# NEW TRENDS IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

Edited by Jorge Díaz Cintas

New Trends in Audiovisual Translation

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New Trends in Audiovisual Translation

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Jorge Díaz Cintas

To Gunilla Anderman,
who never saw it finished

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Contributors

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Acknowledgements

The initial idea for this book was to be a co-edited volume with Professor Gunilla Anderman. Sadly, she passed away in April 2007. She had been ill for some time but chose to keep her illness very private.

Gunilla was Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Surrey and a well known translator from and into Swedish. Undeniably, her main field of expertise and lifelong passion was in drama translation although later on she had become not only interested, but also very enthusiastic about audiovisual translation. Gunilla and I had worked together in the organisation of an international conference called *In So Many Words*, which took place in London in 2004. Although her illness robbed her of part of her stamina and energy towards the end, she continued doing what she loved: writing about and teaching Translation Studies. Just before her death, we had managed to see the end of another collaborative project entitled *Audiovisual Translation: Language Transfer on Screen* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Unfortunately, though, Gunilla never had the opportunity to offer any critical comment on any of the essays compiled in the present volume. At the time of her death she might have been working on some aspects of this project but we have been unable to trace any of that possible work. This means that for the present volume I have been prevented from having the invaluable input of a very incisive and curious mind. Blame for any shortcomings can be placed on my shoulders alone.

The production of this volume has been somewhat of a roller-coaster and I would like to acknowledge my most sincere debt to Gillian James and Professor Margaret Rogers with whom I have been liaising during this distressing period.

I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks to all those who have worked hard and tirelessly in the production of this book. First of all, I would like to thank the contributors for their enormous patience during the coordinating and editing of the many essays that make up the present volume. Special thanks should be extended to Professors Susan Bassnett

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Jorge Díaz Cintas
Imperial College London
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Introduction – Audiovisual Translation: An Overview of its Potential

JORGE DÍAZ CINTAS

Despite being a professional practice that can be traced back to the very origins of cinema, audiovisual translation (AVT) has been a relatively unknown field of research until very recently. Off to a sluggish and shaky start in the late 1950s and early 1960s, research in this field only experienced a remarkable boom at the close of the 20th century. However, over the last 20 or so years the audiovisual industry has provided a fertile ground for a burgeoning activity in academic studies with translation at their core. Apart from growing as a professional activity, thanks primarily to the digital revolution, AVT has now become a resolute and prominent area of academic research.

A Bit of History

The first studies in the field were brief and scattered in a wide range of publications going from cinema and translation journals to newspapers and weekly magazines. Occasionally, papers and manuscripts were simply passed around among professionals and academics without ever being published or reaching the general public. This unfortunate dispersal of fundamental research material not only makes bibliographical search into the beginnings of the discipline complicated for researchers in this area, but it also means that for some time quite a few scholars carried out their work without knowing what others had already done in the field. Even though this situation belongs to the past, we still lack a proper historiography of audiovisual translation and its study today.

Making abstraction of the research that never saw the 'official' light of day, Laks's *Le sous-titrage de films*, dating from 1957, can be considered the first volume ever to have been written on subtitling. Though rather short, only 62 pages, it provides the reader with a very comprehensive overview of this technique. However, its publication as *livre d'auteur* means that its distribution too was very limited and very few scholars have had the opportunity to lay their hands on this book. The decades of the 1960s and 1970s were characterised by an acute lethargy regarding subtitling, although some minor articles appeared on the subject of dubbing, with the journal *Babel* publishing a special issue on cinema translation in 1960 which contained contributions by Caillé (1960) and Cary (1960). Most of the works written during this period adopted a distinctively professional perspective, focusing on the figure of the audiovisual translator, on the different translational stages, as well as on the differences between dubbing and subtitling, and the way in which audiences were seen to experience subtitling (Hesse-Quack, 1969; Myers, 1973; Reid, 1978, 1983).

One seminal article from the 1980s is Marleau's 'Le sous-titres . . . un mal nécessaire', from 1982, in which the author classifies the different challenges posed by subtitling in four categories: technological, psychological, artistic-aesthetic and linguistic. He offers some orthotypographical recommendations on the presentation of the subtitles and transcends the linguistic dimension of the practice, considering economic factors, the influence of the film industry and the input of different professionals that take part in the subtitling process. This very same year, Titford (1982: 113) claims that the problems defining subtitling 'derive essentially from the constraints imposed on the translator by the medium itself', introducing the concept of *constrained translation* that will be later expanded to a myriad of (audiovisual) translation practices by Mayoral Asensio *et al.* (1988).

In 1987, under the auspices of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the first ever *Conference on Dubbing and Subtitling* was held in the city of Stockholm. This event had the effect of triggering an unprecedented interest in AVT that materialised in the exponential publication of new books and articles in the field, among which Pommier (1988), Luyken *et al.* (1991) and Ivarsson (1992) are perhaps the most important ones. The latter's work, the English translation of a Swedish original from 1986, benefits from an exhaustive knowledge of the subtitling profession, a detailed history of the technical aspects of subtitling and an early overview of subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. In 1998, with the assistance of Carroll, a revised, updated second edition was published, incorporating the latest technical developments in digital technology at the time.

Working from a markedly Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) stand, Delabastita (1989, 1990) was one of the first scholars to tackle the semiotic nature of audiovisual productions by discussing the translational implications that the multiple signs and channels that make up a film have for dubbing and subtitling. Although the focus of his contributions is primarily cultural, in consonance with the new developments shaping translation theory at the time (i.e. the so called 'cultural turn'), he never neglects the analysis of translation as a process. Of special interest is his catalogue of the questions that should guide the prying research-mind of AVT scholars. Also in 1989, and with a very similar title to Delabastita's but in French, Lambert published a panoramic work entitled 'La traduction, les langues et la communication de masse' on the power that mass media have in our society and the role played by language and translation. His main contribution to the field is perhaps his ability to introduce a new angle to the way in which we consider AVT, highlighting how susceptible audiovisual productions can also be to manipulative and ideological forces.

The proper beginning of a real flurry of activity can be traced to the 1990s – AVT's golden age. The field became the object of more systematic research from a translational perspective in educational, scholarly and professional circles and saw the publication of collective volumes (Gambier, 1995, 1996, 1998) and the works of prolific authors like Gottlieb (1997a, 2000). Since then, and this is no exaggeration, we have been flooded with contributions on AVT and the true scholarly emergence of the field. Given the numerous conferences and other events regularly organised on the topic, AVT seems to have finally come of age academically (Díaz Cintas, 2008a); PhD dissertations and publications on the subject are a frequent occurrence these days and some universities and higher education centres have started to offer courses on dubbing, subtitling, voiceover, and accessibility to the audiovisual media, that is, subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing (SDH), and audio description for the blind and the partially sighted (AD). From being considered a minor area of specialisation within Translation Studies, the position of AVT is now rapidly changing, growing in significance and visibility thanks, amongst others, to the efforts of many young, novel scholars who have decided to direct their academic interests to the analysis of audiovisual programmes.

Gone are the days when scholars needed to start their papers with a reference to the limited amount of research carried out in this field, followed by a detailed explanation of the terminology used and the few publications available in this area before moving on to the real focus of their study. The hackneyed debate on the merits or otherwise of a particular AVT mode as opposed to another has meanwhile been successfully settled

as well. Scholarly approaches have now moved well beyond value-laden comparisons, discussing whether one mode – particularly subtitling or dubbing – is better than the other to studies where the emphasis is placed on understanding these modes as different translational practices deserving of in-depth critical attention. It has become accepted that different genres and audiences call for different translational approaches, that they all have their pros and cons, and that they all have their place in the booming audiovisual industry.

Audiovisual Translation Modes

Even for those with an adequate command of the foreign language, audiovisual productions bring with them a whole range of obstacles for the unsuspecting viewer. Indeed, while attempting to recreate a real live situation on screen, they may hamper comprehension of a given scene due to fast paced dialogue exchanges among characters, the use of unknown dialectal and sociolectal variations, instances of overlapping speech and interfering diegetic noises and music, to name but a few. All these factors contribute to making the translation of the audiovisual programme a necessity for the vast majority of viewers.

In the main, there are two overarching, basic approaches to dealing with the transfer into another language of the spoken dialogue of the original programme. Either oral output remains oral output, as in the original production, or it is transformed into written output. If the first option is favoured, the original soundtrack is replaced by a new one in the target language, a process which is generally known as 'revoicing'. The replacement may be total, whereby the target viewer can no longer hear the original exchanges, as in dubbing (also known as lip sync), or partial, that is, when the original spoken dialogue is still (faintly) audible in the background, as in the case of voiceover.

Although it is true that habit, cultural disposition and financial considerations have made of dubbing, subtitling and voiceover the three most common translation modes of AVT, this does not mean that they are the only language transfer options available in the industry. The typologies put forward by authors like Luyken *et al.* (1991), Gambier (1996) and Díaz Cintas (1999) distinguish over 10 different types of multilingual transfer in the field of audiovisual communication. For the sake of this volume, a brief definition of each of the modes discussed in the forthcoming pages – that is, dubbing, subtitling and voiceover – follows.

Dubbing involves replacing the original soundtrack containing the actors' dialogue with a target language recording that reproduces the

original message, ensuring that the target language sounds and the actors' lip movements are synchronised, in such a way that target viewers are led to believe that the actors on screen are actually speaking their language. *Subtitling* involves presenting a written text, usually along the bottom of the screen, which gives an account of the original dialogue exchanges of the speakers as well as other linguistic elements which form part of the visual image (inserts, letters, graffiti, banners and the like) or of the soundtrack (songs, voices off). *Voiceover* involves reducing the volume of the original soundtrack to a minimal auditory level, in order to ensure that the translation, which is orally overlapped on to the original soundtrack, can be heard by the target audience. It is common practice to allow viewers to hear a few seconds of the original foreign speech before reducing the volume and superimposing the translation. The recording of the translation finishes a couple of seconds before the end of the original speech, allowing the audience to listen to the voice of the person on the screen at a normal volume once again.

The Potential and Pitfalls of AVT

Romero Fresco (2006) points out that when 'looking back at what has been written so far, it seems that the most fruitful studies on AVT include or assume to some extent two basic notions: the independence of AVT as an autonomous discipline and its dependence on other related disciplines'. Although this assertion could be read as a contradiction in terms, the author aptly argues how these two ways of understanding AVT are perfectly compatible. Let us therefore investigate both sides of this coin in some greater detail.

As an autonomous field within the broader domain of Translation Studies, AVT is indeed an entity in its own right rather than a subgroup within, say, literary translation, as posited by influential Translation Studies scholars such as Bassnett (2002: 17) and Snell-Hornby (1995: 32). Both scholars place dubbing and subtitling within the larger area of literary translation, equating them with 'cinema translation' and 'film translation'.

However, as discussed also by Chaume Varela (2004: 118–22), one of the main and recurrent misconceptions that has permeated the literature written on translation more generally seeking to 'place' audiovisual translation, is precisely that AVT is understood to be a 'genre' when in fact it should be considered a 'text type' that subsumes many and different genres, an idea already latent in Reiss's (1977: 111) proposed superstructure known as the '*audio-medial* text type'. It seems rather limiting to liken 'audiovisual translation' with 'film translation' when films are only a

small fraction of a wider variety of audiovisual programmes – including corporate videos, documentaries, TV series, reality shows or video games – that are routinely translated. Likewise, to talk about 'film and TV translation' (Delabastita, 1989) as if they were synonymous terms again leads to fuzzy terminology, mixing the genre (film) with the medium (TV, as opposed to cinema or DVD). It is my contention that AVT practices like dubbing, subtitling or voiceover are not merely variants of literary, drama or poetry translation, but rather that they are translational modes belonging to a superordinate text type – the audiovisual one – that operates in contradistinction to the written-only and the spoken-only types. This approach encompasses the potential situation of, for instance, a TV programme calling for the subtitling of a poem or the dubbing of a play for their release as part of an audiovisual production.

Skewed, traditional perceptions of AVT have somehow also led to the idea that the only cultural artefacts within AVT worthy of analysis and research – and for that matter, worthy of inclusion in publications for training purposes and in educational curricula – are fiction films. However, we only need to watch a bit of television, surf the internet, or peruse the DVD shelves of megastores to ascertain that there are many more genres and programmes that are also subtitled, dubbed or voicedover, and that these too deserve to be the object of scholarly analyses. Examples are sitcoms, cartoons, documentaries, corporate videos, commercials, educational and edutainment productions, video games, cookery and property programmes, interviews and fly-on-the-wall docudramas, to name but a few. It is evident that the way in which we interact has changed and is constantly changing still, the main move being that from the page to the screen as text carrier, and these changes in their turn create new communication needs. In this sense, the impressive development of technology has played a crucial role. In brief, we must view translation, and especially audiovisual translation as a more flexible, more heterogeneous phenomenon, one that is able to accommodate a broader range of empirical realities, to subsume new and potential translation activities within its boundaries and that therefore also calls for adapted research methods.

The seemingly ever-changing nature of translation and the difficulty of coping with it have also resulted in a certain amount of indecision regarding terminology. The first studies in our field tended to resort to terms like *cinema translation* and *film translation* (*cf.* supra) to name their research but as the field extended to include additional televised productions and those released on video, the term *audiovisual translation* was introduced. Another term that has enjoyed and is still enjoying a certain currency in the field is *screen translation*, designed to encompass all those programmes that are

distributed via a screen, be it a television, cinema, computer or mobile screen. Although this terminological instability is yet another corroboration of the changeability of the field, it should by no means be considered a communication hurdle. On the contrary, it can just as well be considered a clear sign that many academics and scholars have maintained the open and accommodating stance that our changing times require, with a view to assimilating and acknowledging new developments in translation praxis, rather than squeezing them into old, respectable straightjackets.

What is more, the study of AVT has by now developed its very own theoretical and methodological approaches, allowing it to claim the status of a scholarly area of research in its own right. This new-found autonomy of AVT is evident in the fact that specific research frameworks have been developed for the study of dubbing and subtitling, for instance (Chaume Varela, 2004; Díaz Cintas, 2003a). In addition, and as I pointed out above, AVT has become the main topic of books, postgraduate courses and international conferences focusing on the specificity of this field. And yet, there also is this other side of the coin.

Despite this apparent independence, AVT is by nature heterogeneous and interdisciplinary, which is, in fact, one of the field's greatest assets. As Romero Fresco (2006) puts it: 'if the autonomy of AVT is the starting point for research, its interdisciplinarity is the way forward, as it is drawing on other disciplines that AVT finds new and fruitful avenues of research'. There is no point in isolating AVT. There are substantial fields of research and theoretical reflection that can productively and systematically contribute to the study and understanding of translation in general, and AVT in particular, as will be corroborated by the different chapters of this volume.

Let us consider a few examples. There is no doubt that the ever-increasing prominence of audiovisual media in our society has had a positive knock-on effect on the social and cultural visibility of AVT, attracting enormous interest in this form of communication. The United States is the first largest exporter of audiovisual productions in the world dominating, not exclusively but mostly, the film industries of many other countries. With English being the all-dominant language, and audiences in the United States and the UK rarely being interested in foreign-language productions, whether dubbed or subtitled, the metaphor of translation as a bridge between cultures looks increasingly shaky. From the standpoint of the target culture, the situation is certainly worthy of comment. Since a large percentage of films and television programmes consumed by viewers worldwide are originally produced in the United States it seems legitimate to expect that they will exert a certain degree of influence both in the language – usually via translation – and in the attitudes of millions of people across the

globe. Whilst aiming to mirror society, audiovisual productions invite their audiences to find resemblances in the characters they see on screen in a process of identification, which, in turn, triggers a mimetic attitude in some viewers. Hence, the immense power that the media are accredited to wield over viewers, a power that is well worth further investigation.

In my brief historical survey I showed that AVT has often been studied from a professional point of view in the (recent) past, with research focusing mainly on its mechanics, on technical issues such as time and space constraints, lip synchronisation, spotting or cueing of subtitles, and so on. However, topics of research too are widening in scope, departing from the technical and linguistic approaches to encompass the sociocultural dimension of AVT. Thanks to the seminal works of scholars like Bassnett and Lefevere (1998), increased awareness of the cultural embeddedness of translation, of any kind, has drawn the fields of Translation Studies and Cultural Studies together. And, slowly but surely, this 'cultural turn' is starting to have a clear impact on the research conducted in AVT, as witness some of the chapters to come.

Recently, AVT has been addressed from a perspective centred on how the language used in the (translated) dialogue exchanges affects or is affected by social constructs such as race, class, gender and economic status, besides censorship and the manipulation and control of meaning by various institutions. The project *Translation in Global News*, led by the University of Warwick in the UK, is one such new development investigating the multifaceted nature of global news as well as the politics and economics of translation in global media (Bassnett, 2006; Bassnett & Bielsa, 2008).

While mirroring reality, cinema also distorts it by constructing certain images and clichés that grip the audience and mould their perception of the world. Given the power exerted by the media, it is not an exaggeration to state that AVT is the means through which not only information but also the assumptions and values of a society are filtered and transferred to other cultures. Films and other audiovisual productions now represent one of the primary means through which commonplaces, stereotypes and manipulated views about social categories (women, blacks, Arabs, homosexuals, religious minorities) are conveyed: dubbing, voiceover and subtitling enable such views to be made accessible to wider audiences unfamiliar with the language of the original production.

How does AVT go about this? The task of the translator is particularly slippery when dealing with the translation of identities and stereotypes since there is always the risk of the target language not rendering precisely the locations and dislocations of identity that are present, whether

explicitly or implicitly, in the source language. When translating, the danger of a potential mismatch between cultural identity and the very specific way in which it is linguistically mapped through two (or more) different languages is always real. Whereas in other closely related areas like drama translation or film remakes, some productions resort to strategies of geographical relocation or new models of cultural hybridity in order to bridge the cultural gap and engage the collaboration of their new audiences, AVT is always constrained by the presence of the original production, which lives on semiotically through images (and sound) in the adoptive culture. Dialogue exchanges do not just happen in a vacuum but they always take place in a given context, which, in the case of AVT, is a concrete situation in time, captured and frozen by the camera. The fact that target viewers have the same access as source viewers to the visuals of the programme, and in the case of subtitling and voiceover even to the same soundtrack, has vast implications for the way the translation can be carried out. Obviously, studying the linguistic dimension of this process only will not yield satisfactory results.

Still, from a linguistic point of view, the first, obvious step is the translation of the programmes into various domestic languages if the contents are to be intelligible to the target audience. But the semiotic complexity of the audiovisual productions will determine the nature of the strategies implemented and the solutions reached. Translating only the linguistic component without taking into account the value of the other semiotic dimensions of film (*cf.* supra) would certainly be a recipe for disaster. Culture, cultural identity and pragmatic functioning in their more or less explicitly localised forms ooze from all the film or programme's semiotic systems and pragmatic. The translation of humour, dialect, compliments, swearing or taboo language must be considered within this context and they are only a few examples of the areas discussed in the present volume posing formidable challenges. Not only for their very localised meaning, both in time and space, but also for being always embedded in the source audiovisual text with a pragmatic and semiotic significance that goes well beyond the purely linguistic dimension. In brief, as is the case in other translation fields, translators must pay intricate attention to language in the first instance, however, in order to ensure a successful triangular marriage between words, acoustic and kinetic information, they must undertake a very precise examination of the audiovisual situation, of the relationships established between images, character interaction and individual verbal strategies. In short, they must be fully aware of the semiotic complexity of the audiovisual production.

In addition to the above mentioned cultural hegemony, the role of English as the main working language in all the stages of the AVT industry – that is, production, distribution and exhibition – raises other very important questions for investigation as well. From a professional perspective, AVT is closely linked to technology and recent technical developments, which, in the fields of subtitling and dubbing, have had a direct impact on working practices. Routines that were standard a decade ago are becoming obsolete and new ways of operating in a global world, minimising efforts and maximising benefits, are constantly sought. Los Angeles and London are not only the main powerhouses of the audio-visual production industry; they are also becoming the nerve centres of AVT, especially in the case of subtitling (and increasingly so in voiceover). Films in minorised and lesser-used languages are rarely translated directly from the source language. Instead, they tend to be translated first into English, which is used as a pivot language, then into other languages, with decisions on translation issues being taken in English-speaking cities rather than in the 'territories' as they are called in the DVD industry jargon. 'Templates', 'master (sub)titles' and 'genesis files' are becoming more frequent in the industry and are having a great impact on the new ways that subtitles are produced (Georgakopoulou, 2008). The jargon used in the industry is reminiscent of a colonial past and a far cry from the gendered and sexualised metaphors of translation discussed by Chamberlain (1988), among which the notorious *les belles infidèles* is probably the best known.

From a technological perspective, old historical certainties and dominant technical parameters are being increasingly challenged as new ideas and possibilities sweep in, hand in hand with advances interrogating in very different ways the meaning of audiovisual translation, examining how ingrained codes of behaviour and sets of assumptions shape translation practices in this field. The potential offered by digital technology is colossal both for the production and consumption of AVT. New formats like DVD, Blu-ray and internet have also changed our perception of audiovisual products, giving viewers an unusual degree of control over the linguistic combination(s) in which they wish to watch a programme. We are now dealing with an (inter)active rather than passive viewer, who is increasingly more deeply immersed in the world of the image and has greater familiarity with new technologies. In years to come, innovations such as on-the-go and mobile technology and amateur practices like fansubs have the power to change the field and the way we study it even more.

For instance, in the case of subtitling and thanks to the internet, digital subtitling programmes have become a much more common occurrence, with many of them available free on the net: Subtitle Workshop, Media

Subtitler, Virtual Dub and Aegisub are just a few examples. The production of subtitles is relatively easy these days and has popularised translating practices like fansubbing (www.fansubs.net, www.fansubs. org), whose main philosophy is the free distribution over the internet of audiovisual programmes with subtitles done by fans. Free from market imperatives, this new form of subtitling 'by fans for fans' can afford to be much more creative and idiosyncratic than traditional (professional) subtitling. Indeed, some aficionados prefer to use the term (fan)subbing, instead of subtitling, in an attempt to emphasise its unique nature. Although the usefulness of some of the subtitling conventions and strategies fansubbers apply is still to be critically assessed, it is undeniable that some of their groundbreaking innovations, such as the use of translator's notes on the screen, have already started to filter the profession, cropping up in some commercialised films and other audiovisual programmes (Díaz Cintas, 2007). As posited by Pérez González (2006), in an analogy to the butterfly effect discussed in chaos theory, the future of audiovisual translation modes and conventions is certainly being challenged, if not threatened, by these alternative practices. As the power of consumers in audiovisual media is bound to increase in the near future it is hoped that these new developments will also be prime candidates for further scholarly attention.

To conclude this section, it is worthwhile mentioning the vast potential opened by AVT from a pedagogical and didactic perspective. Given the fact that until very recently, and with very few exceptions, the profession was learned *in situ*, away from educational establishments, very little has been researched on the best way to train audiovisual translators, not just in subtitling but in all the different translation modes normally used in the world of audiovisual programming. Although, traditionally, the primary role of AVT has been to act as a means for viewers to understand a programme originally shot in another language, the possibilities of AVT have expanded beyond this *prima facie* role in recent years. Language instructors round the world are increasingly realising the benefits of AVT for foreign language teaching and learning. The European Commission funded project *Learning Via Subtitling* (http://levis.cti.gr) has as its main remit the development of educational material for active foreign language learning based on film subtitling. It aims to cover the exigency for active learning where cultural elements are involved effectively through real-life (simulated) activities and the need for productive use of multimedia not as a nice add-on but rather as the core element of an activity. From a scholarly standpoint, the use of subtitles, both intralingual and interlingual, as a tool in the teaching and learning of foreign languages has been mentioned

in passing by numerous authors and discussed in more detail by others (Caimi, 2002; Danan, 1992, 2004; Díaz Cintas, 2008b; Gambier, 2007) but it can still benefit from more empirical experiments and systematic analysis. To date, virtually nothing has been written or researched relating to the value of dubbing or voiceover, for instance, in the learning of foreign languages, and despite the success of literacy projects like BookBox (www.bookbox.com), which resorts to same language subtitling of audio-visual programmes to enhance children's reading experience (Kothari *et al.*, 2004), the field of AVT and language learning/acquisition remains vastly unexplored.

About the Content of this Book

Audiovisual translation is a powerful activity, a highly significant form of intercultural communication, and one of the main objectives of this volume is to stimulate the exchange of ideas from a broad perspective, including both cultural and linguistic approaches, and to place emphasis on the exploration of different languages and traditions. As the table of contents shows, the various chapters that make up this volume have been grouped under three main themes. The first part, *Crossing Cultural Borders*, contains papers that share the common thread of looking at AVT from a cultural perspective, with a strong focus on the semiotic dimension. **Henrik Gottlieb** opens this section with a contribution entitled 'Subtitling against the current: Danish concepts, English minds'. The fact that audiences in the United States and Britain do not often enjoy foreign-language productions, whether dubbed or subtitled, allows him to posit the hypothesis that those non-English films that make it into Anglo-Saxon territory are prone to have a substantial part of their verbal localisms deleted or domesticated – that is, explicitated – in an attempt to make them more palatable to a predomi-nantly monolingual Anglophone audience. To test the validity of this hypothesis, he carries out a thorough analysis of the strategies used in the subtitling of extra-linguistic culture-specific references when translating several art films from Danish into English and compares these results with the strategies implemented in the subtitling of Anglo-American localisms in the Danish subtitles of two American films. Although on the whole fewer localisms tend to be preserved when subtitling into English, the picture that comes out of his study is much more complex than anticipated in the author's hypothesis, as the genre of the film rather than the language direc-tion seems to play a part in some cases.

It is commonly accepted that translators mediate between two linguistic and cultural systems. In our field, audiovisual translators have to engage

with elaborate multisemiotic texts, where the interrelation between language and culture takes on a special significance. Audiences of foreign films encounter sociocultural systems which might be similar in some cases, but differ substantially from their own experience in others. Audiovisual translators must decipher and filter meaning on different levels (aural, visual, verbal, nonverbal) before deciding on an appropriate rendering that will hopefully make sense to their target audience. In her contribution, 'Connecting cultures: cultural transfer in subtitling and dubbing', **Zoë Pettit** delves into the problems related to specific cultural features embedded within the audiovisual text. From a pragmatic and semiotic perspective, she considers how the interplay between image, sound and target text affects the translation strategies in operation, with particular reference to a selection of English-French subtitled and dubbed versions, and she examines how the cultural transfer is carried out in the two AVT modes.

The traditional emphasis accorded to the linguistic component of the audiovisual programme when subtitling has meant that the nonverbal dimension of films is often neglected in the translation under the pretext that it can hardly be reproduced as written text. In her contribution, 'The codification of nonverbal information in subtitled texts', **Elisa Perego** criticises the marginal attention given so far to nonverbal elements when studying subtitles, and advocates an approach that takes into account paralanguage, silences, kinesics and proxemics as decisive communicative parameters. The marginalisation of paralinguistic features can greatly affect comprehension since not only do they transmit information nonverbally but they also complement and complete the verbal message. Drawing on examples from subtitled films (Hungarian-Italian, English-Italian), the author sheds light on the possible causes that require nonverbal information to be verbalised. The analysis offered by the author is predominantly qualitative, although some attention is given to the quantitative dimension of the results.

Isabel Hurtado de Mendoza Azaola's contribution, entitled 'Translating proper names into Spanish: the case of *Forrest Gump*', aims to illustrate the kind of problems that dubbers and subtitlers face when they have to transfer highly marked sociocultural references, like proper names, into another language. After discussing the merits of a good audience design and the technical constraints imposed by the media, she argues that dubbing has greater leeway than subtitling, thus allowing for a more suitable adaptation of the original film to the new audience. Conversely, the subtitled version is subject to more technical constraints, which can result in an undermining of the general tone of the original film as well as some loss

of meaning. Drawing on Skopos Theory, the author then puts forward the hypothesis that dubbing rather than subtitling does often a better job when the original text is heavily loaded with culture-specific allusions.

In Canada, all English language feature films released in Quebec must be available in French within weeks, which means a flurry of film translation activity that normally occurs six to eight months before the same film is released in France. Despite the fact that Quebec-dubbed films cannot be distributed in France because of protective measures imposed by the French industry and government, the translation policies and practices of the Quebec companies produce 'international' or 'mid-Atlantic' French language in these films, excising anything Québecois from the text, such as intonation, lexis, and syntax. The chapter by **Luise von Flotow**, entitled 'Frenching the feature film, twice: Or *le synchronien au débat*', examines this situation, focusing on the issue of 'international' French on which studios and distributors continue to insist. Questions asked include: What exactly drives dubbing policy in Quebec? Are there any links between the Quebec and the French dubbing industries that may be behind these policies? What, if any, is the effect of academic work in the field?

The concept of translation tends to conjure up the rather erroneous idea that two cultures signify two languages and, hence, two different countries, a perception that is obviously wrong since there are many nations where two or more languages are spoken within their frontiers and translation is needed between those languages. The reality may even require that in some cases even dialects need to be translated for the benefit of the rest of countrymen, a rather common occurrence in Flanders (Remael *et al.*, 2008). This is what also happens in Italy, where since the early 1990s, the need for Italian-Italian subtitles has characterised the work of a group of filmmakers from the south of the country, who use the local dialect as the predominant language in their films. In contradistinction with the chapter by von Flotow, the study by **Abele Longo**, 'Subtitling the Italian south', looks into the cinematic meaning and value that diatopic language variations have within the same country: Italy. Focusing on two films by Ciprì and Maresco's – *Totò che visse due volte*, set in Palermo, and Piva's *LaCapaGira*, set in Bari – the author sets to find out what is the diegetic value of the intralingual subtitles that are needed in the original version. It is shown that the Italian language used in the captions requires active participation on the part of the viewers in order to grasp the special features and idiomatic expressions of the dialects; how and why Italian itself as a language is mocked in both films; how the effectiveness of subtitling is determined by keeping translation to a 'minimum'; how humour characterises and influences the subtitling of

both films and, finally, how and why strong language appears to be lost in translation.

Whereas dubbing and subtitling have been widely discussed in academic exchanges, voiceover has traditionally been given little attention in AVT studies. **Anna Matamala**'s chapter, 'Main challenges in the translation of documentaries', deals primarily with this translation mode. She presents the reader with the main hurdles audiovisual translators have to overcome when dealing with documentary programmes. First of all, a brief overview of voiceover translation is given, focusing on the main characteristics of the documentary genre. Then the author offers a classification in two groups of the main problems faced by translators in this field: working conditions, on the one hand, and more specific problems such as terminology, types of speakers and translation modes, on the other. In her opinion, translators must master not only voiceover and narration techniques, but also subtitling, since in the English-Catalan combination different translation modes are used when dealing with documentaries. A corpus of real examples drawn from her vast professional experience as a translator from English into Catalan is used for illustrative purposes and, finally, some conclusions regarding the translation of documentaries are posited.

The second series of texts, grouped under the title *Juggling with Humour*, is devoted to the interaction of two flourishing and challenging research areas: humour studies and AVT studies. If verbally expressed humour is, at best, difficult to translate, the task becomes even trickier when other semiotic dimensions have to be taken into account before deciding on a satisfactory solution, whether in dubbing or subtitling. Wordplay which relies on visual representation can certainly be an ordeal for the screen translator. The cohesion of the information supplied simultaneously by the two channels, audio and visual, must be hypothetically maintained in the target text and, since the visuals cannot be manipulated, the degree of translation manoeuvring required will be higher in order to achieve a humorous effect, equivalent to that of the source text. In 'Translation strategies for the dubbing of puns with one visual semantic layer', **John D. Sanderson** seeks to develop a partial taxonomy of audiovisual puns through the analysis of excerpts of comedy films which range from parodies such as *Spaceballs* and *Life of Brian* to Jim Carrey's *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective, Bruce Almighty*, and *Friends*, all strongly reliant on visual humour.

There are many factors influencing the kind of humour with which audiovisual translators have to deal. Given the nature of the material to be translated, it is no surprise that some of these aspects go beyond the linguistic dimension. In her contribution entitled 'Translating humour: the dubbing of *Bridget Jones's Diary* into Spanish', **Nieves Jiménez Carra**

discusses the relationship of humour to cultural aspects including the traditional/modern roles assigned to women and the use of taboo language in comical phrases and expressions. The author discusses the English and Spanish versions of the film, paying special attention to strategies like adaptation, which is mostly used when dealing with the translation of phraseology.

The next contribution in this section, 'Dubbing *The Simpsons* in Spain: a case study', broaches the subject of the translation of humour in animation productions, through an analysis of the Spanish version of the popular US cartoon series *The Simpsons*, which has been on the air in Spain for over 15 years. The programme is rich in characters, with the occasional presence of celebrities, and intertextual references to movies, historic events and current affairs. Taking into account the scarce subordination to lip synchronisation that characterises the dubbing of animation programmes, **Marta Muñoz Gil**'s discussion focuses on the translation of: (a) proper names, (b) intertextual references, (c) cultural referents, (d) humorous elements, and (e) national and social identity features. In the analysis of these elements, the Mexican version of the series is also referred to and compared with the translation commercialised in Spain.

Further examples of the problems involved in the translation of humour, this time in the case of subtitling into Portuguese, are provided by **Maria José Veiga** in her chapter 'The translation of audiovisual humour in just a few words'. One of the main purposes of this contribution is to investigate the various strategies implemented by translators when dealing with humour on the screen. After discussing the main constraints inherent to subtitling – synchronisation between sound, image and content, size of subtitles, time exposure, and readability, among others – the author argues that the task of the subtitler dealing with the transfer of humour is aggravated by the problems of: recognising and understanding humour in the source language/culture as well as (re)producing the same or similar meaning the screenwriter originally intended to convey, thus producing the same or similar effect on the target audience.

The last chapter in this section, 'Gender portrayal in dubbed and subtitled comedies', is written by **Marcella De Marco**. The purpose of her contribution is to link AVT to an issue of growing importance in film studies: the portrayal of gender. Cinema forms part of a wider sociocultural context and, as a medium of representation, it portrays values, myths and clichés that mirror and strengthen common assumptions about what it means to be a man or a woman. Cinematic language in general and dubbing/subtitling in particular play, therefore, a fundamental role in the transmission of stereotypes from one culture to another. In this contribution, the author

analyses a number of Anglo-American films such as *Working Girl*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Sister Act* and *Mrs Doubtfire*, focusing on how gender stereotypes are portrayed visually; how these stereotypes are linguistically transferred in the Spanish and Italian dubbed/subtitled versions; whether they adopt similar or different verbal images and, if so, what these differences suggest about the recipient culture.

Despite having gained a certain degree of autonomy, Translation Studies in general remains a multidisciplinary area, drawing most notably on the insights of linguistics. Indeed, language is the primary working tool of the (audiovisual) translator and it is the core of the third and last part of this book, entitled *Dealing with Linguistic Variation*. Whilst research on the linguistic aspects of dubbing has mainly focused on general aspects such as lip synchronisation and the translation of social and geographic variation as well as transfer errors, systematic quantitative analyses of spoken language are rarely available. As a result, little is known about the degree to which spoken language filters into translated film scripts. Investigations so far do in fact suggest that dubbed language varieties are likely to be placed closer to a 'neutral', uniform written standard, thus failing to portray sociolinguistic variation. **Maria Pavesi**'s chapter, 'Dubbing English into Italian: A closer look at the translation of spoken language', presents a quantitative account of selected syntactic and lexico-syntactic features of spoken Italian, typically associated with the constraints and situational factors of face-to-face communication, as reflected in five Italian translations of widely known British and American films, including *Secrets and Lies*, *Sliding Doors*, *Notting Hill*, *Dead Man Walking* and *Finding Forrester*. The results are then compared and contrasted with the data from corpora of spoken Italian and a corpus of Italian films.

The contribution by **María Jesús Fernández Fernández**, 'The translation of swearing in the dubbing of the film *South Park* into Spanish', focuses on the role of coarse language and expletives in film translation. After taking a look at how swearing works in English and Spanish, the author examines the way in which swearing has been handled when dubbing US films into Peninsular Spanish. From a diachronic perspective, taboo expressions contained in many American films were often toned down in Spanish by using artificial expressions that suffered from a lack of authenticity. The trend nowadays seems to point in a different direction as translators resort to expressions more in tune with the linguistic and cultural contexts of the target language in order to maintain the pragmatic intention of the original. To illustrate this point, some examples of the translation of strong language are presented and discussed in a contrastive analysis of the US animated film *South Park* and its dubbed Spanish counterpart.

Silvia Bruti's contribution, 'The translation of compliments in subtitles', aims to investigate to what extent linguistic simplification in subtitling affects the domain of politeness phenomena, focusing on compliments and compliment responses, which are culturally-restrained speech acts. As shown by sociopragmatic studies, it is clear that speech acts are subject to cultural and sociolinguistic variation and interesting changes may also be observed across age and gender. After discussing the value of compliments in the negotiation of social identities and relations, the author seeks to investigate how the original speech act is translated in the subtitled versions, bearing in mind that information can also be conveyed extra-linguistically. The analysis of compliments and compliment responses is applied to various British/American films and their Italian subtitled versions including *Shallow Hal, Sliding Doors, There's Something About Mary* and *Philadelphia.*

As has frequently been observed, strong language and nonstandard forms tend to be eliminated or, at least, toned down in subtitling. The most obvious reason for this is that swearing and taboo language have a stronger effect when written than when spoken, and in many countries this is an area subject to censorship. Working within the politeness theory framework, this joint contribution from **Olga Gartzonika** and **Adriana Şerban**, entitled 'Greek soldiers on the screen: politeness, fluency and audience design in subtitling', investigates the ways in which the spoken interaction between characters in the Greek film *Loafing and Camouflage* has been represented in the English subtitles. The characters are soldiers doing their compulsory military service in Greece, and the language they use is frequently nonstandard. While the subtitler was found to have systematically toned down the language for the benefit of the film audience, in some cases offensive language has, more unexpectedly, been added, as a result of the subtitler's concern to achieve a fluent sounding text.

Drawing on the work of some of the most prominent scholars in AVT, this volume covers a few of the central areas of concern in this dynamic field of research. A wide range of themes and issues are discussed from a variety of angles, dealing with various cultures and language pairs. These different perspectives and views represent some of the many facets in which AVT manifests itself in our society and are a testimony to the power of AVT in cultural transformation and change. Just as importantly, as the authors discuss AVT in its various manifestations (dubbing, subtitling and voiceover), supplying answers to some crucial questions, they also open up new debates by asking further questions. I hope this volume will engage the reader's imagination and encourage continued research into a field that many have started to see as the new translation discipline of the 21st century.

Part 1

Crossing Cultural Borders

Chapter 2

Subtitling Against the Current: Danish Concepts, English Minds

HENRIK GOTTLIEB

> *Translation indicates a willingness to appreciate other cultures.*
> Yifeng, 2003: 34

Localisms on Foreign Screens

The international exchange of films and TV productions is becoming increasingly asymmetrical. Onscreen, English is the all-dominant foreign language, and even major speech communities are turned minors in the process. In Europe, only France, Denmark and Sweden have a domestic film production able to keep the United States and other imports below a market share of 80%.[1] Meanwhile, audiences in the United States and the UK are rarely bothered with foreign-language productions. Like people almost all over the planet, they enjoy Anglophone productions. But unlike all others, they do not often enjoy foreign-language productions, whether dubbed or subtitled:

> In Britain, for example, acquiring foreign languages has never been accorded high cultural significance and there is the somewhat arrogant assumption that the majority of life's activities – including broadcasting – can be safely conducted in English. [...] In Britain this characteristically insular mind-set has not only affected our readiness to learn foreign languages, it also has had an impact on audiences' response to foreign language material. (Kilborn, 1993: 649)

As opposed to the cosmopolitan, albeit anglophile, situation found in most subtitling countries (Gottlieb, 2004b), the very small market shares of foreign films in Britain and the United States reflect the fact that general Anglo-American audiences avoid non-Anglophone productions, no matter

their genre or cinematographic qualities. It remains to be determined what role the original language of the film plays in this context. However, it makes sense to believe that – aided by the oft-mentioned time-and-space constraints of subtitling[2] – those non-English films that make it into Anglo-Saxon territory are prone to have a substantial part of their verbal localisms deleted or domesticated, fitting with the general condensation strategies in subtitling and with the critical views of foreignisation advocated by Venuti (2000: 335): 'Subtitling [...] necessarily offers a partial communication of foreign meanings, which are not simply incomplete, but re-established according to target concepts of coherence.' In this process, foreign films – with their outlandish expressions, alien allusions and foreign settings – would end up being more palatable to a predominantly monolingual anglophone audience.

On the other hand, in translating from 'exotic' languages, conscientious translators may take pride in preserving such localisms (while incompetent translators often transfer them as a matter of course), with the result that sometimes the natural flow of the dialogue is lost in translation.

In subtitling 'upstream', against the English current, should we then expect to encounter the latter trend toward source-text fidelity, or are subtitlers more prone to localise, that is, to skip or convert culture-related items in the name of reader-friendliness? In other words, does the fear of alienating the viewer, paired with the need for condensation in subtitling, win over subtitlers' professional ambitions to get localisms across to their English-speaking audiences?[3]

In trying to answer this question, five Danish films (Dogme and after) were analysed, and the fate of their localisms in the English subtitles was compared with that of Anglo-American localisms in the Danish subtitles of two American films.

Films Across Cultures: Translatability or Remakes?

The underlying notion of translation – whether we deal with printed literature, feature films or nonfictional texts – is based on the assumption that 'it is possible to map aspects of one language onto aspects of the other' (Malmkjær, 1999: 17). In this interlingual 'mapping' process, one would tend to consider culture-based and other verbal obstacles in source texts nothing but minor hurdles easily overcome on the road toward the target text – no matter the semiotic structure of the text in question.[4]

Much along these lines, when talking about film translation, Whitman (2001: 144) states that 'there is no such thing as "untranslatability", a term I hear all too often when collaborating with directors and translators

working on dubbed versions of American movies'. In her view, the way to secure success in translation is through linking the message of the original dialogue to the minds of the foreign audience: 'Translation means being aware of the intent of the original as well as the target audience's common pool of allusions' (Whitman, 2001: 147).

However, if intended target audiences have little knowledge or interest in the foreign setting of an otherwise interesting film, there is still a way out. Instead of dubbing or subtitling the foreign production – neither method seems to go down well with US audiences[5] – one may 'translate' the entire work; that is, produce an English-language remake of the original film. Especially with French films, this method has been resorted to frequently (Wehn, 2001; Weissbrod, 2004). Even Danish films are sometimes remade for the American market, like Ole Bornedal's *Nattevagten* (1994) – remade in the United States as *Nightwatch* (1997) – and Susanne Bier's *Den eneste ene* (1999), which was remade in 2002 in the UK, titled *The One and Only.* Both Danish films won critical and public acclaim in Denmark and abroad, whereas both remakes were flops in the English-speaking world, artistically as well as commercially (Internet Movie Database).[6]

The problems of preserving the original spirit and appeal in remakes bring us back to the issue of fidelity.

Fidelity in Screen Translation

The Macmillan English Dictionary (Rundell, 2002), lists the three following senses of 'fidelity':

(1) the attitude or behaviour of someone who is willing to have sex only with their husband, wife or partner;
(2) loyalty to a person, organisation or principle;
(3) the degree to which something is an accurate copy or translation of something else.

Fidelity – in the third sense – is not a notion that immediately springs to mind when discussing screen translation. In dubbing and subtitling, what counts more than anything else is the transfer of speech acts, not necessarily the exact elements that make up the original speech acts: 'We should remember that the audience reaction to a funny line is far more important than any literal fidelity to the original sense' (Whitman, 2001: 149). Still, with drama and similar genres, fidelity in translation is often considered worth striving at – provided that speech acts are successfully recreated in the process.

In comparison with feature films, whether dubbed or subtitled, documentaries stand out by typically retaining their culture-specific references in translation. Referring to the fate of Brazilian documentaries in Europe, Franco (2001: 177) observes that 'a greater degree of exoticism or foreignization is almost inevitable in translated documentaries'.

However, the most 'exotic' elements in a film up for translation may not be those that establish the foreign universe in which many (Anglo-American) productions are set. In discussing the Italian translation of internationally popular Disney cartoons, Di Giovanni concludes that:

> difficulty in translation does not generally lie in the rendering of cultural otherness [e.g. the 'exotic' setting of *Aladdin*] but rather in adapting those American expressions, idioms and references which are designed to act as balancing elements but whose primary role is to ensure a smooth and pleasant reception by the American and English-speaking viewers. (Di Giovanni, 2003: 217)

In most polysemiotic media only the verbal content may be altered in translation. The continual presence of the other semiotic channels (the image and the international music and effects track) in the translation means that on the axis ranging from strictly verbatim rendition of the original (verbal) text to free, target-culture recreation of the text, for example, so-called localisation, translations of commercial film and TV productions would be expected to stay near the source-oriented pole. This source-orientation should be especially pronounced in subtitling, as no part of the original work is replaced, and subtitles are added to the original and presented in sync with the dialogue.

We will now have a closer look at some conflicting factors that influence the degree of fidelity in subtitling.

Fidelity trigger #1: Audience knowledge of the source language

Especially in societal contexts in which large segments of target audiences know enough of the original language on screen (which most often is English) to second-guess the subtitler, this parallel and simultaneous viewing of the original and the translated dialogue will inevitably draw the subtitler toward the loyal end of the axis outlined above.

Fidelity trigger #2: Status of the source language

When dealing with the reception of Anglo-American screen productions overseas, a second factor comes into play: the undeniable prestige of

the English language means that, all things being equal, translations from English will be closer to the source text than those from less-dominant and low-prestige languages.[7] However, as subtitling often presents itself as an ultimately target-oriented translation method, two counter-factors must be entered into the equation as well.

Anti-fidelity factor #1: Intersemiotic redundancy

As films and television programmes are usually seen as less sacrosanct than printed literature, and – even more importantly – screen productions are polysemiotic by nature, the information conveyed through the non-verbal channels will often help get the message across to target audiences if the subtitles do not render 'everything' in the original dialogue. Little wonder, this means that subtitlers tend to rely on intersemiotic support for their translated lines, also in situations where elements are simply omitted in translation.

Anti-fidelity factor #2: Noiseless communication

As subtitling is still a one-size-fits-all operation, subtitlers tend to go for the common denominator in the expected audience, which is often very mixed. For this reason, smooth communication via recognisable entities is sometimes preferred to loyal representation of strange localisms.

The issue at hand: The tug-of-war between fidelity and audience concerns

In the terms of natural science, how strong a pull will there be between original and translation if the two fidelity triggers are left out of the equation? In our subtitling context, how loyal to the original dialogue – and, thus, the source culture – will translators be if (1) the target audience does not understand the language spoken, and (2) the language spoken has no privileged status in the target culture?

As these preconditions are both met in subtitling from Danish into English, the stage is now set for this investigation.

Aims and Films of this Study

With the aim of measuring the strength of the above-mentioned anti-fidelity target-oriented counter-effect in subtitling, I have looked at the strategies used by English subtitlers when encountering Danish localisms

Table 2.1 Films used in the study

Title; Director; Subtitler [8]	Actors	Awards	Box office figures [9]	
			DK	USA
Danish films				
Mifune (TV version) *Mifunes sidste sang* (1999) Dir.: Søren Kragh-Jacobsen Subtitles: *Jonathan Sydenham	Iben Hjejle, Anders W. Berthelsen, Jesper Asholt	AFI European, Amanda, Berlin (3), Lübeck, 2 Roberts, 1 Bodil	351K	$0.6M
Shake It All About (DVD) *En kort en lang* (2001) Dir.: Hella Joof Subtitles: *Jonathan Sydenham	Mads Mikkelsen, Troels Lyby, Charlotte Munck	4 Roberts	823K	No data available
Open Hearts (DVD) *Elsker dig for evigt* (2002) Dir.: Susanne Bier Subtitles: *Jonathan Sydenham	Mads Mikkelsen, Sonja Richter, Nikolaj Lie Kaas, Paprika Steen	Lübeck, Toronto, 5 Roberts, 3 Bodils	506K	$0.1M
Inheritance (DVD) *Arven* (2002) Dir.: Per Fly Subtitles: Nicholas Hawtin	Ulrich Thomsen, Ghita Nørby, Lisa Werlinder, Peter Steen	Lübeck, Norwegian International, San Sebastián, 7 Roberts, 2 Bodils, 1 Zulu	374K	$0.07M
Count to 100 (film) *Tæl til 100* (2004) Dir.: Linda K. Holmberg Subtitles: Allan Hilton Andersen	Frederik Paarup, Julie Carlsen, Troels Lyby, Anders W. Berthelsen	(None)	23K	Never released
American films				
High Fidelity (2000) (DVD) Dir.: Stephen Frears Danish subtitles: Lasse Schmidt	John Cusack, Iben Hjejle	Blockbuster, Motion Picture Sound	94K	$27M
Spider-Man (2002) (DVD) Dir.: Sam Raimi Danish subtitles: *Aage Brock	Tobey Maguire, Willem Dafoe, Kirsten Dunst	Saturn, BMI Film Music, Bogey, Empire, MTV Movie; People's Choice	424K	$404M

in the dialogue of five Danish feature films. Most of these are box-office hits, and two of them (*Mifune* and *Open Hearts*) are Dogme 95 films. For comparison, I studied the treatment of Anglo-American localisms in the Danish subtitles for two successful American films (see Table 2.1).

