "Bad Fellas". *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/mar/13/paolo-sorrentino> (last visited: 02/07/2017).
- Koff, S. Z. and Koff, S. P. 1999. *Italy. From the First to the Second Republic*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Leppihalme, R. 1997. *Culture Bumps. An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Lomheim, S. 1995. "L'écriture sur l'écran: stratégies de sous-tritrage à NRK, une étude de cas". *Translatio, Nouvelles de la FIT/FIT Newsletter XIV* (3-4), 288-293.
- Marcus, M. 2010a. "The ironist and the auteur: Post-realism in Paolo Sorrentino's *Il Divo*". *The Italianist*, 30 (2): 245-256.
- Marcus, M. 2010b. "A reply to Pierpaolo Antonello and Alex Marlow-Mann". *The Italianist*, 30 (2), 269-271.
- Marlow-Mann, A. 2010. "Beyond (post-)realism: A response to Millicent Marcus". *The Italianist* 30 (2), 263-268.
- Pedersen, J. 2007. "Cultural interchangeability: The effects of subtitling cultural references in subtitling". *Perspectives. Studies in Translatology*, 10 (1), 30-38.
- Pedersen, J. 2011. *Subtitling Norms*. John Benjamins Publishing: Amsterdam and Philadelphia.
- Pérez-González, L. 2012. "Co-creational subtitling in the digital media: Transformative and authorial practices". *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16 (1), 3-21.
- Pérez-González, L. 2014. *Audiovisual Translation. Theories, Methods and Issues*. London: Routledge.
- Picarelli, E. 2015. "The Great Beauty: Italy's inertia and neo-baroque aestheticism". In F. Bernardi (ed.). *Italian Cultural Studies*, Special Issue of JOMEC Journal 8, <https://publications.cardiffuniversitypress.org/index.php/JOMEC/article/view/94> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).
- Ranzato, I. 2016. *Translating Culture Specific References on Television: The Case of Dubbing*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Schäffner, C. and Bassnett, S. 2010. "Introduction. Political discourse, media and translation". In C. Schäffner and S. Bassnett (eds.). *Political Discourse, Media and Translation*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 1-30.
- Sinclair, T. A. 1962. "Translator's introduction". In Aristotle. *The Politics*, trans. T.A. Sinclair. London: Penguin Books, 13-28.
- Venuti, L. 1998. *The Scandals of Translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Viano, M. 2010. "Between modernity and eternity: 'Il divo' in cinematic Rome". *Annali d'Italianistica* 28, 341-362.
- Weissberg, J. 2008. "Il Divo". *Variety*, <http://variety.com/2008/film/markets-festivals/il-divo-1200522096/> (last visited: 02/07/2017).

Filmography

- Bekmambetov, T. 2004. *Nochnoi Dozor* (*Night Watch*). Russia.
- Giordana, M. T. 2000. *I cento passi* (*One Hundred Steps*). Italy.
- Ferrara, G. 1993. *Giovanni Falcone*. Italy.
- Moccia, F. 2008. *Scusa, ma ti chiamo amore*. Italy.
- Placido, M. 1995. *Un eroe Borghese* (*Ordinary Hero*). Italy.
- Scimeca, P. 2000. *Placido Rizzotto*. Italy.
- Sorrentino, P. 2013. *La Grande Bellezza* (*The Great Beauty*). Italy.
- Sorrentino, P. 2008. *Il divo. La Spettacolare vita di Giulio Andreotti* (*Il divo*). Italy.
- Tarantino, Q. 1991. *Reservoir Dogs*. USA.

Translating non-native varieties of English in animated films.

The Italian dubbing of *Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted*

Vincenza Minutella

University of Turin

Abstract

This paper will explore the representation of non-native varieties of English in Dreamwork's animated film Madagascar 3 (2012) and will investigate the strategies adopted by Italian dubbing professionals. Language variation is often exploited in films and in animated films in particular to provide characterisation, to construct identities and to trigger humour. Linguistic varieties and accents play an important part in defining characters and are often conveyors of stereotypes (Lippi-Green, 1997). In Italian dubbing the translational norm seems to be that of levelling out different varieties by using standard Italian (Chiaro, 2008). However, comedies and animated films constitute an exception to this homogenizing norm, as they convey linguistic variation to some extent. In particular, although Italian dubbing professionals usually refrain from using Italian regional dialects or regional accents in order to avoid unintended effects and stereotyping, they sometimes resort to ethnolects, foreign-accented Italian, or Italian regional dialects, thus adding a further layer of meaning to the dubbed version. By analysing the representation of the non-Anglo-American characters and their dubbing into Italian in Madagascar 3, the paper seeks to ascertain whether non-native varieties of English or ethnolects (Salmon, 2000) are reduced, neutralised or conveyed and highlighted in the Italian dubbed version. The paper will also draw on interviews with dubbing professionals in order to understand their approach to language variation and to multilingualism in films, as well as their role in shaping the representation of 'otherness' in the Italian dubbed versions.