Lower Fidelity Upstream?

As stated above, this study focuses on the strategies used in the subtitling of localisms. Phrased more accurately, the focus of this investigation is extra-linguistic culture-specific references (Pedersen, 2003) in original and subtitled film dialogue. These items – hereinafter ECRs – can be defined

as lexical items, typically nouns and names, designating phenomena specific to the culture in which they are used. In films and other artefacts from nondominant cultures, almost all such items will be known only to their original audiences. With subtitled productions from such minor speech communities, foreign audiences have to rely almost entirely on the informational content in the subtitles. In films from major speech communities, however, many ECRs will be recognised abroad. Thus, the bridge-building efforts in translation ought to be smaller in downstream subtitling than upstream as more ECRs could be retained or otherwise represented. Accordingly, downstream subtitling should express a high degree of fidelity toward the original dialogue, while subtitling 'against the current' – as when Danish films meet English-speaking audiences – would be expected to display more explicatory, adaptive and deletive strategies.

Existing Downstream and Upstream Studies

When discussing the nature of ECR's, a crucial issue is the 'C' in the acronym: how culture-specific are these items? Especially when translating works from a dominant culture, it may be difficult to determine whether a certain element is specific to that culture, or whether it is well-known in the target community, may be even disseminated internationally. As stated in an analysis of the translation of the American animated comedy series *The Simpsons*, 'there are a large number of cultural references that do not constitute a translation problem because both the source and target cultures belong to the same cultural macrosystem (the West)' (Lorenzo *et al.*, 2003: 289).

However, even within the Anglophone microsystem, certain cultural references, particular to one geographical region or demographic segment, may be incomprehensible to large parts of the (English-speaking) audience, as has been pointed out in a study comparing the Spanish subtitling and dubbing of the Marx Brothers' film *Duck Soup* (Fuentes Luque, 2003).

While usually only one translated version of a film exists in the dubbing countries, it is very common to find two or more subtitled versions of the same film in subtitling communities.[10] This provides the translation scholar with some excellent material for comparing translational strategies (see e.g. Díaz Cintas, 2001b, discussed below). Of course, any such comparison of two or more translations into the same target language will, to a certain extent, reveal the personal talents, preferences and idiosyncrasies of the translator. Yet, when the media of distribution and/or the geographical region differ, other aspects than personal choice may come into play. This is often the case whenever European films are subtitled for the English-speaking market(s).

In his study on the fate of *La flor de mi secreto*, a film by Pedro Almodóvar, Díaz Cintas (2001b) compared two subtitled versions of the film available in Britain: a video version originally made in the United States, for an American market, and an all-British version, made and broadcast by Channel 4 in the UK. Unlike what is usually the case when cinema or video subtitles are compared to TV subtitles with regard to their treatment of offensive language and other colorful elements in the dialogue, it was found that:

> the video version resorts to a rather systematic and excessive sanitizing of the sexual expressions, whereas the TV version, that in principle should be more cautious because it must cater for a more heterogeneous audience, follows the original a lot closer. (Díaz Cintas, 2001b: 64)

Summing up, the author (Díaz Cintas, 2001b: 65) adds: 'If translations should […] reflect the plurality of choice, cultural expression and linguistic transgression of the original, the US video version, unfortunately, does not.' In this case, the quest for stylistic fidelity usually represented in cinema and video subtitling seems to have been overruled by the prudish concerns so often encountered in American mass media.

Translating from Danish: Minor but Not Marginal

Far from being the world's number one native language, English has some 350 million native speakers, against 5.3 million Danish speakers. However, when it comes to translation into and from Danish, that language is not as marginal as one might expect when judging from the number of speakers.

Dividing the world's more than 6000 languages into central, semiperipheral and peripheral languages – in terms of (book) translation output – it has been found that while English, French, German and Russian belong to the 'central' category, Danish – along with Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Polish and Czech – could be placed in the semiperipheral group, each with 1–3% shares of the total number of translated titles (Wallerstein, 1991; quoted in Heilbron, 2000: 14). Major languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese, Japanese, Wu Chinese, Javanese, Korean, Turkish, Vietnamese, Telugu, Yue Chinese (Cantonese), Marathi, Tamil and Urdu – all with more than 50 million native speakers (Coutsoukis, 2005) – may thus be considered peripheral when it comes to published translations.

In relation to their number of native speakers, the Scandinavian speech communities hold a world record in translational activities. As a

case in point, while the UK and the United States together published 2167 translated book titles annually in the 1980s, Denmark published 1758 titles. Per million speakers, this amounted to an import of 351 titles in Denmark, against 21 in Britain, and only four in the United States. More relevant, perhaps, is that while 29,401 English-language titles were translated annually, a total of 532 Danish titles were translated – some 100 titles per million inhabitants in both speech communities (Gottlieb, 1997a: 17–18).

Today, Danish films on DVD help maintaining the relatively high international profile of Danish fictional works, thanks to the success of the Dogme 95 project, including films by renowned directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg.

In translation studies, very few authors have discussed the fate of Danish fictional works abroad. Those who have typically focus on general or pragmatic issues in the works of internationally recognised authors like Karen Blixen and Hans Christian Andersen (Anderson, 1997; Hjørnager Pedersen, 2004; Malmkjær, 1999). Studies on the translation of Danish films for foreign audiences are even more scarce, and only few of these are ever published (Hilwerda, 2000 vs. Zilberdik, 2004). For my own part, subtitling into Danish has been a central topic in my production so far (Gottlieb, 1992, 1994, 1997b, 1997c, 2001a, 2001b, 2004a), whereas only one title (Grigaravičiūtė & Gottlieb, 1999) deals with screen translation – in casu voiceover – from Danish.

As implied above, very little has been published on the specific problems encountered in subtitling productions from a minor speech community. One of these rare studies (Zilberdik, 2004) deals with translation from Danish into Hebrew – or, to be exact, from Danish into Hebrew via English. In her study, Zilberdik analyses the relay translation of the Danish Dogme film *Festen* (*The Celebration*), directed by Thomas Vinterberg in 1998. In her discussion on what she terms 'culture-specific phenomena', she embraces both language-internal and -external entities, the latter category comprising:

(1) strictly Danish entities: *Sydhavnen* [run-down neighbourhood in Copenhagen], *toastmaster* [presenting party guests with speeches and songs for the occasion], *franskbrød* [Danish white bread], *pejsestuen* [large sitting room with a fireplace], *Gammel Dansk* [spicy Danish-made bitters], *VS* and *SF* [Danish political parties];

(2) international phenomena also found in Denmark: *Rip, Rap og Rup* [Disney's Huey, Dewey and Louie], and *Frimurerlogen* [the Free Masons]; and finally

(3) references to cultures well-known in Denmark but more exotic to the
     (Israeli) target audience: the *Ruhr* district in Germany (Zilberdik, 2004:
     39–46).

Zilberdik's (2004: 53) study shows that in the Hebrew version of *Festen*
there are 'several features, notably swearing and culture-bound phenom-
ena (here indicating class) that are particularly liable to mistranslation and
condensation'. Having acknowledged that the polysemiotic nature of
film means that 'isolated errors in translation may not be crucial to the
understanding of the character (or the film)', Zilberdik (2004: 53) concludes:
'I still find that the humans portrayed tend to become more mainstream'.

   This testimony of mainstreaming the original verbal content fits with
another study of (relay) screen translation (Grigaravičiūtė & Gottlieb,
1999), in which 'eccentric' dialogue features and cultural references were
standardised in a centripetal motion.

Taxonomies of ECR Translation Strategies

   In recent years, the scholarly literature has presented us with several
attempts at describing what happens to culture-related elements in
translation. In this section, we will look at some models which may help
understand the workings of subtitlers confronted with localisms in the
original dialogue.

   In her study of the translation of allusions, which she aptly terms
'culture bumps', Leppihalme (1997: 3-ff.) distinguishes between key-
phrase allusions – which are by definition intra-linguistic and thus of little
interest to us here – and proper-name allusions. As an extra-linguistic
entity, the latter category yields an important part of the phenomena under
scrutiny here, the ECRs.

   As semiotic, semantic and contextual circumstances vary from one
film to another – and, more importantly, throughout any film – this study
has been conducted based on the presumption, shared with Leppihalme
(1997: 78), that 'considering a wide range of strategies is more likely to
lead to successful translations than routine use of one strategy only'.

   Inspired by, among others, Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), Leppihalme
(1997) and Pedersen (2003), I have established what I believe to be an
exhaustive taxonomy of strategies available to the subtitler when con-
fronted with ECRs in the original dialogue. On a scale from maximum
to minimum fidelity to the original, Table 2.2 below seeks to present a
'taxonomy of taxonomies', which also illustrates the difficulties of agree-
ing on terminological practices in translation studies, not to mention the

challenges found in actual case-by-case categorisation of individual ECR candidates, an issue I will not elaborate on here.

Table 2.2 juxtaposes four taxonomies of strategies for dealing with ECRs – the taxonomy used in this study (in the far right column) and the ones that inspired it. Within each taxonomy, strategies are ranked according to their degree of source-text fidelity as interpreted by the individual authors.

Although there seems to be at least some foundation for terminological consensus here, we encounter the usual Janus-faced 'double trouble' in terminology: different terms may denote the same thing, and the same term may denote different things. A case of the latter is found with the term 'explicitation'. Whereas Nedergaard-Larsen places this strategy halfway between the poles of foreignisation and domestication, both Leppihalme and Pedersen point to something more loyal. Because of this dichotomy, I have avoided the term altogether. Instead, I suggest the term

Table 2.2 Strategies for translating culture-specific items

	Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993	*Leppihalme, 1997*	*Pedersen, 2003*	*Gottlieb*
Maximum fidelity	Identity	Retention	Non-translation	Retention
		Retention with explicitation	Explicitation	
High fidelity	Imitation		Literal translation	Literal translation
	Direct translation			
Low fidelity	Explicitation	Replacement by SL element	Generalisation	Specification
				Generalisation
	Paraphrase			
	Situational adaptation			
	Cultural adaptation	Replacement by TL element	Cultural substitution	Substitution
Minimum fidelity	Omission	Omission with sense transfer		
		Total omission	Omission	Omission

'specification', a low fidelity translational strategy aimed at disambiguating ECRs in the dialogue.

As always in the arts and humanities, classification is bound to be somewhat arbitrary, but three major concerns when establishing ways to discern patterns in one's data must be that:

(1) categories are established to accommodate all findings,
(2) different categories reflect significant differences in one's findings, and
(3) the number of categories reflect the number of findings: a small set of data does not tally with a great number of categories.

In the context of this study, in which numbers are indeed rather small, the latter point has made me limit my taxonomy to six categories – which I believe cover all potential ECR translational strategies. However, with a larger material, some of these categories may deserve being subdivided (*cf.* Nedergaard-Larsen's taxonomy). Especially, substitution would qualify for such an operation as it covers three types of replacement of a foreign element unknown to the target audience:

(1) replacement by a foreign element known to the target audience (English *Adirondack National Park* > Danish *Yellowstone National Park*),[11]
(2) replacement by a foreign element shared with the target culture, that is, an international element (English *White Palace* > Danish *McDonald's*),
(3) replacement by a domestic element (English *Fourth of July* > Danish *Nyårsaften* [new year's eve]; shared feature: fireworks).

However, as shown in Table 2.3, substitution only comes in fourth among my six categories; hence the amalgamation of the three potential subcategories.

Findings: Conflicting Choices in ECR Translation

Based on direct comparison of soundtrack and subtitles in each film, the following data were collected. The tables offer further details on the ECRs found and their fate in translation, including the categorisation practices used in this study.

Table 2.3 allows a comparison of the degree of localism – measured by the total number of extra-linguistic culture-specific references – of each film studied. Within the main corpus (the Danish films) and the reference corpus (the American films), films are ranked according to ECR frequency, which vary considerably (from 20 to 105) in the main corpus, with *Shake It All About* displaying more than four times as many ECRs as *Open Hearts*,

Table 2.3 Distribution of ECR subtitling strategies

English title and original title	ECR total	Reten-tion	Literal translation	Specifi-cation	Generali-sation	Substi-tution	Omission
Danish films							
Open Hearts *Elsker dig for evigt*	20	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)
Inheritance *Arven*	22	7 (32%)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)
Count to 100 *Tæl til 100*	25	12 (48%)	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)
Mifune *Mifunes sidste sang*	59	19 (32%)	14 (24%)	0 (0%)	11 (19%)	7 (12%)	8 (14%)
Shake It All About *En kort en lang*	105	3 (3%)	29 (28%)	17 (16%)	15 (14%)	31 (30%)	10 (10%)
Average share		24%	20%	8%	23%	17%	8%
Maximum variance		16.0	2.0	>3.2	3.3	3.3	>2.8
American films							
High Fidelity	41	20 (49%)	5 (12%)	5 (12%)	1 (2%)	9 (22%)	1 (2%)
Spider-Man	47	28 (60%)	5 (11%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	5 (11%)	4 (9%)
Average share		55%	12%	8%	4%	17%	6%
Maximum variance		1.2	1.1	3.0	3.0	2.0	4.5

Inheritance and *Count to 100. Mifune* takes a middle position, much in line with the two American films: these three films contain roughly half as many ECRs as *Shake It All About.*

Yet more relevant in a translational context, Table 2.3 shows how sub-titlers have tackled the various types of ECRs in the seven films,[12] giving both the absolute (numerical) and the relative distribution of the six available strategies. A direct numerical comparison is made difficult by the substantial variation in the number of ECRs found in the different films. For this reason, percentages are given for each strategy in each film. This makes it possible to discern a certain pattern in the material:

(1) For Danish as well as American films, retention has a dominant position and is found in five of the nine instances where one strategy is applied more than 25% of the time (cells highlighted in grey). In addition, all three instances where one strategy has a share of more than 40% (cells in dark grey) are cases of retention.

(2)   Running counter to this predominant pattern, generalisation scores
      just as high as retention in one film (*Inheritance*), and, more strikingly,
      two of the Danish films have very low retention shares. Only 3% of
      the ECRs in *Shake It All About* and a mere 5% of the ECRs in *Open
      Hearts* have been retained in the English subtitles. Thus, the gap
      between high and low shares is nowhere greater than when looking
      at the strategy of retention; the probability of an ECR being retained
      in *Count to 100* is 16 times as high (maximum variance: factor 16)[13] as
      that found in *Shake It All About*. As can be seen in the two maximum
      variance rows in the table, in the Danish material no other strategy
      shows such gaps in usage; the maximum variance is factor 3.3 (dis-
      carding the specification void in *Mifune* and the lack of omission in
      Count to 100).[14]
(3)   The American films, constituting a small reference corpus and
      chosen for their differences in genre, are strikingly similar – yet not
      translated by the same person – when it comes to distribution of
      translational strategies. Maximum variances range from 1.1 to 4.5,
      the same range found in the main corpus – except of course when
      looking at retention. No surprise, American culture-specific references
      are considered more familiar to Danish audiences than vice versa – at
      least twice as familar, judging from the retention shares. While 55% of
      all American localisms were retained in the Danish subtitles, only 24%
      of Danish localisms survived in translation.

   In Tables 2.4–2.6, readers will find the data sheets of three of the seven
films investigated (space does not allow printing them all). ECRs with
geographical reference are highlighted in grey, while personal and brand
names are underscored. Numbers in brackets are total figures, including
repeated items.

ECRs and Genres

   When trying to explain the different ECR frequencies in the material
investigated, two factors must be taken into consideration:

(1)   Thematically, some film (and TV) genres are more local than others
      and may not lend themselves to translation. As a case in point, British
      satirical TV programmes, although having acquired something of a
      cult following abroad, have become popular *in spite of* rather than
      because of the points which the subtitles manage to pass on to audi-
      ences abroad (Gottlieb, 1997c) – many of whom are quite familiar with
      English, anyway.

Table 2.4   Mifune

Data sheet 1 **Mifune**	*Retention*	*Literal translation*	*Specifi-cation*	*Generalisation*	*Substitution*	*Omission*
Original title: *Mifunes sidste sang*	Lolland (×9)	København (×7) (Copenhagen)	[None found]	en proprietærgård (a big farm)	fredningsmyndighederne (the planning officer)	Katrinebæk
Screenplay: Anders Thomas Jensen Søren Kragh-Jacobsen Director: Søren Kragh-Jacobsen	i Nakskov eller Sakskøbing (In Nakskov or Saxkøbing)	Mogenstrup Kro (Mogenstrup Inn)		en proprietærgård (a farm)	Frikadeller (meatballs)	København
Main actors: Iben Hjejle,	Løgtofte	en by der hedder Hæmning (a town called inhibition)		i Tivoli (to the fair)	bryggerset (the utility room)	Gønge høvdingen
Anders W. Berthelsen, Jesper Asholt	Søren Pilmark	kongen af Nakskov (the King of Nakskov)		udsigt over Sundet (sea view)	Otterup (there)	Kastager
Released in 1999	Otterup	Kastbækvej (Kastæk Road) [sic]		på 100 kilo (overweight)	Lille Peter Edderkop (Incy wincy spider)	Lolland (×3)
Duration: 98 minutes	*Mini Golf* [cigar] (Minigolf)	Fede Flemming (Fat Flemming)		medisterpølse (sausage)	Arne Melchior (Donald Duck)	inde i Maribo
	Katrinebæk	Joakim von And (Scrooge McDuck)		fiskefilet (fried fish)	Joakim von Hønseand (Scrooge McChicken)	
	Ebbe Sand (×2)	Tosse-Rud (Rud the Nut)		mørbradbøf (pork)		
	Nakskov (×2)			inde i København (in the city)		
				en Tivolitur (an outing to the fair)		
				Langelinie (the harbor)		
ECR total: 41 (59)	9 (19)	8 (14)	——	11	7	6 (8)
ECRs/hour: 25.10 (**36.12**)	5.51 (11.63)	4.90 (8.57)	——	6.73	4.29	3.67 (4.90)
Fidelity index: **20.20**	Sum: 17 (33) Share: 41.46% (**55.93%**)			Sum: 24 (26) Share: 58.54 % (44.07%)		

(2)   Having thus made allowance for differences in the density of ECRs – the number of localisms per sentence, so to speak – the fact remains that certain genres are much more verbose than others; while a 100-minute long American action movie broadcast on Danish TV may contain some 600 subtitles, the dialogue in a Woody Allen–type comedy

Table 2.5   Open Hearts

Data sheet 2 Open Hearts	Retention	Literal translation	Specifi- cation	Generalisation	Substitution	Omission
Original title: *Elsker dig for evigt*	Rigshospitalet (Rigshospitalet)	Randersgade (Randers St.)	studie (M.Sc.)	en næsten ny Volvo (a new car)	Christian IV (Henry VIII)	Ungdoms- huset
Director: Susanne Bier Screenplay: Anders Thomas Jensen		*med dejlig chokolade og kager til* (With lovely hot chocolate and birthday cake …)	skole (high school)	100 kroner (money)	Panodiler (Aspirin)	
Main actors: Mads Mikkelsen, Sonja Richter, Nikolaj Lie Kaas, Paprika Steen		*og når hun hjem fra* (And when she …)		par tusind i prisen (price)	Choco-Pops (cocoa pops)	
Released in 2002		Fiskedamsga de 16 (16, Fish Pond Street)		Lotto (the lottery)	Joachim Petersen (Joachim Peterson)	
Duration: 113 minutes				Iso eller hvad det er, det hedder (a supermarket)		
				Dankortet (the card)		
				hamburgerryg (pork)		
				lagkage (cake)		
ECR total: 20	1	4	2	8	4	1
ECRs/hour: **10.62**	0.53	2.12	1.06	4.25	2.12	0.53
Fidelity index: 2.66	Sum: 5 Share: **25.00%**			Sum: 15 Share: 75.00 %		

of the same runtime may generate more than 1000 subtitles. In our material, the talkative comedy *Shake It All About* contains 64 ECRs per hour (Table 2.7 below), while the melodrama *Open Hearts* and the more epic *Inheritance*, both much more slow-paced, display no more than 11 ECRs per hour. Without having made an exact count of the number of words per minute in these films, it remains a fact that one cannot establish a localism score of films like *Shake It All About* just by looking at their overwhelming number of ECRs. What counts is the ECR/verbosity rate – and that calculation is beyond the scope of this study.

Table 2.6 *Spider-Man*

Data sheet 3 Spider-Man	*Retention*	*Literal translation*	*Specification*	*Generali-sation*	*Substitution*	*Omission*
Original title: *Spider-Man* Director: Sam Raimi Screenplay: Stan Lee, Steve Ditko, David Koepp Main actors: Tobey Maguire Willem Dafoe Kirsten Dunst Released in 2002	Woodhaven Boulevard	Science Department (fysikafdeling)	Big Apple (New York)	College (studierne)	Midtown High seniors (elever fra Midtown High)	public school kids
	Moondance coffee (Moondance-kaffe)	Eastern Seaboard (Østkysten)	soap opera (billig tv-serie)	trust fund (formue)	meatloaf (farsbrød)	downtown library (biblioteket)
	Columbia University; Columbia; Broadway; New York (×2); Fifth Avenue	The Flying Dutchman (Den Flyvende Hollænder)		College (skole)	the subway (S-toget)	the paramedics
		science fair (kemi-konkurrence)			the itsy bitsy Spider went up the water spouts (×2) (Lille Peter Edderkop kravled' op ad muren)	Unity Day Festival
		World Unity Festival (Verdensfreds-festivalen)				
Duration: 121 minutes	Bone Saw (×6)					
	Macy's					
	Conway					
	3000 $ (×4); NYWL					
	Stormin' Norman					
	200 $					
	300					
	Daily Bugle					
	7 dollars, 84 cents (7.84 $)					
	Thanksgiving					
	Pete					
ECR total: 37 (47)	19 (28)	5	2	3	4 (5)	4
ECRs/hour: 18.35 (**23.31**)	9.42 (13.88)	2.48	0.99	1.49	1.98 (2.48)	1.98
Fidelity index: **16.37**	Sum: 24 (33) Share: 64.86% (**70.21%**)			Sum: 13 (14) Share: 35.14% (29.79%)		

Summing up, and taking heed of all the above points, a few statements seem reasonably sound (Table 2.3):

(1) The taxonomy of strategies chosen seems to serve its purpose well; five out of seven films show instances of all six strategies, and the two remaining films display instances of five categories each.

(2) In subtitling from English, more than half of all localisms are rendered in their original form: the strategy of retention has a share of 55%, with number two, substitution, reaching only 17%.
(3) In subtitling from Danish, a more varied pattern emerges: generalisation is almost as common as retention (23% against 24%), while literal translation and substitution obtain shares of 20% and 17%, respectively.

In the next section, we will group the six strategies according to their degree of faithfulness to the original dialogue and see what patterns may then emerge.

Measuring Fidelity in Subtitling

So far, we have looked at the subtitling strategies one by one. We will now make a major distinction between source-oriented strategies and more target-oriented ones.

As should be obvious from Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6, subtitles representing the strategies of retention and literal translation communicate the original localisms as localisms. Hence, these two strategies express fidelity toward the original ECRs. Low-fidelity strategies, that is, specification, generalisation and substitution, are seen as exponents of adaptation. Finally, the minimum-fidelity strategy of omission is, of course, a strictly deletive measure.

In Table 2.7 below, the fidelity-related data on all seven films are juxtaposed. While the ECR total and the ECRs/hour are self-explicatory entities, the three right-hand columns need some interpretation:

(1) The fidelity share – as calculated on the data sheets – is the added percentages of retention and literal translation items of the total number of ECRs.
(2) The fidelity index (FIX) is a measure of how many localisms get through to the secondary audience without being adapted or deleted in the subtitling process. It is calculated simply by multiplying the number of ECRs per hour by the fidelity share. The formula used is this:

'Number of extralinguistic cultural references per hour' (localism density) times 'Percentage of source-oriented translation strategies used' (fidelity share):

$$\frac{\text{Number of ECRs} \times 60}{\text{Runtime in minutes}} \times \frac{\text{Number of retentions plus literal translations}}{\text{Number of ECRs}}$$

Table 2.7 Fidelity in subtitling

Title	Genre	ECR total	ECRs/ hour	Fidelity share	Fidelity index	Localism index
Danish films		A	B	C	B x C	B + 100C
Open Hearts	Melodrama (Dogme 95)	20	10.62	25.00 %	2.66	35.62
Inheritance	Tragedy	22	11.48	45.55 %	5.23	57.03
Count to 100	Teenage love story	25	18.29	64.00 %	11.71	82.29
Mifune	Drama (Dogme 95)	59	36.16	55.93 %	20.22	92.09
Shake It All About	Gay comedy-drama	105	64.29	30.48 %	19.60	94.77
Average figures		46	28.17	44.19 %	12.45	72.36
American films						
High Fidelity[15]	Comedy-drama	41	21.77	60.98 %	13.28	82.75
Spider-Man	Action drama	47	23.31	70.21 %	16.37	93.52
Average figures		44	22.54	65.60 %	14.79	88.14

However, this formula can be reduced (by multiplying both factors by the number of ECRs), as follows:

$$\text{FIX} = \frac{60 \times (\text{Number of retentions plus literal translations})}{\text{Runtime in minutes}}$$

This means that the number of ECRs in a film is discarded in the fidelity index.

(3) The localism index (LOX), however, takes the original ECR volume into account. This index is an indication of the joint impact on secondary audiences of the ECRs and their translations. It is designed in much the same way as the fidelity index – yet in order to allow for the subliminal presence of adapted or deleted ECRs, localism densities

and fidelity shares are added, not multiplied, and the fidelity share is multiplied by 100:

$$\text{LOX} = \frac{\text{Number of ECRs} \times 60}{\text{Runtime in minutes}} + \frac{\text{Number of retentions plus literal translations} \times 100}{\text{Number of ECRs}}$$

To illustrate how these indexes can be calculated, let us look at *Open Hearts*. Using the formulas above, we obtain the following values:

Fidelity Index (FIX): $\dfrac{60 \times (1 + 4)}{113} = 2.66$

Localism Index (LOX): $\dfrac{20 \times 60}{113} + \dfrac{(1 + 4) \times 100}{20} = 10.62 + 25.00 = 35.62$

Upstream Subtitling: Contrasting Fidelity Patterns

In Table 2.7, fidelity scores are calculated for all films and in both sub-corpora (the Danish films and the American films, respectively) the highest scores are highlighted in grey. As is clearly seen when comparing the two right-hand columns, the extreme variance in FIX scores is reduced considerably in the LOX figures, as non-fidelity ECRs are represented in the LOX formula.

With average fidelity shares of approximately 66% in downstream (English-Danish) subtitling, against upstream (Danish-English) figures ranging from 25% to 64%, it takes little guesswork to decipher whether Nedergaard-Larsen (1993: 238), in her conclusion in an early study of ECRs in subtitling, looked at upstream or downstream translation: 'The analysis of specific examples showed a tendency, possibly norm-governed, to retain the local colour of the film and to remain faithful to the source language when this did not cause problems of comprehension.' The paper discussed subtitling from French into Danish and Swedish, that is, downstream subtitling, although the current may not be as strong as in the case of subtitling from English.

Interestingly, my data concerning the American films in this investigation correspond nicely with Nedergaard-Larsen's findings. As can be seen with regard to the Danish films, fewer localisms tend to be preserved in translation. Still, the films – and the subtitling strategies applied – are so different that a more complex pattern is found:

(1) *Open Hearts* and *Inheritance* are global films addressing general psychological issues (love, suffering, duty, power, loss). They contain very

few localisms, and less than half of these are preserved in translation. This means that these films obtain the lowest FIX and LOX scores of all seven films.

(2) *Count to 100* also deals with everyday human issues (boy meets girl, Dad beats Mom), contains few localisms, but – translated by a Dane – displays a much higher fidelity index, and, for that reason, produces medium FIX and LOX scores.

(3) *High Fidelity* and *Spider-Man* are more dependent on their local setting than the films just discussed. With their moderate ECR densities and high fidelity shares, they come out very American – with high FIX and LOX scores.

(4) *Mifune* and *Shake It All About* are very much rooted in Danish culture and geography, and teem with localisms. So many, in fact, that despite moderate fidelity shares, they produce record FIX and LOX scores; that is, they remain very Danish even in translation.

Summing up, the picture is much more complex than expected in the hypothesis, with the American films taking up a middle position between two Danish poles: one constituted by the local comedy *Shake It All About* and the Dogme drama *Mifune*, set in rural Denmark, and the other pole represented by less exotic works: *Open Hearts*, with its international theme of love and betrayal, and *Inheritance*, with its Shakespearean qualities.

The fact that the subtitled *Mifune*, with its markedly high fidelity scores, was able to sell six times as many tickets in the United States as *Open Hearts*, the more global English version of *Elsker dig for evigt* (Table 2.1), is good news for film producers and subtitlers.[16] In selling films 'up the river', one need not domesticate the dialogue; upstream subtitling may indeed express a high degree of fidelity toward the original lines. Still, we are talking art films here. Whether this statement applies to movies and TV productions aimed at a broader (Anglo-Saxon) audience remains to be seen.

Notes

1. According to the Danish Film Institute (www.dfi.dk), in the five-year period 1998–2002 the average market shares for domestic films in selected European countries were as follows: France (31%), Denmark (23.7%), Sweden (20.3%), Great Britain (14.6%), Germany (11.3%), Norway (11.1%) and Holland (7.3%). In 2000, 2001 and 2003, six of the annual top-20 box-office hits in Denmark were Danish. In 2002, that figure was eight. All other films (54 titles in all) – plus a few of the Danish productions – were in English. In the period 1996–2001, the market share of American films in the EU oscillated between 65% and 77%, approximately five times the share of national films (European Audiovisual Observatory – www.obs.coe.int/db/index.html).

2. In the extensive literature on subtitling – as documented in Gottlieb (2002a) – hardly anyone avoids mentioning the need to condense the original dialogue. However, with young audiences being increasingly used to fast-edited movies and messages flashing on and off screens, it is little wonder that commercial TV and Hollywood-commissioned DVD productions have accelerated home audience reading speeds from the traditional European TV norm of 10 characters per second to today's – somewhat optimistic – tempo of 16 characters per second on DVD: a 60% increase in potential text volume, and hence a way to avoid time-consuming condensation strategies in subtitle editing.

3. To be exact, the immediate target audience of Danish films with English subtitles are not native speakers of English. As the way to export (Danish) films goes via success at international film festivals (*cf.* the awards listed in Table 2.1), English subtitles serve as global sugar on local pills, so to speak. Only later, when Danish films are released or broadcast in Anglophone markets, the English 'festival jury' subtitles – sometimes with only slight modifications, if any – will reach 'normal' audiences. In recent years, a third target group has entered the picture: Scandinavian programme buyers and translators. The last decades have witnessed a major increase in the knowledge of English – paired with deteriorating mutual comprehension among speakers of Scandinavian languages. For this reason, Danish TV productions not only have to be subtitled in neighbouring countries; according to creative director Allan Hilton Andersen at Dansk Videotekst, TV stations in Sweden, Finland and Norway now often receive English subtitle files as an aid to subtitlers working from Danish into the other Scandinavian vernaculars.

4. Monosemiotic works – printed fiction, and so forth – present the translator with conditions for transfer of source text 'obstacles' that differ considerably from those of polysemiotic texts, for example, film and TV productions. See Gottlieb (2003) for a comprehensive, semiotically defined taxonomy of translation.

5. Much in line with the spectator sport of spotting translation errors, so popular with European subtitling audiences, (young) Americans excel in ridiculing ludicrous dubbing in imported productions. This national passtime is even documented on film: in *American Pie*, one of the protagonists speaks out of sync, mocking the typical imported Asian martial arts movie. In June 2004, mock-presidential campaign posters on New York billboards, with a large picture of candidate Haymish Fuse, announced: *Mandatory Death Penalty For Lip Synching*. These posters were part of a marketing campaign for the American MTV rival Fuse TV, and the slogan pointed to the widespread practice of (intralingual) post-synchronisation of music videos.

6. According to subtitler Jonathan Sydenham, his English subtitles for the well-received *Den eneste ene* served as the basis for the script of the British remake. Language, then, was not the deciding factor for the failure of the remake.

7. Very little research has been made as to the influence of non-English source dialogue on dubbed or subtitled productions, but it would be very hard to match the number of morpho-syntactic calques and other Anglicisms presently found in dubbing and subtitling (Gottlieb, 2001b; Herbst, 1997).

8. Unbilled subtitlers are marked by an asterisk. The fact that one subtitler turned out having translated three of the five films only goes to show that upstream subtitling is a small niche in the Danish subtitling industry, with only a handful of translators, against a corps of more than 150 active English-Danish subtitlers.

9. Danish admission figures (1K = 1000 tickets sold): the Danish Film Institute (www.dfi.dk); US gross sales figures ($ 1M = 1 million dollars): *Internet Movie Database* (www.imdb.com) and *The Numbers (*www.the-numbers.com/movies).

10. *Rain Man* (1988) exists in at least four Danish versions: the video version (1990) with subtitles based on the cinema version, an internationally distributed DVD version (1998) with subtitles based on a USA-originated DVD subtitling template, and two Danish public service TV versions, one by TV2 (2000) and one by Danmarks Radio (2001). Between these four versions, hardly two sets of subtitles are identical, although the film content and runtime stay exactly the same (Gottlieb, 2002b).

11. This 'cultural equivalence' (Ripoll, 2005: 88) may be what Santamaria (2001: 163) has in mind when saying that 'reference to the foreign culture has to be carried out in such a way that it builds up new knowledge on the basis of the previous information the audience of the target text may have of the foreign culture'. An example of such intra-cultural substitution is the replacement Ritz Brothers > Marx Brothers found in the Spanish dubbed version of Garry Marshall's 1990 love story *Pretty Woman* (Ripoll, 2005: 81).

12. I have not analysed the semantic and pragmatic functions of the individual ECRs, although to some extent 'the choice of translation strategy seems to hinge upon how central the ECR is to the text' (Pedersen, 2003).

13. For each strategy, the maximum variance factor is based on the percentage share for individual films. Thus, the shares of the two extremes *Shake It All About* (3%) and *Count To 100* (48%) constitute a factor 16 variance.

14. If one had expected larger conformity in the material, the typical factor 3 span found in the material may look dramatic – three times as many is a lot when comparing large sets of data, for example, the average income of subtitlers in two different countries. However, when comparing phenomena as relatively scarce as ECRs in these films, very small numerical changes would alter the variance figures considerably. If, for instance, one case of generalisation in *Inheritance* was replaced – or redefined – as substitution, the share of that strategy would go up from 9% to 14%, and the maximum variance would then fall from factor 3.3 to factor 2.5, with *Mifune* now displaying the lowest substitution share.

15. This film is set in and around a record store, and nearly all characters in the movie excel in dropping names of rock bands, song titles, and so on. These names and titles are considered internationalisms and, accordingly, are not included in this count.

16. To be fair, a Dogme 95 film like *Open Hearts* does not need 'exotic' dialogue to be sensed as foreign to American audiences; its cinematography is a challenge in itself. Still, this film has won impressive critical acclaim in the United States (*cf.* the external reviews at www.metacritic.com). One reviewer even praises the film for distancing itself from Hollywood acting: 'this is the movie's naked moment of truth, in which we see that grace under pressure, that pretty little Hollywood fiction, has next to nothing to do with life' (Taylor, 2003: online).

Connecting Cultures: Cultural Transfer in Subtitling and Dubbing

ZOË PETTIT

Introduction

Language is an expression of culture and culture is expressed through language. An audiovisual text offers a cultural representation of the world, both through language and the image. It is commonly accepted that translators mediate between two linguistic and cultural systems and need 'not only a bilingual ability but also a bi-cultural vision. Translators mediate between cultures (including ideologies, moral systems and sociocultural structures), seeking to overcome those incompatibilities which stand in the way of transfer of meaning' (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 223). The audiovisual translator deals with a complex semiotic text, a film or television programme, which is composed of signs: verbal/nonverbal, intentional/unintentional, implicit/explicit, all of which combine to form a network of codes, creating the message to be received by the viewer (Delabastita, 1989; Gottlieb, 1994). The image can show that which words cannot express. It can illustrate and support the verbal message or indeed contradict what is being said, perhaps to comic or ironic effect. A cultural sign is a sign which contains culture-specific information, verbal or nonverbal, transmitted aurally or visually. In this paper reference is made primarily to verbal and visual signs in a selection of subtitled and dubbed texts. The terms subtitler and dubber will stand for translator in a general way, referring to and encompassing those responsible for transposing the texts from English to French.

In a subtitled version, the viewer has access to the original soundtrack and hence two linguistic systems operate simultaneously. It is clear the original is rooted in a foreign cultural reality. In a dubbed version the aim is to ensure that the dubbed dialogues feel as authentic as possible, yet the image betrays specific features of the source culture. A selection of English-French

extracts will be analysed, taken from three feature films – *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1992); *Smoke* (Wayne Wang, 1995); *Blue in the Face* (Paul Auster, 1995) – and a television series – *NYPD Blue*: *A Death in the Family* (Steven Bocho, 1996). Different cultural realities are present: British colonialists in 19th century New Zealand, Maoris, New York city dwellers and residents of downtown Brooklyn.

This paper will explore the translation strategies employed when a culture-specific term is used in the dialogue, moving on to a discussion centred on the potential cultural particularities embedded in the image and their impact, if any, on the translations. Although a large number of examples have been studied prior to the findings presented here, space limitations prescribe a selection only of the most pertinent.

Translation Strategies and Method of Analysis

Tomaszkiewicz (1993: 223–227) offers a brief discussion of the strategies in operation in film subtitling, noting that some culture-specific terms are untranslatable. These strategies will be drawn upon and developed further in the analysis which follows. It is also possible to use them to describe the processes which occur in the dubbed versions, showing the extent to which one strategy is preferred over another according to the audiovisual mode of translation. The strategies are:

(1) Omission, whereby the cultural reference is omitted altogether.
(2) Literal Translation, where the solution in the target text matches the original as closely as possible.
(3) Borrowing, where original terms from the source text are used in the target text.
(4) Equivalence, where translation has a similar meaning and function in the target culture.
(5) Adaptation, where the translation is adjusted to the target language and culture in an attempt to evoke similar connotations to the original. Strictly speaking this can be considered a form of equivalence.
(6) Replacement of the cultural term with deictics, particularly when supported by an on-screen gesture or a visual clue. This strategy was not observed in the selected audiovisual texts and will not be discussed here.
(7) Generalisation, which might also be referred to as neutralisation of the original.
(8) Explication, which usually involves a paraphrase to explain the cultural term.

Finally, it should be noted that more than one strategy might operate concurrently.

Analysis of Verbal Cultural Signs in Subtitled and Dubbed Versions

In Example 1, taken from *Smoke*, both translators opt for the strategy of adaptation:

Example 1: Adaptation of the cultural sign

English original version	*Subtitled French version*	*Dubbed French version*
Paul: The slumber party is over.	La partie de ronflette est finie.	La partie de ronflette est terminée.

Slumber parties are part of Anglophone rather than Francophone cultures and an alternative strategy to equivalence needs to be found. Paul uses this expression ironically to wake up Rashid, a nuance that is picked up in the adaptation *la partie de ronflette* [the snoring session].

The subtitler and dubber sometimes resort to a brief paraphrase of the culture-specific term as in Example 2 from *Blue in the Face*:

Example 2: Explication and paraphrase of the cultural sign

English original version	*Subtitled French version*	*Dubbed French version*
Auggie: It's a hangout, and it helps to keep the neighbourhood together.	Ça resserre les liens.	Ça crée des liens. Puis c'est un moyen de maintenir la vie du quartier.

Auggie tries to convince the shop owner, who wants to close the shop down, that it fulfils an important societal function within the area. It is a 'hangout', a slang American term which is explained in the translations as tightening or creating links between Brooklyn inhabitants: *Ça resserre les liens*, *Ça crée des liens*. In this example, omission is also used in the subtitled version. However, sometimes, culture-specific allusions are removed in both versions as in Example 3 from *Smoke*.

Paul recounts how Bakhtine smoked his book while in prison by resorting to a phrase that alludes to the well-known children's story *The Three Little Pigs*: 'So he huffed and he puffed and he blew their house down'.

This cultural allusion disappears in French and the translations correspond to the context of Paul's story, that is, smoking.

Example 3: Omission of the cultural sign

English original version	Subtitled French version	Dubbed French version
Paul: And so he huffed and he puffed.	Et il fuma, fuma.	Donc il fuma, refuma.

Up until this point, examples where both the subtitler and dubber opt for the same strategy have been studied. However, they also differ as illustrated in the following example from *Smoke*, where the subtitler chooses an Anglicism for 'freelance' – which becomes *free-lance* – and the dubber prefers a more French alternative with *indépendant*; a strategy frequently preferred in the dubbed version of this film, as in Example 4:

Example 4: Borrowing (subtitled version) and equivalence (dubbed version)

English original version	Subtitled French version	Dubbed French version
Rashid: And is there a benefits package, or are you hiring me on a freelance basis?	Il y a des avantages ou c'est en free-lance?	Il y a des avantages qui complètent le salaire ou je travaille ici… comme indépendant ?

In *NYPD Blue*, the subtitler and dubber often differ in their choice of strategy. This series contributes to a popular theme in American television, offering yet another dramatisation of police work in New York. The programme combines the professional and personal lives of the detectives as they try to solve crimes, hunt down suspects and capture guilty offenders. Behind the fiction, the viewer is given a glimpse of a certain reality of New York. The colloquial language, slang and jargon used are indicative of this subculture as can be seen in Example 5.

The characters use terms specific to police work. For 'Robbery' (Example 5.1), the subtitler uses an equivalent French expression *la Répression des vols*, the capital letter indicating that reference is being made to a specific section or branch of the police. The dubber prefers a more general, jargon-free translation where the strategy of generalisation/neutralisation is in operation: *On épluche les cas de tous les bars qui se sont faits braqués* [We are going through all the cases where bars have been held up].

Example 5: NYPD Blue

English original version	Subtitled French version	Dubbed French version
(1) Lieutenant: Robbery's checkin' patterns on bar stick-ups.	La Répression des vols compare avec d'autres cas.	On épluche les cas de tous les bars qui se sont faits braqués.
(2) Lieutenant: Narcotics already got money on the street.	Les Stup' ont mis de l'argent dans la rue.	Les Narcotiques ont déjà prévenu leurs indiques.
(3) Detective Diane: BCI's gettin' back on Freddy Keyes.	Le central nous rappelle, pour Keyes.	On se renseigne toujours sur Freddy Keyes.
(4) Detective Simone: … you're in felonious possession of a deadly weapon here.	T'es en possession illégale d'une arme mortelle.	Vous déteniez une arme qui a servi à tuer.
(5) Marty: Next time you and me talks, gonna be for police brutality in court over money damages!	Quand je vous parlerai, ce sera au tribunal, pour coups et blessures !	La prochaine fois qu'on se parlera tous les deux, ce sera au tribunal où vous serez jugé pour brutalité.

In Example 5.2, the dubber chooses a literal translation presumably to attain lip synchronisation and 'Narcotics' becomes *Les Narcotiques*. This term is not used in the same way in the target culture but the dubber does compensate with the use of police slang: *indiques* is an abbreviation of *indicateurs* [informers]. On the other hand, the subtitler finds an equivalent turn of phrase to replace 'Narcotics' with *Les Stup'* (*la brigade des stupéfiants*). Equivalence is acquired on a semantic and stylistic level.

In Example 5.3, a potential suspect is being investigated by the BCI, Bureau of Criminal Information. The subtitler adapts this to *Le central*, the bureau where criminal information is stored, whereas the dubbed version is once again more general: *On se renseigne toujours sur Freddy Keyes* [We are still checking out Freddy Keyes].

In Examples 5.4 and 5.5, the subtitler finds equally conventional expressions in the target language and culture. 'You're in felonious possession' in Example 5.4 becomes *T'es en possession illégale* in the subtitled version. However, this is not retained in the dubbed version with the more neutral *Vous déteniez une arme* [You had a weapon in your possession]. The respective use of *tu* and *vous* also constitutes an important difference. As the

policeman tries to draw a confession from the suspect, he puts himself on the same level, talking in the same way and addressing him with the informal pronoun. *Tu*, together with the familiar contraction *t'es*, corresponds to this context. However, in the dubbed translation, the opposite effect is created through the use of the formal *vous* which raises a, perhaps unnecessary, barrier between policeman and detainee.

In Example 5.3, Simone goes to the hospital to question another suspect whose skull he fractured whilst being arrested. The suspect announces his intention to sue Simone: 'police brutality in court over money damages!' is subtitled with an expression used in French legal circles, *pour coups et blessures* [assault and grievous bodily harm]. Once again the subtitler finds an expression which suits the target culture and context in contrast with the dubbed version, which offers a general paraphrase of the original: *où vous serez jugé pour brutalité* [where you'll be judged for brutality]. It is also interesting to note the expansion which takes place – *La prochaine fois qu'on se parlera tous les deux* – where *tous les deux* [the two of us] is redundant. However, it would seem to appear that more words are needed in the French version in order for the translation to fit with the lip movements and angry gestures of the suspect as he accuses the detective. In Table 3.1 we can see a summary of the different strategies used in the previous examples.

Generally, the subtitler of *NYPD Blue* tends to opt for semantic and stylistic equivalence in the target culture, whereas the dubber prefers paraphrase, omission and generalisation which in turn give rise to simplified dialogue, accessible to a wider audience. The need for lip sync is a contributing factor, but not always, as this is dependent on whether the speaker is facing the camera and camera proximity (Fodor, 1969). Furthermore,

Table 3.1 Strategies used in the extracts

Example	*Strategies used in subtitled French version*	*Strategies used in dubbed French version*
(1)	Equivalence	Generalisation/neutralisation
(2)	Equivalence	Literal translation and Adaptation
(3)	Adaptation	Generalisation/neutralisation and Omission
(4)	Equivalence	Generalisation/neutralisation and Omission
(5)	Equivalence and Literal translation	Generalisation/neutralisation

the majority of films are dubbed in French television and cinemas, and subtitled copies tend to be restricted to specialised cinemas in the larger cities; a situation that increases the potential number of viewers of dubbed versions and is likely to be a contributing factor for the simplification of the dubbed dialogue. Let us now consider some visual cultural signs.

Analysis of Audio and Visual Cultural Signs in Subtitled and Dubbed Versions

The image situates the narrative within a specific geographical, historical, temporal and cultural context. Although cross-cultural codes might be present in the image, there will also be culture-specific visual signs which do not exist in the target culture. As Shochat and Stam propose:

> Linguistic communication is multi-track; every language carries with it a constellation of corollary features having to do with oral articulation, facial expression and bodily movement. Certain locutions are regularly accompanied, often without the speaker's awareness, by codified gestures and automatic motions. The norms of physical expressiveness, moreover, sharply vary from culture to culture [. . .] To graft one language, with its own system of linking sound and gesture, onto the visible behaviour associated with another, then, is to foster a kind of cultural violence and dislocation. Relatively slight when languages and cultures closely neighbour, this dislocation becomes major when they are more distant, resulting in a clash of cultural repertoires. (Shochat & Stam, 1985: 51–52)

The way in which an image is perceived depends, amongst other things, on the viewer's native language and culture. Do visual cultural signs impact upon the translated text in the subtitled version and the new soundtrack of the dubbed version? In *The Piano*, two substantially different cultures come into contact with one another: nineteenth century British colonialists and Maoris. George Baines is the only foreigner who is fully integrated. Maoris and Britons do not understand each other's language or culture as reflected in the following exchange in Example 7, where the Maori speaks his own language and his intervention appears subtitled in English in the original film print.

In both subtitled and dubbed versions, the Maori exchanges are translated and subtitled into French, their content revealing Maoris' attachment to their own traditions and the land. The dubbed version copies the format of the original in order to retain the tension created by placing the viewer in a privileged position. The viewer understands the dialogue

Example 7: Translation of the Maori dialogue

Subtitled dialogue in the original English version	Subtitled French version	Subtitles in the dubbed French version
CHIEF NIHE: *The rivers and the burial caves of our ancestors*	Les rivières	*Les rivières*
	et les tombes de nos ancêtres	*et les tombes de nos ancêtres*
lie within these lands.	se trouvent sur ces terres.	*se trouvent sur ces terres.*
Baines, tell that to him.	Baines,	*Baines,*
	dis-le-luis.	*dis-le-lui.*
STEWART: What do they say? Are they selling?	Alors ? Ils vendent ?	Alors ? Que disent-ils ? Est-ce qu'ils vendent ?

between the Maoris and Baines, while Stewart remains isolated, grasping nothing. It would not have made sense to dub the Maori dialogue since it is important that Stewart, the outsider, is set apart. The addition of *Alors?* in the dubbed version provides partial synchrony with the visible lip movements for 'What'.

In the films by Wang and Auster, an excerpt of Brooklyn reality is revealed, showing the multicultural diversity of this New York borough. The characters are all defined by their culture, by their physical appearance, their actions and their accents. In *Blue in the Face*, a selection of Brooklyn inhabitants belonging to different ethnic groups read statistics pertaining to the cultural diversity of Brooklyn. In the dubbed version, the different accents are erased. However the image embeds the verbal text within a cultural reality which compensates for the standard pronunciation of the dubbing actors. In other words, the image compensates for the culturally determined aspects of speech which have been removed in the dubbed version. Visual signs denote the different cultures.

In *Smoke*, we are shown one of the more violent sides to New York. Two hoodlums threaten one of the protagonists, which is reflected not only through the dialogue and the register used, but also through their kinesics, gestures, physical appearance and other visual signs. All are related to and influenced by the hoodlum subculture to which they belong, guiding the translators in their transposition of the original soundtrack (see Example 8).

Both subtitler and dubber choose translations that reflect the general atmosphere. The latter does this through repetition (*Oui, oublie pas hein.*

Example 8: Hoodlum subculture in Smoke

Original English version	*Subtitled French version*	*Dubbed French version*
Goodwin: Mr Benjamin, yo!	—	Monsieur B . . . yo !
Clemm: Mr Benjamin, I presume?	M. Benjamin, je présume ?	Monsieur Benjamin, je suppose.
Goodwin: You got a security problem in this building, you know that?	Y a un problème de sécurité ici.	Dis-donc y a un sérieux problème de sécurité ici.
The lock on that door downstairs is busted.	La serrure de la porte d'entrée est naze.	La serrure de la porte d'entrée, elle est naze.
Clemm: Not a good idea in these troubled times.	Dangereux, par les temps qui courent.	C'est dangereux en ces temps si troublés, hein Monsieur ?
You never know what kind of trash might just wander in off the streets.	Qui sait quels vauriens pourraient entrer ?	On sait jamais quels vauriens pourraient venir traîner dans la maison.
Paul: I'll er, have the landlord look into it tomorrow morning.	J'en parlerai au propriétaire demain.	J'en parlerai au propriétaire demain.
Goodwin: Yeah, you do that, 'cos you don't want any unpleasant surprises now, do you?	Oublie pas. T'as pas envie d'avoir de mauvaise surprise, hein ?	Oui, oublie pas hein. T'as pas envie d'avoir de mauvaise surprise, hein ?
Paul: Who do I have the pleasure of talking to now?	A qui ai-je le plaisir de parler ?	Je peux savoir à qui j'ai le plaisir de parler ?
Clemm: Pleasure?	Le plaisir ?	Le plaisir ? Oh le plaisir, non . . .
No it's not a pleasure, I wouldn't exactly call this pleasure, funny man.	Je ne parlerais pas vraiment de plaisir, rigolo.	J'irais pas jusqu'à dire que c'est un plaisir, petit marrant.
This is more in the nature of business.	C'est plutôt de l'ordre des affaires.	Ce serait de l'ordre des affaires plutôt, tu suis ?

T'as pas envie d'avoir de mauvaise surprise, hein ?, *Le plaisir ? Oh le plaisir, non …*), slang (*naze*) and grammatically incorrect spoken forms of language. This includes the omission of *ne* in negative constructions (*oublie pas* instead of *n'oublie pas*) and contractions (*T'as pas envie …* instead of *Tu n'as pas envie …* and *Y a un problème* instead of *Il y a un problème*). Interestingly enough, these features are also included in the subtitles.

A cultural allusion which is likely to escape the attention of the target viewer is the implied reference to the famous greeting 'Dr Livingstone, I presume', uttered by Henry Stanley when he met Dr David Livingstone. As the hoodlums break into Paul's apartment, Clemm says: 'Mr Benjamin, I presume'. Althoug the irony is present in the subtitled and dubbed versions, the double meaning is only hinted at in the subtitles where a literal translation, *je présume*, helps to point towards this. In the dubbed translation, on the other hand, *je suppose* has been chosen.

In *NYPD Blue*, typical oral features such as colloquial forms are also preferred in the translation. This is perhaps less surprising in the dubbed version, as the dialogue continues to be transmitted aurally. Subtitling, however, is characterised by a change in medium, from spoken to written, and one might expect oral features to be less prevalent or disappear altogether in the subtitles. Yet, in spite of this change in medium, oral features are frequently retained in the subtitled extracts studied. Furthermore, in a number of instances, it could be argued that the subtitles fit closer to the characters we see in the image than the dubbed translation (see Example 9).

In this episode of *NYPD Blue*, three suspects are questioned. They all belong to the lower echelons of society, evident through the way they express themselves and their physical appearance. Verbal signs include the use of the double negative ('No, I didn't hold up no bar'), grammatically incorrect expressions ('He or Marty coulda done a murder easy'), and slang ('I was in the system'). Nonverbal signs include an aggressive tone of voice, a rough accent and a dishevelled physical appearance.

The subtitles include French oral features reflecting not only what is said, but also complementing the visual signs specific to these characters, who belong to the New York hoodlum subculture. The dubber, however, prefers to opt for a more standard translation and the links between verbal and visual cultural signs, between language and physical representation are lessened somewhat. Omissions and contractions, slang, and colloquial expressions are used in the subtitled version: *t'as*, *t'es* (Examples 9.1, 9.2 and 9.5); *cradingue* [filthy, Example 9.5]; *flingues* [pieces or guns, Examples 9.1 and 9.6]; *c'est dans ses cordes* [it's right up his street, Example 9.3]; and *raconter des bobards* [to tell fibs, Example 9.1]. The subtitler even goes so far

Example 9: Hoodlum subculture in NYPD Blue

Original English version	*Subtitled French version*	*Dubbed French version*
(1) Detective Simone: Your story's wrong, Mike, and I'm comin' back for your ass.	Si t'as raconté des bobards, on te ratera pas.	Si ton histoire est fausse Mike, je vais repasser ici pour m'occuper de toi.
(2) Detective Simone: … that you killed today Mike!	… que t'as tué	… que tu as tué aujourd'hui Mike.
(3) Mike: Y'know, the, the guy's a bad ass too. You know, guns, glue. He or Marty coulda done a murder easy.	C'est un vrai dur. Les flingues, la colle … Un meurtre, c'est dans ses cordes.	Ce type c'est pas un rigolo. Vous savez. Il se drogue à tout. Et lui et Marty, ils sont très capables de tuer quelqu'un.
(4) Mike: No, I didn't hold up no bar.	J'ai pas braqué de bar.	Non, j'ai attaqué aucun bar.
(5) Detective Simone: Your appearance is all messy the way they said …	T'es cradingue.	Votre apparence n'est pas très soignée comme ils l'ont dit …
(6) Bernat: I don't even like guns, but I thought I could get fifty bucks for it.	J'aime pas les flingues, mais je pensais en tirer 50$.	J'ai horreur des flingues vous savez. Mais je pensais que j'arriverais à le revendre.
(7) Bernat: Look, I, I don't do well in institutions	Écoutez. Les institutions, ça me réussit pas.	E … écoutez. Je jure … je vous jure que je n'ai rien fait.
(8) Marty: You fractured my skull pal.	Vous m'avez fracturé le crâne, merde !	Vous m'avez fracturé le crâne, mon vieux !
(9) Mike: Ah for Gods sake, I was in jail. I mean I was in the system all night.	J'étais en taule ! J'ai passé la nuit au violon !	Au pour l'amour du ciel. J'étais au trou, c'est vrai ! J'ai passé toute la nuit au poste !

as to insert *merde* [shit, Example 9.8], the equivalent of which does not appear in the original dialogue. However, this translational licence serves to highlight the suspect's anger and the type of background he comes from. In all these examples, the dubber prefers a rendering of the original that resorts less to informal expressions.

Slang is used to a certain extent in the dubbed version (e.g. *flingues*), but for the most part the French exchanges are standardised and more neutral. The omission of a translation for 'guns' in the second example, which becomes *Il se drogue à tout* [He is addicted to everything], is due to the need for lip sync, where *tout* coincides with 'glue'. Lip movements are clearly visible during this exchange and the dubber's choice is therefore steered by the position (frontal) and proximity (mid-shot) of the camera.

At times, the dubbed dialogue becomes more general, often changing the original substantially as in Example 9.6: 'I don't even like guns but I thought I could get fifty bucks for it' becomes *J'ai horreur des flingues vous savez. Mais je pensais que j'arriverais à le revendre* [I hate guns, you know. But I thought I could resell it]. The cultural reference 'bucks' is not translated, which could be in part due to the visibility of the actor's lip movements. Partial synchrony is gained through 'fifty'/*j'arriverais* and 'for it'/*revendre*. However, 'I don't do well in institutions' becomes *É . . . écoutez. Je jure . . . je vous jure que je n'ai rien fait* [L . . . listen. I swear . . . I swear to you that I didn't do anything], and, although the lip movements are not clear on this occasion, yet the translation moves away from the original. To avoid any possible confusion, the dubber offers a simplified rendering that fits within the context as the suspect pleads his case saying that he cannot cope with 'institutions', in other words, prison.

The final Example 9.9 shows how both the subtitler and dubber use slang and informal expressions which complement the visual cultural signs specific to each of the characters. The expressions *être au trou* or *en taule* could be translated as 'to be in the nick' or 'in clink'. There is a difference between the original and the translations though. 'Jail' is not colloquial usage, unlike the translations offered by the subtitler and dubber, which are in keeping with the visual signs and reinforce the fact that the character is a repeat offender, a reprobate who is familiar with prison slang.

It will be noted that the subtitler usually reflects the oral features and style of the soundtrack to a greater extent than the dubber in the extracts analysed. Of course, dubbing actors can also make use of intonation, volume, and vocal pitch to compensate for changes. But at the level of the translation, the differences are significant. A certain dissonance between the dubbed dialogue and what we see occurs in the dubbed version, where the exchanges do not seem to fit as well with the visual characterisation of the suspect being interviewed by the detectives. His unshaven, unkempt appearance, baggy, oversized clothes are just as important as the way he speaks. The dubbed translation tends to be a standardised version of the original, somewhat contradicting the physical depiction of the character.

Conclusion

This paper illustrates the translation strategies used by subtitlers and dubbers when dealing with cultural transfer in a selection of scenes from English-spoken films into French. The omission of culture-specific terms allows the subtitler to reduce the text. It also simplifies the dubbed dialogue exchanges, making them easier to understand whilst becoming at the same time more general, often neutral and less expressive. There were few examples of literal translation in the examples studied. Where present in the dubbed version, this is generally due to the constraints of lip sync; phonetic equivalence is attained often at the expense of semantic equivalence. As for the use of loan words or borrowing, one cannot forget that in a subtitled version the viewer can also hear, and in some cases follow, the original soundtrack. If it is possible to use the same term in the target language, this eliminates the need to search for an alternative. Although this strategy could help the lip sync of the dubbed dialogue with the actor's lip movements, it does not seem to be used very frequently. There seems to be a tendency to place the target text as close as possible to the target culture. Equivalence, which allows the meaning and function of the original to be retained, is preferred by the subtitler but has not been as widely used in the dubbed versions of the examples studied. Adaptation brings the subtitles firmly to the target culture, and it is frequently used to render the dubbed dialogue exchanges more French. Generalisation allows the subtitler to reduce the text and simplifies the dubbed dialogue to improve audience understanding. Explication is less prevalent in the examples studied but, when employed, it helps to explain cultural terms and to clarify the meaning of some words.

Audio and visual cultural signs are an integral part of the audiovisual message. The source culture infiltrates the subtitled version through the image and the soundtrack. In the case of the dubbed version this process takes place normally through the image but also through the translations when terms from the source culture are borrowed. Physical appearance and behaviour imply a specific form or verbal expression which ought to be matched in the translations. This is particularly important in dubbed versions where the original soundtrack has been replaced. The Bronx demeanour of the hoodlums and suspects analysed in the extracts needs to be represented at some level in the linguistic renderings chosen by the translators.

Although specific constraints operate for both subtitling and dubbing, this does not always explain the choice of one strategy over another. Certainly, some differences are attributed to the need for reduction in

subtitling, or lip synchronisation in dubbing, but these are not the only guiding principles in the choice of strategy (Luyken *et al.*, 1991). Other factors which might affect the resulting translation are: (1) the type of audiovisual text as in television series, feature films, documentaries and news broadcasts; (2) the intended target audience whether young or old or with specialised or limited knowledge; (3) the format chosen for the distribution of the programme, be it DVD, video, television or cinema; and (4) specific requirements imposed by the content of the programme itself, for example, comedies, dramas, musicals, westerns or thrillers. This is by no means a definitive list, but serves to emphasise the complexity of the audiovisual translator's tasks and to suggest potencial avenues for further research.

Chapter 4

The Codification of Nonverbal Information in Subtitled Texts

ELISA PEREGO

Preliminary Remarks

This article focuses on the semiotic nature of film texts and their translation. A film represents a multichannel and multicode system of communication, a polysemiotic text (Gottlieb, 1998: 245) requiring translators to consider the overall text structure. It necessarily shapes the way they decide to recodify the target text (TT), a text whose chief channel of communication (written) is different from that of the original (oral). Hence the description of subtitling as a diasemiotic translation (Gottlieb, 1998: 245): what is oral in the original version becomes written in the translation, and it is this written text that takes on the semantic load. At times, the semantic load of nonverbal signs accompanying speech is much more significant than that of the spoken text itself. In such cases the subtitler should make those signs available to the foreign-language audience. Three films have been analysed in order to illustrate how nonverbal information can be restored in subtitles: *Szerelem* [*Love*], by Károly Makk (1970), Hungary (VHS version); *Szerelmesfilm* [*A Film about Love*], by István Szabó (1970), Hungary (VHS version); *The Talented Mr Ripley*, by Anthony Minghella (1999), USA-Italy (DVD version).

Triggering Issues

When subtitling, translators are obliged to work within the space and time constraints of this translation process. At the same time, they have to transpose an oral source text (ST) into a written one; translate into a foreign language, reducing the ST when necessary; and take into account the semiotic texture of the film – at all times remaining as informative as

possible. In other words, given the semiotic composition of the film, the subtitler has to deal with:

(1) A shift from the paralinguistic to the verbal dimension.
(2) A diamesic shift, that is, the switch from the spoken to the written language.
(3) A shift from the image or film frame to verbal language.
(4) A shift from sound effects to verbal language.

Such semiotic shifts inevitably influence the translators' choices and can make the translation more explicit and lead to the codification of nonverbal messages. Intersemiotic explicitation in subtitling (Perego, 2003a, 2003b), the main topic of this chapter, is triggered by the semiotic composition of the film or by any of the above semiotic shifts.

Explicitation is a linguistic phenomenon whereby a ST's covert, implicit, unsaid and implied information is expressed overtly and verbally in the translated text, without altering the source message, but making it clearer and more informative, more complete and unambiguous (Bertuccelli Papi, 2000; Blum-Kulka, 1986; Klaudy, 1993a, 1993b, 1999; Nida, 1964), enriching, developing and reconstructing it for the sake of the target viewer. The restoration of nonverbal elements in subtitling represents a significant type of explicitation that allows the subtitler to foreground unsaid but important pieces of information.

There are three forms of explicitation that actively participate in the codification of nonverbal information: addition, that is, the insertion of linguistic elements absent in the original; specification, which operates at the lexical level of language and involves substituting a lexical unit in the ST with a different one in the TT that is more precise and specific in nature; and reformulation, which operates at the textual level and involves substituting a sentence or phrase (in the loose sense of any part of a sentence) with a more informative sentence or phrase.

Even though the polysemiotic nature of a film text is clear to any specialist, linguistic analyses of the different aspects of subtitling do not appear to accord equal importance to all the semiotic channels involved in film communication. Works on subtitling tend to give prominence to the impact of the paralinguistic dimension – or rather, to that of the pragmatic value of intonation (Assis Rosa, 2001; Blini & Matte Bon, 1996; Hatim & Mason, 2000) – partly or entirely neglecting the effect of other communicative signals. However, there is more than just intonation to be investigated. Indeed, all the signals that complement verbal discourse deserve equal attention, since it is often nonverbal signals, whether phonic or nonphonic, that complete the message, or even constitute the only

means of conveying it (Canepari, 1985; Chaume Varela, 1997; Poyatos, 1997a, 1997b; Zabalbeascoa, 1997).

The analysis of various films demonstrates how explicitation is triggered by a variety of semiotic signals – ranging from intonation, kinesics and proxemics to film images and sounds – and also by a change of medium from oral to written.

From Paralanguage to Verbal Language

Paralanguage is a term for both the auditory, nonverbal elements and the nonauditory, nonverbal elements which make human verbal communication complete, natural and nonartificial (Canepari, 1985: 87). It includes prosody and intonation, as well as kinesics and proxemics (Table 4.1), essential elements in communication, given their pragmatic and emotive functions and their power in conveying the speaker's communicative intentions (Bazzanella, 1994, 2002; Bertinetto, 1996: 395–396; Canepari, 1985: 87).

Given that codes that are secondary to the spoken language reinforce or clarify its illocutionary force, they often cannot be ignored. In subtitling, paralanguage helps guide the translator's semantic choices and when it is the only vehicle conveying important messages, the information it carries is foregrounded and verbalised by means of additions, specifications and reformulations.

Addition

Most nuances in the oral discourse can be restored in the subtitles by means of addition. There are various types of linguistic elements that can be added, ranging from interjections and politeness markers to adverbs and adjectives; from discourse modifiers to circumstantial adjuncts and connectors; from noun phrases to adjectives and deictic elements (Perego,

Table 4.1   Paralanguage: Relevant features

Paralanguage	
phonic nonverbal	nonphonic nonverbal
↓	↓
prosody; intonation	kinesics; proxemics

2003b). We shall take a closer look at some of these by commenting on excerpts taken from the material analysed.

In Example 1, it is not only the voice quality, the distinctively loud and peremptory pronunciation given to 'I'll', that plays a major role; equally, the kinesics of the speaker – heading to where Dickie has gone and looking askance at her interlocutor – also call for the reinforcing negative adverb *no* before the assertion.

Example 1: Minghella

Tom: I'll go and see what's the matter. Marge: I'll go.	
Subtitles in Italian	***Back translation***
-Vado a vedere. -No. Vado io.	[-I'll go and see. -No. I'll go myself.]

The adverb definitively quashes any option for Tom to go and see what the matter is. It stresses the emphasis Marge puts on the personal pronoun 'I', opposed to an unsaid but implied 'you', thus making it clear that she is going to see how Dickie is because she is his girlfriend. It is through the adding of the adverb *no* that the subtitler manages to restore the illocutionary force of Marge's linguistic act. Moreover, Marge's communicative intention is explicitated in Italian by the right-marked word order of her linguistic act *Vado io* rather than the unmarked (*Io*) *vado* (especially with no pronoun at all), where the dislocation of the subject to the right of the sentence 'recalls to attention something regarded as "given" or "understood" in the preceding part of the sentence' (Maiden & Robustelli, 2000: 363). Hence, the ST and the TT share the same propositional content but use different devices to explicitate it, with the subtitle opting for its verbalisation.

It is not only intonation and proxemics that can be transliterated into a linguistic item: pauses are eloquent paralinguistic devices, which also need to be codified at times. When they are meaningful, pauses can be lexicalised, that is, explicitated. In Example 2, the use of ellipsis in the original dialogue is very suggestive: it reflects a specific and deliberate rhetorical device employed by the speaker, who emphasises the message by choosing not to state it verbally. As subtitles tend not to be elliptical, ST ellipsis is filled in, resulting in an explicit TT which does not require cognitive elaboration on the part of the viewer.

Example 2: Minghella

Mr Greenleaf: Marge, what a man may say to his sweetheart and what he'll admit to another fellow … **(Pause)**.	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Marge, quello che un uomo dice alla sua bella …	[Marge, what a man tells to his sweetheart …
… **è diverso da** quanto confessa ad un amico …	… **is different from** what he confesses to a friend …]

Specification

Sometimes the paralinguistic information accompanying the situational context is more meaningful than the purely verbal information. In such cases, the translator tends to be, whether deliberately or unconsciously, more precise in the TT, transferring the connotative meaning – when it is uttered with a particular intonational or gestural emphasis – to a normally neutral term, therefore deneutralising it.

This tendency has been observed mainly in the Hungarian-Italian material, where, in order to reflect the speaker's attitude in a given communicative situation, general words are given a more precise semantic load in the subtitles. Example 3 is representative of how the stress given to the Hungarian word *nőket* and the increase of its first syllable's duration highlight the word's connotative meaning:

Example 3: Szabó

Kata: Miért követelődzöl? Kérlek … Én sem követelem tőled megtudni a nőket. [Kata: Why are you insisting? Please … I don't expect to know from you about all your women either.]	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Perchè sei tanto esigente? Io non esigo di conoscere le tue avventure.	[Why are you so demanding? I don't expect to know about your (love) affairs.]

Reformulation

Besides leading to the addition of linguistic elements and to the specification of lexical units, the shift from nonverbal to verbal language can also prompt the subtitler to reproduce 'the matter without the manner, […] the content without the form of the original' (Newmark, 1988: 46). A free

translation can be more explicit and better transmit paralinguistic traits. Example 4 is an instance illustrating how the important subtitling requirement for conciseness can be overruled by the need for explicitness and textual dilution. Since the speaker's tone and attitude are particularly meaningful, the subtitle codifies verbally what is merely implied in the original, where the speaker is being eloquently vague. Again, similarly to what happens in Example 2, it is possible to observe the tendency – or rather, the need – for subtitles to be self-contained and autonomous, as if they were the only information carrier for the viewers and the latter did not have access to other communicative channels.

Example 4: Minghella

Marge: When you have his attention you feel like you're the only person in the world. That's why everybody loves him. It's always the same whenever someone new comes into his life – Freddie, Fausto, Peter Smith-Kingsley – he's wonderful – did you meet him? … Especially you … **And that's just the boys** …	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Le sue attenzioni ti fanno sentire unico al mondo.	[His attentions make you feel unique in the world.
Per questo lo amano tutti.	That's why everybody loves him.
Va sempre così. Quando c'è una persona nuova …	It's always the same. Whenever there's a new person …
… Freddie, Fausto, Peter Smith-Kingsley …	… Freddie, Fausto, Peter Smith-Kingsley …
Lo hai conosciuto? È meraviglioso.	Did you meet him? He's wonderful.
E con te, poi!	And you!
Per non parlare delle donne.	**Not to mention women.**]

The Diamesic Shift

The second factor to consider is the impact on subtitles of the shift from the oral code, a language written to be spoken and different to the natural spoken language – what Chaume Varela (2001: 78) calls 'oralidad prefabricada' [prefabricated orality] – to the written code.

Subtitles are subject to the rules of written language and although they often have to maintain a certain degree of brevity they are usually very precise and cohesive (Bussi Parmiggiani, 2002: 195). Subtitles show many features typical of written language, including: conciseness; lack of

redundancy, or at least notably less than in spoken language (Example 7); high degree of textual organisation and accurate information planning; high informativity; explicitness in developing argumentations; excellent chaining of sentences; meaningful use of punctuation; high degree of cohesion and coherence, thanks to the extensive use of deictic and anaphoric referential elements; disambiguation of pronominal forms; specification of referents; specific and accurate lexical choices; and reconstruction of elliptical forms.

Addition

Written language is far less elliptical than spoken language, which explains the need for written sentences to be as complete and as unequivocal as possible, where nothing is left unsaid and where subtitlers explicitly rely on their knowledge of the overall plot of the film. This is the case in Example 5, where the addition also has a stylistic dimension: the message can still be understood without it, but it allows the subtitler to offer the viewer a complete and cohesive text, as opposed to the succinct and context-related ST. Hence, *Io vengo più tardi* [I'll come later], as opposed to simply 'later', where the viewer's attention is not loaded with extra cognitive work (Grillo & Kawin, 1981):

Example 5: Minghella

Peter: I'm freezing. Coming down? Tom: Later. I want to catch the sunset.	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Sto gelando. Andiamo dentro?	[I'm freezing. Coming in?
Io vengo più tardi. Voglio vedere il tramonto.	I'll come later. I want to catch the sunset.]

Specification

In cases when the trigger for the verbal codification of nonverbal information is a diamesic shift, the translator can also rely on specification or substitution strategies:

Example 6: Szabó

Kata: Jövőre fürdőruhákat csinálok… [Kata: Next year I'll make bathing suits …]	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
L'anno prossimo ideerò costumi da bagno …	[Next year I'll design bathing suits …]

In Example 6, the Hungarian *csinál* [to make] is far more neutral than the Italian *ideare* [to design, to create], which implies the character's creativity and search for originality and belongs to the semantic field of fashion, as does the lexical unit *costumi da bagno* [bathing suits]. The semantic relation of solidarity that links the Italian *ideare* and *costumi da bagno*, together with the speaker's job that is implied (she is a fashion designer) represents an important cohesive factor for the subtitled text.

Reformulation

Finally, reformulation allows subtitles to be phrased in a form more appropriate to the written medium, for instance by avoiding a repetition which, though perfectly suitable and perhaps essential in the oral text, would sound redundant in the written form as can be seen in Example 7:

Example 7: Szabó

Másik korcsolyázó fiú: Mikor **születik a kiskrapek?** Hallod? Mikor lesz gyerek? [Other ice-skater: When **will the kid be born**? Are you listening to me? When is the baby coming?]	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Quando **sarai papà**? Viene il bebè?	[When **will you be a father**? Is the baby coming?]

From Image to Verbal Language

Besides paralanguage and code related shifts, images represent another trigger for explicitation by means of additions and specifications. They have a great impact on the formulation of the text, where the translator 'verbalises images' whenever space and time constraints allow for it.

Addition

Translators can decide to add a piece of information that derives from the image, thus foregrounding what they consider more relevant for the target viewers, who have to split their attention between watching, hearing and reading, and so risk missing important details carried by the images. Example 8 verbally codifies what the nurse is talking about and dealing with. Even though the photography is not particularly clear, we can tell from the subtitles that it is *pasticche* [pills] that the nurse is actually handing over to the person who is to look after the patient overnight.

Example 8: Makk

Ápolónő: Holnap is meg kell katétereznem, ebből háromszor hármat, ebből mára háromszor hármat, ha a láz nem csökken négyet. [Nurse: I'll have to put the catheter on her again tomorrow; of these, three for three times; of these, (as for) today, three for three times. Four if need be, if her temperature doesn't come back down.]	

Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Domani le applicherò il catetere.	[Tomorrow I'll put the catheter on her.
Tre pasticche di questo, e di questo tre volte tre,	Three of these pills, and three of these, three times,
eventualmente quattro.	four if need be.]

Specification

Additions can be complemented by instances of specification. This happens whenever pronominal forms used in the ST to stand in for a noun or a noun phrase, or to make reference to participants in the discourse, are reinforced in the written version through nominalisation. The written text takes into account what is visible and makes it more informative and target oriented. Thus in Example 9, the referent is made visually clear only to those who can understand the source language and do not need to read the subtitles, or to fast readers who manage to consider all the semiotic channels of the subtitled film. Failing this, a complete, explicit subtitle can be a helpful strategy for viewers who may miss the image.

Example 9: Szabó

Jutka: **Az** piszkos, biztos. Jancsi: Nem nagyon. [Jutka: **That one** is certainly dirty. Jancsi: Not so much.]	

Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
È sporca **la carrozza**? Beh . . .	[Is **the coach** dirty? Well . . .]

From Sounds to Verbal Language

Let us now take a look at how the acoustic channel affects whether and how nonverbal information is codified. It would appear that in the multicode context of a film, the need for explicitness and autonomy is at times dictated by the soundtrack, which plays just as much of a role as other semiotic variables in calling for additions (Example 10) and specifications (Example 11). In Example 10 below, sound effects provide the grounds for the insertion of the new element.

Example 10: Szabó

Jancsi anyja: Bombáznak. Ide valahova becsapott. Bombáznak . . . [Jancsi's mother: They're bombing. (One) has fallen somewhere round here. They're bombing . . .]	
Subtitles in Italian	**Back translation**
Bombardano. Una bomba è caduta qui vicino. Bombardano . . .	[They're bombing. A bomb has fallen nearby. They're bombing . . .]

The fact that Budapest is being bombed is represented visually and above all aurally. *Una bomba è caduta qui vicino* is a nonelliptical subtitle, ensuring cohesion thanks to the insertion of the noun phrase *una bomba* [a bomb] – a partial recurrence in the Italian with *bombardano* [(they) are bombing]. Evidently, this insertion meets the requirements of written language too. As a general principle, noise, music and meaningful sounds can influence and determine the choices made by the translator, especially if – as in this case – other semiotic shifts are involved. The subtitle is thereby self-contained and easier for the viewers to read, thus reducing their dependence on the other semiotic channels. Similarly, Example 11 specifies what the Hungarian demonstrative pronoun *ezt* [*ez* 'this'+ -*t* (accusative suffix)] stands in for, that is, *i colpi* [the bangs]. The one-liner *Senti i colpi?* [Can you hear the bangs?] gives the audience more complete information and reinforces the viewer's awareness of what is going on.

Example 11: Szabó

Jancsi: Hallottad, Kata? Hallottad **ezt**? Kérlek maradjon otthon, odamegyek. Maradj otthon, kérlek Kata, mindjárt ott leszek egy csak maradj otthon kérlek. [Jancsi: Have you heard? Have you heard **that**? Please, stay at home, I'll be there (soon). Stay at home, please Kata, I'll be there straightaway, but please stay at home.]	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Senti **i colpi**?	[Can you hear **the bangs**?
Resta a casa, ti prego. Io vengo subito, non muoverti!	Stay at home, please. I'll come straightaway, don't move.]

Concluding Remarks

Though relatively few examples have been presented and commented upon here, Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of the triggers for explicitation, and helps us understand how significant semiotic shifts can be. Overall, the
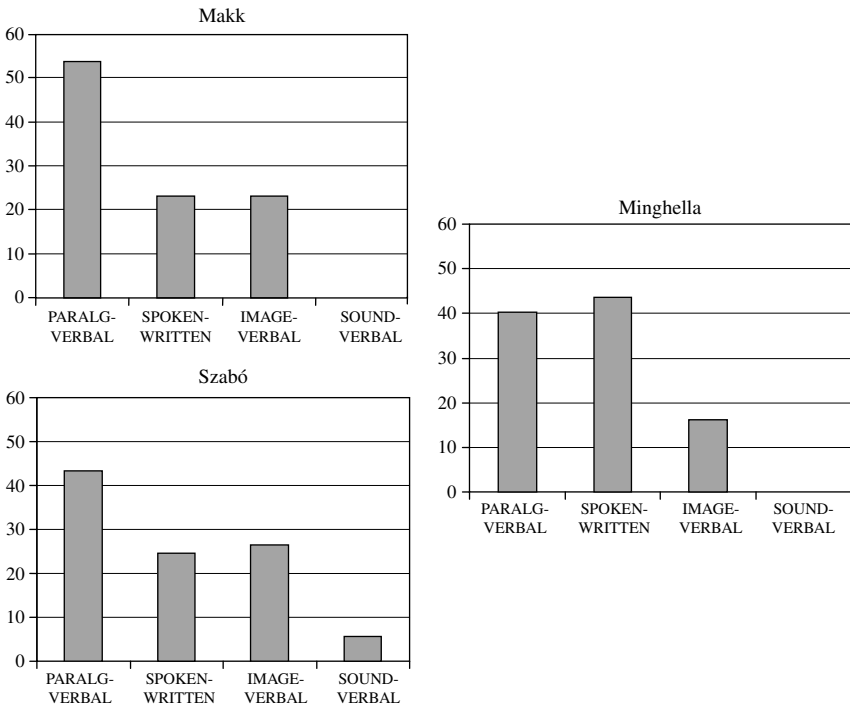
Figure 4.1   Intersemiotic explicitation: The quantitative dimension

most frequently represented shift is the paralinguistic-to-verbal one, though the spoken-to-written shift would also appear to be highly significant. Although less common, the image-to-verbal shift is nonetheless active and productive throughout the material analysed. Even the sound-to-verbal shift, present only in one Hungarian-Italian film, should not be underestimated as another potentially significant variable. Of course, these frequencies remain tentative pending corroboration by larger scale analyses.

Nevertheless, whatever semiotic shift is involved, the codification of nonverbal information in subtitling is undeniably a reality. It represents a very important facilitating and target oriented device which deserves to be taken into account when subtitling so as to assist the audience who are simultaneously watching, listening and reading, and often have to rely predominantly on the written channel.

Translating Proper Names into Spanish: The Case of Forrest Gump

ISABEL HURTADO DE MENDOZA AZAOLA

Introduction

Social and cultural allusions have always presented translators with challenges. However, translation theory has only relatively recently started to attend to the different issues brought about by these references. For decades, theoreticians struggled with dichotomies such as free versus literal translation, to move later to the search for correspondence and equivalence (Catford, 1965; Newmark, 1981; Nida, 1964). Recently, however, certain scholarly groups within Translation Studies have focused on culture and conceptualised translation as a cross-cultural exchange (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Toury, 1980). The approach to translation has become functional and sociocultural, and the emphasis has been put on the target text (TT) as well as in its reception by an audience of different characteristics and background.

The translation of sociocultural allusions usually poses severe challenges because in the process of transferring a cultural reference into a new text in a different language translators have to help the new audience retrieve as many nuances as possible from those present in the source text (ST). This difficulty is magnified when the mode of translation already limits the strategies available to translators, as in the case of audiovisual translation (AVT).

About the Film

Forrest Gump (Robert Zemeckis, 1994) could probably be considered an exceptional film in the sense that not that many films are so explicit in their collage of cultural references. *Forrest Gump* (*FG*) is highly intertextual

and rich in cultural allusions, making it a suitable case study to test the ideas put forward in this paper.

When watching the English original version of *FG*, it is immediately clear that this film is full of underlying meanings, some of which would probably not be retrieved by some members of the audience, including some US viewers. When watching the dubbed and subtitled versions into Spanish, it becomes evident at once that the new audience is often expected to be familiar with many of the cultural and social associations of the film. The TT works on assumptions of understanding, and this sometimes prevents a full appreciation of the film's allusions.

The reason why the audience might not retrieve the film's intended meaning is because *FG* is a semiotically rich film, one in which the references present are given special formal attention. The film's eponymous protagonist takes the audience through 30 years of the history of the United States; their successes and failures and the positive and negative aspects of this nation. Forrest is the embodiment of the American myth: anybody can become anything they want in the land of dreams.

But how are all these ideas conveyed in the film? And why is it that non-American viewers may not always understand them immediately whilst allegedly the original spectators do? As stated below, when discussing the skopos theory, the new audience is always of key importance when translating a text. A Spaniard will never understand all the implications of *FG* as an American would, because comprehension is deeply rooted in culture and varies according to the different societies people belong to and to the way they have been raised individually.

Culture and Semiotics

Semioticians like Peirce (Hartshorne & Weiss, 1960) or Barthes (1957/1970) understand culture mainly as the way in which we give meaning to the world surrounding us. Our comprehension of the world – and, consequently, our comprehension of a word, a text or a film – depends on our cultural baggage. Meanings do not pre-exist in the world; we are the ones who create them according to codes and conventions, which are culture-specific. Saussure (1971: 33) coined the term 'semiology' to describe a new discipline that would study 'the life of signs at the heart of social life'. Semiotics – a term more widespread in English-speaking countries and used to refer to what French semiologists called 'semiology' – suggests that we live in a world of signs and that we understand our reality with the aid of these signs and the codes in which they are organised. Our gestures, the words we use and even

the objects in our world are signs, which have an agreed meaning and are combined according to the rules and conventions agreed upon by the members of a given community. Through these shared conventions – called 'codes' by semioticians like Saussure – we are able to make sense of the world surrounding us. In the processes of codification and decodification, we incorporate the values of our culture, and this is how cultural references are created.

For this reason, signs can be interpreted in many different ways by different individuals. Most people may agree on the obvious meaning of a sign, but it is possible that they will see different connotations in it. Connotations are the personal or culture-specific associations of a sign, whilst the obvious or primary meaning is called denotation. This twofold nature of signs is what makes them open to different interpretations. Furthermore, it may also be argued that the connotations of a set of signs in context can reveal a certain culture-specific ideology on which the worldview of a particular society is based – a 'myth' in Barthes's words (1957/1970).

This common background knowledge always affects us when we approach a text. In the case of audiovisual programmes, it is nearly impossible to see a famous film without being conscious of other contexts in which it has been used, quoted, alluded to or reproduced. All these contexts create expectations, which the audience of the film cannot ignore when interpreting the text. This is what we call intertextuality, a concept which helps us realise that the frontiers of a text are never fixed, because a text is always tangled in a web of references not only to other texts, but also to other cultural and social codes. No text exists in isolation, nor is it hermetic, and it is virtually impossible to approach a text without any expectations.

Moreover, intertextuality also refers to the internal characteristics of a text, and it is an especially complex issue in the case of audiovisual programmes, in which several intermingling codes are involved: text, images and soundtrack. All of these can draw on intertextuality and, since it is the interaction among them which generates meaning, there is a need to interpret all the references and allusions in order to grasp the meaning of the film in its entirety.

Given that different communities codify the world according to different rules and conventions, in cases where there is an abundance of sociocultural references in the ST, trying to achieve the same 'equivalence' in the TT seldom works. Under such circumstances, translation cannot be but a functional approximation, which is why skopos theory has been chosen as the framework for this study.

Skopos Theory

It has been previously argued that signs are polysemic because their connotations depend on the reception process. Particularly, it is the receiver/interpreter's knowledge and situation that makes a difference. This section deals with skopos theory since it is believed to be one of the translation theories that best explains the reasons why a translator sometimes has to adapt the ST according to the context and situation of the TT audience.

Translators have the very important task of bridging the gap between two cultural systems present in a translation process, a rather difficult task since different communities see the world in different ways, and reality is loaded with culture-specific meanings. The strategy of adaptation is often necessary when translators are dealing with the transfer of cultural references, which can become even more challenging if they also have to comply with the media limitations of dubbing and subtitling.

Skopos theory – first proposed by Vermeer in the late 1970s and further explained in a book co-written with Reiss (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984) – argues that the shape of the TT must be determined by the function that this text is meant to perform in the target context, the addressees being the main factor determining the TT's purpose. Usually, a ST is produced for a given situation in order to perform a certain function. In addition, it is usually oriented towards a source culture, because its author had a specific kind of audience in mind when producing it. But a new target audience may lack the awareness of the source culture that is necessary to fully comprehend the text, and this is why the TT must be oriented towards the assumed knowledge that the target community has. Thus, the role of the translator is not only to transpose a text into another text in a different language, but also to act as a mediator in a process of intercultural communication.

In the case of the film subject of this study, *FG*, there are multiple ideas latent under the surface of the text. All these underlying meanings based on culture-specific connotations create what Barthes (1957/1970) calls a myth: the projection of a particular society's ideology. This is not easy to convey in a text for viewers that belong to a culture different to that of the ST audience. Thus, the translator of this film should follow Vermeer's idea (1996: 15) that 'it is not the source-text and/or its surface-structure which determines the target-text and/or its surface-structure, but the skopos', and realise that the situation of the target audience sometimes calls for a certain degree of adaptation.

Forrest Gump was a very successful film in Spain in that it was a box-office hit. This is probably due to the fact that Spanish and American cultures are no exceptions to the general trend of globalisation. Thanks to

global communications, cultures come closer together and share more and more references with every passing day. This phenomenon considerably facilitates the translators' task since there is a decreasing number of references that need to be adapted.

Translators have to gauge how relevant a given ST item is for the end product and whether it is appropriate to deviate from it. Skopos theory accounts for this departure from the ST by accepting that 'a translation need not necessarily be retrospectively "equivalent" to a source-text interpretation, but should be prospectively "adequate" to a target-text skopos' (Vermeer, 1996: 77).

A translator working within a skopos-based framework renders the information contained in the ST according to the requirements of the target audience, instead of merely passing on all the components of the original text to the new receivers. Given that the skopos of a translation is what determines the strategies used for reaching the intended goal, translators can move away from the original text. They have more freedom in the design of the new text and can consider how best to convey the deeper meanings of the text, its semiotic significance. They can produce a more idiomatic text, adjusted to what they believe are the needs of the target audience. However, as will be explained later on, this may not be the case in all modes of translation, for example, subtitling.

Despite the fact that the transposition of the sociocultural allusions within a ST into a new TT is very challenging for translators, this is by no means their only obstacle. In fact, the translation mode is also a determinant, and it can bring about many difficulties to the translation process, which is especially significant in the case of AVT because of the media constraints.

Dubbing and Subtitling

Different translation modes make different demands on translators. Subtitling, for instance, has a number of limitations related to time and space. Luyken *et al.* (1991) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) offer a detailed account of these constraints, which include the screen space that can be used for the written subtitles, the time available for and between subtitle exposures, the timing of subtitles and the format of the subtitles. When writing subtitles, factors like the quantity and complexity of the information, the action taking place on screen, and the viewers' average reading speed must be taken into account. Dubbing is not an altogether easy task either. The dubbing writer has to mould the TT in order to make it match the lip movements of the actors on the screen. Moreover, for the target product to seem real, other factors such as intonation, gestures and postures have to be considered too.

Audiovisual translation, thus, imposes special requirements upon translators. Instead of preserving the form of the original text, the aim, as advocated by skopos theory, is to achieve the same effect as the original work in an audience with a different cultural background. With this in mind, AVT inevitably has to become more flexible; the translator – be it dubber or subtitler – becomes a mediator, who participates in the act of communication in order to make the new audience get the most out of a film or audiovisual programme while trying to preserve the essence of the ST and comply with specific constraints.

Data Analysis

For the following analysis, some cultural features of the film *Forrest Gump* have been chosen according to how specific they are to the source American audience, and they have been compared to their correlatives in both the Spanish dubbed and subtitled versions of the film. It is worth mentioning that the dubbed version was produced for Spain and distributed by Paramount Home Entertainment Spain, whereas the subtitled version was only meant to be distributed in the United States and Puerto Rico.

The aim of this section is to discuss the motivation that might have guided the translation solutions offered in the TTs. Due to the physical limitations of this paper I will only concentrate on one specific area: the translation of proper names, regardless of whether they are names of real people or fictional characters. These specific allusions have been chosen because the way the translators dealt with them highlights the importance of an adequate audience design.

FG is a formal enactment of the multiple layers of a culture and presents many references to famous US people, events and places. Sometimes these cultural and social associations may pass unnoticed to a Spanish audience that is not as familiar with those references as the original US audience might be. This would make some of the intended meanings of the ST impossible to retrieve, which would certainly prevent, if not the whole act of communication, at least full comprehension and understanding of what the original author meant to convey at specific moments during the film.

In order to prevent this from happening, semiotic considerations should be taken into account. As stated previously, *FG* is a semiotically rich film, which draws heavily on intertextuality as a key compositional feature. In order to be able to interpret intertextuality, one needs to read the signs in all the codes involved, which is especially difficult if the signs belong to a culture which is not one's own, and this is where the need for a mediator arises. On occasions, translators have to untangle a convoluted network of codes that exist in a text, make sense out of them and then try to help the

new audience understand as much of the original text as possible by making the cultural cues given in the ST more visible or approachable. This task is especially arduous when it comes to films as meaning is generated by the interaction of text, images and sound.

FG was a very popular film in the United States because of its casual but informative depiction of three turbulent decades of American history, in a mixture of romantic comedy and drama. The aim of both the dubbed and the subtitled versions should not only be that of reaching as wide a foreing audience as possible, in order to attain the same box-office records that the film achieved in the United States, but also to make the new viewers cry, laugh and learn as much as the original audience did. Once the skopos is established, the question is how to fulfil it. The procedure to do this is to start by establishing who the target culture addressees and their circumstances are, paying special attention to how much their culture differs from that of the source addressees.

In the case of the dubbed version, the target addressees are the general Spanish public. It is not an audience with a particular in-depth knowledge of US history and culture, nor an especially educated audience. Spanish viewers do not share the same culture as the original viewers who saw the film in the United States, although they might share some common icons like the Vietnam War or the civil rights movement. This makes it necessary for the translator to adapt the original source text in certain instances, so that the target audience does not feel excluded and can appreciate the content of the film.

In the case of the subtitled version, though, the target addressees are basically Latin Americans living in the United States and Puerto Ricans. It is safe to assume that these communities have a fair knowledge of American culture, sharing many cultural references with the original viewers and thus making the translator's task somewhat easier.

In both cases, it is the translators who are in control of the communication process and their undertaking is quite challenging. They have to pay attention to each individual cultural allusion of the ST and decide whether the audience is going to understand them or not. Bearing in mind that the dubbed and subtitled versions were produced for very different communities, it is not striking that the translation solutions used were found to be quite different too.

The Translation of Proper Names

The translation of names of people and places is rather controversial, as Newmark (1981), Franco Aixelá (2000) and Moya (2002) have pointed out.

The debate can be approached using Venuti's (1995) two key concepts of domestication and foreignisation. Should the translator simply calque names from the ST into the TT, or should he adapt them to the TT culture or even substitute the original names by others that would sound familiar to the target addressees, for the sake of creating the same effect in the audience as the original text did?

Sometimes, the visibility of the translator can be minimised by the use of certain strategies that enhance comprehension but do also curtail the reader's enjoyment of the text, like the use of explanatory notes or glosses in certain types of writing. However, this procedure is not normally available to audiovisual translators and, although some subtitling practices – that is, fansubs – do resort to the inclusion of translators' notes (Díaz Cintas, 2005), this can be considered a very marginal activity. Dubbing translators and subtitlers have only a limited range of translation strategies available, and this is particularly evident in those parts of a text which are most problematic. People and place names are especially challenging for translators because rather than being universal they are usually deeply embedded in a particular culture.

Each community shares a culture, which is determined by factors such as their past history, their common experiences and a relatively similar point of view regarding the reality that surrounds them, as opposed to that of other communities. Yet, this reality is not only made up of real facts, historical people and true events. In fact, the shape of different cultures is strongly determined by other fictional factors that also play an important role in a particular community's reality and include two main categories: literature and the media.