Keywords: Language variation; ethnolects; animated films; dubbing; dubbing professionals

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the representation and recreation of non-native varieties of English in Dreamworks' animated film *Madagascar 3: Europe's*

most wanted (2012) and to investigate the strategies adopted in the Italian dubbed version. Varieties of English can be of different types, i.e., geographical, social, temporal or diachronic, standard or non-standard as well as ethnic. The concept of ethnolect has been put forward to refer to “ethnic varieties of the majority language”, that is, varieties which signal that the speaker was born in a country but belongs to a specific ethnic group and has a different native language (Salmon, 2000: 68-69) or that the speaker was not born in the country. The paper will focus primarily on the linguistic portrayal of foreign characters or characters belonging to specific ethnic groups, i.e., ethnolects. It will explore how characters who are non-native speakers of English are portrayed in this animated film and how their ‘otherness’ is rendered in dubbing, i.e., whether specific linguistic features used in the original version are reduced, neutralised, conveyed, highlighted or rewritten for the Italian audience. The film *Madagascar 3* has been chosen precisely because it is set in different countries (Monte Carlo and the United States) and portrays characters of various nationalities and ethnicities. The methodology adopted in this study combines a linguistic examination of the film dialogues with paratextual information, i.e., data gathered through personal interviews with *Madagascar*’s dubbing director and actor Massimiliano Alto and with other translators, dialogue writers, dubbing directors and dubbing actors that work on animated films in Italy. The following professionals were interviewed between 2015 and 2018: Massimiliano Alto (dubbing director and actor, musician), Elena Di Carlo (translator and adapter), Chiara Gioncardi (dubbing actress), Marco Guadagno (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Massimiliano Manfredi (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Marco Mete (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Roberto Morville (Creative Director, Disney Character Voices International, translator and adapter), Serena Paccagnella (translator, adapter and dubbing assistant), Alessandro Rossi (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Carlo Valli (dubbing director and actor, adapter). These interviews and observation of dubbing sessions provide insights into dubbing practices and help to understand the factors that impinge upon the final product. The analysis of the representation of non-native language varieties and dubbing strategies is thus based on repeated viewing of *Madagascar 3* in English and in Italian, a linguistic analysis of the transcription of the film dialogues and interviews with dubbing professionals.

2. Language variation in films and in Italian dubbing

Scriptwriters often use conventionalised linguistic features and traits, such as different language varieties, to supply information “to audiences about character and location” (Hodson, 2014: 7). As pointed out by several scholars, different types of language varieties and accents in films are adopted “as a quick way to build character and reaffirm stereotype” (Lippi-Green, 1997: 85), to provide a setting for

the story and also to trigger humour (see also Kozloff, 2000: 82; Hodson, 2014: 6-7).

When an audiovisual text is transposed into another language, for a different culture and audience, language variation or the presence of a third language (L3) is one of the most difficult and challenging features to deal with for screen translators (Chiaro, 2008; Corrius and Zabalbeascoa, 2011; Heiss, 2004). As pointed out by Chiaro, “a common strategy to deal with variation is simply not to deal with it and homogenize it into the standard, mainstream variety of the target language” (2008: 23) (see also Pavesi, 1994, 2005). The neutralisation of linguistic variation and the use of standard Italian can thus be considered the first and most common strategy in dealing with linguistic variation, in particular with native varieties of English. Since opting for a target language regional dialect may result in adding unwanted and different social connotations to a character, and as one-to-one equivalents across cultures do not exist, the translational norm in Italy is that of neutralising geographical variation. Moreover, in Italian dubbing there is a tendency to adopt a sociolinguistically, regionally unmarked Italian. Dubbing actors must display proper diction, perfect elocution and a neutral accent, devoid of any regional inflection. For this reason, the language of dubbing has been defined as “un italiano per tutte le stagioni” (Raffaelli, 1996), i.e. “an Italian for all seasons”. Professionals also perceive it as a language that nobody speaks (Alto, personal communication, 2016), a non-existent language (Morville, personal communication, 2016), a language that differs from real everyday Italian (A. Rossi, personal communication, 2017). The tendency to avoid regional pronunciation in Italian dubbing is also due to the fact that, as argued by creative director Morville, “il doppiaggio è come il montaggio: non deve attirare l’attenzione su di sé” (personal communication, 2017), that is, dubbing and film editing should pass unnoticed. This frequent absence of regional markers in the language of dubbing contrasts with their presence in Italian television and cinema products, where geographical varieties of Italian and sometimes even dialects can be heard (Pavesi, 2005: 28; Rossi, 2006: 293).

A second strategy to deal with variation is to resort to a target language regional dialect, chosen among a few recurrent ones. Several scholars (Pavesi, 1994, 2005; Chiaro, 2008; Parini, 2009, forthcoming; Rossi, 2006; Ferrari, 2010 among others) have highlighted that, although the norm in dubbing is to neutralise variation and to use standard Italian, thus homogenising the speech of the characters, a few stereotyped regiolects such as Sicilian, Neapolitan, Romanesco are sometimes used. These regional Italian dialects are usually exploited either in comedies for humorous purposes, to convey a comic flair to a character, or in mafia or gangster films with Italo-American characters, to represent stereotypical thugs or mobsters. As observed by Chiaro (2008: 15):

the clichéd variety of English spoken by Italo-Americans, so common in US screen products, is one of the screen varieties which is consistently

replaced with a form of Italian strongly marked with a Sicilian accent and syntactic structures typical of Sicilian. The negative stereotypes implied by such a choice are evident, but presumably opting for this preference does tend to be true to the original skopos.

The use of Italian with a Sicilian accent and regional lexis and syntax to dub Italo-American gangsters has thus become a dubbing stereotype, a convention. Alternatively, a Neapolitan accent might be used, as is the case for the popular American TV series *The Sopranos*, based on ethnic stereotypes, where the Italian American Mafia boss Tony Soprano is dubbed with a Neapolitan accent or dialect (Ferrari, 2010: 109).

Other cases in which the neutralising and homogenising norms are not applied and domestication is achieved through the use of Italian regional varieties are *My Fair Lady* (1964) and the American TV series *The Nanny* (1993-1999). In the dubbed version of *My Fair Lady* the protagonist's contrived Cockney variety is localised using "a non-existent Italian language" (Ranzato, 2010: 114), while in *The Nanny* Jewish American Fran Fine is turned into a woman from Southern Italy's Ciociaria (Ferrari, 2010). However, these seem to be exceptions to the norm, which continues to be the neutralisation of accents and varieties and the choice of a standard Italian, devoid of any regional inflection or trait.