As a film that 'performs' cultural references, *FG* also makes use of these two important dimensions of a culture by resorting to allusions to books, TV shows, films and other kinds of entertainment particular to US culture. These references can pose a problem for the translators because many of them escape an audience that is not familiar with the US culture. This happens, for instance, when the protagonist, Forrest, decides to buy a shrimp boat and become a captain, and his friend Dan tells him: 'I tell you what, Gilligan, the day that you are a shrimp boat captain, I will come and be your first mate.' The dubbed version (Dub) left out the allusion, using a more general word (Admiral):

| Dub | Vale, escucha, Almirante, el día que tú seas Almirante de barco, yo me apuntaré como Primer Oficial. | [OK, listen, Admiral, the day you become an Admiral of a boat, I will enlist as a First Official.] |

The original allusion would have probably left most of the Spanish audience startled: Who is this Gilligan? So the translator decided to obviate this word, using a common name instead for the sake of comprehension. On the other hand, the subtitled version (Sub) substituted the allusion by another cultural reference:

Sub	Mira, Robinson Crusoe, cuando tú seas Capitán, yo seré tu Piloto.	[Look, Robinson Crusoe, when you become Captain, I'll be your Pilot.]

In this instance, the new allusion is retrievable by most of the Spanish speaking population in the United States. Whilst they might not know that Gilligan is the character in the TV show *Gilligan's Island* – a popular series broadcasted in the United States since 1964, in which Captain Gilligan was stranded on an island – they would most likely recognise Robinson Crusoe as the character in the homonymous book written in 1719 by Daniel Defoe.

This example shows that both the dubbed and the subtitled versions of the film accounted for the fact that their new audiences might not be able to retrieve the referent behind the original allusion. The translators realised that the strategy of leaving the allusion unchanged would have prevented communication, and this is why they decided to change it in the TT. Both strategies seem to work fine as regards comprehension, yet the strategy adopted by the subtitler is arguably better in the sense that it helps the audience understand the allusion, whilst retaining the flavour of the original. The ST allusion has been substituted by another one which can easily be retrieved by the TT audience, making the irony still perceptible.

Something similar happens in other instances, but the strategies followed in the subtitles are not always the same. One is left to wonder whether this is because of the restrictions of the medium or because the cultural references present in the ST did not pose a big challenge to the translator, since the new audience is habitually exposed to US culture.

There is a scene in the film when Forrest and Lieutenant Dan are with two prostitutes and *Ripley's Believe It or Not* is mentioned. One of the prostitutes gets angry because Forrest acts strangely when she tries to kiss him. The other girl starts laughing at Dan because he is now disabled after having fought in the Vietnam War. Eventually, both girls start shouting and making a big fuss. They call Dan 'cripple' and Forrest 'stupid', adding: 'You belong in *Ripley's Believe it or Not*' and 'You should be in a side show'.

In the dubbed version, these two sentences are omitted, most likely because of audience design considerations. For most Americans, Ripley is well-known and although they may not know that he started as a cartoon-ist for a newspaper, they probably know that in order to gather ideas for the cartoon he travelled throughout the world collecting exotic stories, weird exhibits and unusual artefacts, which are now on exhibition in dif-ferent museums. Spanish viewers have most certainly never heard of him and would not associate Dan and Forrest with these museums or a circus show, and would never make much sense of what is being said.

The subtitle opts for a foreignising strategy and instead of just omitting the cultural reference as the dubber does, the subtitler prefers to resort to a literal translation:

Sub	Ustedes son un caso de Ripley.	[You are a Ripley's case.]

Had it been used in the dubbed version, this strategy would have failed to help the TT audience understand what was going on in the scene. It would have been detrimental to communication, because it would have possibly alienated the target viewer with this referent that is too obscure for most Spaniards. However, the subtitler seemed to think that the Latin American audience would be familiar with this referent.

Another instance in which the strategies chosen by the dubber and the subtitler differ is when Captain Kangaroo is alluded to. This is likely to be the longest running children's TV show of all time, and it has marked the lives of American children during its 30-odd years on air. However, a Spanish audience would probably not know who the character Captain Kangaroo is, and, in order not to hinder communication, the dubber had to resort to some kind of strategy. When talking about himself, Forrest says that he was: 'Famouser even than Captain Kangaroo'. The translator realised that the allusion would be meaningless to Spaniards and decides on the strategy of substitution:

Dub	Más famoso incluso que Pinocho.	[More famous even than Pinocchio.]

The figure of *Pinocho* [Pinocchio] seems a good choice since it is also a fictional character that belongs to the world of children, and the humour of Forrest comparing his fame to that of a children's character is not lost. But the translator avoided using the original allusion so that the audi-ence would not be left wondering who Forrest is talking about. One of

the reasons why the dubber probably used *Pinocho* is that he knew this was a cultural allusion that the TT audience would have no problem understanding, since it is part of their cultural background. In the subtitled version, however, the strategy of adaptation is found:

Sub	Más famoso que el Capitán Canguro de la TV.	[More famous than the Captain Kangaroo of the TV.]

Even though the translator added an explanation, *de la TV*, this would have definitely not been enough for the majority of Spaniards, had it been used in the dubbed version. Translating the allusion by adapting it rather literally would have not helped the audience of the dubbed version. On hearing *Capitán Canguro*, they would not know what the referent is, and they would have been left astounded. 'Captain Kangaroo' is a cultural allusion which has little significance outside US culture, and the great majority of Spaniards would miss the humour in this comment, since they cannot see the sign behind the allusion. However, it would be reasonable to think that Puerto Rican and Latin American children living in the United States did watch this TV programme, and this is possibly the reason why the subtitler used this adaptation technique. By choosing this strategy, the subtitler would also be overcoming the problem of using a different referent than the one being uttered in the original soundtrack and being heard by the viewers.

   Another example in which it is clear that the dubbed and subtitled versions were produced with a different audience design in mind is a scene in which the TV show characters Bert and Ernie are mentioned. Bearing in mind that the original soundtrack can be heard in the subtitled version, it is understandable that the translator decided to leave this reference as *Bert y Ernie*. As in the previous example, the viewers of the subtitled version were probably used to watching the US show where these characters appear, making it possible for the subtitler to use a referent that would fit the soundtrack without hindering communication. However, this solution would have made no sense to a Spanish audience and would not have been the best possible strategy for the dubbed version. Fortunately, the dubber realised that this programme has got an equivalent in Spanish. 'Bert and Ernie' are the well-known characters in *Sesame Street*, a children's programme also very popular in Spain under the title *Barrio Sésamo*. The Spanish version also featured these two characters with the only difference that the puppets had other names: *Epi y Blas*. Thus, the translation works by simply substituting the names in English for their equivalents in Spanish.

Conclusion

From the examples chosen, it emerges that the dubbed and subtitled versions share some common problems, and both suffer from losses of meaning in specific scenes. This is mainly due to the fact that audiovisual translators have to face certain constraints. However, medium constraints in dubbing do not seem to be as problematic as those in subtitling, in which the text has to be adapted and limited to more stringent requirements, making the task of subtitlers extremely challenging. The translator has limited options when having to deal with a difficult term especially due to the co-presence of the original text and the translation in the final product. The limitations of AVT always affect the overall translation process, but they are more significant in those cases where translation is especially challenging. This happens, for example, when dealing with sociocultural allusions, because they are linked to the semiotic codes particular to each culture and language. They require a good understanding of the ST signs and a good adaptation of both the denotative and connotative meanings of the signs to comply with the needs of the TT audience.

The analysis of the translation of proper names in the two Spanish versions of *FG* suggests that the dubbed version generally tends towards ease, fluidity and acculturation, whilst the subtitled version favours foreignisation, maintaining the referents from the ST. The dubbed version shows what seems to be a good end result for a standard Spanish audience. Some elements of US culture portrayed in *FG* are not widely known by the majority of Spaniards, and this calls for a certain degree of adaptation if the original skopos of the film is to be maintained. Since dubbing seems to be less restricted than subtitling, most cultural references did not seem to have been problematic when producing the dubbed version.

On the other hand, the subtitles seemed to assume that the new audience had a fair knowledge of US culture. Even though the constraints of the medium – mainly the concurrent presence of both the English and the Spanish language in the end product – had an important role to play in this, one of the main reasons why some of the strategies used in the subtitled version are so different from those used in the dubbed one is probably due to the fact that Puerto Rican and Spanish speaking communities in the United States share many cultural referents with Americans, which means that adaptation was rarely needed.

This analysis shows that two fairly different approaches to the translation of the same proper names in the same ST can be adopted. This can be as a result of various factors: time availability, medium constraints, co-presence of the two languages, skopos and so on. In any case, even

though this is one case study and general conclusions should not be drawn from it, the data analysis seems to suggest that audience design is an important factor in AVT.

The dubbed and subtitled versions are possibly very different because the strategies implemented in them were coherent with the context of different audiences. Apart from the impact of the medium constraints, the subtitler probably left many cultural referents unchanged because of the fact that the communities the subtitles were designed for are familiar with the US culture. On the other hand, the dubber seems to have realised that some adaptation was necessary in order to be more accommodating to the new audience's background. Nonetheless, thanks to the popularisation of new technologies, the generalised use of internet, DVDs, CDs and other means to access foreign culture, Spanish society is rapidly becoming more familiar with some of America's cultural referents. This is why, nowadays, many cultural allusions present in US films are not adapted to a Spanish audience anymore.

Frenching the Feature Film Twice: *Or* le synchronien au débat

LUISE VON FLOTOW

Introduction

At a synchronisation session in a Montreal dubbing studio, the Hollywood film in question was *Ginger Snaps* (John Fawcett, 2000) and had something to do with young drug addicts being held in an institution. In the scene being dubbed, a boy taunts a relatively strung-out girl with drugs that he has and that she wants, and offers her some in exchange for sex. Her response in English is an angry, hissed 'Fuck you!' The Québecois actor dubbing the girl's voice uttered a genteel *va au diable* [go to the devil], and then collapsed in hoots of laughter, off-mike. Indeed, throughout the preceding bits of dialogue, the actors had taken refuge – off-mike – in all kinds of local street language and local accents, amusing themselves with the alternatives that their language offers to the *synchronien* [synchronian] they had to produce for the mike. In this case too, they came up with several gritty alternatives to *va au diable*, the first being a vicious 'fuck you' spoken in English but with a strong Quebec accent. Earlier in the session, they had swerved from street slang, to exaggerated Quebec dialects, to English with the strong vocal shifts that come with Quebec intonation and pronunciation – anything to relieve the tension of the *français international* that is required professionally. And together with the dubbing director they kept addressing this issue – the censorship they are forced to impose upon their own language.

My work with this Quebec studio was first due to a lead that had suggested that dubbers in France might be pirating Quebec texts, especially for the difficult translation of songs, and that the film *Chicago* (Rob Marshall, 2002) was a case in point. This seemed not improbable since many Hollywood films are dubbed twice into French – once in Quebec

and once again in France, with the Quebec version coming out almost simultaneously with the English North American version, and the European release often occurring four to six months later (Paquin, 2000).

The real question that has come out of this research, however, is not about piracy; it revolves instead around the dubbing languages, the differently standardised versions of French, or *synchronien*. This is the term dubbing actors in both France and Quebec give to the artificial version of spoken language that they talk in film, and which the translators assemble under the direction of the studios and with clear instructions from the distributors. And it is as much a question of tradition as it is of competing business practices, ideologies, and state-sponsored language policies (Betz, 2001) – a complex, complicated issue that, in Quebec, leaves no one cold.

Background

For many Majors' films the first dubbing into French occurs in Quebec, to comply with a government requirement that all foreign films shown in the province (of which approximately 90% are US 'majors') be available in French within 45 days of their release in English. The film is dubbed a second time in France, often several months later, and in compliance with another government decree (dating from 1961) that all foreign films shown in French in France must be translated on French territory. Lampron (1998: 4), the author of a Quebec government funded report on the dubbing situation in the province, writes that this is 'the only measure adopted by a dominant country to protect itself from a smaller one' (my translation). While this comment may be somewhat anachronistic since the protectionist French decree of 1961 predates the establishment of the Quebec dubbing industry, it expresses some of the emotion and ire that is found in most of the discourse on this topic.

The French government decree is more powerful and absolute than any Quebec legislation on this issue. It makes it impossible for any Quebec dubbed feature film, except dubbed versions of English–Canadian films, to be shown in France. The products of the Quebec dubbing industry are thereby restricted to Quebec and other Francophone countries. The power of the French dubbing industry is, however, strongly felt throughout Quebec: almost all TV series imported from the United States are dubbed in France, and more and more DVD releases use the French dubbed version (Lampron, 1998). Quebec has no protectionist legislation in this domain. Recent figures show that the Majors have revenues of about $100 million dollars from film, video and DVD in Quebec, while the entire local dubbing industry is worth only about $20 million. In other words, the relationship

between the Majors' income from Quebec and the part shared with the dubbing industry appears to be rather off-balance.

Given this situation of exclusion from the large French market, and hence the small market share of profits, the question of the method and language used for film translation becomes interesting. It would seem that for such a small audience – the total French-speaking population of Quebec is less than 6 million – subtitling, at a cost of less than $10,000 per film, would be a likely option. Quebec's geographical proximity to English-speaking cultures, its *américanité*, would doubtless allow much of the filmic material to be understood without translation, and subtitles could cover the rest. Alternatively, given the restricted local market, dubbing into a version of local spoken French would be a definite possibility, a plus even, enhancing the 'proximity effect' that Lampron (1998) cites in his report as being vital to film translation and film appreciation. The fact that English-language films are neither subtitled, nor translated into local forms of French, but are dubbed into so-called *français international* or *français standard* which differs from the *français standard* of the Franco-French versions, is what concerns me here. Why dub into a language that is not definably Québecois, that, in fact, seeks to eradicate most traces of Quebec, its dialects and accents? What are the pressures on the industry, and the actors, and what are the results of this policy?

For it is policy. The UDA (Union des artistes) website on dubbing (www.doublage.qc.ca) categorically states that dubbing is necessary in Quebec because *on veut s'entendre* [we want to hear ourselves]. However, at the same time it asserts that the language used for this activity must be free of regionalisms and any other form of dialect; it is *français international*. Local self-styled and voluble critics of the practice, notably Le Blanc (2002, 2003) and Roy-Décarie (1997), call this form of French *cette langue bâtarde et artificielle* [this bastard and artificial language] and *cette langue de nulle part* [this language from nowhere].

In the following, I will examine and describe some of the features of this standardised French in Quebec film dubbing, juxtapose them to the Franco-French versions of the same source text for purposes of comparison, and explore the controversy around this issue. I will focus primarily on a number of songs in *Chicago*, since this was originally my starting point.

Working with *Chicago*

The film, a recently revamped version of a musical that ran in 1975 and was based on a play written in 1926, tells the unlikely and camped up story of an unsuccessful chorus girl, Roxie Hart, who kills her lover and

with the help of a wily lawyer, avoids prison, and makes a career for herself in a duo of murderous showgirls. It features emaciated dancers, a crimped and stiff Renee Zellweger, one big-bodied black female prison warden, and other Hollywood types. As one anonymous critic (www. movieeye.com) has put it, 'none of these characters possess depth and the performances are hardly subtle, but then Chicago is a musical – flat characters are a staple of the genre'. This 'flatness' is evident throughout the film, though the dance sequences, enhanced by special effects, work to counteract it.

When You're Good to Mama: Dubbed in Quebec, Subtitled in France

The question of piracy that I raised briefly at the start and that is a possibility, given the timelines, was quickly resolved. The translations are very different. The Franco-French version subtitles all the songs and maintains the original soundtrack, while the Quebec version dubs the entire thing. This creates interesting disjunctions that highlight the problematic of dubbing in general and the differences between the two Frenches in particular. In terms of technical aspects alone, it is even more difficult than usual to achieve the illusion of lip sync when the camera is focused on the wide open mouth of a singer; and second, since intonation and prosody of translated songs need to go with the rhyme and rhythm of the original soundtrack/music, translated songs are a particularly fragile commodity (Kaindl, 1991). Some of the translation effects relating to these two moments are readily apparent in *When You're Good to Mama*,[1] a song that occurs early in the film.

This piece introduces Mama Morton, the warden who looks after the women in the wing of Cook County Jail that is reserved for murderesses. She sings about her job as a prison warden describing it as a good situation where she threatens and cajoles her charges, making deals and extorting money from them. A voluptuous, full-bodied matron, in 1920s nightclub gear (played by Queen Latifah), she sings out her philosophy of life, full of sexual innuendo, leaning forward into the camera, and engaging in elaborate scarf routines straight from the repertoire of striptease; she preens and struts her way through the club emphasising the sexual overtones of the piece. The song is interspersed here and there with scenes from her role as a warden, in which she wears a grey overall, and is clipped and business-like.

This is a piece charged with sexual overtones, in both language and performance, reminding us that film is a holistic medium, where language (actual dialogue/words), performance (body language, facial expression,

timbre of voice), music and atmosphere come together in a polysemiotic whole. To look at the language alone is to study only one of many components. In this case we know from the way the piece is performed that 'Mama is good to you' is not an innocent refrain about motherhood or a relatively kind-hearted prison warden. The language enhances this with its overtones of the use of 'mama' in Black vernacular and in thousands of blues songs, where 'Mama' refers to a sexually available and desirable woman. This topos runs throughout the song, with references to 'favours' that Mama will do, how she will 'get hot' or 'put out' for you, evocations of 'her gravy' and the reciprocal stroking (masturbation?) as well as the 'boosting you up yours' that she promises. While the tone in the opening stanza about her relationship with the women in the penitentiary could be construed as somewhat motherly ('mother hen', 'They love me and I love them'), this theme quickly abates and changes into a predictable type of crowd-pleasing sexiness. In terms of rhythm and intonation, the English fits neatly into the simple 4/4 beat, with no wrenching of syllables or false stress. The translations into Franco-French subtitles and Québecois dubbing are shown in Table 6.1.

Looking first at the sexual overtones, those raunchy aspects that predominate in the English, the Franco-French subtitled version can obviously stay closer to the original text in meaning. It makes no concessions to lip sync. Thus *Maman s'ra bonne avec toi* and *Maman sera chaude pour toi* includes mild sexual innuendo while the Québecois *Maman est bonne pour toi* or *s'ra à vous* occludes sex. The first makes Mama sound like a medical treatment, the second makes her available to a plural or formal *vous* in order to lip sync with the 'oo' of 'you' in English. While the 'gravy' metaphor is maintained in both, there is a curious nonsense in the Quebec version that has the supposedly desiring Other peppering Mama's sauce so that she can enjoy it herself.

On the topic of register, the first stanza, which sets the scene in the penitentiary and establishes Mama's relationship with the inmates, uses two different levels of language – not only in terms of semantic choices but also in syntax and structure. Take the terms for 'jail', for example; *taule* in Franco-French is slang, akin to crowbar hotel, slammer, clink, while *pen* in Québecois is a short form of *pénitencier* that is necessary for line-length; referring to the proper term, it has a higher register, and moreover, is very close to the English 'pen' for penitentiary. This difference in register will recur throughout the film, and is very obvious in the *Le tango de la taule* vs *Le tango du pénitencier* translation of 'The Cell-Block Tango', one of the next pieces. Further, Mama is referred to as *mère-poule* in Franco-French – a direct translation of 'mother hen' while in Québecois she becomes both a

Table 6.1 'When You're Good to Mama', from *Chicago* (2002)

Franco-French – subtitled	Quebec – dubbed
Demande à n'importe qui dans ma taule J'suis une mère-poule, c'est mon rôle Je les aime et elles m'adorent, c'est un fait Preuve qu'il fonctionne, le système nommé Réciprocité.	Interrogez toutes les filles dans mon pen Elles me traiteront de putain, de mé-cène Je les aime toutes et elles sont mes amies Parce que le système veut, le système c'est la… Réciprocité.
J'ai une devise dans la vie Elle m'a toujours servie T'es bon avec Maman Mama s'ra bonne avec toi.	J'ai un sacré modèle Un joli gobe-sous Vous êtes bons pour Mama Mama est bonne pour vous
Y'a plein de services Que je suis prête à rendre T'en rends à Maman Maman t'en fera autant.	Y'a une tonne de faveurs Que j'prépare pour vous Z'en faites une pour Mama L'en fait une pour vous
La vie, c'est donnant, donnant C'est ma philosophie en tout Et je mérite un traitement de choix Vu ce que j'ai comme répondant	Si l'argent ne fait pas l'bonheur Le fric c'est un d'mes vices Alors j'm'attends à c'qu'ya d'meilleur En échange d'mes services
La main gauche se fout De ce que fait la droite T'es bon avec Maman Maman s'ra bonne avec toi.	Une main vide ne donne rien Une main pleine fait tout Vous êtes bonnes pour Mama Mama est bonn' pour vous
Si tu veux de ma sauce Relève mon ragoût Force sur l'épice Maman s'ra chaude pour toi.	Tu veux goûter ma sauce Prépare mon ragoût Poivre le pour Mama Elle t'aimera beaucoup
Quand passera l'récipient Surtout n'hésite pas Mets des sous pour Maman Elle piochera pour toi.	Quand on passe le panier Faut qu'on trouve de tout Si t'en mets pour Mama Tu pass'ra partout
Tout en haut de l'échelle Ils connaissent les honneurs Envoie-moi au ciel Je renverrai l'ascenseur.	Les gens au top de l'échelle Sont ceux que le monde adore Pousse-moi plus haut mon beau trésor J'te promets ton passeport
C'est un truc d'équipe Comme le sport à Oxford Tu rames pour Maman Maman ramera pour toi.	Pas de coups malhonnêtes Pas de complots jaloux Quand vous trompez Mama Mama vous rend fous
La conclusion de cette chanson T'es bon avec Maman Maman s'ra bonne avec toi.	Quelle est donc la conclusion Simple et facile comme tout Si vous êtes à Mama, Mama s'ra à vous

putain and a *mécène* – a whore and a rich philanthropist/patron of the arts. Again, a nonsense of sorts is created in the name of lip sync. The translation *mécène* is doubtless an attempt to handle the bilabial 'm' of 'mother hen' – a full frontal camera shot – and the relatively open-mouthed ending 'hen'. Whether it makes sense, or fits here, is another matter, especially as we come to see that Mama is anything but a philanthropist in her dealings with the women, whom she bullies, blackmails and bribes.

In terms of syntax and structure, the Québecois version is more proper, more 'correct', less spoken, and often very close to English, as will be the case throughout the film. Again the first stanza shows this:

> Ask any of the chickies in my pen
> They'll tell you I'm the biggest mother hen
> I love 'em all and all of them love me

The English is slangy with words like 'chickies', 'biggest mother hen', and the easy use of 'love'. When the Franco-French has Mama sing:

Demande à n'importe qui dans ma taule	[Ask anybody in my clink
J'suis une mère-poule, c'est mon rôle	I'm a mother-hen, that's my role
Je les aime et elles m'adorent, c'est un fait	I love them and they adore me, it's a fact]

It, too, is relaxed: *demande a n'importe qui* and *elles m'adorent* are expressions from the daily lexicon, in informal spoken language. The Québecois looks like this:

Interrogez toutes les filles dans mon pen	[Ask all the girls in my pen
Elles me traiteront de putain, mécène	They will treat me as a de whore, a patron
Je les aime toutes et elles sont mes amies	I love them all and they are my friends]

This is more awkward, harsher, addressing itself to a plural or formal 'you/*vous*' who are/is asked to *interroger* rather than *demander*, while the girls *traiteront* the warden – a formal future tense.

I have already addressed *mécène* as a semantic choice, but it also presents interesting complications as an element of prosody. In English, Mama hesitates and draws out the 'mother' (pause) 'hen' here, for ironic effect, since her appearance as a 1920s nightclub singer hardly fits. The music pauses briefly as well, and this forces the Quebec singer of the dubbed version to stress and hold the first syllable *mé* much longer than would be usual in a language that normally puts the tonic accent on the last syllable. The result is that *cène*, the second part, which is stressed in French, peters out and fades away. A similar problem occurs in the enunciation of *modèle*, in *j'ai un sacré modèle* in the next verse where it is pronounced *mo – dèle*,

or in the simpering line *tu veux goûter ma sauce* where, very strangely, the possessive pronoun *ma* is stressed rather than *sauce*, the final word of the phrase. The tonic stress should fall on the last syllable or last word, yet has to be sung on the first, or on an unimportant element of the phrase. This results in a strangely bumpy rendition of the words within the flow of the music as the dubbing artist seeks to fit the new words into the existing musical form.

While this is in no way an exhaustive look at the translations, we see that both reduce or obscure the sexual innuendo of the English. This is more complete in the *proprette* Quebec version, where Mama goes through her strip club routine of heaving flesh and scarf manoeuvres in a language that is formal, polite, dry, and often beside the point. As in much dubbing there is some lack of congruence between her performance and her language; and predictably, in song, there are problems with the tonic accent and intonation. These have of course been noted and commented upon by local viewers. Le Blanc (2003) writes: 'the operation [of dubbing a singer] turns into almost constant a-synchronicity both for the lip movement and the text. The result is always mediocre, and often ridiculous. The Quebec version of *Chicago* is an example' (my translation).

Le Synchronien

The language known to French and Quebec dubbing artists alike as *le synchronien* is the construct which is supposed to supply as close as possible a version of the 'langue de proximité' [language of proximity] (Lampron, 1998) that film audiences apparently want to hear. Clearly a target-oriented construct designed to recreate something close to the language that the local population speaks, since market studies claim to have shown that this has a direct influence on commercial success 'people prefer films that are dubbed into the language they speak, which has a direct influence on business' (Lampron, 1998: 4; my translation), it however has little to do with actual speech rhythms, intonations, prosody or semantics, a fact that seems to hold true in much European dubbing:

> In Italy, where most of the populace and, indeed, the actors speak dialect rather than the official Tuscan (a cultural levelling that began with unification in the 1860s and became official national policy during the Fascist regime) dubbing forges a 'synthetic unity' of a shared national language. Intranational dialects and the specificities of social and cultural differences are ironed out in the process. (Betz, 2001: 34)

It is created and used for one main purpose – film dubbing, and the sociocultural agenda of this industry. A study of a whole group of dubbed films would doubtless show that this language has a rather limited range of vocabulary, recurrent syntactic and grammatical structures, regularly repeated, limited figures of speech, as well as syntactic and semantic Anglicisms. In Quebec, this language also has a very particular pronunciation: it is the Québecois version of *français international* or *standard* or *normatif*, a version that has been a bone of contention for some time, between the government and the government-subsidised dubbing companies, self-appointed cinephiles who object to it, as well as the few academics who get involved. And the discussion, as any discussion about language in Quebec, can be very public and acrid.

The arguments are approximately as follows: when the UDA website asserts that *on veut s'entendre* [we want to hear ourselves], it means that 'we' do not want to hear English, and therefore subtitles are out of the question, and 'we' do not want to hear a French we do not speak either, a foreign version of our language. The focus is officially on the language of Quebec for the people of Quebec. Further, the website asserts that Quebec's proximity to the source culture of most films (the United States), its *américanité*, gives it special access to the 'spirit of the American language and the mores of its people'. This special access and understanding allows Quebec dubbers to show greater respect for the original work, and provide a stronger, more real intellectual and emotional impact for the North American Francophone viewer through the translation. Finally, the Quebec dubbing industry provides valuable work and fine-tuning for the media artists of the province, and its international French opens markets in other Francophone countries. These arguments can be summed up as nationalist, protectionist, aesthetic and economic.

Yet, there are numerous contradictions. For example, the FAQ section of the website states that productions dubbed in Quebec are done in a French that must be free of any local accent for a local accent from Abitibi or Gaspé or Montreal would irritate viewers not from those regions. On a page that describes the differences between French and Quebec dubbing, it asserts, 'In Quebec, we use a correct French, close to international French, that allows the viewer to concentrate on the film and forget the translation' (my translation). Rather than reflect the power or specificity of the film's actual dialogue, this approach seeks, even assumes, transparency in translation where the dubbing text, operating much like subtitles, tries to pass unnoticed. In other words, normative, international, standard French – and not what we hear in the street – is imposed, and although

there is no mention of the pedagogical purpose of this norm, this is clearly a concern – which researchers on the history of Quebec's obsession with language would confirm (Bouchard, 1998).

The distributors, and the studios, are heavily funded by the Quebec government, through refundable tax credits for personnel and other costs as well as special funds for technical expertise and equipment, up to about 50% of their total expenses,[2] and they participate in this standardisation of dubbing language in a number of ways: first and foremost by censoring the language used. Alliance Atlantis, one of the major distributors, for instance, circulates a list of words and expressions to be avoided in all dubbing to their translators, a list that consists largely of Franco-French expressions (see Appendix), many of them outdated, certain Anglicisms (such as the word *job*), and some Quebec slang, most of which has already been eliminated by self-censorship. Limited alternatives are offered. The argument, much like that of the government, is that translation that avoids these terms will allow the dubbed film to travel to other parts of *la Francophonie.*

But there are other pressures, largely connected with contracts. These seem never to be a sure thing, and more and more are slipping out of the grasp of the Quebec studios. In 1999 the Artists' Union, for example, set itself the goal of getting Warner to return to dubbing in Quebec and to persuade Universal to have more work done in the province. In 2000 Sony/Columbia/Tristar ended their dubbing contracts in Quebec, and those that are signed are completed under enormous time pressure, three to four days (Bossé-Pelchat, 2001: 17), which must affect quality.

On the other side are the self-appointed critics whose opinion pieces published in diverse local dailies and culture journals provoke numerous responses from readers (and those employed by dubbing studios). The battle here is over the perceived poverty of the *synchronien* in Quebec, the increasingly poor quality of the work, as films are dubbed in a matter of days, and the lack of choice – which has cinephiles suffering through 'this language from nowhere … that is a denial of our own identity' (Le Blanc, 2002; my translation), systematically ruining their filmic experience, since they do not have access to either the Franco-French version, or the English originals if their English is weak or nonexistent.

Finally, the few academic studies in this area seem to confirm many of the weaknesses that Le Blanc and other critics address, and highlight others: Plourde's (1999) study of *The Simpsons* TV series, which was extraordinarily dubbed with some Quebec language and accent, shows that these Quebec features are reserved for the poor, the working class, the uneducated characters in the series, while figures of authority or status were

systematically assigned international French. Garnier's (2003) work on *The Shipping News* (Lasse Hallström, 2001), the film version of a novel by Annie Proulx set in Newfoundland, came up with the surprising results that the Canadian dubbed version (from Quebec) erased Canadian specificities; geographical, architectural, cultural, even botanical specificities disappeared, presumably in the name of international French while the Franco-French version maintained many of these. A piece by Caron (2003) on *Patrouille du Cosmos*, the Quebec-dubbed *Star Trek* series (done from 1971 to 1972) also addresses the neutralisation of language in the series, which saps actors' verbal power and has the crew of the Enterprise speak 'in a manner that implies an extensive education, some degree of refinement, great psychological strength in the face of danger and an underlying uniformity of social provenance' (Caron, 2003: 343). While acknowledging the difficulties of dubbing, Caron (2003: 342) cites a study by Luyken *et al.* (1991) which ascribes this standardisation to French dubbing tradition 'that always significantly alters spoken dialogue [since] French-speaking audiences as a whole insist on linguistically and stylistically correct dialogue'. While this tradition of standardisation of language in film translation may apply generally to dubbing in both Frenches, the Quebec tradition seems to go one better, as we shall see in my final example.

But there is one more point to make here: Caron takes her descriptive academic work a step further. Given the time gap of 30+ years since the dubbing of *Star Trek*, she is able to trace the 'effect' of this cultural politics of dubbing, and show how *le synchronien*, and the disjuncture it causes between language, image, characters and story line has entered Quebec creative work – for laughs. Space explorers, devised in Quebec, routinely speak in 'pathos-filled, longwinded speeches [where] accent and vocabulary are in perfect International French' (Caron, 2003: 348), and the lack of coherence between audio and visual elements, specifically 'the exaggerated linguistic characteristics and uninspired acting inherent in most dubbing performances' (Caron, 2003: 347) – where the prototypes were first encountered – are exploited for comic effect. In other words, a generation later, *le synchronien* has entered the creative realm of the generation of young filmmakers and artists that grew up aware of and laughing at this language.

Tango Chants, 'Double-Dubbed'

In a final example from *Chicago*, where both the French and Quebec versions are dubbed since they are recited, chanted texts, the disjuncture

between the raw, oral English, the relatively colloquial Franco-French, and the Quebec French is, I think, even more obvious than in the *Mama* song. The Quebec text is proper, unostentatiously (even mousily) literary. It is largely devoid of the features of spoken language: sentence fragments, repetitions, grammatical errors, syntax errors or colourful (Quebec or French) expressions that might place it in some definable region – or North American city.

In English, the piece is entitled *Cell Block Tango*. It is introduced by a series of individual sounds and words that are hissed and whispered as the tango opens, and that punctuate the women's angry confessions. These are rhythmic devices, with some semantic content: 'pop', 'six', 'squish', 'ah! ah!', 'Cicero' (the name of the hotel where one of the murderesses was arrested), and 'Lipschitz' (the name of a murder victim). The song continues with brief spoken (and danced) accounts of the murderesses' frustrating experiences with the men they killed. The English is highly vernacular, aggressive, with sentence fragments that are spit out in anger. The body language of the dancers echoes and expresses this anger. Here are Liz and June, telling the stories of how they could not help but murder their husbands Bernie and Wilbur:

Cell Block Tango – Liz

Liz: You know how people have these little habits that get you down? Like Bernie. Bernie liked to chew gum. No, not chew. POP. I came home one day and I'm really irritated, and lookin' for a little sympathy and there's Bernie layin' on the couch, drinkin' a beer and chewin' …	
Le tango de la taule **(Franco-French)**	***Le tango du pénitencier*** **(Quebec)**
Les gens ont parfois de ces p'tites habitudes qui vous fichent en rogne. Comme … Bernie. Bernie, qui aimait mâcher du chewing gum. Non, pas mâcher, faire 'plop'. J'rentre à la maison ce soir-là, les nerfs franchement en p'lote. En manque de gentillesse et de compassion, et je trouve Bernie vautré sur l'divan qui se tape une bière et qui mâche …	Beaucoup de gens, autour de vous, ont des petites habitudes qui vous tapent sur les nerfs. Moi, c'était Bernie. Bernie adorait mâcher des chewing gums. Mais il fait des 'pop'! Ce jour-là, je suis rentrée à la maison. J'étais vraiment très énervée et j'espérais trouver un peu de réconfort et j'ai découvert Bernie étalé sur le canapé, en train de mâcher un chewing gum …

Cell Block Tango – June

June: Now I'm standin' in the kitchen carvin' up the chicken for dinner, minding my own business, and in storms my husband Wilbur in a jealous rage. You been screwin' the milkman, he says. He was crazy and he kep' screamin', you been screwin' the milkman. And then he ran into my knife. He ran into my knife ten times.	
Le tango de la taule **(Franco-French)**	*Le tango du pénitencier* **(Quebec)**
J'étais peinarde à la cuisine, j'découpais le poulet pour le dîner, bien tranquille dans mon coin. D'un coup mon mari Wilbur débarque fou de rage. Tu te fais sauter par le laitier. Il se déchaine, il gueule, il éructe. Tu te fais sauter par le laitier. Et là il s'jette sur mon couteau. Il s'jette sur mon couteau dix fois.	Je suis debout dans un coin de ma cuisine. Je découpe le poulet pour le dîner. Je ne demande rien à personne. D'un coup mon mari Wilbur débouche dans la cuisine en hurlant. Je sais que tu te tapes le laitier. Il est devenu fou. Et il continuait à hurler: je sais que tu te tapes le laitier. Et ensuite, il a couru vers mon couteau, il a couru vers mon couteau dix fois.

In both excerpts, the English text to some extent reflects spoken idiom: dropping syllables (standin', carvin', layin'); changing verb tense in midphrase ('I came home one day and I'm really irritated', 'Now I'm standing in the kitchen … he was crazy and he kep' screaming'); incorrect grammar ('there's Bernie layin' on the couch'); sentence fragments ('Like Bernie. No, not chew. POP'); repetitions ('Like Bernie. Bernie liked to chew gum'), and strong or colourful language (in *storms* my husband Wilbur).

The Franco-French version seems to follow this pattern: dropping syllables (*p'tites*, *p'lote*); including colloquial language (*les nerfs en p'lote, Bernie qui se tape une bière*); sentence fragments (*Comme … Bernie. Non, pas mâcher, faire plop*). Further, this version uses forms typical for spoken language (*Les gens ont parfois de ces p'tites habitudes*); colourful expressions (*les nerfs franchement en p'lote* [tied in knots]; *alors, je lui dis comme ça tu fais péter ton chewing gum ne serait-ce qu'une seule fois*). While there are a few curious literary moments: the verb *éructer* for the expression of Wilbur's jealous rage is an example, the Franco-French seems readily colloquial.

The Quebec version, on the other hand, is noteworthy for its reluctance to participate in the language of the tangoing murderesses: they speak

'literary' – complete sentences, proper formulations, no tense switching, or syllable dropping. Where the French story about Bernie popping his gum breaks into short broken utterances of frustration and rage (*Non, pas macher, faire 'plop'*), the Quebec version softens the anger considerably in a complete sentence, with a proper introductory adverb (*Mais il fait des 'pop'*). And Liz comes home from work *très énervée* hoping to find a bit of comfort … soft dialogue that hardly expresses the capacity for violent rage that moments later will be unfurled against Bernie. The question of Anglicisms, or simply poor, imprecise French, comes up in the Quebec version too: June *est debout dans sa cuisine* – a typical calque from English (would she be lying in her kitchen?), while Wilbur *a couru vers mon couteau … dix fois* [ran toward my knife … ten times]. The Franco-French gets it righter with *Il s'jette sur mon couteau dix fois*.

But the title alone gives away a certain translation politics of dubbing: *Le tango de la taule* achieves a certain poeticity with the alliteration of *tango* and *taule*, and the slang term *taule* seems more appropriate to the look and tone of the film than the pedantically pedestrian or perhaps purist *tango du pénitencier* which is wholly denotative and has nothing illocutionary about it.

Finally, the list of repeated rhythm words that opens this piece introduces another important difference between the two Frenches, a difference that has become virtually traditional: the Quebec version always pronounces English proper nouns, and onomatopeic utterances in English, usually with a strong North American inflection: here, *Cicero* has a strong, rolled American 'r', much like the 'r' in Mama Morton, Roxie Hart, Amos Hart, and so on. The Franco-French version always domesticates the proper nouns, which are produced with French pronunciation, in a more desirable *franglais*, as critic Le Blanc (2003: 23) notes: 'names […] repeatedly pronounced in American English are like knife wounds in the magic of dubbing; there is nothing quite as effective as this despicable practice to remind us that the language of the film is not French' (my translation).

There may be no immediate conclusions to draw from this demonstration of acute differences in excerpts from two French versions of one particular film. However, the anxiety over language in Quebec, which is regularly demonstrated and discussed in the press, in education and in government (Meney, 2004), along with the need to assert a clean version of Quebec French in the face of the more colloquial Franco-French dubbings are doubtless important motivators behind a practice that seems to produce aesthetically dubious results. More work is doubtless in order in this area as well as on the Franco-French materials and discourses if we wish to understand the motives, practices and results of these competing translation practices.

Notes

1. The lyrics of the song cannot be reproduced in print here but the entire clip of *Mama Morton* singing this piece can be viewed at: http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v = ikz9fLl1BYQ. For a transcription of the lyrics, please visit any of the following websites:
    www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/chicago/whenyouregoodtomama.htm
    www.stlyrics.com/songs/c/chicago801/whenyouregoodtomama232459.html
    www.metrolyrics.com/when-youre-good-to-mama-lyrics-chicago-the-musical.html
    www.lyricsdownload.com/queen-latifah-when-youre-good-to-mama-lyrics.html
    www.sweetslyrics.com/527343.QUEEN%20LATIFAH%20-%20When%20You're%20Good%20To%20Mama.html
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    www.allmusicals.com/lyrics/chicago/whenyouregoodtomama.htm
    www.6lyrics.com/music/queen_latifah/lyrics/when_you_re_good_to_mama.aspx
2. *Bulletin d'information Gouvernement du Québec*, 18 December 1997, and *Quebec Tax News Flash*, 11 March 2003.

Appendix

Robert Paquin, dubbing translator and teacher, made this list available to me.

Alliance Atlantis Vivafilm (Montréal 2003)

Expressions prohibited for use in adaptation. (Replace wherever possible with the suggestions given in brackets.)

Prohibited expressions

À la con	Envoie la sauce	Paluches (pattes, mains)
Balancer (lancer, jeter)	Faire la peau (tuer)	Paumé
Bien-être social (aide social)	Faire une faveur (anglicisme/rendre un service)	Pinailleur
Billets (dollars)	Faux-cul	Planque, planquer (ranger, cacher)
Bosser (travailler)	Flemmard	Pognon (magot, argent, butin)
Burnes (couilles)	Flingue, flinguer (revolver, fusil, arme)	Pote (type, gars, ami, vieux)
Cabinets (toilettes)	Fourguer (rendre, donner, se débarrasser)	Putain, putain de … - en tant

Cacahuètes (arachides)	Foutre une trempe	qu'exclamation
Caisse (voiture, bagnole)	Fric (argent, magot, butin)	Rien dans le citron (dans la tête)
Camé (drogue)	Gonflé (du culot)	S'envoyer une poule
Car wash (lave-auto)	Graillons (graisse)	Saqué (drogué)
C'est vraiment vache!	Grue – dans le sens de pute, prostituée	Stone (gelé)
Clébard (chien)	Je t'emmerde (va te faire voir/foutre)	Taré
Coffrer (quelqu'un)	Job (travail)	Tripot (bar)
Crèche (dormir, vivre)	Lardons (enfants)	Tu t'en tapes (tu t'en fous)
De mes deux	Mec (type, gars, amis, vieux)	Un gay (gay, pédé, homosexuel)
De mes fesses	Mettre une dégelée (flanquer une raclée)	Vachement (drôlement)
Enflé	Nana, nénette (fille, femme)	Vieux (parents)
Enflé de connard		

Use sparingly

Came	Fais chier	Pardi
Cool	Fait gaffe	Piquer
Connard	Flics (policiers)	Sniffer
Enculé (salaud, vermine, pourri, crétin)	Gelé	Tapette (gay, pédé, homosexuel)
Enfoiré	Parbleu	Tu fais chier

Subtitling the Italian South

ABELE LONGO

Introduction

Since the early 1990s subtitling Italian dialects into standard Italian has become an established practice with a new generation of independent filmmakers based in the south of the country. The precursor of this new wave of films, mostly set in urban environments and focusing on people living on the margins of society, is Antonio Capuano's *Vito e Gli altri* (*Vito and the Others*) directed in 1991. What this film displays, particularly through its controversial depiction of Neapolitan children, is a critical approach to its environment which can also be found in the filmmakers discussed here: Daniele Ciprì and Franco Maresco from Palermo and Alessandro Piva from Bari. It is an approach which can be summarised in what Cassano (1999) suggests is a new way for the south to see itself, to become the subject of its own way of thinking as opposed to continuing to be determined and constructed by others.

In this process of self-discovery, in antithesis with a tradition which views the south as Other or else a 'Place of the Mind', an important role is attributed to the local dialect which becomes the predominant language in the films. How this predominance of the local dialect emerges, enhanced by the way subtitles are used, is one of the issues addressed in this essay by focusing on two films: *Totò che visse due volte* (*Totò Who Lived Twice*; Ciprì and Maresco, 1998) and *LaCapaGira* (*My Head's Spinning*; Piva, 2000). These two films employ dialect almost exclusively throughout; Italian is used only in particular situations and by a limited number of characters. Furthermore, the dialects used are not domesticated and are new, each in a particular way, to the screen. Before Piva's film, the dialect of Bari was unknown to the screen. Even though Palermo – together with Naples – is the most commonly represented southern Italian city in cinema, its dialect has often been domesticated or even replaced by that of Catania,

which, as a result, has become the standardised Sicilian found in many
mainstream films.

For the Italian audience, the use of dialects in a film often brings with
it connotations of the film being an art house movie due in part to the
influence of Neorealism which is associated with the representation of
dialects. The use of subtitles augments the perception of these films being
'heavy and boring', reflecting the way in which much art cinema is
regarded nowadays.

From the very early days of sound, Italy adopted dubbing in preference
to subtitling. The official Fascist policy allowed only dubbed versions of
foreign films with the key aim of implementing Italian as the standard
language in a country where dialects were still spoken by the majority
(Sorlin, 1998: 10). In any event, subtitling would not have been welcomed
in 1930s Italy in view of the still high percentage of illiteracy. Things did
not change in post-war Italy when the dubbing tradition was consoli-
dated through skilful practitioners who often kept the business strictly
within the family, managing to control the market well into the 1970s. Things
changed when, with the boom of private television, an increasing number
of dubbing companies established themselves in Rome and Milan.

Whether the subtitling of *Totò che visse due volte* (henceforth *Totò*) and
LaCapaGira helped or hindered their box office performance is therefore
hard to assess. Ciprì and Maresco's first film *Lo zio di Brooklyn* (*The Uncle
from Brooklyn*, 1995), where they make their most uncompromising use of
dialect, was not subtitled and, despite a certain critical success, the film
did not do well at the box office. Their subtitled second film, *Totò*, due also
to its problems with censorship, did even worse. Things only improved
with their third film, *Il ritorno di Cagliostro* (*The Return of Cagliostro*, 2003)
which, although still subtitled, makes much more use of Italian.

Piva's film, *LaCapaGira*, was a huge local box office success when it was
released, with no subtitles, in Bari, the city where the film is set. With his
second film *Mio cognato* (*My Brother in Law*, 2003), again set in Bari, Piva
moved more towards mainstream cinema and arguably it is no coinci-
dence that there is no use of subtitling, although this choice can in part be
explained by the fact that this time the main characters are more middle
class and therefore more likely to speak Italian or an Italianised dialect.

In these two films, subtitles combine with the visuals and the sound-
track to create different layers of signification. Subtitling has provided
these directors with the possibility of opening up their films to audiences
either partly or entirely unable to understand the dialects spoken; in such
a way, however, that audiences are asked to concentrate, without switch-
ing off, on the language spoken on the screen. This establishes a kind of

dialogism new for Italian cinema, since, prior to these films, the assumption was that the viewer could not follow the source language. This differs from some Northern European countries which often subtitle foreign films working on the assumption that the viewer can understand the source language to some extent.

As we will see, humour is an important element in both films. The way in which Italian is mocked constitutes part of this humour, confirming the cultural predominance of the source language. This can also be seen in the way Italian is used in the captions – as a key to understand dialect rather than a tool to transpose it. Humour is combined in both films with strong language and revolves around the themes of sex and food in *Totò* while *LaCapaGira* is more satirical in style focusing on consumerist society.

These directors show an awareness of language which seemed almost lost in Italian cinema of the last few decades – evidenced by the personal interest which each of them took in the subtitling process. It should also be noted that both films were conceived from the outset in dialect and shot with this in mind. Ciprì and Maresco worked without a detailed script with their nonprofessional actors, directing them to improvise and speak in *palermitano*. Piva co-wrote the script with his brother, conceiving it as a sort of parallel text with the dialogue exchanges in dialect translated into Italian. This way of presenting the screenplay was not favourably received by potential producers and led to Piva finally deciding to produce the film himself. Piva is actually from Salerno, near Naples, but spent his formative years in Bari and hence was very familiar with the people and places in his film. Ciprì and Maresco were born in Palermo and have always lived there.

Dialect vs Italian

Dialects have always constituted a 'problem' in a cinema where linguistic connotations have often been reduced to mere conventions. As already noted, the Sicilian dialect almost exclusively used in Italian cinema is that of Catania, notwithstanding that the majority of the films are set in Palermo. Similarly, all the rich and varied dialects of Puglia, which vary greatly from the south to the north of the region, have been reduced to the parody made by a famous comedian, Lino Banfi, who characterises the Apulian dialect as a misspoken form of Italian, a sort of made-up language which bears no relation to the dialect spoken in *LaCapaGira*.

The only notable case of an Italian film subtitling an Italian dialect before the 1990s is Ermanno Olmi's *L'albero degli zoccoli* (*The Tree of the Wooden Clogs*, 1978), a film set in the north of Italy, in the Bergamasco area, which

deals with the everyday life of a peasant family. Luchino Visconti, however, chose not to use subtitles in his film *La terra trema* (*The Earth Trembles*, 1948), using instead a voiceover to explain the life of the poor Sicilian fishermen who speak in their dialect throughout the film. Not even Pier Paolo Pasolini opted to use subtitles in his first two films, *Accattone* (1961) and *Mamma Roma* (1962), set in the *borgate*, the downtown areas of Rome. While Pasolini wrote his first two novels, *Ragazzi di vita* (1955) and *Una vita violenta* (1959), religiously using the Roman dialect, with his films he opted instead to render the dialect more comprehensible.

In Capuano's *Vito e gli altri*, the Neapolitan dialect is the language spoken by the main characters: children and young boys who are the victims and at the same time perpetrators of violence. Italian, on the other hand, is the language imposed by the establishment, as is clearly laid out at the beginning of the film when we hear a teacher reading from Dante's *Divine Comedy* and we see one of the boys walking nervously backwards and forwards, unable to bear the reading. This conflictual relationship between dialect and Italian also pervades the two films under analysis, where the use of dialect and Italian generates particular meanings and connotations, with subtitles playing an important role in this interaction.

Totò comprises three loosely connected episodes set in a world called 'Palermo': a bleak black and white cinematic text inhabited only by men and men dressed up as women, where the geography of the 'real' Palermo is transformed and time itself is indeterminate. The first episode is the story of Paletta, a penniless drifter who steals a medallion from a sacred shrine in order to go with a prostitute, unaware that the medallion was the property of a Mafia boss. The second is the turbulent gay love story of the aged Pitrinu and Fefè, told in flashback during the wake for Pitrinu's death. The last follows the arbitrary miracle working of a Christ-like figure, Totò, and a cruel Mafia boss with the same name and played by the same actor.

LaCapaGira is set in Bari, represented as a nocturnal city which leads a double life, where the continuous movement of 'merchandise' from the outskirts to the centre includes the trafficking of illegal immigrants as well as packages of drugs. Mafia henchmen Pasquale and Minuicchio wait for a consignment of drugs by the side of a railway line but fail to retrieve the goods, angering their boss who needs to supply the merchandise to a local games hall. Pasquale and Minuicchio finally manage to get hold of the package of drugs and deliver it to its destination only for it to be stolen by a pair of delinquents.

In *Totò*, dialect predominates and relegates Italian to the language of the Other, at the same time mocking and ridiculing it. Only a prostitute and

a gay couple speak Italian. With her affectionate expressions of caring for her clients, the prostitute, a man dressed up as woman, represents an escapist world. Her saccharine Italian is in sharp contrast with the crude dialect of the community of males only interested in sex and food. Italian is also spoken between Pitrinu and Fefè, a gay couple who express their love in a mannered Italian very reminiscent of Italian 1950s popular fiction. Italian comes to represent the feminine, the language of 'love', remaining strongly stereotyped and limited in its use.

Dialect, on the other hand, is spoken by the older generations. It strongly connotes this all-male world and is deployed with all its idiosyncrasies and idiomatic expressions throughout the film. Much of the time it is hard to follow and is only grasped thanks to the effective use of the subtitles, which are not a detailed translation of the dialect but rather provide viewers with the minimum of information to follow the plot. The assumption remains that it is still a dialect and as such, that is, as a variety of speech from the standard language, it can still be understood.

Clearly not all viewers are able to understand the dialect but by demanding a more active role of the spectators, they are enabled to enter the world represented in the film. Influenced by Brecht's theatre, Ciprì and Maresco's cinema shapes its own spectators as active interpretants, inducing them to follow a 'formative' itinerary, a journey in Ciprì and Maresco's Palermo, but also, by revealing the principles of their own construction, constantly reminding them that it is a film: we see characters looking into the camera, at times even addressing the audience. Contrary to what usually happens in the case of dubbed foreign films in Italian, where the invisibility of the translator's work is based on the illusion that viewers can completely ignore the language of the source text, *Totò* asks the spectator not only not to abandon the source language but also to have a critical approach to it.

In *Totò*, the concept of the invisibility of the translation should instead be taken literally, as subtitling is very minimal and essential. There is never an attempt to render idiomatic expressions in an equivalent Italian and Italian is often foreignised in order to retain the sense of the dialect as much as possible. There is for example a scene in a brothel where robbers ask the men to *esci li picciuli* [bring out the money] and the subtitles translate into Italian as *esci i soldi* which is a very literal translation from the dialect, where the verb *esci* does not mean 'bring out', but 'go out'.

Symbolically, *LaCapaGira* starts with a taxi driver ferrying Albanian illegal immigrants, just arrived on the shores of Puglia, and watching a badly dubbed soap opera on a mini-screen in his car in which the characters use a typical 'television' standard Italian. The inexpressive stiltedness of this standard Italian is highlighted by its juxtaposition with

the lively and vibrant dialect used by the actual characters of the film. The predominance of dialect is affirmed right from the opening credits when we hear the Mafia boss giving directions to one of his mates and, annoyed at not being understood, asks 'don't you understand Italian?', when he is, in fact, speaking dialect.

In *LaCapaGira* too subtitles do not provide an equivalent in Italian of dialectal idiomatic expressions, which are often translated very literally or not translated at all. We hear the expression *fare tum e tum*, reported in the captions as it is said. We understand from the context that *fare tum e tum* could mean 'being noisy' and/or 'not being able to keep silent', but even though the sentence could have easily been translated in various ways in Italian the dialect is kept and reported in the captions. *Fare* means 'to make' and *tum e tum* is purely onomatopoeic and works very well untranslated, its puerility complementing the characters of the film who seem like grown up children.

The main difference with *Totò* is that the dialect in *LaCapaGira*, although difficult to grasp, has more influences from Italian and, in particular, youth slang. The film appeals to a young audience and can be seen as a 'game', whose aim is to overcome a series of obstacles and deliver the package of drugs to its destination (an interpretation underscored by the soundtrack, which seems inspired by videogame music, and the editing, which is structured around the various movements from one place to another by car and motorbike). In other words, Piva deals with postmodernity, proposing a kind of cinema with which audiences are more familiar, a 'trip' in his Bari where the spectator is asked to enjoy the dialect with its piquant and colourful expressions.

Humour and Swearing

Totò and *LaCapaGira* are both comedies, albeit of a very different kind. The first one proposes a postmodern carnival which can be seen as homage to and a parody of the work of directors such as Pasolini and Buñuel, a highly provocative and irreverent cinema imbued with philosophical and religious concerns. Piva's cinema, on the other hand, although stylistically postmodern, follows the best tradition of the so called *commedia all'italiana*, a comic genre which established itself in 1960s with Dino Risi's *Il sorpasso* (*The Easy Life*, 1962). It is a satirical style of cinema looking mainly, and often with a certain indulgence, at Italian society, some of the excesses of which Piva manages successfully to restrain.

Comedy is an essential element of other films by directors from the south of Italy like *Libera* (1993) and *I buchi neri* (*The Black Holes*, 1995) by the

Neapolitan Pappi Corsicato, as well as *Tano da morire* (*To Die for Tano*, 1997) and *Sud Side Stori* (2000) by the Palermo based Roberta Torre, in which dialect is used almost exclusively in its comic register. As Díaz Cintas (2003a: 53) points out, humour represents a challenging task for subtitlers, forcing them to activate creative solutions, which at times, in order to achieve the desired effect, are some way detached from the original. This is not the case in the films considered here. As already noted, subtitles in *Totò* and *LaCapaGira* do not try to recreate an equivalent in Italian of what is said in the source language, but rather provide the audience with a key to the source language, so that it is not only dialect which retains its pre-dominance but also the culture, and more specifically a certain kind of popular humour composed of salacious expressions and swearwords.

In some ways, *Totò* does not pose many difficulties to the subtitler as its humour is essentially visual. Paletta, the first episode's protagonist, never speaks, and moves and acts as if in a silent film. That he likes sex is obvious from his facial expressions, which clarify the action through kinesic exaggeration. Many scenes are a sort of *tableau vivant* and have little or no dialogue at all. An example is the beginning of the film, where the cinema audience, after watching a film where a man performs sex with a donkey, is seen in synchronised masturbation in the cinema's toilet.

The carnivalesque in Ciprì and Maresco is rendered with bodies seen in their overflowing enormity, in 'all that seeks to go out beyond the body's confines' (Bakhtin, 1984: 317). Their carnival is not as joyful as the one commented on by Bakhtin, but is still reminiscent, although in hybrid forms, of a peasant culture where corporeal sounds, farts and belches provoke laughter. It is a self-explanatory kind of humour, present in the tradition of many cultures. What often accompanies these tableaux is a refrain of swearwords, most of which, although in dialect, are known everywhere in Italy, but there is also a number of picturesque expressions which are hard to grasp and get lost in the subtitles or are deleted. Humour in *LaCapaGira* is more verbal but this does not make the film wordy, as there are some humorous scenes with no dialogue at all. However, humour is mostly based on dialogue, involving at times lengthy discussions on futile topics.

While the subtitling manages to give a glimpse of what is said in these dialogue exchanges, at the same time keeping the flavour of the dialect, it fails, as in *Totò*, to translate strong language or some salacious expressions. There are references to genitals, sexual practices and family relations which reach only the audience familiar with the dialect. It can be argued that these expressions do not add to the general sense of the film, but still, failing to translate them diminishes the role of some characters in terms of interpersonal dominance.

Both films, with their essential use of subtitles, seem to confirm the teleological aspect of subtitling with its capacity to streamline and strengthen the core message or theme of a film. However, a consequence of this process, as pointed out by Remael (2003: 225), is that often voices of dissent are cut (or deliberately left out) in the process, as the fact that strong language is often completely ignored demonstrates. The impression is that some of these expressions might be considered too strong to be rendered in Italian. The cantankerous Christ-like character in *Totò* in particular, who swears all the time, seems to become more gentle in the subtitling since, when he loses his temper, very little of what he says is translated. It is important to remember, however, that the film had problems with censorship and the directors were firstly promised funds by the state, which were then withdrawn after the completion of the film as it was judged to be blasphemous. The absence of subtitles has perhaps given the films more freedom at the expense of the average viewer unfamiliar with the dialect, and created, at the same time, a layer of intimacy in the film to which only the initiated are admitted.

Conclusion

What we now call dialects were once considered languages in their own right, with their own written tradition. *Totò* and *LaCapaGira* have re-evaluated these languages and, as a consequence, overturned the old habit of Italian cinema of domesticating dialects. The directors were freed from the need to rely on Italian to represent a culture which is inseparable from its language and is often in clear counter-position to the official culture. Since the unification of Italy in 1861, southern dialects have been discriminated against. While words from northern dialects were included in the dictionaries of the newly formed country, words from southern dialects were more often excluded.

As discussed, it is difficult to assess whether subtitling has helped these films to reach a wider audience, given the resistance in Italy to this practice. It has certainly helped those interested in a new and independent cinema to realise that although difficult to grasp and very different from one another, these dialects are part of a common cultural heritage. These differences bear witness to the rich and varied linguistic and cultural traditions of the south which, as the subtitling of these films show, can also be understood by the rest of the country. What must be borne in mind is that the history of the Italian south, with all its dramatic contradictions, is also part of the history of contemporary Western civilisation and that both

the south and the north of the country find their roots in the same peasant culture. In Ciprì and Maresco this culture is resurrected in hybrid forms and at the same time mourned, while in Piva's Bari it has been replaced by the void of postmodernity.

The subtitling of these films, therefore, goes beyond what can merely be seen as a practical exercise. They have been conceived, above all, as a way of rendering the source language without losing its characteristics. This has meant reducing captions to a minimum and opting for a literal translation that helps viewers to penetrate the dialect and its culture. However, this minimum cannot be defined as the necessary minimum, since as is common in subtitling, in an attempt not to overload the verbal, in what is fundamentally a visual medium, something is inevitably lost.

The loss in both films concerns mainly strong language expressions, which have not been subtitled even though they are of critical importance in terms of establishing interpersonal dominance. It has been noted how this approach has softened the irascible Christ-like character in *Totò*, and the same can also be said of his alter ego, the cruel mafioso with the same name played by the same actor. Sometimes, however, the assumption that the audience can follow the narrative without the support of the captions holds true when, for instance, Italian is used or the visuals and the soundtrack help.

To summarise, we can say that the subtitling of *Totò* and *LaCapaGira* is not a question, as Eco (2003: 1) would put it, of 'the version from a text A in a verbal language Alpha into a text B in a verbal language Beta'; but of a text A, mostly in dialect, supported by a text B, the subtitles in Italian. The subtitles of these films imply that viewers are to different degrees able to follow text A and in some cases very little or nothing is done to help them to grasp text A. Moreover, text B translates text A very literally and does not attempt to render idiomatic expressions of text A into an equivalent in language B. It even occurs that language B is foreignised in order to better explain text A. In other words, we experience a dialectisation of Italian, aimed to help the audience to understand certain expressions which otherwise may be lost in translation.

Subtitling may alter a film's signification through omission of words and expressions which are part of the subtleties and nuances of the source language. It is nevertheless preferable to the Italianisation of Italian dialects which has commonly characterised Italian cinema, and in this sense, although imperfect, subtitling is here the best possible solution. As with other translation types, it is always a case of compromise and, as Eco (2003: 6) would say, negotiation, defining translation as 'a process by virtue

of which in order to get something, each party renounces something else'. These are some of the negotiations which determined the adoption of subtitles in these films and influenced their use:

- Subtitling adopted as a negotiation between the possibility of using unadulterated dialects, which are often hard to follow, and the possibility of reaching a wider audience.
- A very essential and literal use of Italian in the subtitles as a negotiation between helping the average viewer to follow the film and the need, at the same time, not to lose or domesticate linguistic and cultural characteristics.
- A partial or complete lack of subtitling in Italian of particularly salacious words and expressions in dialect, as a negotiation between the possibility of using the dialect in all its richness and the concern about a possible negative reaction from some viewers not at ease with dialect's salaciousness.

Although much has been written on the representation of the south in contemporary Italian cinema, subtitling has virtually never been addressed as part of the discussion. The impression remains that despite the growing interest shown in subtitling by some independent directors, the practice itself is still very much undervalued in Italy and its full potential has yet to be explored.

Chapter 8

Main Challenges in the Translation of Documentaries

ANNA MATAMALA

Translating Documentaries

Defining the term documentary is not an easy task, although from a professional standpoint the difference is clear-cut: when a dubbing studio calls a professional to offer him/her a translation, the product manager clearly states whether it is a documentary, a film, an episode of a TV series or a cartoon. Nonetheless, from a theoretical point of view, the term documentary has been given different definitions, as discussed by León (1999: 59–64) and Espasa (2004). One of the distinctive features of documentaries, as opposed to fictional products, is that they deal with reality, but separating fiction and reality is not always easy and documentaries, although based upon reality, usually offer a subjective vision:

> It is not easy, therefore, to define exactly the concept of documentary on the basis of its differences with respect to other categories of audiovisual statements based on real facts. Moreover, in certain cases, it is not even easy to establish whether a work belongs to the domain of fiction or can be considered 'non-fiction' or informative. How, for instance, should works with actors who reproduce real situations be classified? For some authors documentary makers create nothing but a fictitious statement, even if using material from reality. (León, 1999: 62; my translation)

Theoretical discussions about this concept aside, and taking for granted that translators know what a documentary is, I will try to underline the specificities of this type of audiovisual translation and emphasise the main difficulties it presents for the professional. As Chaume Varela (2003a: 189) points out, the distinction between genres is only relevant if it entails different translation strategies, which are the key matters for the professional.

The discussion is based on my personal experience as a freelance translator for *Televisió de Catalunya* (TVC). In order to work for the public Catalan television, translators have to take an exam and, once passed, the corporation authorises them to work for TVC and includes them on a list which is sent to dubbing studios working into Catalan. The job of translators and copy-editors – who are mostly freelance professionals – is supervised by a group of linguists who are permanent members of the television staff and who take care of the quality of the final product, asking for retakes when it is not of the required standard. All these mechanisms are geared to guarantee a high degree of quality.

My own practice will serve as a source for the statements presented in this paper, but an additional corpus will also be used, consisting of the documentaries broadcast by TVC during the first week of September 2003 on both their channels (TV3 and C33). A detailed list of these documentaries is included in the Appendix. Apart from my personal experience and the extra corpus, a short informal questionnaire about documentary translation was sent to colleagues in order to know their opinions.

Main Challenges when Translating Documentaries

Even though all documentaries are different – depending mainly on the target audience they address and their skopos – and present their own particular difficulties, the aim of this contribution is to offer some generalisations as well as a classification of the main problems found in documentary translation, according to working conditions, on the one hand, and more specific problems such as terminology, types of speakers and translation modes, on the other.

Working Conditions

The fact that translators have to work against the clock is not a specific characteristic of this genre, but it is especially relevant since documentary translation usually demands more time. Although admittedly some of the so-called fictional programmes require great effort in searching for information, the translation of documentaries tends to put higher demands on the translator as it requires a documentation process longer than that of a TV episode or a cartoon. This is why deadlines are one of its main constraints. According to Chaume Varela (2003a: 149), the translator normally has between five and seven days to deliver the translation of a 90-minute programme. In my personal experience, dubbing studios usually give translators a week to translate a documentary, but in order to earn a decent

salary translators have to deliver it in a much shorter period. With regard to the deadlines imposed by the Catalan television on the dubbing studios, as far as documentaries are concerned, they can be quite generous and exceed even a month. Whatever the deadline, the studio might want to deliver the final programme to the client sooner in order to have all recording studios operative, which means that the product manager allows less time to translators to fulfil their task. Sometimes it is the broadcasting channel which imposes a tight deadline, especially when working with certain types of documentaries discussing the latest news. A case in point here was the translation and revoicing of a documentary about *Cirque du Soleil* in just one day because the Cirque started performing in Barcelona the following day.

Another serious hurdle is the lack of a postproduction script and, when this is available, the poor quality of the transcription. Dries (1995: 22) states that a 'post-production script is absolutely essential to all people involved in the dubbing of a foreign production', adding that 'Latin names of all flora and fauna appearing in the film script should be given' (Dries, 1995: 23). Very often this is not the case. In fact, most times translators do not have a script at hand and the main difficulties encountered, as opposed to fictional programmes, is the abundance of terminological units and very specific proper names. Even when the translator is given a transcript its accuracy is not guaranteed, and many offer proper nouns followed by a question mark, indicating that it might be erroneous. But it is even more common to find the wrong transcription of a general term or specific proper noun with no indications at all. Laine (1996: 202) highlights this problem and offers some examples of erroneous transcriptions: Jungle Reinhard instead of Django Reinhart, Jorn Asten instead of Jane Austen and Magnus Axle instead of Aldous Huxley. The following examples are in the same vein, followed by the correct transcription in square brackets:

> We were just discussing the name for a while at what we should call our little collective. I really had a fascination with the name Medullamagada [*medulla oblongata*], which is the brain stem. But everyone said how is anyone gonna find the web page, no one knows how to spell Medullamagada, so we kicked around a couple of ideas and we were watching the movie Metropolis, and the guard [*god*] in the movie Metropolis is named Moloch. (From *Hackers*)

> Grant listens with interest to Professor Didier Raoult, director of the French National Defence [*Reference*] Centre for rickettsial disease. (From *Red Storm*)

> One of Hildebrand's suspects was on the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. There, the State Oil Company, Petrolinus Mexicana [*Petróleos Mexicanos*], had detected a strange circular anomaly in the earth's gravity field. (From *Crater of Death*)

All these examples show that translators should not trust the written text. They should be critical and use scripts as a reference tool, since they are translating an audiovisual programme and not a written text. Apart from misspellings, translators might also come across inaccuracies or mistakes. On these occasions, they have to decide whether to amend them or to maintain them in the target text, as in the following example:

> In the South Eastern part of the country, Merv was one of the most prestigious of the ancient cities of Central Asia. This urban centre contains the secrets of five great eras. The archaeologists can continually gain insight into the populations' movements, their way of life as well as their extinction … The first city dates back to 16 BC. (From *World Discoveries*, 57)

According to sources like the Global Heritage Fund (www.globalheritagefund.org/sites/EMEA/middle_east/merv.html) and the British Museum (www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/ane/anereexmerv.html), the first city dates back to 6 BC. What should be done in these cases? In theory, the translator should not be held responsible for the errors contained in the original and should not have to verify the actual content, but the reality is quite different and errors contained in the revoiced product can be ascribed to the translator's incompetence.

In the above example, the documentary was shot originally in French but the translator was given an English translation of low quality to work from, with French transcriptions of Arabic names and historical inconsistencies. In the final Catalan programme all wrong information was corrected. In this sense, documentaries are different from other audiovisual programmes in so far as the core element is information, whereas in fiction films inaccuracies and mistakes are not so important, since the audience generally assumes they are not watching a real story.

Specific Genre Difficulties: Terminology, Speakers and Translation Modes

Audiovisual nonfiction programmes cover a vast array of topics, on various levels of specialisation, presented by different speakers, who use varying discourses and are revoiced using different techniques. First, I

will focus on problems related to the subject matter, since all translators consulted for this contribution highlighted this as a key problem.

Terminology in documentary translation

Documentaries deal with a wide range of subjects, forcing audiovisual translators to do research and undertake terminological searches in very specialised areas. Usually, translators are not specialists in a specific field and they must be resourceful enough to get in a very short time all the information necessary about any specific area to understand the documentary and to be able to translate it. The list of documentaries analysed in this chapter illustrate the great variety of issues dealt with: *Les princeses de Guizhou* (anthropology), *Pinta i dibuixa* (drawing techniques), *City Folk* (current issues), *El viatge humà* (human evolution), *La meva ciutat estimada* (tourism), *Punt Omega* (medicine), *Segle XX* (history), *Els campions de la natura*, *El caçador de cocodrils* (wildlife), *La guia definitiva* (preservation of mummies) and *El catabàtic* (winds). In the wildlife group, for instance, the thematic diversity is enormous: Cuban crocodiles, hunting dogs, Tasmanian devils, white-headed eagles or elephants, to name but a few.

The extent of specialisation in these documentaries varies according to their skopos and their target audience (general public, children, learners), but they all include terminological units, albeit in a lesser degree than specialised texts. As shown by León (1999: 104), specialised texts and documentaries differ considerably, and the latter do not generally present a high degree of specialisation due to the characteristics of their target audience. Nevertheless, they usually contain terms which pose real challenges to translators and scientific nomenclature in wildlife documentaries is a prototypical example. The documentary *Beetles, Record Breakers* makes use of 15 different terms to refer to beetles in less than 30 minutes (longhorn beetle, cellar beetle, stag beetle, burying beetle or gravediggers, sexton beetle, tiger beetle, bloody nose beetle, tortoise beetle, diving beetle, devil's coach horse, weevil, click beetle, malachite beetle, oil beetle, cockchafer), apart from mentioning other animals such as horseshoe bats or meadow brown butterflies.

According to Cabré (1999: 193–195), terms are multidimensional lexical units which acquire specialised value according to discourse conditions. The translator must understand all the values associated with each unit and render them in the target language. This means that, when translating nonfictional programmes, translators must undertake specific terminological searches. The first step is to extract the maximum amount of information from the audiovisual programme itself, without isolating

units from their context. For example, in a wildlife documentary they can refer to a specific animal while at the same time showing images of it or describing its characteristics. All these clues are essential when finding the equivalent in the target language, especially when the narrator uses a generic name which has to be rendered by a more specific name in the target language. For example, a 'heron' can be translated in Catalan as *agró*, *bernat* o *martinet*, depending on the type of heron it refers to. If translators decide it is better to use a specific name and not a family name (*ardeids*), the audiovisual context – image and spoken text – will help decide which species the documentary refers to and, hence, they will be able to use the best equivalent. In case translators need help from a specialist, video processing applications can be used to capture images of the bird and send them to an expert.

Besides the image, the spoken discourse can also contain information, in the form of rewording, which might help the translator better understand the text. Scientific documentaries targeted to a general public usually include specialised terms which are then reworded in plainer words, so that the viewers can understand them.

The next step is to consult all kinds of specialised reference works, terminological databases, internet resources, parallel corpora, and so on, and to ask specialists. Once the translator has understood the meaning of the term, an adequate equivalent must be found. As claimed by Cabré (1999: 85), within the Communicative Theory of Terminology, variation exists and different denominative variants can sometimes be found, forcing the translator to choose the most adequate one to the context.

When working into minorised languages, some terms might not exist, especially in new fields in which English has become the *lingua franca*. In Catalonia, the terminology centre Termcat compiles and creates new terminology when necessary, and it is an essential source of information. Nevertheless, when specialists have to be consulted and solutions have to be discussed, answers might arrive too late for the tight deadlines of audiovisual translators, who therefore have to create their own new terminology.

Another common problem arises from the differences between the terms proposed by official terminological bodies, such as Termcat, the ones found in other dictionaries and databases, and those really used by most specialists. This is what Cabré (1999: 80) calls the difference between terminology *in vivo* (spontaneous, natural) and terminology *in vitro* (standardised, agreed by consensus). Which terms should audiovisual translators use? In a context of linguistic standardisation, should translators use the terms proposed by terminological bodies, although specialists do not use them, or should they use real terminology full of loanwords? Should

translators combine terms by using terminology *in vivo* when a specialist talks and by resorting to terminology *in vitro* for the narrator? The answer is not easy but, in my opinion, the choice depends on the client's wishes as well as on the type, style, function and intended target audience of the documentary.

Speakers and translation modes

Apart from terminological challenges, difficulties also arise from the type of speakers and from the different techniques used. In what follows, I define the main elements that documentaries usually contain, based on the types of speakers, their relationship to the addressee and the degree of spontaneity in their discourse:

(1) Narration in third person: usually – not always – with a planned and formal script read by the speaker. The narrator is normally off-screen, although some famous narrators might appear on screen at the beginning and at the end of the documentary and they might talk in the first person. The narrator addresses a general audience and, therefore, adapts the language when needed, rewording what the specialist might have said in an interview with a more simple explanation.

(2) Talking heads: that is, people who are being interviewed and explain their own experiences and opinions on screen. The only editing done by journalists and technicians consists in selecting the relevant fragments and including them in the film. Although interviewees are aware that they are being recorded for a documentary and they adapt the degree of formality of their speech, they normally make use of a more spontaneous register which includes hesitations, false starts, repetitions, anacoluthon and other oral features not generally found in the narration. The degree of formality and the density of terminology depend on the subject matter and on the speaker.

(3) Dialogue and spontaneous interventions: the language tends to be informal and even vulgar since they are not addressing the audience but talking among themselves.

(4) Some documentaries might contain footage from historical archives or, in a specific type of nonfictional programme (making-of), there might be actual scenes from a movie, mixing fiction and reality.

The narration soundtrack is usually substituted by the target language version and, although isochrony is not so strict, the interaction between text and image is essential as the translation has to follow the image: 'Even if the narrator is off-screen, the revoiced narration must agree with the

visual information being presented' (Luyken *et al.*, 1991: 80). Narrators do not normally pose big problems with regard to the mode and tenor of discourse, since it is usually a planned script and the language register is formal.

Talking heads are generally revoiced using a voiceover technique, which is applied in order to transmit authenticity and maintain the illusion that an interpreter is translating the original speech. The original voice is heard and, simultaneously, a revoicing actor or television presenter reads the translation without expressing emotions. In theory, the target language version starts after hearing a few words of the source language and then the volume of the original soundtrack is reduced to a minimum – or even muted – until the end, when the original speaker is generally heard again. The initial and final period in which the original is heard lasts a few seconds, normally between two and four. This reduction in time forces the translator to control the length of the translated version and although there is not lip synchrony, the translator must take into account the synchrony between text and image (gestures, descriptions, inserts on screen, etc.).

Interviewee's dialogue differs from that of narrators in that it is usually full of hesitations and oral features and has to be reworded in order to offer a more coherent and cohesive speech, unless these elements are particularly significant. As Luyken *et al.* (1991: 141) point out, 'fluffs, hesitations, grammatical errors made during the interview must be ignored'. This is one of the difficulties highlighted by most translators who answered the questionnaire. When the interviewee does not speak good English and makes mistakes, these are corrected in the translated version, since what really matters is the content and not the form. In fiction films, however, these elements might be important in order to define the character and create a credible oral language. Can we imagine Woody Allen acting with a free-flowing discourse, without hesitations? But, could we stand a voiceover actor hesitating a lot when revoicing an interview with Allen?

Dialogue exchanges and spontaneous interventions are generally revoiced, but when someone speaks a different language they might be subtitled. In fact, on Catalan television subtitling is reduced to a minimum since it is not a widespread technique. Subtitles are only used when someone speaks in a different language, when archive footage is used or when scenes of a film are included in the documentaries. Captions identifying speakers are also translated by means of subtitles. However, there are a few factors which can alter these norms:

- When technical constraints prevent technicians to substitute the narrator's track with the translated track, the programme is revoiced

using a voiceover technique and leaving the original narrator's voice underneath.

- When the speaker is someone known or who acts emphatically, a voiceover is used rather than subtitles in order to perceive the emotional characteristics of the discourse.
- When a documentary is programmed on prime-time and a wide audience is expected, voiceover is preferred to subtitling, whereas quality documentaries broadcast on a more cultural and innovative channel such as *Canal 33* might be subtitled.

Corpus Analysis

In what follows, the techniques used in the corpus will be described and complemented with the information provided by professional translators, to check if they are actually followed.

(1) Narration: most documentaries in the corpus, such as *Les princeses de Ghizou* and *Idees per crear*, substitute the original narrator with the target language version. Gender parity in the speakers is maintained and even in a particular case – *La meva ciutat estimada* – in which the speakers are children, the dubbing actor imitates a childish voice.

(2) Voiceover: is generally used when the speaker appears on screen (*La magnificència de Tasmània)*, but sometimes voiceover is used in all circumstances (*De viatge per França)*. Two documentaries use voiceover to revoice an unseen narrator (*Pinta i dibuixa*, *Dibuixem amb en Blitz*). These documentaries are translated from Italian, and a few words are heard at the beginning and at the end of each statement. Given the topic they deal with – teaching of drawing techniques – the interplay between image and text is crucial.

As far as interviewees are concerned, voiceover is generally used when they talk on screen as well as when they are off screen and have a more narrative discourse (*Ocre i aigua*). However, do revoicing actors leave a few seconds at the beginning and at the end of each turn? Do translators take it into account? Do programmers think this is an important feature to maintain? In the documentary *Mons apart* no seconds are left at the beginning or at the end; in some cases a few seconds are left at the beginning but not at the end (*La magnificència de Tasmània*, *Punt Omega*), and there are documentaries in which a few seconds are left at the beginning and at the end (*Dibuixem amb en Blitz*).

According to the questionnaire, some translators consider that length constraints should be taken into account and, since there is not another

professional who does it, they assume this task as their own. They summarise the speech of talking heads mostly by eliminating the hesitations and repetitions typical of oral language and then check the isochrony by reading the text aloud. Some translators, however, admit not taking these constraints into account, since neither the dubbing studio nor the television controllers have asked them to do so and, moreover, they do not get paid for it. In fact, some prefer to leave these technical considerations to the discretion of the dubbing director and, in some cases, they think that this shortening can be an obstacle to conveying all the information.

Although voiceover constraints are not as strict as dubbing constraints and lip sync, someone should take care of the length of the translations. Traditionally, a professional called adapter was in charge of this task, but this does not seem to be the case any longer. In my opinion, translators are the perfect candidates to perform this task and should be paid accordingly.

(3) Subtitling: is used for spontaneous interventions (*La guia definitiva*), songs (*De viatge per França*) and archive footage (*Segle XX*). Captions are also used to identify the speaker and to translate certain signs which appear on screen. A unique case among the corpus is *City Folk*, a European co-production entirely subtitled.
(4) Special cases: A very special case is *Els campions de la natura*, which uses a technique quite uncommon when revoicing talking heads. The original soundtrack is completely erased and a type of revoicing technique is used in which isochrony is maintained, but not lip sync; it is like a dubbed programme without lip sync.

Table 8.1 presents the distribution of techniques used in our corpus when revoicing narrators and interviewees.

Table 8.1   Translation techniques

Technique	*Percentage*
Narrator (off) + voiceover (on)	58%
Only narrator (off)	15%
Narrator (off) + Isochronous voiceover (on)	13%
Only voiceover (on and off)	11%
Only subtitling	3%

Conclusion

This paper wants to contribute to the description of a neglected audio-visual translation field by focusing on the main challenges presented by documentary translation. Two crucial ideas must be taken into account. On the one hand, documentaries are audiovisual programmes and, therefore, sound and image are key elements; it is not important what it is written on the script, but what it is heard and seen. On the other, each original presents particular features which the translator has to perceive and render in the target language. Given the various different techniques used when translating documentaries, it can be concluded that documentary translators must master voiceover and narration techniques, as well as subtitling.

Appendix

I have not taken into account neither the documentaries created by the Catalan television nor those produced in cooperation with other Spanish channels such as the Basque *Euskal Televista* or the Galician TVG, although they contain passages in foreign languages which have been revoiced or subtitled. However, foreign documentaries broadcast as part of a Catalan production have been included in the corpus.

(a) List of documentaries translated by the author of this paper:
    Beetles Record Breakers, Wildlife on One, BBC Natural History Unit
        Crater of Death. BBC, 1997
    Hackers. World of Wonder. Channel 4, 2001
    *Philosophy: A Guide to Happiness. (Nietzsche on Hardship; Schopenhauer
        in Love)*. Channel 4, 2000
    Red Storm. National Geographic, 2000
    World Discoveries, 57. Hemisphere Productions, 2001
    Walk Naked Singing. Elan Productions, 2002.

(b) Corpus of documentaries broadcast on TV3 and C33, 1–7 September 2003:

TV3: *Els asmat*; *Els últims paradisos: El Kalahari*; *Els últims paradisos: Malawi*; *L'anguila elèctrica de l'Amazones*; *La família mundial*; *La guia definitiva*; *La guia definitiva de les mòmies*; *La guia definitiva dels gats*; *La meva ciutat estimada*: *Londres*; *La meva ciutat estimada: Mèxic*; *La meva ciutat estimada: San Francisco*; *Natura fantàstica* (*La meravella del moviment*); *Tresors de la humanitat, patrimoni de la humanitat* (*Raboseria*); *Vida salvatge*.

C33: *Aventures al món salvatge* (*Al Brasil amb les llúdries gegants i els guacamais jacints*); *Campions de la natura* (*L'àguila americana de cap blanc*); *Campions de la natura* (*Els cocodrils de Cuba*); *Campions de la natura* (*Els jaguars*); *Campions de la natura* (*Els licaons*); *City Folk* (*Irlanda*); *Dibuixem amb en Blitz*; *El caçador de cocodrils* (*El país dels diables*); *El katabàtic*; *El viatge humà* (*A la recerca dels orígens*); *Horitzons estiu. Dibuixem amb en Blitz*; *Horitzons estiu. Idees per crear* (*Cartonatge*); *Horitzons estiu. Pinta i dibuixa.* (*Pastel. La figura ambientada*); *La Xina de les minories* (*Les princeses de Ghizou*); *Mons apart.* (*Després del foc: ha arribat l'hora d'una nova Irlanda del Nord*); *Mons apart* (*On el riu es troba amb el mar*); *Mons apart.* (*Secrets del sud. La magnificència de Tasmània*); *National Geographic Specials* (*Els goril·les de Lossi: viure entre goril·les*); *National Geographic Specials* (*La força dels elefants*); *Pinta i dibuixa* (*Llapis, carbonet, el nu*); *Planeta Terra* (*Ocre i aigua*); *Punt Omega*; *Segle XX. Una força més poderosa* (*Un segle de confrontació no violenta*); *Sorres ardents* (*El món implacable*); *Viatgers.doc. De viatge per . . . França.*

Part 2

Juggling with Humour

Chapter 9

Strategies for the Dubbing of Puns with One Visual Semantic Layer

JOHN D. SANDERSON

Introduction

When Mel Brooks produced *Spaceballs* (1986), a parody of the *Star Wars* saga, he could safely rely on the pragmatic presupposition that most inter-textual references to the George Lucas trilogy – *Star Wars* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *Return of the Jedi* (1983) – would be easily recog-nised not only by the American audience, but also in other parts of the world where it had been a great box-office success. Spain can be counted among those many countries where the US film industry is predominant, so the viewers at the Spanish movie houses, where it was released that same year, could enjoy the adventures of Lone Starr, Princess Vespa, Dark Helmet and Barf, easily decoded caricatures of the well-known characters Hans Solo, Princess Leia, Darth Vader and Chewbacca.

In one scene, the heroic Lone Starr and his hairy best friend Barf are descending with their spaceship into Dark Helmet's territory to try to res-cue Princess Leia. Barf's pointed ears express his concern that 'the minute we move in there, they spot us on their radar'. In order to prevent this, he looks through his periscope, locates the radar, presses a button to activate the weapons of the spaceship and says: ¡*Radar a punto de ser intervenido*! [Radar about to be taken over!]. Then we see a jar of jam smash against the radar and spread its content all over it. One can imagine the bafflement of the Spanish audience, since there had been no reference to food in the whole sequence and, therefore, the use of a jar of jam as ammunition is unintelligible. But Brooks had not made a convoluted joke which was difficult to understand. The audience was actually watching the Spanish dubbed version of the film and could not listen to the original soundtrack, where Barf says: 'Radar about to be jammed!'. They consequently missed

the verbal polysemic allusion in the source text (ST) to both fruit preserve and obstruction, semes which were humorously brought together visually in that single shot.

However, the previous line which Barf had uttered in the dubbed version, ¡*Abajo el perriscopio!* [Down perriscope!], may have raised a smile among the Spanish audience, something which would not have happened in any other part of the world; definitely not in English speaking countries, where the original line was: 'Down scope!'. But the Spanish translator of this dubbed version had produced a paronymic effect by establishing a false etymology between the prefix of Greek origin *peri-* (near, around) found in *periscopio* and uttered with a deviant pronunciation, and the lexeme *perr* from the Spanish word *perro* [dog] which made reference to Barf's physical appearance.

Perhaps the hypothetical need to compensate for the loss of the humorous effect in the following line prompted the translator to make up a joke which was nonexistent in the original version. But the visual presence of a periscope in a spaceship is semiotically coherent, and therefore would need no specific verbal allusion to it, whereas the use of a jar of jam as ammunition would definitely require some justification that was lacking in the immediate co-text and context of the scene. *Intervenir* [to take over], a rather uncommon term to be used here in any case, does not relate to the unexpected presence of the jar on screen, so it impairs the cohesion of the audiovisual fragment and leads to a semiotic opacity which would have discouraged the receptive effort being made by the target audience. In the subtitling of the DVD edition, however, we find the use of the verb *pringar* [to get something sticky, but also hurt or dishonour], whose polysemy renders more suitably the two semantic layers of the original utterance.

The main objective of this chapter is to make an attempt at developing a taxonomy of wordplay in audiovisual productions where at least one of its semantic layers is visually present on screen. I will perform a descriptive analysis of segments taken from English-speaking comedies, a genre prone to this humorous resource, where the play on words uttered by the characters relies on visual representation. The criteria for my choice is based on the traditional verbal classification, but I also bring in other elements such as culture specific items and interlingual wordplay which are relevant from a translational perspective, since I will also analyse the dubbed target texts (TT) in Spanish. After enumerating the different translation strategies applied to dub the humorous illocutionary effect produced by these puns, the final aim of this chapter is to open up the search for a hypothetical translation norm in these cases which will obviously need further research and a much bigger corpus than this paper provides.

Epistemology

Leech (1974: 209) describes a pun as 'a foregrounded lexical ambiguity which may have its origin either in homonymy or polysemy'. The standard communicative function of language is deliberately disrupted, since in the stable relationship between signifier and signified a new semantic layer is added. However, the context of the utterance would normally help the listeners to re-orientate their perception, and with a recurrence of this humorous resource, the theoretically surprising textual device would eventually come to be expected by the listener.

Due to interlingual asymmetry, puns present the most frequent cases of inequivalence in translation because both the formal similarity between words which are neither etymologically nor semantically linked and the multiplicity of meanings within the same word will not usually coincide between languages. Therefore, they will require a wider range of linguistic manoeuvring than with other translation problems, and its acceptability will depend on the standards established by the polysystem, because if 'the translator wants his/her TT to become an integral part of the receiving system, s/he will have to adjust the text to these standards' (Delabastita, 1993: 293). Puns and other humorous resources related to comedy are not highly considered in the standards of what we could call textual respectability in the receiving polysystem, which would allow the translator to go far beyond the word for word rendition required in other kinds of texts.

In an audiovisual production the duplicity of channels, visual and audio, only increases the complexity in the translation of puns since the most effective humorous resource, as I hope to prove with the examples in this paper, normally consists of rendering visually the unexpected semantic layer in order to produce a humorous illocutionary effect. What Gottlieb (1997c: 209) refers to as vertical wordplay – 'the listener or reader has both meanings exposed in one glimpse' – would apply here to the simultaneous appearance in both channels of the differing layers of meaning linked to one pun. Since there is a tendency not to modify or erase the visual seme of the original, translators will find their task restricted by the representation on screen and, therefore, would seemingly have to prioritise it and manipulate the verbal content in an attempt to establish a certain degree of cohesion between both channels which would prevent the impairment observed, for instance, in the example mentioned above.

Dubbing is still the most favoured convention for audiovisual translation in Spain, whose main advantage for translators, when compared to subtitling, is the absence of what Törnqvist (1995: 49) calls 'gossiping effect', that is, the simultaneous reception of the source dialogue soundtrack with

the printed translation on screen. The fact that the original voices are erased in the dubbing process enables the translator, or dubbing director, to manipulate the text to a higher degree, an important aspect in this field now that a basic general knowledge of the English language is spreading among the younger generations in Spain.

As an epistemological basis for this paper I would like to refer briefly to the theory of relevance put forward by Sperber and Wilson (1986) and based on Grice's (1975) maxims of conversational cooperation. One of the key issues of this theory is that, in order to encourage the receiver to make an effort to decode an utterance, speakers will make their communicative intention explicit through what Sperber and Wilson (1986: 50) call ostensive behaviour or gesture, since 'an act of ostension carries a guarantee of relevance, and that this fact – which we will call the *principle of relevance* – makes manifest the intention behind the ostension'. In films or television comedies, which make a profit through box office, audience rates and DVD sales, the moving image is the distinctive feature which differentiates them from other forms of entertainment. So here, the ostensive gesture Sperber and Wilson refer to, encouraging the audience not only to listen and watch but also to pay, would be expected to take the form of a visual prompt that would become a key semiotic element in this act of communication, therefore becoming as well a communicative priority for the audiovisual translator.

In his seminal work *Translation and Relevance*, Gutt (1991: 116) goes further by stating that: 'Since the stream of speech flows on, the audience cannot be expected to sit and ponder difficult renderings – otherwise it will lose the subsequent utterance; hence it needs to be able to recover the intended meaning instantly'. In the case of puns, the audience would be prepared to make a decoding effort if they obtained a reward in the form of a humorous effect. We can, therefore, expect from a commercial film director a tendency to foreground the pun visually in order to facilitate its reception and, consequently, draw larger crowds to watch the audiovisual production (the *Naked Gun* saga, full of visual puns, has been far more successful worldwide at the box office than any Woody Allen film, for instance). The distributors in foreign countries would probably require the translator to act accordingly as far as explicitness is concerned. What we could call in dubbing the seme *in praesentia* (as the original dialogue has been erased, only the visual content remains) becomes the translator's top priority in order to transfer the humorous illocutionary effect produced by the original puns to the TT.

Analysis

Besides polysemy, illustrated above in the segment from *Spaceballs*, the other major source of puns, according to Leech (1974), is homonymy.

However, within the field of audiovisual productions it should be more specifically labelled as homophony, that is, a pun produced by words that are different in writing but identical in pronunciation, since the verbal utterance will be normally apprehended through the acoustic channel.

As far as comedy is concerned, US television sitcoms tend to be based on an attempt to establish a regularity of humorous illocutionary effects emphasised by the subsequent emission of canned laughter, and it is quite common to come across the use of this punning resource when watching an episode. *Friends* is one of the most popular American sitcoms ever, having run for 10 seasons and propelled most of its actors to star in cinematic productions, and I would like to use a segment from episode 22 of the fifth season to illustrate homophony with two examples (for a more detailed analysis of this season see Sanderson, 2002). At the very beginning of this episode, before the credits come on, its main characters have got together at the usual café Central Perk. Rachel is complaining about her itchy eye, but she refuses to visit the 'eye doctor' that Monica is recommending. Her friends start making fun of her, poking at their own eyes and saying:

Monica: Hey Rach, remember that great song, *Me, Myself, and I*?
Rachel: Monica! Come on!
Ross: Hey, does anybody want to get some lunch? All those in favour say I!
Rachel: Ross! Stop it! Come on!

The humorous illocutionary effect is essentially based on the kinetic synchrony of Monica and Ross poking at their own eyes as they utter the pronoun 'I', hence the resulting homophonies. In the first case we find that the pun involves as well a culture specific item, a well known US song which would be immediately recognised by the source audience but might pose a translation problem in other cultural contexts. This is how Darryl Clark, translator of most *Friends* episodes into Spanish, transferred this segment in the dubbed version:

Example 1: Friends

Monica: ¡Hey, Rach! ¿Conoces esa canción tan genial "Tú, yo y mis ojos"?	[Monica: Hey, Rach. Do you know that great song "You, Me and My Eyes"?
Rachel: ¡Mónica, vamos!	Rachel: Monica, come on!
Ross: ¿Alguien quiere salir a cenar? ¡Los que estén a favor que levanten el ojo?	Ross: Does anybody want to go out for dinner? Those in favour raise your eye!
Rachel: ¡Ross, basta! ¡Por favor!	Rachel: Ross, stop it! Please!]

The semiotic priority would be the physical referents the two characters are pointing at rather than what they are actually saying, and the kinetic synchrony between channels has been achieved by the translator with a nonhomophonic rendering of the segment since, as mentioned above, interlingual asymmetry makes it highly unlikely to find a perfect homophony match between languages. The end result is that the word-play has been lost, but the coherence between the information supplied by both channels is preserved and a comic illocutionary effect has been produced. However, it is relevant to remark how the original culture specific item has been replaced by a nonexistent song when there are other songs, recognisable in the target culture, whose titles end with the required word. The translation strategy known as limited neutralisation, whereby an obscure reference is replaced by another reference also belonging to the source language culture but closer to the target viewers (Franco Aixelá, 1996: 63), could have been applied here by using an American song known in Spain such as, for instance, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, with the advantage of it having been translated and sung in Spanish as *El humo ciega tus ojos*, and the disadvantage of being rather old-fashioned for Monica to actually like a Frank Sinatra song. As for the second homophony, I would like to suggest the idiom *¡Andaos con ojo!* [literally 'walk with an eye', but whose English equivalent is 'keep an eye'] as a solution, taking advantage of the componential nature of idiomatic expressions to create a pun. It is, in any case, easier to supply alternative answers when you have not got the pressure of a deadline to deliver your work. As for manipulation of the ST, it is very important to evaluate how relevant the item is if replacement is being considered. It would have been a far more difficult translation task if the song had actually been played or sung by Monica, because then the translator might have had to preserve the reference, which is the case in the two following examples.

Life of Brian (Terry Jones, 1979), a parody of the Bible concerning the life of Jesus Christ, was very popular when it was released in Spain, a country with a long-tradition of religious upbringing. As a consequence, most spectators at the time, shortly after Franco's death, could identify the references to the New Testament even more easily than, for instance, the references to *Star Wars* a few years later in *Spaceballs*, since the shared cognitive environment was actually embedded in the roots of the Spanish culture. In one sequence of *Life of Brian* we can see his followers waiting outside his house to worship him, but it is Brian's mother (played by one

of the Monty Python actors in drag) who opens the window and urges them to leave her son alone. This is the response she gets:

Example 2: Life of Brian

> Crowd: The Messiah! The Messiah! Show us the Messiah!
> Mother: The who?
> Crowd: The Messiah
> Mother: There's no Messiah in here. There's a mess all right, but no Messiah. Now, go away.