Some animated films and TV series also exploit Italian regional dialects. For instance, in *The Aristocats* (1970) the stray cat Thomas O'Malley became 'Romeo er mejo der Colosseo', a cat speaking Romanesco dialect (Bruti, 2009), the Italian version of *The Simpsons* (1989-to date) is famous for its large use of Italian regional dialects (Barra, 2007; Fusari, 2007; Puddu and Viridis, 2014; Ferrari, 2010), and in the dubbed version of *Shark Tale* (2004), an animated film that makes reference to *The Godfather* (1972), Italo-American mobster shark Don Lino and his entourage speak with a strong Sicilian accent and use dialect words, while Sykes has a Neapolitan accent (Parini, forthcoming). Another recent animated film whose dubbed version makes constant use of several Italian regional dialects is *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011), a film in which the story of the star-crossed lovers is linguistically reinterpreted and localised in terms of North vs South divide (Minutella, 2016; Bruti and Vignozzi, 2016).

Dubbing professionals confirm this association between regional accent, humour and comedy and state that they prefer not to use regional accents or Italian dialects. According to them a marked accent has a comic effect, the characters become funny and almost caricatures, therefore it is advisable to resort to it with caution (Galassi, 1994: 66-67; personal communications: Paccagnella, 2016; Alto, 2016; A. Rossi, 2017; Guadagno, 2016; Morville, 2016; Manfredi, 2018).

Animation, however, allows for more freedom and creativity compared to other film genres (Mete, personal communication, 2016; Gioncardi, personal communication, 2015). Dubbing directors and dubbing actors may thus decide, in rare cases, for humorous purposes, to recreate a regional accent, a marked regional

pronunciation or what dubbing professionals call “una sporcatura”, that is, a diction which is not perfectly neutral and is somehow ‘dirty’, betraying the origin of the speaker. Mete points out that when dubbing animation in the dubbing studio dubbing actors try to start from their own dialects and then look for “sporcature” in their pronunciation or “appoggiature” in their modulation of voice (personal communication, 2016). However, resorting to Italian dialects in animated films or comedies must be agreed with the client i.e., the dubbing supervisor or distributor of the film (personal communications: Guadagno, 2016; Morville, 2016; Alto, 2016; Manfredi, 2018; Valli, 2018). Moreover, scholars have observed that only a few characters are given a regional accent (Chiaro, 2008), otherwise the dialogues would become difficult to understand.

A third strategy to deal with linguistic variation, which seems to occur especially with characters who are marked as non-native speakers, is to retain, convey and perhaps emphasise foreign accents or ethnolects. This strategy seems to be chosen in comedies and animated films, again for humorous purposes. As argued by Heiss (2004: 211), “certain genres, such as comedies, for example, are in a certain sense perceived as being detached from reality and therefore offer more room for ‘unorthodox’ solutions in film translation.” Analysing a series of films dubbed into German and Italian, Heiss demonstrates that compensation strategies at the level of lexis, syntax and pronunciation are adopted to “characterise the various ways of speaking of the individual characters in a manner that makes them distinguishable from one another. [...] At a phonetic level it is possible to reproduce typical accents (for example, a German accent or various ethnic accents)” (Heiss, 2004: 111). This strategy is adopted in *Bend it like Beckham* and other multilingual films whose protagonists are Indian, where an Indian accent and non-standard grammar are resorted to in the dubbed version (Minutella, 2012), in the stereotyped foreign accents of the cats in Scat Cat’s band in *The Aristocats* (Bruti, 2009), in the foreign-accented Italian of Puss in Boots and other minor characters in the *Shrek* saga (Minutella, 2015).

It seems reasonable thus to hypothesise that another exception to the homogenising norm in dubbing – and perhaps a stylistic dubbing convention – might be that non-native varieties, foreign accents and ethnolects are connoted: “foreign-accented English in the original versions is often rendered with foreign-accented Italian in dubbing” (Minutella, 2012: 227). The following analysis of *Madagascar 3* will demonstrate that ethnolects or non-native varieties of English tend to be conveyed and reproduced also in the Italian dubbing of this animated film.

3. Non-native varieties of English in *Madagascar 3: the English and Italian versions*

In *Madagascar 3* it is possible to identify several instances of varieties of English, since the protagonists display features of American English, British English and Indian English. While most of the actors voicing the main characters (Alex the lion, Marty the zebra, Gloria the hippo and Melman the giraffe) are native speakers of these varieties, in the case of King Julien an Indian English accent was contrived and comically emphasised by humorist Sacha Baron Cohen. These pronunciation differences among native varieties of English are not conveyed in dubbing and they are all rendered in standard Italian. This confirms the “homogenizing norm” in Italian dubbing for geographical varieties of English (Chiaro, 2008). On the contrary, differences in the speech of these characters in Italian are in terms of voice quality or at a lexical level, in terms of register.

Instances of ethnolect or foreign-accented English, instead, are quite frequent and are conveyed in the Italian dub. In *Madagascar 3* the protagonists land in Europe, in Monte Carlo, and they are chased by the French police led by Animal Control Officer Captain Chantal Dubois – an evil, obsessed woman who wants to kill Alex the lion. The protagonists manage to escape by joining a group of circus animals – the Circus Zaragoza – and getting on their train. The European members of the Circus are Stefano (a supposedly Italian sea lion), the female leopard Gia (who speaks with a foreign accent which is supposed to sound Italian), the Siberian tiger Vitaly (who allegedly speaks with a strong Russian accent and uses some Russian words). The stereotyped foreign-accented English of these characters clearly has humorous purposes and does not pretend to be authentic. In the Italian dubbed version the ‘otherness’ of these characters is signalled by resorting to foreign-accented Italian, i.e., ethnolects are retained and at times emphasised. However, since in the English version Stefano and Gia speak a supposedly Italo-American variety, this unlikely Italian is turned into an unlikely Spanish in the dubbed version. The Russian and French identities are maintained and emphasised through stereotypical and contrived accents, pronunciation, intonation and lexical choices. These, together with some puns on Russian cultural references and the use of French songs, contribute to stressing ethnolects and to creating a comic effect. Non-native varieties are thus conveyed through hypercharacterisation (Parini, 2009: 163).