The wordplay has been achieved by having Brian's mother establish a false etymology between 'mess' and 'Messiah' because of the identical initial phonemic sequence. Even though the visual seme is not so ostensive, since we cannot see Brian himself while this dialogue is taking place, the punning makes an essential reference to the main character using a term which is recurrent throughout the film. The translator would have had to take a macro-textual approach to the whole text if s/he had considered replacing the term, since the Messiah, the savior announced by the prophets to Israel, is a well-known historical and social subject in both cultural contexts. But the term was preserved in the TT, and a remarkable translation strategy was applied to transfer the humorous illocutionary effect to the new context:

Example 3: Life of Brian

| Crowd: ¡El Mesías! ¡El Mesías! ¡Muéstranos al Mesías!
Mother: ¿A quién?
Crowd: ¡Al Mesías!
Mother: Aquí no hay ningún *Monsieur*, lo que hay es demasié personal, así que ¡fuera! | [Crowd: The Messiah! The Messiah! Show us the Messiah!
Mother: The who?
Crowd: The Messiah!
Mother: There's no *Monsieur* here, just too many people, so go away!] |

The paronymy has been achieved in the TT by means of a Spanish-French interlingual pun rendered by the phonological similarity between *Mesías* and *Monsieur*. In addition to this, we can also find another paronymy formed by the latter term and *demasié*, a stable back-clipping in Spanish of *demasiado* [too many/much] based on the analogy with the French form and, therefore, identical in the final phonemic sequence. The anachronistic use of

French in that period would only contribute to the absurd humour that impregnates the whole film so, in this specific segment, the original illocutionary comical effect might have even been enhanced by the translation into Spanish.

Interlingual puns in STs pose an extremely difficult translation problem, since bringing a third party into a coincidental phonological similarity between two languages requires great effort … and luck. In the following segment, taken from *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* (Tom Shadyac, 1994), we find one of these interlingual puns in a culture specific item that requires blatant synchronisation and that can be seen as a summary of most issues dealt with in this paper. Here we can see detective Ace Ventura bend over, fully dressed, at the police station and use his hands to manipulate his buttocks like a puppet in order to mouth a famous Italian song: *Asssshole mííííííooooooo!* The paronymic effect produced by the phonological similarity with the lyrics of the immortal ballad sung by Enrico Caruso maintains a level of cohesion not only semantically with the full presence of his bottom on screen but also with the lip sync of the performance. In the Spanish dubbed version we can hear: ¡*Oooh cuuuulo míííííííooooooo*! [Oh, bottom mine!].

This non-punning rendition in the TT does produce, however, a comical illocutionary effect. The translator has preserved the culture specific item (well-known in Spain) and has prioritised the visual seme by using *culo* [bottom], a bisyllable term which allows synchronisation with song and performance. The fact that the target audience recognises the song and finds it unexpectedly associated with the taboo presence on screen can be found comical even if the wordplay is lost.

I would like to end this analysis with an example which allows us to expand wordplay to idiomatic expressions, understanding as such the stable combinations of words which have a transferred or metaphorical meaning. It is a very common humorous resource in audiovisual comedy to include an image which represents one or more words isolated from the idiom and, therefore, interpreted in a literal, non-metaphorical sense. The idiom is not manipulated verbally, but the duplicity of channels involved in the communicative act produces a vertical wordplay by means of what we see on screen.

In *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyac, 2003), the main character is a television reporter covering a news item about a family of confectioners who have made a giant cookie. He always closes his reports making use of the idiom 'And that's the way the cookie crumbles!' The fact that one word of this common idiomatic expression is rendered visually and, therefore, literally, transforms it semantically, therefore producing the pun and the subsequent humorous effect. The theme of the giant cookie is recurrent

throughout the film and relevant to the plot. From the point of view of the translator, it would require a strenuous macrotextual approach to consider the disposal of the whole referential framework. On the other hand, there are no idioms in Spanish that include the word *galleta* [cookie]; it is only used metaphorically as 'slap', but isolated, not as part of an idiomatic expression and, in any case, no violence is related to the giant cookie sub-plot. So, it is remarkable how the translator has skillfully overcome all these potential restrictions with the following translation: *¡Y a falta de pan, buenas son galletas!* [If there is no bread, cookies will do fine!].

What has taken place is a structural transformation of the stable Spanish idiom *A falta de pan, buenas son tortas*, whose transferred meaning would be 'One will just have to make do', with the final word *torta* [a flat mass of flour] here replaced by *galleta* in order to establish a semiotic cohesion with the visual seme and the plot. The translator could count on the shared knowledge of this idiom, deeply embedded in the Spanish culture, to arouse expectations which are disrupted at the very end by this word, producing, consequently, the humorous effect. Also worth emphasising is the fact that the metaphorical meaning of this transformed idiom is relatively close to the one in the ST, proving that, somehow, a way can be found to perform successfully the difficult task of transferring the humorous illocutionary effect produced by puns to a new TT.

Conclusion

In this paper several audiovisual comical segments have been presented in which wordplay relied on the presence of a visual seme. They can be classified as follows:

Spaceballs	Polysemy
Friends	Two homophonies (one in a culture specific item)
Life of Brian	False etymology
Ace Ventura	Interlingual pun in a culture specific item
Bruce Almighty	Idiomatic expression with visual presence of isolated element

This is obviously a partial taxonomy, but it can give us an idea of how the traditional classification of wordplay can be expanded with the inclusion of the visual seme on screen and, from a translational perspective, it could help the professional translator to identify the punning resource used to produce a humorous illocutionary effect in the ST before trying to transfer it to the TT by applying the most suitable translation strategy.

In this paper I have analysed a few of these strategies, some as convoluted as a compensation with a paronym produced by deviant pronunciation, an interlingual pun via a back-clipping paronym or the structural transformation of a stable idiom. But if there is a norm that can be deduced from this analysis, it is that not once has the original punning strategy been used in the TT. So the first conclusion that can be reached would be that it is perfectly acceptable, even recommendable, to apply a different punning device in dubbing when a coincidence between languages cannot be found, or even a non-punning rendition, as long as cohesion is maintained between both channels. If the translator could mentally enumerate the wide range of strategies which can be applied when dealing with wordplay, it might contribute to solving many translation problems.

A different matter is to question whether translation is an appropriate term to be used when we are describing how a culture specific item is erased from the TT or a foreign language is replaced by another, with no connection with the original plot, in order to produce an interlingual pun in the new context. It is fair to point out that if a pun could not be made in the original with the reference to *Me, Myself and I* or *Oh, Sole Mío!*, the scriptwriters would not have included these popular songs in the texts to begin with. Perhaps even the world's biggest cookie would not have been a key issue in the subplot of *Bruce Almighty* had it not allowed Jim Carrey to repeat the idiom again and again. So if these songs and idiom were introduced mainly as phonological devices to produce a pun, and not because of their relevance to the development of the plot, it is understandable that translators would prioritise the illocutionary effect instead of the literal rendering, trying to manipulate the verbal element within the limits imposed by the target culture in order to establish cohesion with the visual seme.

Translation is usually performed to serve the target context. Members at both ends of the scale, whether film distributors or viewers, will almost certainly appreciate that a breakdown in the cohesion between channels, such as the one seen in the first example of this paper, is prevented even if a certain degree of manoeuvering is required. Otherwise, it can be discouraging for the spectator, who is making a decoding effort, to perceive that the illusion of nonlinguistic interference in the dubbed version has been destroyed. As we have seen, screen translators into Spanish have proven that they are capable of maintaining that illusion with their skilful manipulation of the ST even in the most restrictive visual conditions.

Translating Humour: The Dubbing of Bridget Jones's Diary *into Spanish*

NIEVES JIMÉNEZ CARRA

> *Anyone who has ever tried to translate an English joke into another language will know that it is no easy task. [...] Similarly, when a joke in a foreign language is translated into English, results tend to be disastrous. Jokes, it would seem, travel badly.*
> Chiaro, 1992: 77

Humour in Translation

The translatability of humour has been widely questioned for a long time. A number of studies have been carried out so as to determine to which point and degree can a text with humorous features be adequately translated, and if, once translated, the result can be acceptable as a 'good' or appropriate translation. Mateo (1999) argues that the success of a humorous act depends on the existence of shared knowledge between sender and recipient, a factor that determines the translation strategies to be implemented. The perception of the quality of a translation will also have a direct correspondence with the attitude of the reader/viewer. For Zabalbeascoa (1996: 236), 'one reason translations are so often seen as being "bad" could be that their consumers expect too much of them, or different consumers expect different things – therefore someone is bound to be unhappy with the result'. Castro Roig (2002: online) states that: 'We translators do not hear anymore, we listen; we translators do not read anymore, we scrutinise; we translators do not see anymore, we observe; we translators do not write anymore, we compose' (my translation), confirming what we already knew, that translators tend to be the most fierce translation critics. In fact, Castro Roig (2002: online) also asserts that: 'From the moment you decide to become a translator and to make language your

work tool, you have – sweetly – condemned yourself to change your perception of the environment' (my translation).

When discussing the translation of humorous situations, it is necessary to bear in mind the general translation problems that translators often face such as the existence in the source text (ST) of puns, wordplay, or cultural references. The so-called *realia*, that is, cultural realities that do not have an exact equivalent in the target culture, tend to be very difficult to translate.

The concept of equivalence in translation may prove useful here. Hurtado Albir (2001: 209) accepts the use of this term when it refers to the relationship established between the translation and the ST, as long as we do not only use it when referring to linguistic approaches. What she proposes is a dynamic and flexible conception of the term which takes into account both the communicative situation and the social and historical context in which the translation takes place. On the other hand, Reiss and Vermeer (quoted in Shveitser, 1993: 48), state that 'the term equivalence embraces relationships not just between separate units but also between whole texts […] Besides, the equivalence of texts goes beyond their linguistic manifestation into the cultural dimension'. We are thus made aware that total and perfect equivalence is not possible, since not only linguistic factors are involved in the text. Although the reaction produced in the target reader/viewer may be similar or even identical to the source audience's reaction, how can we be sure that they are triggered by the same kind of linguistic, cultural or social factors? For Hatim and Mason (1990: 8), the term equivalence makes us believe that 'complete equivalence is an achievable goal, as if there were such a thing as a formally or dynamically equivalent target-language (TL) version of a source-language (SL) text'. The sense that the term equivalence acquires for them is 'that of the closest possible approximation to ST meaning' (Hatim & Mason, 1990: 8).

The perception of humour varies depending on every culture, person and situation. It is widely acknowledged that a joke may make some people laugh while it goes unnoticed for others. Considering that this takes place in communication settings within the same culture, it is not difficult to imagine that these factors will be differently perceived when dealing with dissimilar cultural backgrounds. As Chiaro points out:

> to suggest that a common linguistic code is all that is needed in order to appreciate jokes and wordplay would be extremely naïve. One only has to consider the numerous American situation comedies which have had little or no success in Britain, and vice versa, to see that a shared code is only half the story. Language and culture seem to be

> indivisible and, without shared sociocultural knowledge between sender and recipient, a common linguistic code will be of little help. (Chairo, 1992: 77)

However, the media we are dealing with provides the translator with an invaluable help insofar as it is multilayered and composed of visual and audio elements. In most cases, the solutions reached at the linguistic level will be supported by the image that we see on screen, by the gestures of the original actors, and by the intonation of the dubbing actors. This does not, of course, happen with a written text, for obvious reasons.

The Translation of Humour in the Dubbing of *Bridget Jones's Diary*

In order to carry out this analysis, I have taken as my object of study the film *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Sharon Maguire, 2001), which is based on the homonymous book written by Helen Fielding and first published in the UK in 1996. The novel was in turn the continuation to the success of the weekly articles that Fielding had published in the British newspaper *The Independent*. I first examine the original English dialogue in order to determine the main factors that cause humorous situations in the original, and then comment on some of the translation solutions reached in the Spanish dubbed version of the film that was distributed on DVD.

One of the recurrent humorous features consists in building a situation in which what is said contradicts what can be seen or what is actually being done. Dialogue and images interact in a conflicting way, breaking the viewer's expectations. In one of the first scenes of the film the dialogue is as follows:

Example 1

Bridget's Mum: Mark? (We can see the back of a man) Bridget (voiceover): Maybe this was the mysterious Mr Right I'd been waiting my whole life to meet.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
¡Mark! Tal vez aquél era el misterioso hombre perfecto que había querido conocer toda mi vida.	[Mark! Maybe that was the mysterious perfect man that I had wanted to meet all my life.]

'Mr Right' has been translated into 'the perfect man', which can be seen as a Spanish equivalent. In the last sentence it is mostly the intonation of both

the original and the dubbing actresses which is humorous. The same scene continues:

Example 2

Bridget's Mum to Mark Darcy: You remember Bridget? (Mark Darcy turns to face them. He is wearing a reindeer jumper.)	
Bridget (voiceover): Maybe not.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
¿Te acuerdas de Bridget? O tal vez no.	[Do you remember Bridget? Or maybe not.]

She has judged the man before seeing the front of his jumper. But the moment she does, she immediately changes her mind.

In the next example, Bridget's comment is again accompanied by an action that completely contradicts what she is actually saying. We can perceive, on the one hand, the intention of the character to make us believe that something is real or true when it really is not, and, on the other hand, a sense of irony, which is not intended by her but which results from the speech:

Example 3

Bridget (voiceover): At least now that I'm in my 30s, I can hold my drink. (And we see her drunk and falling down when she gets out of a taxi.)	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Ahora que tengo más de 30 años puedo aguantar más la bebida.	[Now that I am over 30 years I can hold my drink more.]

The following instance is pronounced by Bridget when, wearing a head-scarf, she is travelling in a convertible car with her boyfriend:

Example 4

Bridget (voiceover): Suddenly feel like screen goddess in manner of Grace Kelly. (And now, we can see the headscarf blowing off her head) Though, perhaps, ever so slightly less elegant under pressure.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
De repente me siento como una gran leyenda de la pantalla al estilo de Grace Kelly. Aunque tal vez me muestre un poquito menos elegante cuando estoy bajo presión.	[All of a sudden I feel like a great legend from the screen in the style of Grace Kelly. Although perhaps I behave a little bit less elegantly when I'm under pressure.]

The minor change introduced by the translator occurs in the translation of the word 'goddess', which is rendered as *leyenda* [legend]. However, this does not provoke a different perception of the humorous situation. In this case, the use of the voiceover mode allows the translation to be considerably longer than the original version, helping the translator to keep the humour. As can be seen in all these examples, the presentation of information through voiceover is one of the ST strategies producing humorous situations within the film.

Bridget Jones's way of referring to people can sometimes also serve as a way to create humour. In the following examples, she defines her mother and her line manager's boss in the following way:

Example 5

Bridget (voiceover): My Mom, a strange creature from the time when a gherkin was still the height of sophistication.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Mi madre, extraño ser de un universo donde el pepinillo es la cumbre de la sofisticación.	[My mother, a strange being from a universe where the gherkin is the height of sophistication.]

Example 6

Bridget (voiceover): Mr Fitzherbert. 'Titspervert', more like. Daniel's boss stares freely at my breasts with no idea who I am or what I do.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Fitzherbert. Más bien 'Titispervert'. Es el jefe de Daniel. Me mira descaradamente las tetas y no sabe ni cómo me llamo ni lo que hago.	[Fitzherbet. More likely 'Titispervert'. He is Daniel's boss. He stares cheekily at my tits and doesn't even know what my name is or what I do.]

The difficulty in Example 6 lies in the nickname 'Titspervert', a wordplay based on his surname. The combination of the words 'tits' and 'pervert' shows Bridget Jones's negative opinion of the boss: a pervert man, who usually stares at her breasts. The translator opted for changing only the first part of the name, which also altered the meaning of the wordplay in Spanish. *Titis* is nowadays an old fashioned Spanish term for 'girls' or 'chicks', but it is also phonetically close to the colloquial *tetas* [tits]. The second part, 'pervert', is left intact in the Spanish translation, possibly because *pervertido* [pervert] can be easily inferred from the English word. In addition, an English sounding surname is kept in Spanish and the

similarity between the character's real surname, 'Fitzherbert', and the nickname is also kept in the translation.

Another recurrent way to create humour in the film is by referring to what Chiaro (1992: 79) calls a universal of humour: sex. There are several scenes in which Bridget Jones and her boss, Daniel Cleaver, exchange emails loaded with sexual innuendo:

Example 7

Computer screen: New mail! Read now. You have a new message. From: Daniel Cleaver. Subject: Serious problem. You appear to have forgotten your skirt. Is skirt off sick?
Bridget (voiceover): Message Mr Cleaver. Am appalled by message. Skirt is demonstrably neither sick nor absent. Appalled by management's blatantly size-ist attitude to skirt. Suggest management sick, not skirt!
Bridget (voiceover): Very bad start to the year. Have been seduced by informality of messaging medium into flirting with office scoundrel. Will persevere with resolution of finding a nice, sensible man. Will put a stop to flirting. First thing tomorrow. Good plan.

Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Correo nuevo. Daniel Cleaver. Parece que has olvidado la falda. ¿Acaso la falda está enferma?	[New mail. Daniel Cleaver. It seems that you have forgotten your skirt. Perhaps the skirt is sick?
Mensaje para el señor Cleaver. Estoy consternada por su mensaje. La falda no está enferma, ni ausente, y puedo demostrarlo. Estoy sorprendida por la actitud descaradamente abusiva de la gerencia con respecto al tamaño de la falda y opino que es la gerencia la que está enferma, no mi falda.	Message for Mr Cleaver. I'm appalled by your message. The skirt is neither sick nor absent, and I can prove it. I'm shocked by the blatantly abusive attitude of the management with respect to the size of my skirt and I think that it is management who is sick, not my skirt.
Es un comienzo de año muy malo. La informalidad de los mensajes internos me ha hecho caer en la tentación de ligar con el sinvergüenza de mi jefe. Continuaré con mi propósito hasta encontrar a un hombre agradable y sensato. Mañana a primera hora pondré fin a los coqueteos. Buen plan.	It's a very bad start to the year. The informality of the internal mails has made me fall in the temptation of flirting with my cheeky boss. I'll continue with my resolution until I find a nice, sensible man. Early tomorrow I'll put an end to flirting. Good plan.]

In this example, the translation once again takes advantage of the voiceover mode to offer a considerably longer version than the original text. The linguistic register used in the email interaction between both characters is clearly more formal in Spanish than it is in English, where some lexical items are omitted. Among the strategies implemented, the translation adds articles and adjectives ('office scoundrel' becomes *el sinvergüenza de mi jefe*) and merges short sentences into longer ones ('Will put a stop to flirting. First thing tomorrow' becomes *Mañana a primera hora pondré fin a los coqueteos*), producing a final passage that loses part of the irony of the original and is far more articulated than the English text.

I have already mentioned the importance that the presence of cultural references in the original may have when making translation decisions. The choice of one solution over another will be determined after having taken into consideration many factors which do not always have to do with the translation act as has been traditionally understood. In the audiovisual arena, new media constraints come into play, such as time and space restrictions, impossibility to resort to footnotes or glosses and the like (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). The following example shows how different translation strategies have to be implemented when confronted with jokes embedded in cultural references since, otherwise, the risk is run of not transmitting the right message to the audience:

Example 8

Bridget: How's it look? Mark Darcy: Great. It's … blue. Bridget: Blue? Mark Darcy: No, but blue is good. If you ask me, there isn't enough blue food. Bridget: Oh, shit. It must have been the string. Mark Darcy: Oh, it's string soup.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
¿Cómo está quedando? Oh, muy bien. Es … azul.	[How is it coming? Oh, very well. It's … blue.
¿Azul?	Blue?
El azul está muy bien. Hay muy poca comida azul, de verdad.	Blue is very nice. There is little blue food, really blue.
Oh, coño. Habrá sido el cordel.	Oh, cunt. It must have been the string.
Oh, es sopa de cordel.	Oh, it's string soup.]

In this scene, Bridget is cooking a birthday dinner with the help of Mark Darcy. When they take the lid off, they find that the soup has turned blue because she has used a blue string to tie the leek and the celery together. The problem here lies in the sentence 'it's string soup', which makes them both smile. But the literal Spanish translation, *es sopa de cordel*, is everything but funny to the Spanish audience. It does not make sense at all and the target viewer may think that there has been some kind of mistake in the translation. The joke is based on a cultural referent which is not shared by British and Spanish audiences, and it comes from the TV show *The Clangers*, broadcast by the BBC in the 1970's, where one of the characters, the *Soup Dragon*, cooked the 'Blue String Soup'.

Throughout the film, there are some other humorous instances mainly based on the use of taboo language and phraseology units. In fact, the penultimate sentence in the previous example shows how 'shit' becomes in Spanish the much stronger swearword *coño* [cunt]. There is no apparent reason for this change, unless it is understood as a case of compensation, since the literal Spanish translation of 'shit', *mierda*, could have also been used here without any loss of meaning. Shazzer, one of Bridget's friends, shows a tendency to overuse swearwords whenever she appears on screen. The problem arises with the continuous use of the word 'fuck' (and its variations) since such repetition has to be avoided if the final text is to sound natural in Spanish, a language less prone to the repetition of lexical items. In the next sentence, the Spanish translator opted for using different swearwords in the translation instead of resorting to the repetition of the same expletive:

Example 9

Shazzer: Fuck'em. Fuck the lot of them. Tell them they can stick fucking Leavis up their fucking arses.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Que les follen. Que los follen a todos. Diles que se metan al mierda de Leavis por el culo, coño.	[Fuck them. Fuck them all. Tell them to stick shitty Leavis up their arses, cunt.]

This approach to recreate the target dialogue and enrich the nature of the swearwords used in Spanish, by not limiting the target text to the same Spanish word every time that 'fuck' is uttered in the original text, has to be 'justified' at this point in the film:

Example 10

Bridget (voiceover): [Shazzer] likes to say 'fuck' a lot.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Le gusta soltar tacos. Muchos.	[She likes using swearwords. Lots.]

In order to preserve the coherence of the whole filmic text, the translation in Spanish avoids the reference to the 'f' word and makes a more general statement that defines Shazzer character: 'She likes using swearwords. Lots'.

Conclusion

After having carried out the description of certain humorous features appearing in the original version of *Bridget Jones's Diary* it can be concluded that there are several ways in which humour has been generated throughout the film. The first strategy is the creation of an expectation in the audience that is not eventually fulfilled. The second is the use of the voiceover technique to give account of the reading of the diary, the emails on the computer screen, and Bridget's inner thoughts that sharply contrast with the actual dialogue and/or the images. Other situations in which humour can be observed derive from the behaviour of our heroine, especially when she describes people, and blunders and flirts with her boss by email.

From a translational perspective, cultural referents are the source of some challenges even though this is not only a translation issue since, within the same community, not all references are fully understood by all its members. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that we live in a global world where some of these references are likely to be known in many countries. Humour can be translated and the best way of doing it successfully seems to be by activating strategies that use terms and expressions different to the ones employed in the source text. The translator has to come up with another text that tries to recreate in the target audience the same effect that was intended for the source audience.

As for the solutions reached in the Spanish dubbed version, they are effective on the whole. The end result is a series of dialogue exchanges that are agile, sound natural in Spanish and render the humorous impact of the original script.

Dubbing The Simpsons *in Spain: A Case Study*

MARTA MUÑOZ GIL

Introduction

The translation of TV series is one of the main areas of work in audio-visual translation (AVT) in Spain. From a translational point of view, one of their defining characteristics is that they are always broadcast dubbed, as opposed to movies, which are sometimes broadcast in their original version with subtitles.

The Simpsons, an icon of today's TV culture, is one of the most popular series in Spain, where it has been on air at the privately-owned TV channel *Antena 3* since December 1994, broadcasting a double bill every day at lunchtime and one on Saturday evenings. *The Simpsons* is the most viewed animated series on Spanish television and, in spite of all these years, continues to be amongst the highest-rated programmes with an average audience share over 24% (Noticias.com, 2007).

Although in Spain it is mainly watched by children and teenagers, it is in actual fact a cartoon comedy intended for adults, depicting the daily life of a five-member family in a small town in the United States. It is a parody and a satire of American society, their way of living and their values. According to Álvarez Berciano (1999: 149): '*The Simpsons* has been the only comedy reinvention in recent years' (my translation).

The Simpsons

In what follows, I would like to foreground some of the most important characteristics of *The Simpsons*:

(1) It portrays a large number of characters, each one with its own background and history. This is something that must be taken into account in the translation, because as Agost (1999: 83) mentions, when

a TV series makes use of the same characters in its episodes, the translator must be especially careful in order to always reflect the way they speak and their idiolect in a consistent manner throughout the series.

(2) Features of the national, social and community identity of some of the characters are sometimes reflected linguistically in the way they speak, such as Mr Burns' extremely formal speech or Fat Tony's Italian accent.

(3) Intertextuality is highly important in *The Simpsons* and there are constant references to movies, tales, stories, and historic and current events, with the frequent starring of well-known celebrities.

(4) Because of it being a cartoon, lip synchronisation in the dubbing into Spanish seems to be a low priority. Even in the original version, lip movements do not always coincide with the actual voiceover. As Chaume Varela (2003b: 262) explains, this lax approach to lip sync seems to be a recurrent feature in the dubbing of cartoons. Given that cartoon characters do not really speak, but instead move their mouths more or less randomly without pronouncing words, an accurate phonetic adaptation is not required apart from those specific and rare cases where the character simulates the pronunciation of an open vowel.

(5) Being a comedy, we find the recurrent presence of irony, sarcasm and humorous elements, such as puns, jokes and plays on words.

The Simpsons is a complex audiovisual product with multiple layers of meaning and its translation into other languages certainly involves a high degree of complexity. In this chapter I shall focus on the translation strategies implemented by the translators when dealing with some of the main difficulties encountered when dubbing *The Simpsons* for its broadcast in Spain and comparisons with the Latin American version will be only made when commenting on the translation of patronymics. I shall analyse several examples from the episodes entitled *Lisa the Vegetarian* (season 7) and *Mayored to the Mob* (season 10). In *Lisa the Vegetarian*, Homer is planning a barbecue that is proving to be a serious problem because Lisa, inspired by a visit to Storytown Village, has just decided to give up eating meat. In *Mayored to the Mob*, after having saved the lives of Mark Hamill and Mayor Quimby at a sci-fi convention, Homer decides to enrol on a course as a bodyguard. As a result, he starts working for Mayor Quimby and has to save him from Fat Tony's attacks, furious because they have ruined his rats' milk business.

Translating and Dubbing *The Simpsons* in Spanish

Before discussing the main challenges in the translation of *The Simpsons*, it is necessary to mention some details about the translation and dubbing processes.

As previously mentioned, there are two different dubbed versions of *The Simpsons* in Spanish: one for distribution in Latin America and another one for peninsular Spain. The former is translated by Francisco Rubiales and dubbed in Mexico; the latter is translated by María José Aguirre de Cárcer and dubbed in Madrid. As far as time is concerned, deadlines for the translation of the series are always tight and, on some occasions, *The Simpsons* have been translated at a rate of one episode per day.

The translator of the TV version for Spain, perhaps a bit surprisingly, works totally independently, without any contact with the Mexican translator, or with Francisco Pérez Navarro, the Spanish translator of *The Simpsons*' books and comics. Once she has finished her (draft) translations, the dubbing team is responsible for all the changes that they may deem necessary when adapting the text for lip synchronisation or when rewriting jokes and changing cultural references. In order to make their work easier, her translations come accompanied by a large number of explanatory notes. This is by no means a unique situation. As Zabalbeascoa (1996: 249) points out when talking about dubbing: 'it is frequently the case that translators do not have the last word on their work, unlike many other professionals'.

Let us now take a look at some examples from *Lisa the Vegetarian* illustrating the type of changes that normally take place during the dubbing sessions, when the raw translation is tweaked by dubbing directors and actors for several reasons:

Example 1

Marge: What's wrong, Lisa? Didn't you get enough lamb chops? (putting two more lamb chops in Lisa's dish)	
Dubbed version	**Back translation**
¿Qué pasa, Lisa? Te tienes que comer dos más.	[What's wrong, Lisa? You must eat two more chops.]

Example 2

Homer: Lisa, get a hold of yourself. This is lamb, not a lamb.	
Dubbed version	**Back translation**
Lisa, no digas cosas. Esto es cordero, no un cordero.	[Lisa, don't say things. This is lamb, not a lamb.]

Example 3

Lisa: Uhh, Miss Hoover? I don't think I can dissect an animal. I think it's wrong. Miss Hoover: Okay Lisa, I respect your moral objection.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Sita. Hoover, no creo que pueda diseccionar un animal. No me parece bien.	[Miss Hoover, I don't think I can dissect an animal. I don't think it's right.
De acuerdo, Lisa, no me importa declararte objetora.	All right, Lisa, I don't mind to declare you a moral objector.]

Aguirre de Cárcer (personal communication) argues that her translations were quite close to the original text and that the final dialogue exchanges were modified by the dubbing team. Her original translations were: *¿No tienes suficientes chuletas?* [Didn't you get enough lamb chops?]; *Lisa, no te pongas así* [Lisa, get a hold of yourself] and *Respeto tu objeción moral* [I respect your moral objection]. From the researcher's point of view, the introduction of these changes can seem odd because, even if they are acceptable, there is no apparent linguistic reason for them. The general reason given to justify these changes is the need to meet the technical requirements of lip sync. The broadcast solution reached in the first example ('you must eat two more chops') might be seen as an attempt to synchronise image and sound because the dialogue is uttered at the same time as Marge puts two more chops on Lisa's plate. However, this change modifies the discourse intentionality: in the original text, Marge is concerned because she thinks her daughter is not getting as much food as she needs, whereas in the dubbed version Marge comes across as forcing her daughter to eat meat, food that Lisa has willingly decided to give up.

The solutions chosen for the other two examples seem to strengthen humour: Homer's *no digas cosas* [don't say things] reinforces this character's simple mind by showing that when dealing with food, he is not able to build a coherent sentence; and Miss Hoover's *no me importa declararte objetora* [I don't mind to declare you moral objector] introduces some humour because of the absurdity of a teacher declaring an 8-year-old girl moral objector for refusing to dissect a worm. More instances of decisions made by the dubbing team can be found below.

Main Problems in the Translation of *The Simpsons*

As it has been outlined earlier, *The Simpsons* is an audiovisual pro-gramme whose translation poses several obstacles. In the following sec-tions, it is my intention to take a look at some of the main challenges that impinge on the dubbing of this particular series. I focus primarily on the translation of patronymics, intertextual references, cultural referents, humorous elements and national and social identity features.

Patronymics

The general strategy chosen to deal with proper names might be seen as an indicator of the overall approach to any given translation, and it is especially important in films and series where the names of some charac-ters are loaded with meaning, as is the case in comedies such as *The Simpsons*.

It should be noted that in the translation of proper names, the Spanish and Latin American versions differ considerably. The first aspect that must be pointed out is the different title used for the commercialisation of the series itself in Spain and in Latin America. In Spain, the series is trans-lated as *Los Simpson*, in accordance with the usual way of forming family names in Spanish, that is, by placing the plural determinate article in front of the family name which does not add an 's' to its ending. In the Latin American version, however, it is translated as *Los Simpsons*, mimick-ing the English way of referring to a family by their surname in plural.

As for the proper names of the characters, they have not been translated for the Spanish audience, keeping in line with the general strategy applied in most films, TV series and books, in which only the names of kings (*Isabel II* [Elizabeth II]), popes (*Juan Pablo II* [John Paul II]), and some historical characters (*Carlos Marx* [Karl Marx]) are translated. However, nicknames in the series have been translated, as well as the titles accompa-nying the proper names. Thus, 'Reverend Lovejoy' becomes *Reverendo Lovejoy* and 'Krusty The Clown' becomes *Krusty el Payaso*. In Latin America, patronymics with an equivalent in Spanish have been translated, and 'Homer Simpson' becomes *Homero Simpson*.

Table 11.1 shows the most significant differences in the way the charac-ters' names have been translated both in the Spanish and in the Latin American versions. Of these, the names of six characters deserve special consideration: Itchy, Scratchy, Miss Hoover, Miss Krabappel, Sideshow Bob and Sideshow Mel.

Table 11.1   Characters names

Original version	Spain	Latin America
The Simpsons	Los Simpson	Los Simpsons
Homer Simpson	Homer Simpson	Homero Simpson
Bart Simpson	Bart Simpson	Bartolomé Simpson
Maude Flanders	Maude Flanders	Magda Flanders
Reverend Lovejoy	Reverendo Lovejoy	Reverendo Alegría
Jebediah Springfield	Jebediah Springfield	Jeremías Springfield
Chief Wiggum	Jefe Wiggum	Jefe Górgori
Sideshow Bob	Actor Secundario Bob	Bob Patiño
Sideshow Mel	Actor Secundario Mel	Mel Patiño
Itchy & Scratchy	Rasca y Pica	Tomy y Daly
Miss Krabappel	Sita Krabappel	Maestra Krabappel
Miss Hoover	Sita Hoover	Maestra Stritckter

The names of the cartoon characters 'Itchy & Scratchy' are quite different on each side of the Atlantic. In Spain, the mouse and the cat are known as *Rasca y Pica*, a literal translation of the original names, although curiously enough, the order has been altered: *Rasca* (Scratchy) comes first and *Pica* (Itchy) second. In Latin America, they are known as *Tomy y Daly*, in reference, on the one hand, to the cat-and-mouse cartoon *Tom & Jerry*, and on the other, to the Spanish expression *toma y daca* which, according to the *Diccionario de la lengua española* (2001: 2190), means a simultaneous exchange of things or services or favour which expects immediate reciprocity.

The strategies applied to the translation of the teachers' names are also interesting. Whereas the surname of Miss Krabappel is the same in Spain and Latin America, the surname of Miss Hoover differs quite notably. In Spain, the name remains unchanged and in Latin America she is known as Miss Strickter, a pun that plays with the phonetic similarity with the Spanish adjective *estricto* [strict]. Another difference in approach can be seen in the way the title 'Miss' has been dealt with. In the Latin American version, the children call both teachers *maestra*, whereas in the Spanish

one they call them *sita*. This is a point that must be foregrounded because this is not the most usual term for children in Spain to call their teachers; the most common being *maestra*, *señorita* or even *seño*, without the need to add the surname. *Sita* is the short clipped form of *señorita* [miss], and it is a rather old-fashioned and traditional term. So, there is a strange contrast in the use of *Sita Hoover* or *Sita Krabappel*, since we are confronted with the use of a very traditional word (*sita*) with a very foreign construction, namely, the use of the surname when addressing a teacher at school. Aguirre de Cárcer mentions that in her translations she used *señorita* and that the decision to use the clipping *sita* was taken by the dubbing team, perhaps due to synchronisation requirements.

The names of Krusty's colleagues, Sideshow Bob and Sideshow Mel, also deserve some commentary. In the Spanish version, they are called *Actor Secundario Bob* and *Actor Secundario Mel* [supporting actor], whereas in Latin America they are called *Bob Patiño* and *Mel Patiño*. This can be considered a case of a straight forward translation, since the term *patiño* is a Mexican word meaning 'sideshow'. However, the problem here is that the term is not widely known in the rest of Latin American countries and it could, therefore, lead to confusion and perplexity among some audiences.

Intertextual References

The Simpsons is a TV show packed with references to movies, books, historical and current events, songs, and so on. As Álvarez Berciano states, this series:

> is aimed at an attentive and cultured audience, able to quickly grasp hidden references [...] Its comic impact is based, more than in any other case, on complicity and relies on the viewer's competence to both understand private jokes and share the references and parodies to the *popular classics* in a 'learned' way. (Álvarez Berciano, 1999: 149; my translation)

Thus, intertextuality is one of the fundamental strategies used to convey most of the parody and the satirical content in *The Simpsons*. It is also a source of many translation problems, because, as Lorenzo *et al.* (2003: 283) state, 'the translator must spot the reference in the first place, and then evaluate the likelihood of it being recognized by the target audience'. Intertextuality may be present either in implicit references to films or other audiovisual programmes, or in references to past events, just to mention a few possibilities. The following is a prime example from

Mayored to the Mob of a witty reference to a very famous film that can be read at several levels:

Example 4

Homer: Mr. Hamill! Mr. Mayor! Come on!	
Mark Hamill: Who are you?	
Homer: Homer Simpson: Nerd Buster! And I'm getting' you out of here.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
¡Señor Hamill! ¡Alcalde! ¡Vámonos! ¿Quién es usted?	[Mr Hamil! Mayor! Let's go! Who are you?
Homer Simpson: Cazaempollones. Y Homer Simpson va a sacarles de aquí.	Homer Simpson: Nerdshunter. And Homer Simpson is going to get you out of here.]

In a first approach, by using the expression 'Nerd Buster', Homer is both verbalising a play on words and making an ironic reference to the movie *Ghost Buster* (Ivan Reitman, 1984). The collocation of the term *Buster* as the second item of the expression should make this reference reasonably easy to spot by any viewer in the source culture. The film was translated in Spain as *Cazafantamas* [*Ghostbusters*] and the Spanish translation of this dialogue exchange also plays with the commercialised title of the film by evoking it in the first term of the expression, *caza*. However, what is lost in the translation is the humorous effect produced in the original by the phonetic similarity that exists between the innocuous word 'buster' and the less than positive substantive 'bastard'. The following example, also from *Mayored to the Mob*, resorts to a different strategy:

Example 5

| Homer: Oh, my God, I killed the mayor! All right, stay calm. I'll just use the body to stage an elaborate farce, à la '*Weekend at Bernie's*'. | |
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
¡Ay, Dios! He matado al alcalde. Tranquilo, coge el cuerpo y monta una elaborada farsa como hacen en las películas.	[My God! I have killed the Mayor. Calm, take the body and stage an elaborate farce as they do in the movies.]

In this instance, the decision has been to change the title of the original movie for a general reference, *como hacen en las películas* [as they do in the

movies], despite the fact that *Weekend at Bernie's* – a 1989 film directed by Ted Kotcheff – was translated into Spanish as *Este muerto está muy vivo*.

In general, most of the original intertextual references have been detected in both episodes and an attempt has been made to reflect them in the Spanish version. There are, however, a few cases where the reference has not been preserved in the target language. This is the case with the name of one of the episodes under analysis, *Mayored to the Mob*, a reference to the movie *Married to the Mob* (Jonathan Demme, 1988), which in Spain was entitled *Casada con todos*. The Spanish translation of the episode's title, *El alcalde y la mafia* [The Mayor and the Mob], is not reminiscent of the movie to which it refers. However, the extreme difficulty in finding a play on words with 'mayor' and 'married' in the target language should not be overlooked. A felicitous solution has been found in the Italian version, where the episode is called *Sindacato con(tro) la mafia*. This solution is based on the similarity of the words *sindaco* [mayor] and *sindacato* [syndicated] and the use of the double preposition *con(tro)* [with/against] also contributes to creating ambiguity and double interpretations not present in the original text.

Cultural Referents

In *The Simpsons*, the source culture is constantly present in the background and one way it manifests itself in the series is through the use of references to units of measurement and to school systems as in the two following extracts from *Lisa the Vegetarian*:

Example 6

Grampa: Well, I'm sorry but it was 150 degrees in the car.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Naturalmente, porque hacía 47 grados en el coche.	[Of course, because it was 47 degrees in the car.]

Example 7

Jimmy: Wow, Mr McClure. I was a grade A moron to ever question eating meat.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
¡Qué tonto soy, señor McClure! Al hacerle esta pregunta he demostrado que soy un pardillo de primera.	[What a fool I am, Mr McClure! When I made that question I showed that I am a first-rate moron.]

In these two examples, and following Venuti's (1995) terminology, it can be said that the cultural elements have been domesticated. According to López Guix and Minett Wilkinson (2000: 281) this seems to be a common strategy when dealing with the translation of certain elements, such as units of weight and measure, musical notes, titles of works that already exist in translation and some aspects of the educational system.

The translation of terms referring to food and drinks may also involve some difficulty, given that they are lexical elements closely related to the culture and customs of a given country (Rodríguez Espinosa, 2001: 107). Let us take a look at the following example from *Mayored to the Mob*:

Example 8

Comic Book Girl: Pardon me, but I wish to tender a serious offer for this stack of water-damaged *Little Lulu's*. Comic Book Guy: 'A' that is not water. That is *Diet Mr Pibb*. And 'B', I . . . ooh . . .	
Dubbed version	***Back translation***
Perdona, deseo hacerte una importante oferta por esta colección de *La pequeña Lulú* pasada por agua. En primer lugar, no es agua. Es *Mr Pibb sin cafeína*. Y en segundo lugar . . .	[Excuse me, I wish to make an important offer for this collection of water-damaged *Little Lulu's*. In the first place, that is not water. That is *caffeine-free Mr Pibb*. And in the second place . . .]

'Mr Pibb' is a spicy cherry carbonated soda produced by the Coca-Cola company that can be acquired in some states in the United States. Since 'Mr Pibb' has never been sold in Spain chances are that the target audience will not know what kind of drink the Comic Book Guy is talking about. This may be the reason why the adjective 'diet' has been translated as *sin cafeína* [*caffeine-free*] to convey to the audience the idea that they are talking about a soft drink, especially targeted at children.

The importance given to the identification of cultural references is reflected in the following example from *Lisa the Vegetarian*, in which the text had to be changed to avoid inconsistency:

Example 9

Sherry/Terry: Look at Miss Potato Head! She has a head made out of lettuce.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Si es la señorita cabeza de patata. Tiene la barriga llena de lechuga.	[But it's miss potato head. She has a tummy full up of lettuce.]

'Miss Potato Head' is the name of a toy manufactured by Hasbro and known in Spain as *la señora Potato* [Mrs Potato]. In the episode, however, it has been literally translated as *señorita cabeza de patata* [Miss potato head] departing from the coined commercial name given to the toy. The translator is therefore forced to modify the second part of the sentence to avoid inconsistency: if the head is made out of potato, it cannot be made out of lettuce.

Humorous Elements

The translation of humorous elements is one of the most demanding tasks that translators must face, since humour tends to resort to the use of puns, plays on words, and sharp and witty comments that in many occasions might have a visual counterpart (see Sanderson, this volume). This challenging nature may explain its attraction to some academics who have studied the translation of humour in *The Simpsons* (Lorenzo *et al.*, 2003; Martínez Sierra, 2003, 2008). According to Zabalbeascoa (2001: 256), TV comedies have a high priority to produce humour, which means that translators must do their best to keep in the target text as many humorous elements as possible. The following, from *Lisa the Vegetarian*, are some examples of humorous situations successfully transferred into Spanish:

Example 10

Bart: I think Lisa's right, Dad. Eating meat is baaaaaaaaaaad. (Imitating the English sound of a sheep.)	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Lisa lleva razón. Comer esto es de beeeeeeeestias. (Imitating the Spanish sound of a sheep)	[Lisa is right. Eating this is of beeeeeeeeeeasts.]

Example 11

Homer: I understand, honey. I used to believe in things when I was a kid. Come on, I'll give you a piggyback … I mean a veggiback ride home.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Yo te entiendo, cariño, porque yo también creía en esas cosas a tu edad. Hala, ¿quieres que te lleve a casa en caballito, digo montada en una verdurita?	[I understand you, honey, because I also used to believe in those things when I was your age. Come on, do you want me to give you a piggyback … I mean veggieback ride home?]

There are, however, instances in which part of the humour is lost in the translation. This might be due to the polysemous nature of the word or expression being used in the original or to the impossibility to find a suitable play on words in the target language, as can be seen in the example below, also from *Lisa the Vegetarian*:

Example 12

Troy: Come on Jimmy, let's take a peek at the killing floor. Jimmy: Ohhh! (Scared.) Troy: Don't let the name throw you, Jimmy. It's not really a floor, it's more of a steel grating that allows material to sluice through so it can be collected and exported.	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Ven Jimmy, veamos el edificio del matadero. ¡Ohhh! Que no te engañe el nombre, Jimmy. No es un edificio, es más bien una cadena de despiece que permite que la materia cárnica pueda ser seleccionada y exportada.	[Come here Jimmy, let's see the abattoir building. Ohhh! Don't let the name throw you, Jimmy. It's not really a building, it's more of a cutting room that allows meat material to be selected and exported.]

'Floor', in this instance, can be understood either as a surface on which one stands or as an area in a building where a lot of people carry out their

work. Jimmy's fear arises from the polysemy of the word and the use of the modifier 'killing'. In Spanish, *edificio* can only mean 'building', and the target audience may not understand why Jimmy is panicking about the idea of visiting a building. The exchange below comes from *Mayored to the Mob*:

Example 13

Mark Hamill: Homer! Use the for . . . (pointing out at a fork with his finger) Homer: The Force? Mark Hamill: The forks! Use the forks!	
Dubbed version	*Back translation*
Homer, utiliza un . . . ¿Un dedo? Un tenedor, utiliza un tenedor.	[Homer, use a . . . A finger? A fork! Use a fork!]

In this example, Homer Simpson is fighting against mob member Fat Tony, who wants to kill Mayor Quimby. Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker in *Stars Wars*) tries to help Homer and, in a tribute to the movie he starred in, he tells Homer to use the forks instead of 'the Force', as anyone familiar with the film would expect. Due to the impossibility of translating the play on words, the translator decides to make the most of the visual clues and chooses to turn a purely linguistic joke into one that rests on the visual dimension, because when Hamill is telling Homer to use the forks, he is pointing with his finger at the mentioned object.

National and Social Identity Features

According to Bravo:

Although linguists have proven that accents and dialects are not decorative elements or a touch of exoticism, since they transmit a large amount of information about the speaker and, if we know how to read the different codes, they immediately reveal to us their geographical origin, social class, education, etc., [. . .] translational practice has traditionally chosen to level out any accent and dialect differences present in the STs, replacing them with standard Spanish. (Bravo, 2003: 243; my translation)

In the dubbed version of *The Simpsons* great effort has been made to replicate in Spanish the different characters' idiolects but without producing an over-domesticating effect. According to Martínez Sierra (2003: 147), this strategy might result in a somewhat artificial product for the target audience. Homer Simpson's 'd'oh' or 'nuts', Bart's 'eat my shorts', or Ned Flander's 'hidely-ho neighborino' are some of the characters' linguistic fingerprints. In the Spanish version, both the translator and the dubbing director have coined the characters' favourite tags: Carlos Revilla, the dubbing director, was the inventor of Homer's famous *moski*s [Spanish equivalent for *d'oh* and/or *nuts*], and María José Aguirre de Cárcer, the translator, was the creator of Bart's *multiplícate por cero* [multiply yourself by zero], the Spanish equivalent of 'eat my shorts', and also responsible for Ned Flander's idiolect full of diminutives.

Despite not being a member of the Simpsons family, Ned Flanders is one of the most important characters in the series. He is the perfect neighbour, he has the perfect family and the perfect house, and he never swears. His way of speaking is very idiosyncratic and personalised, frequently using old-fashioned words and expressions and adding the tag modifier 'didly-do' to almost every single word. To try and convey this information, Flanders always resorts to diminutive suffixes when dubbed into Spanish. This decision was a personal choice made by Aguirre de Cárcer, who considers that the use of diminutive suffixes with most words is the best way to reproduce Flander's affected speech, as in the following example from *Lisa the Vegetarian*:

> *Example 14*

Homer: Hey Flanders! Flanders: Hidely-ho, neighborino! Homer: Shut up! Flanders: Okily-dokily!	
Dubbed version	***Back translation***
Eh, Flanders. Hola, holita, vecinito. ¡Silencio! De acuerdito.	[Hey, Flanders. Hello, little hello, little neighbour. Silence! Little alright.]

Idiolects may also act as an indication of a different national identity, such as in the case of Fat Tony's Italian accent in *Mayored to the Mob*:

Example 15

Fat Tony: I want the mayor dead, I want his wife dead, I want his cat and dog dead. Lenny: Wait, wait, wait, who was before the cat? Fat Tony: Just kill the mayor.	
Dubbed version	**Back translation**
Quiero al alcalde *morto*, quiero a *la sua moglie morta*, quiero a *suo cane morto e a suo gato morto*. Un momento, un momento, ¿qué me dijo antes del gato? Mata al alcalde.	[I want the mayor *morto*, I want *la sua moglie morta*, I want *suo cane morto e a suo gato morto*. Just a moment, a moment, what did you say before the cat? Kill the mayor.]