An example from Captain Chantal Dubois’s lines will illustrate this point. The French Animal Control Officer (voiced by American actress Frances McDormand, dubbed by Barbara Castracane) displays linguistic traits typical of French speakers: she has a strong French accent, intonation and stereotypical French pronunciation (French ‘r’, ‘th’ pronounced as /s/, /z/ or /v/), uses a few French words and expressions (*oui, monsieur, attention, Que-est-ce que c’est?*) and she sings the famous French song “*Non, je ne regrette rien*” in a comic scene in a hospital. Her French

linguistic identity is conveyed and emphasised in the Italian dub through phonetic traits:

Captain Chantal Dubois: <i>Attention!</i> I have found our lion! He is hiding with the circus!	<i>Attention!</i> Ho trovato il nostro leone! Si è nascosto dentro al circo.
Captain Chantal Dubois: Hello, kitty! So, you ran away with the circus. What a cliché.	Ciao, micio! E così sei scappato con il circo. Che banalità.

In the above examples DuBois has a marked French intonation, she pronounces the typical French ‘r’ as a voiced fricative, while the dental fricatives in ‘the’ and ‘with’ are rendered as /z/ or /v/ sounds. In the dubbed version an additional feature is the pronunciation of ‘c’ as /s/ in ‘circo’.

The Siberian tiger Vitaly (voiced by Bryan Cranston in English, dubbed by Fabrizio Pucci) in the English version has a Russian accent, uses a few easily recognisable Russian words (for instance, the word for ‘no’, *nyet*) and incorrect grammar. This linguistic characterisation is conveyed and emphasised in the Italian dub, which provides a hypercharacterisation, as shown by the following examples:

Vitaly: Absolut no outsiders. So wipe that smirn off your face and pop off!	Assolutamente niente estranei. Quindi leva tuo sorrisetto da faccia e sparisci.
---	---

Here Vitaly is addressing Alex the lion, telling him that they cannot join the circus animals and get on their train to escape from the French police. “Absolut no outsiders” is grammatically incorrect. Moreover, Vitaly’s dialogic turn contains puns on Russian cultural references and English phrasal verbs: *Absolut* may refer to a brand of vodka (Absolut vodka), there is a wordplay based on the homophony between “smirn off” and *Smirnoff* (another brand of vodka) and a further pun based on the homophony between “pop off” and *Popov* (a common Russian surname, and a possible reference to a famous physician). The Italian version cannot retain and reproduce the cultural references but conveys humour by recreating Vitaly’s Eastern-European linguistic identity, reproducing a contrived Russian pronunciation and using non-standard grammar. In particular, Vitaly’s Italian displays syntactic errors typical of Russian learners of Italian such as the omission of articles or prepositions plus articles. Examples are: “leva tuo sorrisetto” rather than “leva il tuo sorrisetto” and “da faccia” rather than “dalla faccia”. In the utterance below Vitaly uses the Russian word *nyet* and an incorrect negative construction. In the Italian dubbed version *nyet* is retained (it is a loanword from Russian that has become part of the Italian language) and definite articles are omitted (“il proprietario del circo” becomes “proprietario di circo”):

Vitaly: <i>Nyet!</i> Circus owner no allow stowaways!	<i>Nyet!</i> Proprietario di circo non ammette clandestini!
--	--

The Italian dubbed version clearly hypercharacterises Vitaly by emphasizing his ethnolect. It is an exaggerated and caricatural portrayal aimed at triggering humour. The character speaks with a fake Russian accent in both versions. As explained by dubbing director Alto, the Russian accent is feigned for two reasons: firstly, they had to maintain the effect of the original dialogues and respect the intentions of the producers, secondly, no language advisor was employed in dubbing since this would have considerably raised dubbing costs (Alto, personal communication, 2016).

The language of the sea lion Stefano (voiced by Canadian comedian Martin Short and dubbed by actor Stefano Benassi) in the English version is characterised by an unlikely Italian, or Italian-American: he has a strong, fake Italian accent and uses some Italian words or Italian-sounding words (*sì, scusi, stupido, numero uno, mamma mia, santa Maria*). His syntax is also often incorrect. The English of Stefano displays a series of peculiarities (at the level of pronunciation, intonation, lexis and prosody) which are typical of the variety spoken by Italian Americans and provide a caricatural portrayal of the Italian-American stereotype. Phonetic features such as ‘th’ pronounced as /d/ or /t/, silent *b* (Parini, 2009: 159), the doubling of consonants, the adding of a final vowel sound between words (Rossi, 2006: 326), and the insertion of some Italian words (*scusi, stupido, numero uno, mamma mia*) and some ungrammaticalities (*He fly*). This linguistic representation conforms to the stereotype of the Italian-American. The ‘norm’ in Italian dubbing to turn Italian-American into Sicilian or Neapolitan is not applied here, because Stefano does not comply with the stereotype associated with this language variety: he is not a gangster. Dubbing director Alto (personal communication, 2016) pointed out that it made no sense to have Stefano and Gia speak with a Sicilian accent because *Madagascar* is not *The Godfather*, and unfortunately this regiolect is stereotypically associated with the Mafia.

Moreover, Stefano does not live in the USA but in Europe and he is supposed to be Italian rather than Italo-American. However, his supposed ‘Italianness’ becomes problematic in translation, as the L3 (i.e., the third language spoken in the film) corresponds to the L2 (Italian, the target language). When the L3 in a film is the target language, in our case Italian, dubbing professionals usually replace it with another language, either French or Spanish. Since French (a French-accented English) is the language spoken by other characters due to the setting of the story, and since the circus animals are represented as being ‘foreign’ and not belonging to the same ethnic group, the dubbing director opted for Spanish instead. This choice is also coherent with the name of the circus (*Zaragoza*). The unlikely Italian accent or Italian-American spoken by Stefano is thus turned in the dubbed version into an equally unlikely and exaggerated Italian with a Spanish accent, interspersed with some Spanish and Spanish-sounding words (*escappò, escussame, eh, no le guste*).

Stefano's speech in Italian dubbing contains both prosodic, lexical and morphosyntactic features, as can be seen from the examples below (marked features in bold). This linguistic characterisation immediately signals Stefano's foreign identity as being different from the New York zoo animals, though pronunciation features are not always consistent.

Stefano: Wow! Circus <i>americano!</i> You must all -a- be very famous.	Wow! È il circo americano! Dovete essere tutti molto famosi.
Stefano: I don't- a- tink Vitaly likes dat idea!	Oh, no! Credo che a Vitaly no le guste esta idea.
Stefano: I know. It is stupido idea.	Lo so, è un'idea stupida.
Stefano: He would not stop- a- pushing. And one fateful day... he push-a too far! [...] He fly too close to d sun... and he got burnt , literally.	Non smetteva di osare e in un giorno fatale, osò troppo. [...] Volò troppo vicino al sole e si bruciò. Letteralmente.
And he lost everything. His wife, she ran off with a musician, he lost his- a- dignity, his fame, his passion and his fur.	Stefano: E lui perse tutto. Sua moglie escapò con un mussico . Perse la dignità, la fama, la passione, y el su pelo .
Stefano: Si , that means- a- yes.	Eso es , che significa sì.

As can be noted from the above examples, in some cases the non-native traits are neutralised in the dubbed version, but this loss is compensated by introducing foreign features in other parts of the dialogue.

The female leopard Gia is another supposedly Italian-American character turned into Spanish in the dubbed version. In the original film Gia has a slight Italian accent and pronunciation, while in Italian she has a slight Spanish accent and uses some Spanish or Spanish-sounding words. As dubbing director Alto (personal communication, 2016) explains, the film director wanted this character to be voiced by an Italian actress and voice tests took place with Italian actresses, but in the end the American Jessica Chastain was chosen and she had to reproduce an Italian accent, which is inevitably non-native. Dubbing actress Chiara Gioncardi gives her voice to Gia in the Italian version and she contrives a Spanish accent which is clearly and deliberately not authentic. The aim of the dubbed version was to highlight the fact that she was foreign, without claiming any realism (Alto 2016). The following examples illustrate the linguistic characterisation of Gia in English and in Italian (foreign pronunciation or features in bold):

Gia: I admire (h) ow you have inspired d ese animals. [...] and what you said about the passion it was like poetry.	Te ammiro por come hai ispirato esti animali. [...] E lo che hai detto sulla passione era...pura poessia.
--	---

In the English version, the pronunciation of the ‘r’, silent *b* and the pronunciation of ‘th’ as /d/ are phonetic features which provide a hint that Gia is foreign and presumably of Italian origins, while in the Italian dubbed version her foreignness is recreated by using *te* rather than *ti*, *por* rather than *per*, *esti* rather than *questi* (although *estos* would be the correct Spanish word) and *lo* rather than *quello*. In other utterances Gia also uses some prototypical Italo-American words such as *capisci?* and invented words such as *netta* (from ‘net’). In the dubbed version, *yo*, *estar en* and other Spanish words are used as markers of Spanish origins. Phonetic features typical of Spanish speakers of Italian are also emphasised. The examples below will illustrate the tendency to characterise and hypercharacterise Gia’s ethnic origin in dubbing:

Gia: You use a netta !	Wow! Tu ussi la rrete !
-------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Gia: Vitaly, I may not trust him either, but I am tired of sitting and standing and rolling over.	Vitaly, forse neanche yo me fido, però son stufa de estar seduta, estar en piedi e rotolar su un fianco.
--	---

Gia: You can teach- a -me...Teach- a -me.	Tu me puoi insegnar...Insegname.
---	---

As illustrated above, while on the whole in *Madagascar 3* geographical varieties of English (American English, British English, Indian English) are not conveyed in the Italian dubbed version but homogenised as standard Italian, non-native varieties of English or ethnolects (spoken by Captain Du Bois, Vitaly, Stefano and Gia) are conveyed by adopting non-native varieties of Italian where prosodic, lexical and syntactic features are emphasised. Italian-American is turned into a kind of Spanish-sounding Italian. This seems to be common practice in dubbing: ethnolects are retained for comic purposes. Adapter Carlo Valli (personal communication, 2018) explains that in the dubbed version the European characters were made to speak differently from the American protagonists since they are ‘foreigners’ in the original film. The dubbed version had to convey this linguistic differentiation, also adding a few grammar mistakes that help to emphasise foreignness. Dubbing director Alto confirms that the choice of using unrealistic foreign-accented Italian was due to Dreamworks’ requirement to be faithful to the original film and to recreate its humour (personal communication, 2016). Whereas Alto prefers dubbed versions where standard Italian, devoid of any accent, is spoken, Dreamworks wanted to distinguish the language of Europeans from that of the American protagonists, with a particular emphasis on Captain Chantal DuBois’s French identity. An alternative to broken, mispronounced Italian

could have been to employ vocal coaches or language advisors, but this would have obviously increased dubbing costs. Moreover, since the original film did not aim at linguistic authenticity but at triggering laughter by hinting at foreign speakers, the same approach could be adopted in Italian. The choice of voices, of linguistic realism or the use of specific accents are thus influenced by various factors and agents, i.e., economic factors, marketing reasons, the skills of dubbing actors or voice talents, the adapter, the dubbing director and the client, i.e., the distributor and the supervisor of the Italian edition.