In the original version the mob members all speak English with a strong Italian accent, thus reflecting the common stereotype of the mafioso being Italian or of Italian descend, but without using a single Italian word. In Spanish, the strategy being used reinforces the Italian origin both phonetically as well as lexically: not only do they have an Italian accent, but they also use some Italian words. According to Lorenzo *et al.* (2003: 286), this reinforcement of the characters' background may contribute to make the dialogue more realistic and credible on some occasions. However, the strategy of resorting to linguistic interference from Italian does not seem to be consistent as Fat Tony does not always use Italian words every time he speaks in the episode.

Concluding Remarks

After analysing the translation of two episodes of *The Simpsons*, it can be safely concluded that most of the main problems faced by the translator have been successfully solved. TV comedies have a high priority for humour, and this seems to be the underlying reason why all the choices that have been made and all the changes that have been introduced try ultimately to preserve, and in some instances even stress, the humorous impact of the original. In order to do so, humorous elements, cultural references, national and social identity features and intertextual references

have to be correctly identified and conveyed in Spanish. Zabalbeascoa outlines that the top priority of any TV comedy is to:

> do well in popularity ratings, be funny, aim for immediate response in the form of entertainment and laughter, integrate the words of the translation with the other constituent parts of the audiovisual text, or use language and textual structures deemed appropriate to the channel of communication. (Zabalbeascoa, 1996: 245)

All these priorities seem to have been taken into consideration in the Spanish version of *The Simpsons*. According to the information provided by the translator of the series, it is clear that when dealing with audiovisual programmes translators do not always have ultimate control over the final script and that their translations are often only used as a first draft. This opinion is also shared by Gilabert *et al.* (2001: 325) when they comment on the false assumption hold by many viewers that translators are the only persons who manipulate the dialogue before dubbing, when, in fact, dubbing is a chain-process involving many professionals.

The Translation of Audiovisual Humour in Just a Few Words

MARIA JOSÉ VEIGA

Introduction

Humour, translation and audiovisual translation (AVT) are three fields of study which have favoured different peaks of academic interest and epistemological development throughout the times. Both Humour Studies and AVT Studies are flourishing and challenging research interests within the broader scope of translation. Given that, according to Díaz Cintas (2003b: 192): 'Translation carried out in the audiovisual field accounts for an increasingly large proportion of translation activity', and because of the hybrid and multidisciplinary nature of this field of research, one could almost speak of the existence of a new discipline within Translation Studies: AVT Studies.

The primary purpose of this article is to contribute to the analysis of audiovisual translation of humour. Although audiovisual humour is the product of the interdependence of both visual and verbal elements, particular attention will be paid to linguistic exchanges in the subtitling of the feature film *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Sharon Maguire, 2001) into European Portuguese, as released on DVD. One of the main objectives of the present work is to investigate the strategies implemented by translators when having to subtitle humour on the screen.

In order to structure and organise the line of thought of this reflection, two subdivisions of analysis are put forward: (1) the specificity of humour studies: a brief account; (2) translating audiovisual humour: the search for relevance and equivalence. I focus essentially on the second for the purpose of this work and, when pertinent, a brief account of the results of a short questionnaire given to Portuguese professional subtitlers is presented. The questionnaire consisted of three open questions: (1) Is there

any special treatment in the allocation of comedy films among audiovisual professional translators? (2) How would you describe the ideal translator of audiovisual comedy/humour? (3) Can you point out the major difficulty (technical, linguistic, cultural …) when translating comedy and humour? The questionnaire was distributed by email to 25 subtitling professionals and although only five answers were received, these reflected a large agreement on all fronts.

The Specificity of Humour Studies: A Brief Account

Both humour and AVT have been the object of several revisions concerning their origins, conceptualisation, purpose, methodology and development as fields of study. Research into humour is not recent. In fact, Attardo (1994: 18) posits that 'literature is unanimous in considering Plato (427–347 BC) as the first theorist of humor' and that Cicero (106–43 BC) introduced the distinction between verbal (*de dicto*) and referential (*de re*) humour, stating that 'the taxonomy presented by Cicero is the first attempt at a taxonomy of humor from a linguistic point of view' (Attardo, 1994: 27–28).

In her seminal book, Chiaro (1992: 1) states that 'studies on humour and what makes people laugh are countless'. Indeed, throughout the centuries humour has been studied from innumerable perspectives: medical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, philosophical, historical, educational, linguistic, and so on. As a result, it is not surprising that a myriad of theories and approaches have emerged, justifying the use of the plural (theories of humour) instead of the singular form (a theory of humour).

Nowadays, the theories of humour are commonly divided into three broad families (Attardo, 1994: 47; Raskin, 1985: 31–40): the cognitive, the social and the psychoanalytical. While the cognitive family of humour deals with incongruity or contrast issues, the social family includes phenomena like hostility, aggression, superiority, triumph, derision and disparagement. Finally, the psychoanalytical family of humour is concerned with release, sublimation, liberation and economy (mental energy) problems, and is related to the discharge of psychic energy which would instead be used to repress psychic activity.

The language of humour has been the focus of several studies, namely those of Raskin (1985), Nash (1985), Attardo (1994, 2002), Defays (1996), Ross (1998), Critchley (2002) and Ermida (2003), among others. In addition to the preoccupation of giving a thorough account on how linguistic elements can be formulated so as to produce humour, the works of Chiaro (1992) and Rosas (2002) tackle the issue of translating humour.

However, there is still very little research on the specificity of humour in audiovisual translation. Most of the reflection upon this subject emerged in the last decade of the 20th century, mainly in the form of PhD and MSc dissertations. The turning point can be said to be the completion of Zabalbeascoa's (1993) PhD, devoted to the dubbing of audiovisual comedies from English to Spanish. From then on, the new millennium has witnessed the flourishing of this research field with works by Jaskanen (1999), Fuentes Luque (2000), Asimakoulas (2001), Marjamäki (2001), Schröter (2005) and Veiga (2006). Scattered articles on the AVT of humour can also be found in some specialised translation journals, such as those by Zabalbeascoa (1996) dealing with dubbing, and by Asimakoulas (2002), which approaches the subtitling of humour. Furthermore, some articles published in a special issue of the journal *The Translator* on *Translating Humour*, guest edited by Vandaele (2002), give an insight into the translation of humour on the screen. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 212–229) also pay particular attention to the subtitling of different types of humour.

Humour management in AVT can be hampered by technical, linguistic and cultural constraints. As a result, when it comes to its translation an interdisciplinary approach is needed in order to understand how humorous stimuli/effects in a source language (SL) and culture may or may not produce the same or similar humorous stimuli/effects on the target audience. In this sense, the target viewer of a subtitled humorous film must relate to both the original dialogue and the original action so that communicative cooperation between the source and the target versions can be achieved.

Translating Audiovisual Humour: The Search for Relevance and Equivalence

Like other language composites, humour is a living organism, constantly absorbing new formulas and evolving through time. This gives rise to a very complicated issue: the Herculean attempt at defining humour. Before proceeding further, I would like to briefly suggest not a definition of humour, but a set of presuppositions that may serve as general guidelines to the way it can be perceived, and may also help us to better understand the complexities inherent to AVT.

Presupposition 1: Humour and laughter are not always correlated

As it happens in many feature films, in *Bridget Jones's Diary (BJD)* two distinct dimensions of humour and laughter can be traceable either

within the film (characters produce humour and laugh) or outside the film (viewers perceive humour and laugh). Humour and laughter within or outside the film may not be coincidental at all times. Moreover, what the characters find humorous and what the viewers establish as such can be quite substantially different. The correlation between humour and laughter is neither as linear nor is it as clear as it apparently may seem.

Laughter is not considered an exclusive result of a humorous stimulus. In fact, the relationship humour/laughter can be two-fold:

(1) Humour and laughter can occur almost simultaneously, being laughter a reaction to the humorous effect or stimulus (Figure 12.1).
(2) Since humour is a psychological/mental phenomenon, it should not be immediately identified with laughter, a neurophysiological manifestation that can be induced by causes other than humour (tickling, psychological unbalance, substance intoxication, and others) (Figure 12.2).

For many reasons, laughter could be a very comfortable first indicator of funniness or amusement. However, do we stop finding a joke or a scene from a film funny when we hear/see it more than once and do not laugh?
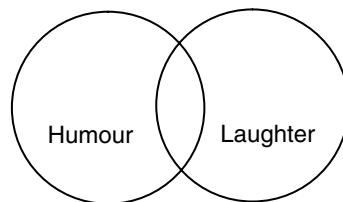
Figure 12.1 Humour and laughter related
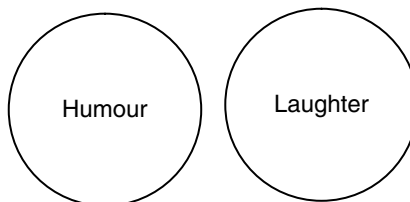
Figure 12.2 Humour and laughter unrelated

What happens if we are told a joke, if we read a book or if we see a film which we find particularly humorous but we do not laugh? Do they lose their humour potential? Are laughter and humour measurable? It seems to be rather painful to have to justify socially the absence of laughter even though we have perceived the humorous effect, that is, even though we have considered the humorous utterance felicitous in Austinian terms (Austin, 1962).

Although it is common to laugh at a humorous act, it can be argued that laughter as the ultimate goal of humour is indeed a fallacy. In reality, according to Defays (1996: 6): 'this method that consists in describing humour through its effects should be handled with a lot of precaution' (my translation). Additionally, Attardo asserts that:

> One common criterion seems to underlie the working definitions of humor implicitly, and sometimes explicitly: laughter. The assumption behind this identification of humor and laughter is that what makes people laugh is humorous, and hence the property is incorrectly seen as symmetrical – what is funny makes you laugh and what makes you laugh is funny. This leads to the identification of a mental phenomenon (humor) with a complex neurophysiological manifestation (laughter). (Attardo, 1994: 10)

Even if humour does not result in laughter it could still provide a positive, pleasant and happy disposition or sense of well-being in individuals, largely contributing to the individual's processing of emotional pleasure. Physiologically, this has been demonstrated in several neuroimaging studies. Neuroimaging is a technique applied to shed light 'on the affective, cognitive, and motor networks involved in humour processing' (Mobbs *et al.*, 2003: 1041). In their article, Mobbs *et al.* (2003: 1041) report an experiment that succeeded in unveiling that humour actually modulates activity in several cortical regions. It also engages 'a network of subcortical regions [thus offering] a new insight into the neural basis of salutary aspects of humour'.

When translating a humorous programme, the correct identification of the relevance of humorous utterances that might generate such feelings and their subsequent transfer into the target language should be two of the main objectives of the translator of audiovisual material. However, it is obvious we are all, as individuals, amused by different things and situations. An awareness of this difference in perception permeates the debate and justifies the discussion of humour as a subjective and a relative concept. This opens a new direction to my argument which I elaborate on in the second presupposition.

Presupposition 2: Humour is a subjective and relative concept

In conceptual terms, humour can be regarded as universal but it is obvious that different people react differently to the same humorous stimuli; a fact that leads one to consider linguistic humour a universally relative concept. I share Chiaro's (1992: 4) view when she presents an analogy between language and laughter and claims that both are human universals. Notwithstanding, culture-specific topics inherent to verbal humour show more difficulty in crossing language and culture boundaries, even within the confines of Western culture. It is also pertinent to say that even within the same culture or community humour can play diverse roles in terms of reception, acceptability and viewers' reaction. Díaz Cintas (2003a: 253) corroborates this idea, applying it to audiovisual humour: 'it is true that humour is a social feeling, and it is different and distinct in each society. Different cultures, and in some extreme cases different directors, conceptualise humour in different ways and find the comic effect in dissimilar situations' (my translation).

Furthermore, the Portuguese subtitlers who answered the abovementioned questionnaire (*cf.* question 3) are unanimous in substantiating this opinion when they refer to the considerable degree of difficulty when translating humour, at both linguistic and cultural levels, particularly when dealing with idiomatic expressions and puns. From a technical point of view they consider that the need for synchronisation between the written word and the soundtrack and image crucially determines the result of a felicitous solution.

In his explanation of why humour is local and sense of humour is context-specific, Critchley (2002: 67) argues that 'anyone who has tried to render what they believe to be a hugely funny joke into a foreign language only to be met by polite incomprehension will have realized that humour is terribly difficult to translate, perhaps impossible'. Also, as far as jokes are concerned, Chiaro (1992: 7–8) mentions that although their topics tend to be universal, they are liable to 'undergo variations from culture to culture'. Nevertheless, when we actually try to translate jokes it is a completely different issue: 'no matter how well the translator knows the target language, cultural references and polysemous items may well involve them in longwinded explanations, after which the recipient rarely reacts with a laugh' (Chiaro, 1992: 77).

We can then infer that humour differs from individual to individual, from context to context and from one culture to another. Mediation in these cases can be carried out resorting to substitutions and adaptations. When subtitling humour, both substitution and adaptation must take into consideration all the linguistic (*de dicto*), nonlinguistic or referential (*de re*)

and technical constraints involved, which do not allow enough space or time for 'longwinded explanations'.

Delabastita (1996: 134) suggests some editorial techniques when dealing with the translation of puns: 'comments provided in translators' forewords, the "anthological" presentation, supposedly complementary solutions to one and the same source-text problem, and so forth'. However, subtitling cannot normally resort to explanatory footnotes or endnotes (*cf.* Díaz Cintas, 2007) and the only strategies available to the translator are explicitation or explanation and, sometimes, addition. Selection is absolutely imperative in subtitling and must be guided by the relevance provided by image and words, so that maximum equivalence in humour exchanges is achieved.

The several media and technical constraints that impinge on subtitling mean that verbal condensation and deletion are valid strategies. Condensation will be obviously dependent, to a large extent, on the rhythm and the intensity of verbal interaction and on its relevance to produce the humorous effect. On this subject Kruger argues that:

> Translation proper involves passing from one language to another, mostly in the same form (written or oral). Subtitling, on the other hand, involves passing from spoken language to written language, which consistently requires a substantial amount of condensation. The condensation is required because within any given time a much larger volume of text can be assimilated aurally than visually. Within this framework, interlingual subtitling can therefore be classified as a form of translation [...] nevertheless it is also distinguished from translation proper by certain unique characteristics, most notably the amount of condensation involved. (Kruger, 2001: 177)

Even though AVT is not an easy task, this might help explaining why SL humorous instances can be translated into other languages and cultures. However, in subtitling, the target text very seldom comes out in as many words as the original. Most of the times, subtitled humour is rendered in far fewer words, thus giving the audience a sense of loss in translation. Eco (2003: 34) alerts us to the fact that 'there are cases in which, talented as they are, translators are obliged to work at a loss', and this holds true for audiovisual translators too. In his study on language-based humour in seven subtitled films (in seven European languages), for different media (TV and DVD), Schröter (2004: 165) notes that in quantitative terms it is not surprising that a loss of about one third of the original takes place when subtitling language-play.

For some like Mayoral *et al.* (1988) this justifies the notion of subtitling as 'constrained translation', a label I disagree with for I consider that subtitling is not the only kind of translation which is subject to constraints since, to some extent, all types are determined by constraints not only linguistic but cultural as well.

Reduction and condensation can be also justified due to the fact that the image illustrates what could be difficult to translate because of media constraints. On occasions, when image and subtitles are shown simultaneously, they may produce redundant meanings since they complement each other in the construction of humor. We must not forget that images constitute a net of connections that viewers exploit to relate to the information provided in the subtitles, as in Examples 1 and 2:

> *Example 1*
>
> Bridget (voiceover): Great, I was wearing a carpet. [Carpet – refers to the pattern of her dress resembling that of a carpet, as is conveyed by the image.]

> *Example 2*
>
> Bridget (voiceover): Maybe this was the mysterious 'Mr Right' I'd been waiting my whole life to meet. [...] Maybe not [after having seen the reindeer on Darcy's jumper, which she utterly dislikes].

The context in which these examples occur determine their interpretation, thus their humorous effect. Neither of the utterances in isolation would probably convey humour. Without the close-up of Bridget's dress pattern and of Mr Darcy's jumper, verbal humour would not be sufficient as stimuli to produce humour. When referring to AVT humour it is essential to take into account the reciprocity between image and words in the construction and reproduction of audiovisual humour.

Zabalbeascoa (1996) presents a model for the dubbing of television situation comedies based on priorities and restrictions, which can be applied to subtitling. For the author (Zabalbeascoa, 1996: 243): 'the concept of priorities is used as a means of expressing intended goals for a given translation task and the restrictions are the obstacles and problems that help justify one's choice of priorities and, ultimately, the solutions adopted in the translation'. In accordance with this model, a scale of priorities (of high and low order) must be established at a global level (whole of a text) or at a local level (a particular part of speech). The functions of humour, the mental states and attitudes expressed by humour should also be assessed so as to help in the decision of translating or omitting an

utterance in the film. Zabalbeascoa (1996: 247–248) also argues that, as a priority, equivalence is an important issue too that can be a variable depending on whether it has been established as a high priority or not. In the case of it being seen as low priority, we may be in the presence of nonequivalence (i.e. it is a priority for the translation not to show a certain kind or degree of equivalence), or equivalence not regarded. Whatever the priorities when translating humour, one should take into account that humour equivalence is always subjective and it depends on how humour is perceived and (re)produced by the translator/subtitler and ultimately by the viewer.

Toury (1995: 26) points out that translations are cultural facts of a target culture, adding that: 'there is no way a translation could share the same systemic space with its original; not even when the two are physically present side by side'. In the case of subtitling, the source text is concurrent with the target text, allowing for comparisons to be made when the audience is acquainted with the SL and culture. We may forget the existence of an original text while reading a translated book, but subtitling constantly reminds us that an original text is present, exposing the translator's work. Out of all AVT modes, subtitling is the one most liable to criticism and evaluation and constitutes a genuine and demanding challenge to AVT professionals.

In an attempt at diminishing and bridging linguistic and cultural barriers in subtitled humour the translator should aim at reaching perlocutionary equivalence. In other words, the humorous effect of what an individual utters in a SL should be triggered in the target language so as to provide the target audience with the same viewing experience. Sometimes, in an attempt to achieve perlocutionary equivalence, translators need to make use of recontextualisation 'which consists of totally or partially abandoning the literal, propositional or locutionary level, while maintaining the illocutionary act (usually "telling") as far as possible and focusing strongly on the perlocutionary effect, directly or accurately reproducing it' (Hickey, 1998: 222). Recontextualisation brings us again to the discussion of relevance as the cognitive environment that allows the recipient of humour to interpret its idiosyncrasies.

Presupposition 3: Humour and intelligence are correlates

If we accept a language to be a complex rational entity, it follows that particular uses of language that may give rise to humorous instances – for example, verbal play, intertextuality, irony, ambiguity, deviant sentences and pronunciation, analogy, alliteration, hyperbole, metaphor, and so

on – are indeed a product of a multifaceted cognitive process. As Neubert and Shreve put it:

> human beings use language to reflect and to communicate what they know and feel about physical and social reality. […] Cognition cannot be separated from communication. They are a unified act rather than a sequence of two independent acts. […] There is a complex relationship between cognitive content and communicative event, between knowledge and process. (Neubert & Shreve, 1992: 37)

Indeed, the perception and interpretation of humour require more than a mere grammatical competence, otherwise we could download on a computer all the words of a given set of languages and expect it to be aware of all the uncountable combinations and to recognise the intertwining of verbal and referential circumstances that contribute to a humorous construct.

In the field of AVT the translator activates several kinds of competences: linguistic, communicative (pragmatic) and technical. In addition to these competences, another skill has to be considered: the audiovisual humour translation competence. As for the translational competence, and according to Neubert and Shreve (1992: 37): 'translators must account for the cognitive content of the communication and they must use language in that accounting [therefore] the competence of the translator is not just a knowledge of two language systems, but also a communicative knowledge'. Moreover, this knowledge is '*knowing how to use language* in specific interactional situations' (Neubert & Shreve, 1992: 37). The translator must find the best solutions so as to communicate humour, or to produce in the target audience as much as possible the same humorous effect, with the same or similar pragmatic force.

Based on the notion of grammatical competence, developed by Chomsky (1965), Hymes (1972) widened this concept to communicative competence, which includes grammatical and pragmatic competences. Raskin (1985: 58) reformulates and enlarges this idea, proposing a 'humour competence' in his Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH). According to him 'the script is a cognitive structure internalized by the native speaker and it represents the native speaker's knowledge of a small part of the world' (Raskin, 1985: 81). Each individual usually possesses three types of scripts: (a) scripts of common sense (representative of his/her knowledge of certain routines); (b) individual scripts (dependent on his/her personal background and subjective experience); and (c) restricted scripts, shared by the speaker with a limited group (colleagues, neighbours, etc.). However, it must be emphasised that Raskin only mentions humour competence in

relation to native speaker production. In the context of AVT, humour competence is not to be expected only from the native speaker/receiver, but also from the translator/subtitler.

Attardo (1994), in his approach to jokes, presents a General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), revisiting and incorporating Raskin's SSTH. According to Attardo (1994: 222), besides a semantic theory of humour, the GTVH includes textual linguistics, the theory of narrativity and pragmatics. These new elements expand even further the understanding of jokes and other forms of humorous narrative thanks to the introduction of knowledge resources (KRs) (Attardo, 2002) inherent to humour.

There are six KRs: (1) language, containing all the necessary information for the verbalisation of a text (the actual wording and organisation of functional elements); (2) narrative strategy, which accounts for the fact that jokes have to be cast in some form of narrative organisation; (3) target, an optional parameter, which takes into consideration which group of stereotyped individuals humour aims at; (4) situation, or the context evoked by humour; (5) logical mechanism, which embodies the resolution of incongruity, also an optional parameter in cases of nonsense or absurd humour; and (6) script opposition, a cognitive structure that provides individuals with information about how the world is structured, allowing them to perceive pragmatic and contextual incompatibilities. Attardo (2002: 182) stresses the idea that 'each culture, and within it each individual, will have a certain number of scripts that are not available to humour (i.e. about which it is inappropriate to joke)'.

How relevant are KRs to audiovisual translation? First of all, the set of KRs aforesaid shows consistency with the current presupposition that humour and intelligence/cognitive environment are indeed correlated. This means that AVT professionals dealing with humour need to know (at least two) languages; use different narrative strategies when necessary; adapt humour to a target group; be aware that not all logical mechanisms in a SL are translatable; be sensitive to the context in which humour is presented in the film and the context (media, time) in which the film will be seen; and refrain, as far as possible, from changing a script opposition, only resorting to modification in cases where a script opposition is not available in the target language or because of technical constraints. Secondly, I subscribe Attardo's (2002: 184) point of view when he declares that a translation that respects all six KRs may be utopian, given that he distrusts the notion of absolute or perfect translation, yet a translation that values none can no longer be considered as such. This might explain why Attardo (2002: 183) recommends translators of humorous texts to respect

all six KRs in their translation when possible, but if required, translations should differ at the lowest level necessary for pragmatic purposes.

In my opinion, humour competence is not innate, although paradoxically it is neither entirely learnable nor teachable. It can be unnoticeably acquired and developed alongside other sociocultural attitudes and determined by them. As Morreall (1983: 92) states: 'humour is a variety of aesthetic experience' and, as such, it is directly reliant on individuals' sensitivity and on their cognitive environment. Humour production, and more specifically language-based humour, also allows for a large margin of creativity with language structures and contextual meaning(s). Besides, the comprehension and the appreciation of humour cannot be equated with the individual's capacity to produce humour, especially in the case of translation.

This helps understand the answer given by the Portuguese AVT professionals about the ideal profile of translators of humour (*cf.* question 2): good sense of humour; exceptional sensitivity to understand a joke and to depict language register and rhythm, in order to search for the best equivalent; more profound knowledge than other translators of both source and target languages and cultures, which will make it easier to find humoristic solutions that respect the synchronisation of image/word. From this information, we can deduce that not every audiovisual translator qualifies to render humour or, in other words, not every translator manifests humour awareness or possesses audiovisual humour translation competence. It comes as no surprise, then, that when answering question 1 about the allocation of comedy films, the informants shared the same opinion: an effort should be made to allocate such translating commissions to professionals who exhibit a profile as described above.

The process of getting audiovisual humour across languages and cultures is much more complex than it appears to be, and it explains why the audiovisual humour translation competence requires translational, technical and humour competences. The latter can be seen as a supplementary skill that, while being dependent on language and culture related competences, implies additional aptitudes of humour perception and response.

Humour competence presupposes humour awareness which will allow the translator to easily recognise elements of situational or verbal humour, such as irony, allusion, ambiguity and incongruity, among others. The fact that *BJD* is a romantic comedy is an indicator of the verbal and situational humour that might occur throughout the film. However, the translator's awareness may be challenged when in presence of a dramatic film which may contain some humorous utterances. For the translator, the stage of

recognition of humour is only a trigger for the process of decision-making. In relation to technical competence in subtitling, we have to bear in mind its inherent constraints: synchronisation between sound, image and content, number of characters allowed per subtitle, time exposure of each subtitle, target group and readability, among others (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007).

On the one hand, we can say that, in general terms, translation is expected to be a *bona fide* mode of communication, governed by the cooperative principle and by the four conversational maxims (Grice, 1975/1989). On the other hand, according to Raskin (1985: 100–101), humour is a non-*bona-fide* mode of communication. How can the translator reconcile both approaches in AVT? In my opinion, when a violation or flouting of any of the maxims (quantity, quality, manner and relation) is perceived by translators as a source of humorous effect, they must deconstruct it in the original text and reconstitute it in the subtitle. Besides, humour cannot be seen exclusively as a mere flouting/violating of the cooperative principle of communication. My argument is that, being aware of that transgression/subversion, the audiovisual translator should be able to deconstruct and reformulate it in such a way that the infringement of the source text is carried through to the target text with all its potential for eliciting a cooperative complicity from the reader of the subtitle.

Very often verbal humour is generally identified with non-cooperative behaviour, thence violating all conversational maxims. If so, how can humorous communication be possible and felicitous? We seem to be before an illogical situation since, owing to its idiosyncratic formulae, verbal humour can enjoy its own distinctive cooperative principle and exhibit its own maxims, consistent with the world created by humorous utterances. Also, we can observe that humour subsists according to the world that it implies, be it real or fictional.

The notion of humour cooperative principle is fertile in the context of AVT and entails a triad structure: (a) a thesis, or communicative norms, as established according to Gricean cooperative principle and maxims; (b) an antithesis, or an unbalance, contrast or disparity between the individual's cognitive environment/expectations and the possible world inherent to humour constructs; and (c) a synthesis in which the individual reassesses and negotiates meanings so as to restructure and interpret humorous stimuli, that is, interlocutors share knowledge/meanings or cooperate in the overcoming of given incongruities.

Taking into account that Grice's (1975/1989) conversational maxims and Raskin's (1985) joke telling maxims reveal to be insufficient as far as the peculiarities of subtitling humour are concerned, I suggest the following audiovisual humour subtitling maxims (Table 12.1).

Table 12.1 Audiovisual humour subtitling maxims

Grice (1975/1989: 27–29)	*Raskin (1985: 103)*	*My proposal*
Conversational maxims	*Joke telling maxims*	*Audiovisual humour subtitling maxims*
(i) *Quantity* Give exactly as much information as required	(i) *Quantity* Give exactly as much information as is necessary for the joke	(i) *Quantity* Give exactly as much information as required for humour rendering considering that there are image/sound/text synchronisation constraints
(ii) *Quality* Say only what you believe to be true	(ii) *Quality* Say only what is compatible with the world of the joke	(ii) *Quality* Translate/subtitle only what is compatible with the world of humorous intention (consider linguistic and cultural adaptations or explicitation)
(iii) *Relation* Be relevant	(iii) *Relation* Say only what is relevant to the joke	(iii) *Relation* Translate/subtitle only what is strictly relevant to AVT humour
(iv) *Manner* Be perspicuous: (1) Avoid obscurity of expression (2) Avoid ambiguity (3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) (4) Be orderly	(iv) *Manner* Tell the joke efficiently	(iv) *Manner* Translate/subtitle humour efficiently: if obscurity, ambiguity and prolixity are part of humorous discourse do not avoid them, except if there are medium/target audience constraints

Language Levels of Humorous Stimulus

I shall now concentrate on the particular uses of language aforementioned which do not only refer to conventional language skills, but they are also related to the process of recognising linguistic deviations at several levels that generate humour: graphological, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. None of these levels of language-based humorous stimulus are mutually exclusive; indeed they can occur simultaneously or side by side, as we will see in examples taken from the feature film *BJD*.

(1)   Graphological (the way words are spelled out or represented), pho-
netic/phonological (related to pronunciation and prosodic elements)
and morphological (word formation):

   Example 3

Bridget (V.O.): Mr Fitzherbert – Titspervert, more like … Daniel's boss, who stares freely at my breasts with no idea who I am or what I do.	
Subtitled version	*Back translation*
O Sr. Fitzherbert, ou Vistetetas, o chefe do Daniel,	[Mr Fitzherbert, or Seentits Daniel's chief,
que me gala os seios sem pudor e sem saber quem sou ou o que faço.	who stares at my breasts with no bashfulness and without knowing who I am or what I do.]

Let us consider the question of phonetics in the transformation of
Mr Fitzherbert's nickname, from Titspervert (a near-homophone in
English) to *Vistetetas* [Seentits]. Although the phonemes [f] and [v] are
distinctive, they are both labio-dental fricative consonants, that is, the
sound produced and their place of articulation are very similar. A great
effort to maintain the repetition (alliteration) of the plosive apico-dental
[t] (Titspervert – Vistetetas) in the subtitled version has been made as
well. On a morphological level the translator managed to preserve
not only the meaning of seeing/gazing/staring through the use of
the verb *ver* [to see] in the past tense, *viste*, but also retained the word
tetas [tits].

(2)   Morphological (word formation) and semantic (meaning relations):

   Example 4

Jude (thru phone): I'm too needy. Am I co-dependant? Bridget (into phone): No, you're not. It's not you. You're lovely. It's vile Richard. He's just a big knobhead with no knob.	
Subtitled version	*Back translation*
Sou demasiado carente. Achas que sou uma lapa?	[I am too needy. Do you think I am a limpet?
Não és nada. És adorável. É o malandro do Richard.	No, you're not. You're adorable. It's naughty Richard.
É um grande pilantra sem pila.	He is a scoundrel with no dick.]

What I would like to pinpoint from this example is the metaphorical and euphemistic use of 'knob' and the suffix 'head' to mean 'penis'. Yet, in Portuguese the metaphor is not conveyed, but a play with word formation is kept and so is the sexual connotation. Although morphologically *pilantra* [scoundrel] is not a compound, the word *pila* [dick] is semantically maintained in *pilantra* and its use is reinforced when it is isolated and repeated. Additionally, the use of *pila* is stronger as a sexual referent, for it belongs to taboo language, than the polysemous use of 'knob' in English.

(3)   Syntactic (structural sentence order), semantic, morphological and graphological:

Example 5

Computer screen: You appear to have forgotten your skirt (not subtitled into Portuguese). Is skirt off sick??
Bridget (V.O.): Message Mr Cleaver: am appalled by message. Skirt is, demonstrably, neither sick nor absent. Appalled by management's blatantly size-ist attitude to skirt. Suggest management sick … not skirt.

Subtitled version	*Back translation*
Saia deu parte de doente?	[Is skirt off sick?
Mensagem para Sr. Cleaver.	Message Mr Cleaver
Estou escandalizada.	Am scandalized.
Saia não está, obviamente, doente nem ausente.	Skirt is not, obviously, sick nor absent.
Escandalizada com atitude tamanhista em relação a saia.	Scandalised with sizeist attitude in relation to skirt.
Sugiro chefia doente,	Suggest management sick,
saia não.	not skirt.]

Syntactically, what is striking in this example is the absence of pronouns, auxiliary verbs and articles which is very common in message writing, especially in telegrams and emails. Even though both languages display these features, Portuguese shows a greater omission of articles than English. This is certainly due to linguistic differences between the two

languages. Comparatively, more articles are normally used in Portuguese than in English.

Now, let us focus on the adjectives 'size-ist' and *tamanhista*. Semantically, the use of the suffixes 'ist' and *ista* reinforce the kind of discriminatory attitude, conferring a new negative meaning and connotation to 'size' and *tamanho* [size]. Although both languages use very similar suffixes, these morphemes are only hyphenised in English. Notwithstanding, the Portuguese subtitler handles this semantic marker in a way that allows the target audience to perceive the manipulation of grammar rules, hence making use of a creative language combination.

(4)   Pragmatic (communicating meaning in context)

Example 6

Cleaver: Psst, Brenda. Listen, what are you doing tonight? Bridget: Actually I'm busy. Cleaver: Oh, right. Well, that's a shame. I just … well, I thought it might be a charitable thing to take your skirt out for dinner. Try and fatten it up a bit. Maybe you could come, too?	
Subtitled version	*Back translation*
Brenda …	[Brenda …
– Que fazes logo à noite? – Estou ocupada.	– What are you doing tonight? – I am busy.
Cleaver to Bridget: É pena.	It's a shame.
Achei que seria caridoso levar a saia a jantar fora,	I thought it might be charitable taking the skirt out for dinner,
para ver se ela engorda.	to see if it fattens up.
Podias vir também.	You could come too.]

Cleaver's utterances are almost self-explanatory. Here, the conversational implicature is obvious and what Cleaver is doing is inviting Bridget for a date, to say the least. In case she does not understand or infer this perlocutionary act she would, then, be considered uncooperative and the humour effect would be inexistent.

From the previous examples, it is legitimate to infer that besides linguistic, communicative (pragmatic) and technical proficiency, translators,

in general, and audiovisual translators, in particular, require the activation of several knowledge resources and competences, that is, a set of operative skills which cannot be reduced to linguistic knowledge or to sensitivity alone. Subtitling (humour) is thus an integrated process which entails the interaction of a myriad of cognitive domains.

Final Remarks

Díaz Cintas (2003a: 253) advocates that humour is undeniably one of the instances that tests translators' skills, forcing them to activate imaginative solutions in order to find equivalence between the humorous intention of the SL and the humorous effect in the target language. The Portuguese professionals who replied to the questionnaire firmly believe that to subtitle humour some distinctive prerequisites must be met. These are what I have called throughout this work humour awareness, humour competence (Raskin, 1985: 58) and audiovisual humour translation competence. Such conditions will be extremely valuable in order to undertake the threefold challenge demanded to subtitle humour:

- first stage: recognition of humorous (perlocutionary) stimulus/i (humour awareness);
- second stage: process of meaning negotiation, between source and target languages (humour competence);
- third stage: decision-making according to language (relevance; recontextualisation; priorities and restrictions), culture (cultural encyclopaedia in both languages) and technical boundaries (imposed by medium constraints) so that the perlocutionary equivalence and force can be achieved (audiovisual humour translation competence).

Humour should not be conceived as a flouting of the cooperative principle nor as a violation of conversational maxims. In humour, a synergy of thought, a cooperative connivance must be established between sender and receiver, therefore between the source text and the translator and the target audience. This kind of cooperation in the understanding of humour is what in this chapter has been defined as humour cooperative principle, accompanied by specific audiovisual humour subtitling maxims.

Chapter 13

Gender Portrayal in Dubbed and Subtitled Comedies

MARCELLA DE MARCO

A New Approach to Audiovisual Translation

Since sound film took its first steps in the late 1920s, it has been clear that, because of its language characterised by a visual and an audio code, cinema does not simply reproduce reality but also speaks reality, mirrors values, conveys messages and, in doing so, brings about the meeting between cultures. Sound films create the need for translation and usher in dubbing and subtitling.

Perhaps because of its hands-on nature, audiovisual translation (AVT) has long been ignored as a field of research and considered mainly a professional activity. However, the development of film studies has recently taken notice of AVT as a discipline in departments of translation, sociolinguistics and even history.

Most of the studies on this subject deal with technical aspects such as the different types of AVT, the characteristics of the audiovisual text, the kinds of synchrony, space and time constraints, and so on (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 69–99). Interest in this field has been growing in recent decades, showing that film, translation and sociological studies have a lot in common, and indicating that the way in which images are portrayed and dialogue dubbed or subtitled acquires social and ideological connotations because of their impact on the audience's feelings and their perception of reality. This is the context in which I shall place my study on the cinematic portrayal of gender, paying special attention to whether, and if so how, dubbing and subtitling transmit gender stereotypes from one culture to another.

For this purpose, I analyse four US films: *Working Girl* (Mike Nichols, 1988), *Erin Brockovich* (Steven Soderbergh, 2000), *Sister Act* (Emile Ardolino, 1992) and *Mrs Doubtfire* (Chris Columbus, 1993). Their content, dialogue

and characters provide clues about how gender is portrayed on screen, whether images and dialogue mirror unpleasant stereotypes, and whether this stereotypical perspective is transferred linguistically in the Spanish and Italian dubbed and subtitled versions of the films that have been distributed on DVD.

Representation of Gender

According to Butler (1990), gender is what being a man or a woman means in a specific society in relation to factors such as race, class and historical period, and the focus of this chapter is on womanhood and femininity. Gender and Translation Studies are two academic fields which have often been brought into relationship in the last decades. The reason for this is the many similarities their related concepts – gender and translation – have in common:

(1) both are variable categories: perfect equivalence in translation is impossible just as absolute identity is impossible in gender;
(2) they have long been seen as two forms of a lesser speech: translation as subordinate to the source text and femininity as subordinate to masculinity;
(3) under the influence of cultural studies, translation has been interpreted as a force re-enacting aspects of a culture often overlooked: the female voice is one of these aspects.

From this point of view, translation becomes the tool through which the dominant ideologies are disclosed and questioned. These perspectives have led to fruitful discussion within feminist criticism and have branched out into different directions such as gynocriticism, black-woman criticism, queer theory and postcolonial studies. These trends show the multidimension of gender (femininity, race, gay/lesbian sexuality, nationality) and reflect the needs of these social categories, whose voices have long been silenced because they were minorities in a Western-patriarchal-heterosexual social system, to be more visible. To these groups, the act of translating is a way to voice their opinions and differences with respect to the canon.

These discourses have encouraged research into the interconnection between gender issues and translation since the 1970s and grew from a literary context. When we talk about gender and translation studies we usually refer to the female translators of books, written by either male or female authors, who openly express their remarks on the redefinition of the act of translating. Spivak (1993), Maier (1995), von Flotow (1997) and Simon (1996) are just a few examples of scholars who have analysed this

process in depth. Focusing their attention on various aspects, they have all tried to work out new translation theories to provide some understanding of what translating literary texts 'as a woman' implies.

De Lauretis (1987: 2), when commenting on Foucault's theory of sexuality as a 'technology of sex', defines gender as 'the set of effects produced in bodies and behaviours by a complex political technology'. Cinema is one of these technologies. As regards the gender stereotypes that Western cinema conveys, I do not think that only economic interests determine a certain image of woman focused, in most cases, on the representation of her physical appearance. This kind of portrayal is the result of a patriarchal frame of mind relevant not only to cinema, but also TV, literature, writing and reading. The representation of gender in a cultural context reflects how society has always seen women and men as opposite categories. Since men have been customarily set up as the norm, women are automatically considered deviant, dependent, their behaviour set forth in stereotypical terms and their bodies depicted as a projection of male scopophilic desire (Mulvey, 1975). In other words, most films speak to audiences as if they were made up only of men, or as if all the audience (men and women) shared these patriarchal pleasures.

The problem is that, even when not everybody agrees, viewers, directors and actors are part of a social system which subtly inculcates myths, values and clichés which they absorb unconsciously. And although there are more and more female actors and directors who have been working on alternative forms of representation and filmmaking, they have nevertheless reached their status by availing themselves of male tools. Thus visual and linguistic stereotypes proliferate within narrative cinema. We find instances of this in the typical roles that female characters play in most films (prostitutes, nuns, mothers), in the way they are portrayed, and in the sexist loaded words and expressions with which they are addressed.

Analysis of the Films

As mentioned, the aim of this study is to examine how AVT mirrors and contributes to conveying stereotypes from one culture into another. Most gender stereotypes reflect a sexist attitude which is the result of certain patterns of thought characterising the society in question. Sexism manifests itself linguistically as well as through behaviour and interaction with other people, but it is through language that we find the clearest evidence of sexism, since language is the means by which we usually voice our ideas and attitudes.

Let us now turn to some examples from the films in which language discloses sexist stereotypes. None of the films analysed contains extremely vulgar language, but the frequency of sexist and offensive expressions, used by both male and female characters, show how deeply rooted these are. Sometimes the nuances of these expressions are maintained in the two translated versions, sometimes they are reproduced using less or more offensive terms, and sometimes they are not reproduced at all.

Gender Stereotypes in Translation

The purpose of my study is not to make a list of offensive terms to see whether they are literally translated. Many of my examples are expressions uttered by characters to vent their anger. Sometimes they are simply colloquial idioms meant to reproduce an informal register, but even these phrases confirm the persistent presence of stereotypes. The following examples discuss whether the dubbed (dub) and subtitled (sub) translations maintain offensive connotations and to what extent they are responsible for perpetuating stereotypical images. The English, Spanish (Sp) and Italian (It) versions are given. For shorter exchanges I provide the original version with entire dubbed and subtitled translations, as well as their back translations. In longer scenes I quote only the original versions and provide the translation of their most relevant utterances in the corresponding comments.

Working Girl 1

Cyn: What d'ya need speech class for? You talk fine.		
Sp dub	¿Para qué necesitas clases de lenguaje? Tú hablas de puta madre.	[What do you need language classes for? You speak of whore mother. (lit. brilliantly)]
Sp sub	¿Para qué la necesitas? Hablas bien.	[What do you need it for? You speak well.]
It dub	A che ti serve un corso di dizione? Sai già parlare.	[What do you need a course on diction for? You already know how to speak.]
It sub	E che ci vai a fare? Tu parli bene.	[And what for do you go there? You speak well.]

Only the Spanish dubbed version uses an idiomatic phrase reflecting a disparaging conception of femininity. In Spanish and Italian cultures,

expressions about 'mothers' and 'prostitutes' are common, but in this case the Italian translation eluded a sexist connotation. The dubbed Spanish translation uses a phrase that is commonly heard in Spain, *de puta madre*, for the purpose of reproducing the informal tone of this friendly conversation. But this very lack of awareness on the part of the speakers shows how prejudices and distorted views about femininity go unnoticed. The Spanish sub, on the contrary, is much closer to the original and uses a phrase without any sexist connotations, but does not, however, convey the colloquial tone of Cyn's remark. In the following example, Tess finds Mick in bed with another woman. After his weak excuse, she says:

Working Girl 2

You snake!		
Sp dub	¡Cerdo!	[Pig!]
Sp sub	¡Cerdo!	[Pig!]
It dub	Sei un verme!	[You're a worm!]
It sub	Serpe!	[Snake!]

According to the *Webster's* (1994), the meaning of 'snake' when addressing someone is 'a treacherous and unpleasant person who cannot be trusted', which is precisely the idea Tess wants to convey. But there is a further meaning, as in the phrase 'trouser snake', meaning 'penis' (www.spraak service.net/slangportal). Since the Spanish *cerdo* [pig] can also refer to men with wandering eyes, both the English and Spanish versions remain ambiguous, suggesting sexual/sexist connotations. On the contrary, the Italian *verme* [worm] in the dub and *serpe* [snake] in the sub do not evoke sexist connotations and merely express Tess's anger.

The night of Cyn and Tim's engagement party, Mick asks Tess if she wants to marry him in front of all their friends and she answers: 'Maybe'. Mick feels humiliated and later they quarrel:

Working Girl 3

Tess: I said maybe.
Mick: Maybe means dick! Fuck maybe! I want an answer now!

> Tess: Please don't yell at me! You treat me like I'm dumb.
> Mick: Why are we always talking about the way you get treated, huh?
>   Who the fuck died and made you Grace Kelly?
> Tess: I'm not steak! You can't just order me!

The vulgar terms 'dick' and 'fuck' are translated into Italian by vulgar equivalents *cazzo* [dick] and *in culo* [in the ass] but the Spanish uses the less obscene – yet offensive nevertheless – *mierda* [shit]. What is particularly striking are two sentences: 'I want an answer now' has a literal correspondence in Spanish (*Quiero una respuesta ahora*), but not in the Italian dub, where it is rendered *Così a me non si risponde* [That is not the way to answer me]. A literal translation might be possible *Voglio una risposta adesso* [I want an answer now], and would effectively convey Mick's arrogance, but the translator prefers a phrase suggesting that male pride cannot suffer any defeat, especially if this threat comes from a woman who dares to challenge him. Her second reply, 'I'm not a steak! You can't just order me!' is similar in the Italian dub and sub, as well as in the Spanish sub. However, the Spanish dub, *Yo no quiero ser tu esclava. No puedes darme órdenes, ¿comprendes?* back translates as 'I don't want to be your slave. You can't give me orders, got it?'. Remarkably, both images reflect the way women are often seen: as an object for consumption ('steak') or exploitation ('slave'). Furthermore, the original 'the way you get treated' is personalised in the Spanish and Italian dubbed versions, since *cómo te trato* and *modo in cui ti tratto* mean 'the way I treat you', giving the idea that Mick has taken Tess's strength of character as a personal weakness. It is a subtlety that neither the original nor the subtitles convey.

In the final scene of *Sister Act*, Vince, a thug from the underworld and Deloris's lover, sees his order to shoot her turned down by Joey, one of his henchmen, because he says that 'she still a nun.' Vince's reaction:

Sister Act 1

She's a broad. You got it? Just a broad.		
Sp dub	Es una fulana. ¿No lo entiendes? Sólo una furcia.	[She's a hooker. Don't you understand? Just a whore.]
Sp sub	Es una tía. ¿Lo entiendes? Sólo es una tía.	[She's a girl. Do you understand? She's just a girl.]

It dub	È una donna. È chiaro? È una donna e basta!	[She's a woman. Got it? She's a woman. That's it!]
It sub	È una puttana. Chiaro? Una puttana e basta.	[She's a whore. Got it? A whore. That's it.]

Vince calls Deloris a 'broad', a disrespectful term for 'promiscuous woman' in American English. The Italian sub reinforces this derogatory tone through a more straightforward term (*puttana* [whore]), but the Italian dub uses the word *donna* [woman] without any offensive innuendo. The Spanish translations use three different words (*fulana* [hooker], *furcia* [whore] and *tía* [girl]) the last of which falls short of a promiscuous connotation. Once again we see men that, feeling their virility is threatened, vent their anger by way of sexist and derogatory language. In the following example, Deloris meets the Reverend Mother and, quickly perceiving her distrust, snaps:

Sister Act 2

	I saw a guy get his face blown off. So why don't you just give me the key to my room? I'll lay low. You stay outta my face, I'll stay outta your face. And I will commune my little black ass in that room.	
Sp dub	Vi cómo a un tío le volaban la cabeza. Así que déme la llave de mi habitación. Me esconderé allí. Y si no se mete conmigo yo no lo haré con ustedes. De modo que recogeré mi culito negro en la habitación. ¿Le parece bien, Reverenda?	[I saw how they blew a guy's head off. So, give me the key to my room. I'll hide there. And if you don't provoke me I won't do it with you. So, I'll keep my little black ass in the room. Is it all right, Reverend?]
Sp sub	He visto cómo le han volado los sesos a un tío. Déme la llave de mi habitación. Me voy a esconder. Usted desaparece de mi vista, yo desaparezco de la suya. La titi comulgará en esta habitación. ¿Le parece bien?	[I've seen how they've blown a guy's brains off. Give me the key to my room. I'm gonna hide myself. You disappear out of my sight, I disappear out of yours. The chick will commune in this room. Is it all right?]

It dub	Ho visto aprire un buco in testa a un povero cristo. Perciò sia gentile. Mi dia la chiave della camera. Io mi ci rinchiudo. Così non vedrò lei e lei non vedrà me. Starò in comunione con me stessa senza scocciare nessuno. Le sta bene?	[I've seen a hole made in a poor guy's head. So, be kind. Give me the key to the room. I'll shut myself up in there. So I won't see you and you won't see me. I will commune with myself without annoying anybody. Is it ok for you?]
It sub	Ho visto far saltare le cervella a uno. Mi dia la chiave della mia stanza. Me ne starò rintanata. Lei non mi stia tra i piedi e io farò altrettanto e me ne rimarrò seduta nella mia stanza. Ci siamo capite?	[I've seen a guy's brains blown off. Give me the key to my room. I'll stay there hidden. Don't put yourself in my way and I'll do the same and I will be sitting in my room. Is it clear?]