4. Conclusions

The analysis conducted in this paper shows that non-native varieties of English are represented and reproduced in the dubbed version of *Madagascar 3*, often through stereotypical traits and sometimes through “hypercharacterization” (Parini, 2009: 163) or compensation strategies. Although the tendency in Italian dubbing is to homogenise and standardise varieties, in the case of ethnolects the linguistic representation of ‘otherness’ is conveyed and emphasised in dubbing. This is achieved by employing dubbing actors who contrive an accent, perform variation and modulate their voices (Chiaro, 2008: 23-24), which is in line with how characters are created in the original version. A homogenising, neutralising approach could not be adopted for *Madagascar 3*, as the film is set in more than one country and portrays characters belonging to different nationalities whose otherness and foreign identity had to be emphasised. Foreign accents were resorted to in dubbing to connote the different ethnicities and changes of places but also to trigger humour, activating Italian stereotypes of other cultures.

Moreover, analysis of the film dialogues and interviews with professionals have revealed that dubbing professionals do not resort to one single strategy when they deal with characters belonging to the Italian ethnic group or with a marked Italian identity. If the Italian-American variety is not associated with gangsters and the characters are meant to be comical, the correspondence Italian-American-Sicilian regiolect is not applied. When Italian-American does not carry negative connotations, is not a direct reference to mafia movies and is not used to voice a criminal, but simply denotes Italianness (the original contains prosodic, phonetic, lexical and syntactic prototypical traits signalling that the character is Italian), then various strategies may be adopted. In *Madagascar 3*, rather than using an Italian regional dialect for Stefano and Gia, the dubbing professionals opted for a shift to another L3 or third language, i.e., Spanish. This study also points out that several agents are involved in the translation/adaptation/dubbing process and that they all bear an influence on dubbing strategies and choices. Interviews with dubbing professionals suggest that dubbing policies regarding the third language may sometimes be decided by the dubbing director, perhaps also by dubbing actors

during the dubbing sessions, or may be required by the client. However, the final decision is taken by the dubbing supervisor.

Future research on translation and dubbing strategies to transpose native and non-native varieties of English is necessary in order to understand trends in dubbing. Is it plausible to hypothesise the norm that non-native varieties or ethnolects are always conveyed and highlighted? Is Italo-American rendered through the stereotypical Sicilian regiolect or are other dialects or languages used? Which ones? What are the reasons behind such choices? What are the strategies for conveying L3 when it coincides with L2? Are specific languages (like Spanish in *Madagascar 3*) the usual choices? Are geographical varieties of English always homogenised into standard Italian? These and further issues should be investigated through the analysis of a large corpus of contemporary animated films. Another fruitful line of investigation would be to compare older vs more recent animated films, to carry out a diachronic study to ascertain whether the professionals' approach has changed over time.

Acknowledgements: I would like to express my gratitude to the following dubbing professionals for answering my questions: Massimiliano Alto (dubbing director and actor), Elena Di Carlo (translator and adapter), Chiara Gioncardi (dubbing actress), Marco Guadagno (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Massimiliano Manfredi (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Marco Mete (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Roberto Morville (Creative Director, Disney Character Voices International, translator and adapter), Serena Paccagnella (translator and adapter, dubbing assistant), Alessandro Rossi (dubbing director and actor, adapter), Carlo Valli (dubbing director and actor, adapter); and to Dr Stefania Taviano for her advice.

References

- Barra, L. 2007. "Springfield, Italia. Slittamenti e conversioni di senso nell'adattamento italiano di una serie televisiva statunitense". *Studi Culturali*, IV (2), 207-231.
- Bruti, S. 2009. "From the US to Rome passing through Paris: accents and dialects in *The Aristocats* and its Italian dubbed version". In D. Chiaro, M. Giorgio Marrano, G. Nadiani (eds.). *The Translation of Dialects in Multimedia. Intralineea – On line Translation Journal*, Special Issue: <<http://www.intralinea.org/print/article/1713>>.
- Bruti, S. 2014. "Accent and dialect as a source of humour: the case of *Rio*". In G.L. De Rosa, F. Bianchi, A. De Laurentiis, E. Perego (eds.). *Translating Humour in Audiovisual Texts*, Bern: Peter Lang, 89-103.
- Bruti, S. and Vignozzi, G. 2016. "Voices from the Anglo-Saxon world: Accents and dialects across film genres". *Status Quaestionis*, 11, 42-74. Special Issue "North and South. British dialects in fictional dialogue", edited by I. Ranzato. Online at

-
- <http://statusquaestionis.uniroma1.it/index.php/statusquaestionis/article/view/13832> (last accessed 20/11/2017).
- Chiaro, D. 2008. "Where have all the varieties gone? The vicious circle of the disappearance act in screen translations". In I. Helin (ed.). *Dialect for all Seasons*, Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 9-25.
- Corrius, M. and Zabalbeascoa, P. 2011. "Language variation in source texts and their translations. The case of L3 in film translation". *Target*, 23 (1), 113-130.
- Ferrari, C. F. 2010. *Since When is Fran Drescher Jewish? Dubbing Stereotypes in The Nanny, The Simpsons and The Sopranos*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Fusari, S. 2007. "Idioletti e dialetti nel doppiaggio italiano dei Simpson". Bologna: Quaderni del CeSLiC. Occasional Papers, 4-35.
- Galassi, G. 1994. "La norma traviata". In R. Baccolini, R.M. Bollettieri Bosinelli, L. Gavioli (eds.). *Il doppiaggio. Trasposizioni linguistiche e culturali*. Bologna: Clueb, 61-70.
- Heiss, C. 2004. "Dubbing Multilingual Films: A New Challenge?" *Meta*, 49 (1), 208-220.
- Hodson, J. 2014. *Dialect in Film and Literature*. Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kozloff, S. 2000. *Overbearing Film Dialogue*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Lippi-Green, R. 1997. *English with an Accent. Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*. London: Routledge.
- Minutella, V. 2012. "You fancying your gora coach is okay with me': Translating multilingual films for an Italian audience". In P. Orero, A. Remael, M. Carroll, M. (eds.). *Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility at the Crossroads. Media for all 3*. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 313-334.
- Minutella, V. 2015. "It ain't ogre til it's ogre': The Dubbing of *Shrek* into Italian". In J. Díaz Cintas, J. Neves (eds.), *Audiovisual Translation: Taking Stock*, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 140-158.
- Parini, I. 2009. "The Transposition of Italian-American in Italian Dubbing". In F. Federici (ed.). *Translating Regionalised Voices in Audiovisuals*. Rome: Aracne, 157-176.
- Parini, I. Forthcoming. "Sleeping with the fishes. Italian-Americans in animation". In I. Ranzato and S. Zanotti (eds.). *Reassessing Dubbing: Historical Approaches and Current Trends*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Pavesi, M. 1994. "Osservazioni sulla sociolinguistica del doppiaggio". In R. Baccolini, R.M. Bollettieri Bosinelli, L. Gavioli (eds.). *Il doppiaggio. Trasposizioni linguistiche e culturali*. Bologna: Clueb, 129-142.
- Pavesi, M. 2005. *La traduzione filmica. Aspetti del parlato doppiato dall'inglese all'italiano*. Rome: Carocci.
- Puddu, N. and Virdis, D. F.. 2014. "Dalla Scozia alla Sardegna: stereotipi e tratti bandiera di Groundskeeper Willie/Willie il Giardiniere dei Simpson". In A. Dettori (ed.). *Dalla Sardegna all'Europa. Lingue e letterature regionali*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 338-354.

- Raffaelli, S. 1996. "Un italiano per tutte le stagioni". In E. Di Fortunato and M. Paolinelli (eds.). *Barriere linguistiche e circolazione delle opere audiovisive: la questione doppiaggio*. Roma: AIDAC, 25-28.
- Ranzato, I. 2010. "Localising Cockney: translating dialect into Italian". In J. Díaz Cintas, A. Matamala, and J. Neves (eds.). *New Insights into Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 109-122.
- Rossi, F. 2006. *Il linguaggio cinematografico*. Rome: Aracne.
- Salmon, L. 2000. "Tradurre l'etnoletto: come doppiare in italiano l'accento ebraico". In R.M. Bollettieri Bosinelli, C. Heiss, M. Soffritti, S. Bernardini (eds.). *Traduzione multimediale: quale traduzione per quale testo?* Bologna: Clueb, 67-84.

Filmography

- Vernon, C., Darnell, E., McGrath, T. 2012. *Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted - Madagascar 3: ricercati in Europa*. USA (Italian dialogue writer Carlo Valli, dubbing director Massimiliano Alto).

Notes on Contributors

Vincenzo Alfano graduated from the University of Trieste in Translation and Interpreting. He has taught Translation Studies and Italian language courses at the University of Hull, where he also completed a MA in Language Learning and Technology. He is currently working on finishing his PhD on the subtitling of Italian cinema into English at UCL.

Frederic Chaume is a Professor of Audiovisual Translation at Universitat Jaume I (Spain), where he teaches audiovisual translation theory and dubbing; and Honorary Professor at University College London (UK). He is author of the books *Doblatge i subtitulació per a la TV* (Eumo, 2003), *Cine y Traducción* (Cátedra, 2004), *Audiovisual Translation: Dubbing* (Routledge, 2012), and co-author of *Teories Contemporànies de la Traducció* (Bromera, 2010). He has also co-edited several books and journal special issues (*Perspectives*, *Prosopopeya*) and is the director of the TRAMA book series (Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I), the first collection of monographs on audiovisual translation. He has given several keynote lectures on audiovisual translation and translation for dubbing in international translation studies conferences and many European and American universities, and also teaches regularly in some of them. He coordinates the research group TRAMA (www.trama.uji.es) and has been awarded the *Berlanga Award* and the *Xènia Martínez Award* for his support to dubbing and his constant university training in this field.

Francisco Javier Díaz-Pérez is a senior lecturer at the English Department of the *University of Jaén*, where he teaches some courses in Linguistics and Translation. He has published several studies in fields such as Cross-cultural Pragmatics, Translation Studies, or Pragmatics of English. He is the author of the monograph *La cortesía verbal en inglés y en español. Actos de habla y pragmática intercultural* and has co-edited *A World of English, a World of Translation*. Some of his publications have appeared in journals such as *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Meta*, *Babel*, *Multicultural Shakespeare*, *Atlantis*, or *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*.

Elena Di Giovanni is Associate Professor of English Translation at the University of Macerata, Italy. She has a degree in Specialized Translation and a PhD in English and Audiovisual Translation. She has been invited to give lectures and workshops on audiovisual translation and media accessibility at several universities and institutions in Italy (Bergamo, Trieste, Milano, Roma, Palermo, Bari, Bologna, Napoli) and around the world (Valencia, Sevilla, Barcelona, Leeds, Belfast, Berlin,

Cairo, Nitra, New York, Shanghai). From 2008 to 2016, she was Visiting Lecturer at Roehampton University, London, MA course in audiovisual translation. From 2014 to 2016, she was Guest Lecturer at Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA. Since 2013, she lectures on cinema accessibility at the Venice International Film Festival, within the European Parliament-funded LUX Prize for cinema. In 2012-2013, she was Director of the international MA in Accessibility to Media, Arts and Culture of the University of Macerata. Since November, 2016, she is president of ESIST, European association of studies in screen translation (www.esist.org). She has published extensively on audiovisual translation and other areas of translation studies. Her publications are here: [http://docenti.unimc.it/elena.digiovanni - content=publications](http://docenti.unimc.it/elena.digiovanni-content=publications).

Margherita Dore is Research Fellow and Adjunct Lecturer at the Department of European, American and Intercultural Studies at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”. She holds a PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University, UK (2008), an MSc in Translation and Intercultural Studies from UMIST, UK (2002) and a BA in English and Latin American Studies from the University of Sassari, Italy (2001). In 2009-2010, she was Visiting Scholar at the University of Athens (Greece). Her interests include: Humour Studies, Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation and Cognitive Stylistics. She has (co)authored over fifteen papers and edited one essay collection on translation practice (*Achieving Consilience. Translation Theories and Practice*, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2016). She has worked on the analysis of humour in translated audiovisual texts and in a range of other contexts, including stand-up comedy.

Catalina Jimenez Hurtado is Professor of Translation and Interpreting. Senior Lecturer at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, Spain. Her main research area is that of accessible audiovisual translation (audio description and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing) and its application to the translator training and accessible museology. Her research interests also include linguistics applied to translation, with a special focus on knowledge management. Within this area she has published books, chapters of books and articles both at a national and an international level. She is the Head Researcher of the research group HUM 770 Aula de investigacion del texto multimedia of the Andalusian research programme, and of the following research projects: TRACCE (SEJ2006-01829/PSIC), AMATRA (P07-SEJ-2660), PRA2 (FFI2010-16142). OPERA. Leisure and culture accessibility. Online portal for the dissemination and evaluation of accessible audiovisual resources (FFI2015-65934-R).

Silvia Martínez Martínez is a Translation and Interpreting Graduate and holds a Ph.D. (2015) from the University of Granada, Spain. She has worked as professional translator since 2007. Since 2017 is Lecturer in the Department of English and German Philologies of the University of Granada, Spain. Her main research fields are audiovisual translation, didactics on audiovisual translation, audio description and subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Assistant Professor at the Department of English and German Philologies of the University of Granada. She is member of the research group HUM 770 Aula de investigación del texto multimedia of the Andalusian research programme, and of the following research projects: TRACCE (SEJ2006-01829/PSIC), AMATRA (P07-SEJ-2660), PRA2 (FFI2010-16142). OPERA. Leisure and culture accessibility. Online portal for the dissemination and evaluation of accessible audiovisual resources (FFI2015-65934-R).

Vincenza Minutella holds a PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Warwick, UK. She is a researcher in English Language and Translation at the University of Torino, Italy, where she teaches English linguistics and audiovisual translation. She has conducted research in theatre translation, film adaptation, Shakespeare translation and audiovisual translation. Her current research focuses on the dubbing and subtitling of multilingual films, on the dubbing of animated films and TV series, on the translation of humour, on the influence of the English language on dubbed Italian and on audio description for the blind and the visually impaired. Recent publications include “Dacci un taglio, vuoi?” Anglicisms in dubbed TV series, then and now” (2015), “British dialects in animated films: the case of *Gnomeo & Juliet* and its creative Italian dubbing” (2016) and “Globalising Bollywood: *My Name is Khan* from India to Italy through Hollywood” (2017).

Irene Ranzato is a tenured researcher and lecturer in English language and translation at Sapienza University of Rome. She holds a PhD in Translation Studies (Imperial College London). Her research focuses on the translation of cultural references, on censorship and manipulation in dubbing, on the function and translation of regional and social varieties of English, and on gender issues, in relation to film and television studies. She has especially worked – both in research and teaching – with cinema and television adaptations of the classics of English literature, involving students in linguistic, translational and intersemiotic analyses. Among her most recent publications: the monographs *Translating Culture Specific References - The Case of Dubbing* (Routledge, 2016) and *Queen's English? I dialetti dell'Inghilterra* (Bulzoni, 2018); as well as the edited collections (with S. Zanotti): *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation* (Routledge, 2018), *Intersections: Audiovisual Translation at the Crossroads of Disciplines* (thematic Issue

of *Perspectives*, 2019) and *Reassessing Dubbing: Historical Approaches and Current Trends* (Benjamins, forthcoming).

John D. Sanderson, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Studies of the University of Alicante, where he teaches Audiovisual Translation and Film and Literature, and also coordinates its Masters Degree in Performing Arts. He is the author of *Traducir el teatro de Shakespeare. Figuras retóricas iterativas en Ricardo III* (2002), editor of several volumes on Translation such as *Research on Translation for Subtitling in Spain and Italy* (2005) and *Focusing on Audiovisual Translation Research* (2018), and has written many articles on this field. He has also been the coordinator of the eight editions of the *Jornadas de doblaje y subtitulación de la Universidad de Alicante*.

Serenella Zanotti is Associate Professor of English Language and Translation at Roma Tre University, Italy. She has published widely in the fields of audiovisual translation, cross-cultural pragmatics, translator manuscript genetics and translanguaging. Her most recent work focuses on Stanley Kubrick and translation. She is the author of *Italian Joyce. A Journey through Language and Translation* (Bononia University Press 2013) and co-editor of numerous volumes, most recently *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation* (Routledge, 2018), *James Joyce's Silences* (Bloomsbury, 2018), *Donne in traduzione* (Bompiani, 2018), *Reassessing Dubbing: Historical Approaches and Current Trends* (Benjamins, forthcoming).