We find here another aspect related to the portrayal of gender, that is, race. In the film there are no explicit linguistic or visual elements suggesting racist attitudes towards Deloris. Nevertheless, some of her remarks suggest her apprehension that the colour of her skin might prejudice people's opinion of her and in this dialogue, Deloris's utterance 'my little black ass' suggests her uneasiness because of her race. These 'racist' remarks do not come from the nuns or other people, but from herself. Of course, the whites she encounters may or may not harbour racist attitudes, but in some way Deloris anticipates racist remarks. She uses a 'colourful' expression intended to shock her addressee. This nuance is kept in the Spanish dub but lost in the sub, where the derogatory *titi* back translates as 'chick'. In both Italian versions the offensive meaning contained in the original has been lost. The register has clearly changed and the reference to race wiped out.

Linguistic Differences and Similarities in Gender Assumptions

Before going on to analyse other scenes, I would like to raise the question of whether the way gender is portrayed visually and linguistically is shared by the three cultures in question, or whether there are any relevant differences among them. The aspect cinema usually focuses on when

screening female characters is their body, their beauty, the pleasure this vision provokes, even when their physical appearance is not the subject matter at hand. And even when plots deal with daily life, issues regarding women are linked to some sexual reference or sexist attitude. When we say that cinematic language is where we find the best evidence for this, we do not necessarily assume that the language used in films is more sexist or rifer with stereotypes than in real life. Cinema incorporates and mirrors everyday language and, in doing so, it encourages certain assumptions.

The following dialogue shows how this happens. The fact that the Spanish and Italian translations do not stray much from the original suggests that the way Anglo-American, Spanish and Italian cultures deal with gender issues is very closely related. After an argument with Ed, Erin's boss, she addresses her office colleague Brenda aggressively because the latter has always looked down on her:

Erin Brockovich 1

Brenda: Lovers' quarrel? Erin: Oh, fuck my ass, Krispy Kreme.		
Sp dub	¿Riña de amantes? Ráscame el culo, zampabollos.	[Lovers' quarrel? Scratch my ass, greedy pig.]
Sp sub	- ¿Riña de enamorados? - Vete a la mierda.	[- Lovers' quarrel? - Piss off.]
It dub	Un bisticcio di amanti? Oh, leccati le palle, cozza di lardo.	[Lovers' squabble? Oh, lick your bollocks, fat mussel.]
It sub	- Un litigio tra innamorati? - Vaffanculo, cicciona.	[- A quarrel between lovers? - Fuck off, fatty.]

Here, cultural references have been adapted, since all three languages use different idioms to convey similar vulgar images. 'Krispy Kreme' is a brand of greasy, glazed doughnut popular in the United States. The American public catch on, but Spaniards and Italians do not have a clue. In the Italian translations, *cozza di lardo* is literally 'fat mussel' and *cicciona*, 'fatty'. The Spanish *zampabollos* is also an offensive expression meaning 'glutton' or 'greedy pig'. The three translations succeed in conveying the idea of the original using images more familiar to the target viewers. Only in the Spanish sub is this image lost and rendered simply

by *Vete a la mierda* [piss off]. What is involved here is not an instance of sexism but rather an insulting remark aimed at a person's physical appearance. Erin's offensive remark reveals another kind of intolerant attitude: Brenda's physical appearance does not conform to the prevalent canon of beauty that Erin, in contrast, embodies. Erin knows this and attacks Brenda in her vulnerable spot, thus returning tit for tat, as Brenda underestimates Erin because of the way she dresses. Both women unwittingly contribute to preserving prevalent stereotypes about how women ought to look or act.

In *Mrs Doubtfire*, Miranda (Daniel's ex-wife) asks Mrs Doubtfire (Daniel cross-dressed) which dress she thinks is best for the dinner party that Stu, her new lover, has planned for her birthday. Mrs Doubtfire replies:

Mrs Doubtfire 1

> Neither. [...] They're both too brazen, dear. They cry, 'Harlot!' Really. I mean, red is the traditional colour of streetwalkers, dear. And the black one is far too short. I hope you waxed. They both say to me: 'I'm easy'. And you don't want that. You want to be Kilimanjaro on your first date – inaccessible.

Daniel is of course jealous and his words suggest very narrow thinking about the importance, for a woman, not to look too conspicuous. The adjective 'easy' has a literal equivalent in both the Spanish (*fácil*) and the Italian (*facile*) versions. In the three languages it means 'compliant,' 'yielding' or 'promiscuous,' especially when referring to women. And the use of 'harlot' and 'streetwalkers', even hyperbolically, reinforces this idea. Both translations maintain the irony of the original, but a few linguistic differences should be noted. The word 'harlot' is rendered in Spanish by two similar synonyms – *ramera* in the dub and *pendón* in the subtitle – each referring to prostitution or promiscuity. In Italian the effect has been maintained in the subtitle (*sgualdrina* [slut]) but softened in the dub where the word *letto* [bed] has been preferred. The reference to prostitution or promiscuity is therefore implied instead of direct. By the same token, 'streetwalkers' is an unoffensive term for 'prostitutes' and is thus devoid of derogatory connotation. The usage is similar in the Italian dub (*passeggiatrici* [streetwalkers]) and somehow glamourised in the Spanish sub where a euphemistic metaphor is used (*reinas de la noche* [night queens]). In the Spanish dub the reference to prostitution is lost since the word *trotacalles* means 'a person who is always out'. On the other hand, the Italian sub uses *prostitute* [prostitutes]. Of course, these are subtle differences, but they seem to suggest that female promiscuity is stereotypically associated with prostitution.

Sexist Conceptions of Women

In the scenes analysed so far we have focused on sexist stereotypes. It is clear that the most common way, though not the only one, to portray women in films is by associating femininity with sexuality through the visual representation of female characters and their remarks. Another example of this occurs in *Working Girl* in the scene in which Tess wears the underwear that Mick, her lover, gave her for her birthday. The close-up of her figure and the presence of the mirror in the movie display her body in every detail. Tess seems sceptical and says:

Working Girl 4

You know Mick, just once I could go for … like a sweater or some earrings, you know? A present that I can actually wear outside of this apartment.		
Sp dub	Sabes, Mick. Alguna vez me gustaría por ejemplo un jersey, unos pendientes ¿comprendes? Algún regalo que pueda lucir fuera de este apartamento.	[You know Mick. Sometimes I would like for example a sweater, some earrings, you know? Some presents that I could display outside of this flat.]
Sp sub	Mick, por una vez me gustaría un jersey o unos pendientes. Algún regalo que pueda llevar fuera de este piso.	[Mick, just once I would like a sweater or some earrings. A present that I could wear outside of this flat.]
It dub	Sai Mick. Anche per una volta sola, ma mi piacerebbe un golf o degli orecchini; insomma qualcosa da poter portare anche fuori da questo appartamento.	[You know Mick. Just once I would like a sweater or some earrings, I mean something that I can wear outside of this flat.]
It sub	Mick, per una volta mi piacerebbero un maglione o degli orecchini. Sai com'è, un regalo che io possa mettere al di fuori di questo appartamento.	[Mick, once I would like a sweater or some earrings. You know, a present that I could put on outside of this flat.]

Her response, indicating that this is not the first time he has given her something of the sort, clearly reveals her awareness that she is regarded only as a sexual object. Mick perceives the underwear as a symbol of sexuality, since it makes Tess's body more attractive and desirable in his eyes. It suggests that the core of a relationship between a man and a woman is sexual intercourse. The fact that he will give the same sort of present to Cyn the night of her engagement party confirms his attitude.

On that occasion Tess is visibly annoyed by Mick's tactlessness, first for giving Cyn such a gift at all, and second for giving to understand that Tess was in on the gift. Note that the Spanish dub underscores Tess's resentment toward Mick's present by using the verb *lucir* [display] suggesting her wish to wear and flaunt something for others, not just him. In a way, *lucir* reproduces the rhetorical emphasis the original version conveys through 'actually wear outside', but this nuance is lost in the Spanish sub as well as in both Italian versions, where words such as *llevar* [to wear], *portare* [to wear] and *mettere* [to put on] are used.

Language as an Expression of Behavioural Sexism

It is true that sexism is transmitted through a certain kind of vocabulary and register, but it is also moulded subtly in people's attitudes. In this case, language is representative not of particular words and expressions revealing sexist attitudes, but of the way we behave and are expected to behave, or the way we look and are expected to look. It is the emphasis on appearance, and especially feminine appearance, that is given prominence on the screen.

Through very different kinds of characters, the four films in question picture the figure of the 'independent woman' who works hard and strives for something better than what she has been allotted. However, the pride defining each feminine character collides with other factors that may hold them back such as family or social roles and the importance of appearing according to the established canon. In *Working Girl*, the day Tess arrives at Katharine's office, Katharine explains a few rules to her:

Working Girl 5

> Katharine: So, Tess … a few ground rules. The way I look at it, you are my link with the outside world. People's impression of me starts with you. You're enough when it's warranted, accommodating when you can be, you're accurate, you're punctual and you never make a promise you can't keep. I'm never on another line, I'm in a meeting. I consider us a team, Tess, and as such we have a uniform: simple, elegant, impeccable. 'Dress shabbily, they notice the dress. Dress impeccably, they notice the woman.' Coco Chanel.
> Tess: How do I look?
> Katharine: You look terrific. You might want to rethink the jewellery.

Women are expected to conform to the norms regulating their appearance if they wish to get ahead in the professional world. Moreover, Katharine's

last remarks on Tess's jewellery suggest that in this film the issue of gender is related to class. Both the Spanish and Italian use two different words to translate 'jewellery'. It is rendered literally in the Spanish sub and in the Italian dub (*joyas*, *gioielleria*), but not in the other two cases where the terms used are *bisutería* and *bigiotteria* which back translate as 'costume jewellery'. Katharine's remark suggesting that Tess should reassess her taste in jewellery reveals her concern about projecting an appropriate social status. Furthermore, while in Spanish the two characters address each other familiarly (through the use of *tú*), in the Italian dub they use the polite form *lei*. In Italy, people's relationships at work are more formal than in Spain. Even when they get to know one another, they usually maintain formal usage because roles and categories are more sharply drawn in the work world.

Erin is also the victim of her boss remarks on the way she dresses because it makes other women in the office feel uncomfortable:

Erin Brockovich 2

> Ed: Why aren't you out to lunch with the girls? You're a girl.
> Erin: I guess I'm not the right kind.
> Ed: Ehm. Look, now you may want to . . . Now that you're working
>   here . . . You may want to rethink your wardrobe a little.
> Erin: Why is that?
> Ed: Well, I think some of the girls are a little uncomfortable because of
>   what you wear.
> Erin: Is that so? Well, it just so happens, I think I look nice. As long as I
>   have one ass instead of two, I'll wear what I like . . . If that's all
>   right with you? You might wanna rethink those ties.

Erin's physical appearance and strength of character are powerful weapons which she skilfully wields to make herself respected. She asserts her strength through aggressive language, speaking in a loud voice and using vulgar, sexist expressions frequently used by men. However, by using such 'inappropriate' language, Erin is able to turn androcentrism to her own advantage and knows that by doing so she demonstrates that women can do and say whatever men can, as in her remark 'as long as I have one ass instead of two'. This phrase is translated literally in the Spanish sub (*mientras tenga un culo y no dos*) and in the Italian dub (*dal momento che ho un culo e non due*) and sub (*finché avrò un culo invece di due*), but the Spanish dub carries the metaphor still further with *mientras mi culo no sea de elefante* [as long as my ass isn't an elephant's]. Apart from this, the English 'I'm not

the right kind' is rendered literally in both subs, whereas both dubs in Spanish and Italian replace 'right kind' for *su estilo* and *loro genere* [their style]. The use of the possessive referring to 'the girls' underscores the idea that the 'right kind' describes other people, not Erin. Once again, Ed addresses Erin familiarly in Italian, whereas she uses the polite form, since Italian usage, as mentioned earlier, reflects sharper social distinctions.

Another scene worthy of notice for the sexist innuendo it betrays can be found in *Sister Act* where Vince has tied Deloris to a chair after kidnapping her:

Sister Act 3

> Vince: What did you think you were doing running to the cops, Deloris? Hiding out? Big no-no, babe. Bet you're sorry now.
> Deloris: I'm sorry for all my sins, Vince, and I'm sorry for yours.
> Vince: I loved you Deloris. I gave you everything: my affection, my time, a big-time career. And how do you repay me? What's the thanks I get? Where's the loyalty? You shouldn't have done that to me, babe.
> Deloris: You'll be judged. We all will.
> Vince: I don't get judged.
> Deloris: I forgive you, Vince.
> Vince: Waste her.

What Vince says and the cool way he says it reveal an openly sexist attitude. His views about love, career and women's expectations are completely opposite to Deloris's. It is interesting to remark that 'the loyalty' – translated literally in the Spanish dub, *la lealtad*, and in both Italian versions, *la lealtà* – is rendered as *tu fidelidad* [your fidelity], in the Spanish sub. The use of the possessive adjective 'your' and the choice of 'fidelity', instead of the more general 'loyalty', shows how different their points of view are and reveals a growing sense of powerlessness in Vince. He feels his authority has been questioned and looks amazed and annoyed by Deloris's calm not only because she dares to stand up to a ringleader, but also because she, a woman, is standing up to a man. This is straightforwardly reflected in the vehement 'I don't get judged' uttered by Vince. While this sentence has been reproduced quite literally in the Italian (*Io non sarò giudicato* [I won't be judged]) and in the Spanish (*A mí no me juzgarán* [They won't judge me]) dubs, it takes on a far more irritated tone in the subtitles. Here the result is *A me non giudica nessuno* in Italian, and *A mí no me juzga nadie* in Spanish, both meaning 'Nobody judges me'.

The presence and emphasis on 'nobody' underscores Vince's pride and actually conveys the idea that he has always exerted a strong control on everybody. It reminds us of Mick's 'I want an answer now', especially in the Italian version, which, as mentioned earlier, back translates as 'Nobody can answer me that way'. In both cases, this reaction reveals a man's fear of losing control.

In *Mrs Doubtfire* it is Miranda who embodies the independent woman torn apart between family and work. We find evidence of her 'split personality' in the way she dresses – especially in the beginning, when she wears tailored black mannish suits – and in what she says during a quarrel with Daniel:

Mrs Doubtfire 2

> Miranda: Don't you dare make me out to be the monster here, Daniel! You have all the fun and I get whatever's left over.
> Daniel: Oh, you chose the career, Miss.
> Miranda: I have no choices here. I have no choices! Why am I the only one that feels there has to be rules? Why do you always make me out to be the heavy?
> Daniel: I don't. You do it yourself quite naturally.
> Miranda: You set me up every time to be the bad guy.
> Daniel: Well, let's take a vacation with the kids, as a family. Get you away from work. You're a different person. You really are. You're great.

Worth of notice is Daniel's justification for their problems. Even though he is open-minded and a loving father, he argues that it is her work that makes his wife different. His cross-dressing as a housekeeper later on, in order to take care of his kids, portrays Daniel as a man who does not conform to the established thinking whereby women have certain tasks at home and men others at work. Nevertheless, his remark 'you chose the career' reveals that he too has unconsciously absorbed the stereotypes he himself will question. This is the sort of comment men make when they want to remind women that there are some roles better left alone, and that it is almost impossible for women to combine professional endeavour with family duties. The English 'monster' in Miranda's first line is rendered literally in the Italian (*mostro*) and the Spanish sub (*monstruo*), but changed into *la mala de la película* [the villain of the film] in the Spanish dub. This same image comes back again when 'the bad guy' is translated into Spanish as *la mala*. In the Italian dub it is rendered

as *guastafeste* [killjoy]. These small variations may be due to translator choices, but I find the Spanish dub less forceful than the other two as in Daniel's remark about taking a holiday. Both the English 'Get you away from work' and the Italian dub (*Lascialo perdere il lavoro* [Leave the job out]) use the imperative mood when Daniel asks Miranda not to think of her job, suggesting that Daniel's true wish is that she should quit her job forever, even though he cannot say this openly. The innuendo is lost in the Spanish dub *Así olvidarás tu trabajo* [That way you'll forget about your job] and in the Italian subtitle *Lontano dal lavoro* [A long way from work].

Gender Nuances in Translating Titles

Finally, I will turn my attention to the translation of the titles of these movies. Only *Working Girl* has been completely changed in both Spanish and Italian, whereas *Erin Brockovich* is left unchanged and *Sister Act* and *Mrs Doubtfire* are maintained, or calqued, and followed by explanatory subtitles.

According to Mayne (quoted in Tasker, 1998: 6), referring to Dorothy Arzner's *Working Girls* (1931), the expression 'working girl' has a double meaning: the literal one and the ambiguous sense of a woman working outside the home and who, for this reason, falls under suspicion. It is difficult, however, to ascertain whether Hollywood played on this double meaning in coming up with the title of Mike Nichols's *Working Girl*. The actual Spanish title *Armas de mujer* [A woman's weapons] suggests something about the female character in the film, but nothing negative, although the expression may also slightly refer to the weapons of seduction of some women; and the Italian *Una donna in carriera* means 'a career woman'. The ambiguous connotation of the original title has not been maintained and the Spanish and Italian translations do not seem to convey sexist attitudes. They underscore two different aspects of the plot which come through clearly in the film. The Spanish title evokes the means that women avail of in order to achieve their ends; and the Italian title underlines Tess's advancement in her professional and private life.

Sister Act also portrays the figure of the independent woman, although differently from *Working Girl* and *Erin Brockovich* in the visual portrayal of the main character, the content of the film and the language used. Actress Whoopi Goldberg, unlike Melanie Griffith and Julia Roberts, does not quite conform to the expected canon of Hollywood glamour. It is not Whoopi/Deloris's physical attractiveness that comes into play, but rather her strength of character and wit as she flouts her role of nun. The subtitle

Una monja de cuidado [An unpredictable/dangerous nun] tagged onto the English *Sister Act* in the Spanish version is significant. The Italian subtitle, by contrast, is less flattering, since *Una svitata in abito da suora* [A nut dressed as a nun] emphasises the character's absentmindedness rather than her cleverness.

Mrs Doubtfire is the film which most fully embraces the aforementioned visual and linguistic stereotypes related to gender, work and femininity, portraying them in a very unique way in comparison to the other films: through a man. The disguise of an aging Scottish housekeeper is perfect; it upsets the characters' accustomed roles and enables the film to bring into the fore and to question one of the basic assumptions of patriarchal society: that women, especially mothers, are the ones who should take care of the home and bring up the children. In this sense, the film titles in Spanish and Italian are significant. The Spanish title reads *Señora Doubtfire. Papá de por vida* [Mrs Doubtfire. Father forever] and the Italian *Mrs Doubtfire: Mammo per sempre*, [Mum forever], where *mammo* is an ungrammatical coinage from the feminine word *mamma* [mum] which has been masculinised for effect. Both the Spanish and Italian titles could have kept only the protagonist's name, as in the original English; however, the longer titles allude to the conflict of roles central to the film. The strategy used in the Italian title hits the nail on the head since *mammo* upsets the assumptions and preconditions of the situations depicted in the film, questioning the conventional notion of 'mothering' that implies that men are not interested in taking care of their children.

Conclusions

My aim at the outset was threefold: to look at some examples of how gender is portrayed in Western cinema, to see whether dubbing and subtitling contribute to transmitting gender stereotypes from one culture to another, and to detect any differences in the way gender is portrayed in the source and target cultures. The mass media are the mainstay of information and transmission of cultural values. Screen translation is the principal means of which the media avail to project these values interculturally. By mirroring the values and ideologies of one culture and fitting them into another cultural context, it brings to the fore the varying perspectives of these cultures with respect to social issues.

This brief analysis of the four films shows that, despite linguistic and technical constraints, dubbing and subtitling weigh significantly in the intercultural transmission of social assumptions about gender. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- In contrast to dubbing, subtitling seems, in most cases, more synthetic and literal. It tends to be more synthetic because due to technical constraints the translator must express the idea contained in the original dialogue without necessarily searching for the most creative expression. This means that many nuances and subtleties are lost, although they are often compensated for elsewhere by words not used in the original. At the same time, subtitling tends to be 'literal' in the sense put forward by Díaz Cintas (2001a). Even though it may be assumed that viewers do not know the source language of a film, they are often familiar with some words or expressions, which means that if they do not see a word-for-word correspondence between what they hear and what they read they conclude that the translation is flawed. Audience expectations seem to make subtitling more literal than dubbing.
- Since dubbing mirrors spoken language, the translator may make choices better suited to the way people express themselves in everyday language, making the translation freer.
- Despite the looser correspondence between dubbed versions and the original, there has been no significant difference with respect to linguistic and visual stereotypes or clichés regarding gender. Sometimes the original version uses phrases less offensive than the translation; and sometimes the reverse is the case.
- These linguistic correspondences and patterns reveal that US, Spanish and Italian cultures portray gender in similar ways.
- Most of the phrases and idiomatic expressions analysed in the three languages give a sexist and offensive portrayal of women, their appearance and their work. It is particularly through vulgar and derogatory colloquial usage that we find evidence of sexist attitudes.
- Some dialogue exchanges show that sexism does not necessarily mean directing insults at women. Sexism also comes through in language that suggests that women should be treated differently from men in a way that places women at a disadvantage. This may include gratuitous and obscene references to sexual organs, addressing women as if they were prostitutes, or simply uttering some stereotypical opinion regarding social roles, implying – and ultimately reinforcing – the sexist notion that gender determines our place in the world.

We might wonder why cinema seems to make no attempt to avoid usages that fan the flames of sexist attitudes. Perhaps the main reason is that sexist attitudes are commonplace, and therefore familiar, reassuring,

and always good for a laugh and the box office. Besides, why rock the boat? To stand up against sexism is to stand up against the status quo. Somehow, the contents of *Working Girl*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Sister Act* and *Mrs Doubtfire* mirror and, at the same time, question these sexist attitudes and unwarranted assumptions about gender, but the language of both the original and the dubbed/subtitled versions reveal just how heavily these attitudes and assumptions weigh on our perceptions, feelings and relationships.

Part 3

Dealing with Linguistic Variation

Dubbing English into Italian: A Closer Look at the Translation of Spoken Language

MARIA PAVESI

Introduction

Research on the linguistic aspects of dubbing has mainly focussed on the translation of general aspects such as synchronisation, social and geographic variation and transfer errors (Bollettieri Bosinelli, 2002; Delabastita, 1989; Herbst, 1996). Researchers have also investigated morphosyntactic and lexical phenomena of the spoken language in dubbed films (Araújo, 2004; Goris, 1993; Malinverno, 1999), although systematic quantitative analyses are rarely available. Little is thus known about the degree to which the spoken language filters into translated film scripts, with some studies suggesting in fact that dubbed languages are placed closer to a 'neutral', uniform (formal) standard as they fail to portrait important areas of sociolinguistic variation (Goris, 1993; Herbst, 1996; Malinverno, 1999; Rossi, 1999).

In a different framework, for the past 20 years, Italian linguists have carried out research on spoken language, thus outlining a profile of spontaneous oral Italian (Berretta, 1994a; Berruto, 1985; Renzi, 2000; Sabatini, 1985) and providing quantitative data on crucial features such as syntactic complexity and marked word orders (Berretta, 1994b; Berruto & Bescotti, 1995; Cresti, 2000; Voghera, 1992). Investigations have been extended to the so-called 'simulated spoken Italian' of Italian films and TV series. More specifically, Rossi (1999) has conducted a major, quantitative study of the Italian of six films, which includes some 100 features of spoken language. Five were original Italian films, whereas one was the dubbed Italian translation of *Born Yesterday* (George Cukor, 1950), which resulted to be the

stylistically most formal film of the group. A first quantitative analysis comparing original Italian productions to Italian translations from English has been carried out by Brincat (2000), who has compared episodes taken from US and Italian TV series. His results show systematic simplifications in translations as opposed to original productions and a shift toward a 'neutral' standard Italian. Finally, a descriptive analysis has been conducted on the Italian of contemporary original TV series, which shows the filtering of many features of spontaneous spoken Italian into this type of simulated oral language (Morucci, 2003). There is thus ground for systematic comparisons between contemporary dubbed Italian and both spontaneous spoken Italian and original simulated spoken Italian.

Aims

In this chapter, I start from the assumption that in translated as well as in original film dialogue similarities to real dialogue exchanges must be present if viewers are to be drawn into the fictional world portrayed on the screen (Korloff, 2000). To which degree such truthfulness is achieved and, more feasibly, which features are involved deserve quantitative and qualitative in-depth investigation in line with recent approaches within both linguistics and translation studies (Baker, 2000; Biber *et al.*, 1999; Miller & Weinert, 1998). As already pointed out, by stressing a shift toward the written mode, neutralisation and increase in formality level, research in dubbing has often undermined orality in translated films. On the other hand, similarities to the spoken language are at least as relevant as differences for a full characterisation of dubbed languages and a better understanding of the underlying translation processes. Drawing on such premises, it is hypothesised that the Italian of films translated from English is placed within a specific sociolinguistic space of Italian, with some spoken features being used as carriers of orality, not randomly but with a degree of consistency and regularity.

A quantitative overview is presented of selected phenomena of spoken Italian typically associated with the constraints and situational factors of face-to-face communication as they are reflected in five Italian translations of widely known US and British films: *Dead Man Walking* (Tim Robbins, 1995), *Secrets and Lies* (Mike Leigh, 1996), *Sliding Doors* (Peter Howitt, 1998), *Notting Hill* (Roger Michell, 1999) and *Finding Forrester* (Gus Van Sant, 2000). Results are discussed primarily in terms of the comparison with the norms of spontaneous spoken Italian and, when possible, simulated spoken Italian, thus providing an initial step for wider as well as more detailed analyses.

Table 14.1 Films under analysis

Films	Words in English	Words in Italian
Dead Man Walking	12,377	11,138
Secrets and Lies	13,744	11,875
Sliding Doors	8809	8308
Notting Hill	10,496	9635
Finding Forrester	10,404	10,582
Total	55,830	51,538

Table 14.1 lists the five films included in the small corpus under investigation with the total number of words in the original version and the Italian translation. These five films were chosen because of the following characteristics:

(1) they were launched in the period between 1995 and 2000, to which available descriptions of spoken Italian are likely to apply;
(2) they mostly portrayed situations in which spontaneous spoken language is used;
(3) they were greatly successful, as reported in one of the major Italian film guides. (Laura & Morandini, 2002)

The fully transcribed Italian translations have been analysed directly or via concordance lists obtained with *WordSmith Tools*. Frequencies have been normalised to occurrences per 100,000 words to allow comparisons between different corpora.

In what follows, phenomena from four areas will be investigated: personal pronouns, syntactic organisation, connectors and marked word orders (right and left dislocation, it-clefts). Although the features analysed must be considered just samples of an obviously much wider constellation of phenomena involved in stylistic and mode variation, they are typical of neo-standard spoken Italian and greatly help to define the discourse structure of conversational texts. More precisely, personal pronouns are very frequent in conversation as they reflect speakers' emotional involvement and sharing of context. Their function is not just restricted to indexicality and anaphora but extends to affective and narrative meanings (Berretta, 1994a; Berruto, 1985; Eggins & Slade, 1997). Utterance structure is bound to the on-line constraints of face-to-face conversation in which speakers often join ideas simply through juxtaposition (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Chafe &

Danielewicz, 1987) and resort to a limited set of subordinate clause types with restrictions on level of embedding (*cf.* Berretta, 1994a, for spontaneous spoken Italian). Weak connectors as well are typical of on-line spoken production, with textual cohesion being achieved more pragmatically than syntactically (Bazzanella, 1994; Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Finally, marked word order contributes to both information processing and discourse structuring. Its use results in segmented utterances, which may be easier in terms of production and reception. Marked word order also allows speakers to express emphasis and interpersonal participation (Berretta, 1995; Schmid, 1999).

Deictic Personal Pronouns

Pronouns are more frequent in spontaneous spoken language than they are in more formal genres, first of all due to the increased deicticity of face-to-face communication (Bazzanella, 1994). In Italian conversation, moreover, first and second personal pronouns are used for emphasis, contrastivity and more generally express the empathy and self-centredness of spoken discourse. It should also be stressed that as Italian is a pro-drop language, personal pronouns are almost never obligatory, differently from English where subjects are always expressed except in elliptical structures. More specifically, in Italian, first and second person pronouns in verbal clauses tend to be grammatically redundant as in most cases person is unambiguously marked on the verb. The presence of these features is thus a strong marker of orality, as already shown by Morucci (2003) in the description of Italian TV series.

Table 14.2 reports the frequency of first and second person singular pronouns both in the five films analysed and in *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato* (LIP), a major corpus of spoken Italian, consisting of five subsections of 100,000 words each, for a total of 500,000 words. From

Table 14.2   First and second person personal pronouns in the LIP corpus and the corpus of translated films*

Pronoun forms	*LIP conversation section*	*Whole LIP corpus*	*Film corpus*
Io	977	747	700
Tu	262	201	442
Io + tu	1239	948	1142

* Occurrences per 100,000 words

the LIP corpus we report the occurrences in the first section, which includes face-to-face conversations in various settings (at home, at work, at school), thus directly comparing with the situations represented in the films analysed. The frequencies of the whole corpus are also reported, which come from all the five sections and include telephone conversations, more formal interactions as well as monological speech in different institutional settings (De Mauro *et al.*, 1993: 39–41). Overall, personal pronouns in the five translated films occur with a frequency similar to conversational Italian. They are used to express emphasis on the participants to the interaction, emotional involvement and contrast, often through their postverbal placement.

Example 1: Secrets and Lies

| Non ho chiesto io di venire al mondo. | [I didn't ask to be born.] |

In Example 1 contrastive emphasis is achieved by postponing the subject pronoun *io* [I], which is placed after the clause verb *ho chiesto* [I asked], in agreement with spontaneous spoken Italian, where marked word order is often used for its interactional and emotional effects. There is an interesting difference, however: in the dubbed films second person pronouns are relatively more frequent than they are in spontaneous spoken Italian. An explanation may lie in the highly interactional style of film language, characterised by short turns and more questions (Rossi, 2002), which consequently may call for a more listener-oriented discourse. In other words, some deviations from the norm of spoken Italian could be due to the special structure and peculiarities of film dialogue, which set it aside from other genres. No increase in level of formality or even transfer from the source language is realised by a higher frequency of second person pronouns.

Syntactic Organisation

Linguists have long debated whether spoken language is syntactically simpler than written language as shown, among other factors, by the ratio between dependent and independent clauses (Biber, 1992; Halliday, 1985; Miller & Weinert, 1998). As for Italian, research has shown that a distinction must be drawn between different genres of spoken language, with conversation consistently exhibiting a much lower proportion of subordination than more formal written and spoken genres of the language (Berretta, 1994a; Berruto & Bescotti, 1995; Voghera, 1992). A first question will thus concern whether the language of dubbed films presents a ratio of dependent/ independent clauses comparable or different from spontaneous spoken

Table 14.3 Percentages of dependent and independent clauses in various corpora

Corpora	*Dependent clauses*	*Independent clauses*
Sample from film corpus	22.4%	77.6%
Voghera (1992): whole corpus of formal and spontaneous spoken Italian	40.6%	59.4%
Voghera (1992): conversation section	23.5%	76.5%
Berrutto and Bescotti (1995): conversation corpus	22.6%	77.4%
Rossi (1999): Italian film corpus	17.2%	82.8%
Rossi (1999): translated American film	23.4%	76.6%

Italian and the Italian of original films. A sample of about 2500 words has been selected for syntactic analysis (about 500 words from the beginning of each film) and the percentage of dependent clauses over the total number of clauses has been compared with that of some corpora of spoken Italian (Table 14.3).

From the sample analysed it would appear that the overall level of syntactic complexity of the five translated films is very similar to that of spontaneous spoken Italian, with no shift occurring toward the more formal end of the continuum. Interestingly, the language of the Italian original films in Rossi (1999) has been shown to be even simpler than conversational Italian, whereas the translated film *Born Yesterday* exhibits a percentage of dependent clauses similar to that of the five translated films. It should further be noticed that the analysis of the original extracts matching those in the translated films has yielded a ratio of dependent/independent clauses comparable to the Italian sample (23.4% vs 76.6%). This result further suggests that translation for dubbing does not necessarily involve an increase in level of syntactic complexity.

Connectors

The degree of similarity in overall syntactic structure between dubbed Italian and spontaneous spoken Italian can also be tested on the frequency of *che*, the most frequent subordinator in the language. *Che* has different

functions: most commonly, it is a general complementiser – 'that' (Example 2) – a relative pronoun for subjects and direct objects – 'that', 'who', 'which' (Example 3) – and an interrogative pronoun – 'what' (Example 4):

Example 2: Sliding Doors

Lo so, lo so, avevi quasi dimenti-cato che lavoro qui.	[I know. I know, you'd almost forgotten Ø I work here.]

Example 3: Notting Hill

E allora, diventerò una triste, patetica matrona che assomiglia a una che è stata famosa per un po.	[And I will become some sad middle-aged woman, who looks a bit like someone who was famous for a while.]

Example 4: Finding Forrester

Ma che vuoi salvare?	[What are you saving?]

Furthermore, the distribution of the functions of *che* appears to correlate with levels of formality: *che* conjunction and *che* pronoun have similar frequencies in the LIP conversational section, where actually *che* conjunction is slightly more frequent. However, in the whole LIP corpus, pronouns are more frequent than conjunctions. More specifically, there is a clear pattern of *che* pronoun being most frequent in the least dialogic and most pre-planned types of spoken Italian, as well as more frequent in written Italian (Rossi, 1999: 156–157). The rate of *che* pronoun thus provides a good indicator of where dubbed language places itself in the formality continuum of Italian. As shown in Table 14.4, dubbed translations present a functional distribution of *che* which is similar to that in Italian conversation, with the frequency of *che* pronoun being closer to that in conversational Italian, as can be seen from the frequencies reported in Table 14.5.

Table 14.4 Che subordinator in the LIP corpus and in the corpus of translated films

Che	*LIP conversation section*	*Whole LIP corpus*	*Film corpus*
Conjunction	1188	1135	1350
Pronoun	1133	1511	1269

Table 14.5   Che pronoun in the different sections of the whole LIP corpus

Face-to-face conversations	1133
Telephone conversations	1044
Dialogic, monitored interactions (e.g. debates, interviews)	1756
Monologic speech (e.g. lectures, homilies)	2042
Monologic and dialogic broadcast exchanges	1596

That dubbed Italian quite closely mirrors the structure of spoken Italian conversation is further suggested by the frequencies of the most common subordinating connectors after *che* in spoken Italian: *se* [if] and *quando* [when]. The two connectors have a frequency in our film corpus closer to that in the less formal sections than the more formal sections of LIP (Table 14.6), which suggests a similar distribution of major subordinate clauses in film language and spontaneous spoken Italian. However, some less frequent subordinators, mainly *siccome* [since], are missing from the translated films.

Further analysis has shown that some common formal connectors are remarkably rare in the five films investigated, in line with what happens in spoken Italian, with the possible exception of *perciò* [thus], a rather formal coordinating connector, whose occurrences are however restricted to two films, *Sliding Doors* and *Notting Hill* (a total of 21 occurrences). The connectors listed in Table 14.7 are typical of formal written Italian, where they are generally used to mark contrast – *tuttavia* [however] – and, more specifically, to introduce concessive clauses – *benché* [although], *nonostante* [notwithstanding], *sebbene* [although]. Their low rate in the five films provides further evidence that syntactically simulated spoken Italian is

Table 14.6   Se and quando in the LIP corpus and in the corpus of translated films

	Se [if]	*Quando [when]*
Corpus of translated films	545	227
Face-to-face conversations	656	224
Telephone conversations	688	248
Dialogic, monitored interactions	441	187
Monologic speech	374	184
Monologic and dialogic broadcast exchanges	392	190

Table 14.7 Formal written connectors in the LIP corpus and in the corpus of translated films (raw frequencies)

	LIP conversation section	*Whole LIP corpus*	*Film corpus*
Benché	0	0	1
Nonostante	1	11	0
Sebbene	0	1	1
Tuttavia	0	13	0

moving towards the spontaneous spoken pole of the target language. Here subordination is relatively rare with explicit clauses being realised through few, very frequent subordinators.

Weak Connectors

In spontaneous spoken language discoursal and pragmatic relations can also be signalled by so called weak connectors, general linking words such as *e* [and], *allora* [then, so] and *ma* [but]. As they are all coordinating connectors, they do not create syntactic dependences between clauses, in some instances mainly acting as discourse markers with a variety of pragmatic functions, e.g. *allora* and *insomma* (Bazzanella, 1994). Weak connectors are very frequent in spontaneous spoken Italian, as evident from the frequencies reported in Table 14.8.

A look at the same table also shows that in the translated films the very common conjunctions *e* [and] and *ma* [but] have frequencies quite close to those reported for Italian conversation, where they perform basic turn-taking as well as linking functions. The other weak connectors, however, are markedly less frequent in the Italian translations than in conversational Italian. This striking pattern could result in reduced textual cohesion and discourse interactivity in dubbed Italian as opposed to spontaneous conversation. The scarcity of weak connectors agrees, on the other hand, with the already observed tendency to have fewer peripheral/pragmatic and textual markers both in original film language (Rossi, 2002; Taylor, 2004) and in dubbed texts, where fewer discourse markers, fewer expletives, fewer vocatives are used as opposed to either the source text or the target language (Brincat, 2000; Pavesi, 1996; Pavesi & Malinverno, 2000). A more 'essential', skeleton-like language is obtained, consistently with the pragmatic specificity of films which compact discourse in order to verbally represent a plot on a reduced time

Table 14.8 Weak connectors in the LIP conversation section and the corpus of translated films

	LIP conversation	*Film corpus*
Allora [so, then]	503	252
Cioè [that is, I mean]	430	17
Comunque [anyway]	178	49
Dopo [later, after]	60	43
E/ed [and]	1816	1711
Insomma [in conclusion, so, well]	277	116
Ma [but]	955	733
Però [but, though]	463	97
Poi [the]	653	103
Total	3519	1382

scale. Such consistency of behaviour could in fact point to an emerging norm in translation for dubbing. The following extract from a dramatic moment of *Dead Man Walking* shows a series of clauses being simply juxtaposed one to the other, with the exception of the last clause being introduced by *e* [and]:

Example 5: Dead Man Walking

Vitello. Dovrebbe starci lui qui. Era come impazzito. Avevo paura. Lui mi ha detto di tenere il ragazzo e li ha ammazzati.	[Vitello. He ought be sitting here. Went nuts on me. I was scared, did what he said, held that boy back. And killed them.]

Marked Word Orders

Among the most often quoted syntactic structures of spoken discourse we find marked word orders: it-clefts, right dislocations and left dislocations as exemplified by the following utterances:

Example 6: Notting Hill

If it's Turkey you're interested in, this one, on the other hand, is very good.

Example 7: Sliding Doors

How does she feel about it, Lydia?

Example 8: Secrets and Lies

Elisabeth, that's my middle name.

These constructions allow a greater dilution of information, thus facilitating both production and comprehension in on-line discourse (Miller & Weinert, 1998). They are also used to emphasise one element or part of the utterance and thus respond to the greater involvement of speakers in conversation (Berruto, 1985). At an informational and discoursal finer level, however, each marked word order serves different functions in Italian, which include focusing on individual elements or whole propositions in it-clefts, building on shared knowledge in right dislocations and positioning a nonsubject topic of discourse initially in left dislocations (Berretta, 1995).

These structures are used frequently in conversational Italian and are also found in spoken English, although not as frequently as they are in spoken Italian, as suggested by published accounts based on corpora of the two languages (Berretta, 1994b; Biber *et al.*, 1999; Cresti, 2000). The analysis of the parallel transcriptions of the five films does in fact show that many marked word order constructions are added to the translations, as the following examples show:

Example 9: Dead Man Walking

È lei che mi ha denunciato. (Instead of the unmarked (*lei*) *mi ha denunciato*)	[(it) was her that has turned me in.] She turned me in. She called the cops.

Example 10: Finding Forrester

Chi le pulisce le finestre? (Instead of the unmarked *chi pulisce le finestre*?)	[Who them cleans the windows?] How do you think those windows get cleaned?

Example 11: Finding Forrester

La prima stesura la devi buttare giù col cuore. (Instead of the unmarked *devi buttar giù la prima stesura col cuore)*	[The first draft it (you) must jot down with the heart.] You write your first draft with your heart.

Table 14.9   It-clefts, left and right dislocations in the corpus of translated film (raw frequencies)

It-clefts	Left dislocations	Right dislocations
122	41	111

Marked word orders result to be altogether quite frequent in the Italian translations (Table 14.9), where 122 it-clefts were counted in the five films, compared to the 50 it-clefts found by Berretta (1994b) in her corpus of three and a half hours of Italian conversation.

A comparison with Rossi's (1999) data also shows that translated films exhibit a frequency of it-clefts similar to original Italian films (Table 14.10). Also, right dislocations are very frequent in dubbed films, in contrast with left dislocations, which score well below their frequency in spontaneous spoken Italian (Table 14.11).

Thus it-clefts are the most frequent structures which exhibit marked word order in translated film language. As it-clefts are more frequent in conversational Italian than in other genres of the language (Berretta, 1994b), their occurrence in translation functions as a marker of orality. This mimetic function is also found in the language of original Italian films (Rossi, 1999). A similar function is performed by right dislocations, whose frequency in translated films closely reflects the situation of spontaneous spoken Italian. Original Italian films use the feature even more frequently.

Table 14.10   It-clefts in the corpus of translated films and the corpus of original Italian films

Translated films	Rossi's (1999) Italian films
237	232

Table 14.11   Left and right dislocations in the corpus of translated films, the corpus of Italian original films and Cresti's (2000) corpus of spontaneous spoken Italian

	Translated films	Rossi (1999): Italian films	Cresti (2000): corpus
Left dislocations	80	260	245
Right dislocations	215	398	197

As argued by Rossi (1999), right dislocations in particular reflect the strong interactivity of film dialogue and perform a phatic, listener-oriented cohesive role. These two features may thus qualify as norms of contemporary simulated Italian, as also suggested by the findings in Brincat (2000) and Morucci (2003). Importantly, they also align translated film language with original audiovisual Italian. In this area of close reproduction of spoken Italian as well as norm creation within film language, the noticeable scarcity of left dislocations in dubbing still requires an explanation.

Conclusions

Although from a small corpus of dubbed films, the results suggest that major syntactic features of spontaneous spoken Italian tend at present to be reproduced in the Italian dubbing from English. First and second person pronouns are frequently used with the emotional, emphatic functions typical of conversation. Syntactic complexity appears to be within the limits of informal spoken language both in terms of the percentage of dependent clauses and types of subordinators. The frequency of some marked word orders in the translated films closely matches that found in conversational Italian. Translators thus seem to give priority to structural phenomena in their doubtless attempt to simulate spoken language, although selective mimesis occurs, whereby some features are systematically chosen as privileged carriers of orality from which the impression of spontaneity is derived. For other features, translated texts exhibit different behaviours from conversation, which cannot all be accounted for as shifts in level of formality or moves towards the written norm of the target language. Rather, these features may have to do with different factors such as film discourse structure and norms emerging both in simulated spoken Italian and film translation. No claims can obviously be made on other levels of dubbed Italian, in particular the phonological, morphological and lexical levels, where shifts to a more formal style have been documented (Malinverno, 1999; Pavesi, 1994; Rossi, 1999). However, the results reported in this paper indicate the need for wider and feature-specific investigations before a full characterisation of the translation of simulated spoken language is obtained.

The Translation of Swearing in the Dubbing of the Film South Park *into Spanish*

MARÍA JESÚS FERNÁNDEZ FERNÁNDEZ

Introduction

The United States is undoubtedly the first exporter of audiovisual programmes in the world. They dominate, not exclusively but mostly, the Spanish film industry, and therefore the translation of these products into Spanish becomes necessary. The linguistic contact between English and Spanish during the translation process often results in language interference and borrowings predominantly from the upper language (English) to the less powerful language (Spanish). Traditionally, these borrowings affect the phonologic, morphologic, syntactic, lexical and/or semantic structures of the target language (TL). However, there are certain interferences that affect, not only the linguistic structure, but also the sociocultural and communicative structure of the TL. This usually happens when certain speech acts and colloquial expressions, like swearwords, are translated literally.

Many people are shocked by swearing and consider expletives to be offensive, rude, insulting and inappropriate. The reason behind it is that these words are taboo and refer to things that are not to be talked about in public, usually unmentionable bodily functions and sex. It is often argued that swearwords impoverish our language and our vocabulary, and we should avoid them.

I do not intend to discuss whether we are supposed to use these words or not. What matters is that we do use them and they play an important role in language. People often feel they need to resort to them in order to release tension and to express strong emotions and attitudes, such as anger, surprise, frustration, annoyance. Some people might use them more than others, but we all have them in our vocabularies. Swearing has always

existed, will always be with us and cannot be ignored. As a linguistic phenomenon, taboo language surely deserves to be studied and analysed.

Swearing in English and in Spanish

According to Sagarin (1968: 18) 'the structure of a language is a powerful tool for an understanding of a culture', and swearing, as part of the language, is a manifestation of culture. Though it may not be a universal feature of human communication, it is common to most societies and civilisations. There is great variation in what constitutes swearing in different cultures, or at least in the way it is expressed. In this chapter I look at the different and similar ways of using coarse language in American English and Peninsular Spanish.

In most languages, swearing is mainly related to personal and bodily functions, sex and religion. In the case of Spanish and English, blasphemous words are also common to both languages, though in Spanish the number of sacrilegious terms is more extensive, often preceded by the construction *me cago en* [I shit on]. There are for instance blasphemies related to the Virgin Mary and the consecrated host that do not exist in English: *¡Me cago en Dios y en la puta Virgen!* [I shit on God and the whore Virgin], *¡Hostia puta!* [Fucking host!], and the like.

From a syntactic perspective, both English and Spanish have expletives that can be used at the beginning or the end of a sentence and can act as the main nominal or verbal constituents of a sentence – 'That bastard fucked everything up!'; *Eres un capullo y lo jodes todo* [You're a dickhead and fuck everything up]. Both languages use swearwords as adjectives and intensifiers: 'Gimme the fucking report'; *¡Apaga la puta radio* [Switch the fucking radio off]. As for fixed expressions, there are also similarities, for example set and ready-made formulas such as 'Go to hell' and *Vete a la mierda* [Go to the shit!], and frames such as What the fuck?, Where the hell? and *¿Qué cojones?* [What the bollocks?], *¿Cuándo coño?* [When the cunt?].

Some swearing forms appear to be universal, while others are more specific to a culture. The problem arises when English coarse language intrudes upon the Spanish patterns of swearing and English obscenities, formulas and fixed expressions are translated literally into Spanish. In a way, it may not be wrong to translate *¿Qué demonios haces?* for 'What the hell are you doing?' or *bastardo* for 'bastard', and yet such translations sound too forced, too English. It is not only a matter of grammar or syntax but of differences in the way people swear in Spanish and English, and althoguh the sentence *¿Qué demonios haces?* is grammatically correct it is

not frequently used. There is a great distinction between being grammatically correct and being socially correct. Let's take the example given by Andersson and Trudgill:

> *Co za cholera tu byla?* (Polish) = 'Who for cholera was here?'
> *Ki a fene volt itt?* (Hungarian) = 'Who the sickness was here?'
> *¿Quién coño ha estado aquí?* (Spanish) = 'Who the cunt has been here?'
> (Andersson & Trudgill, 1990: 62)

These are all literal translations of swearing formulas from Polish, Hungarian and Spanish into English. They might not be ungrammatical, but it is not what English people would say to express their anger/frustration/surprise in a specific situation. We could say that they are not socially, culturally or communicatively correct.

This is what often happens when English swearing constructions are translated literally into Spanish, especially in the dubbing of films. In the past, US films dubbed into Spanish were full of such classic expressions as *maldita sea* [damn it] and *hijo de perra* [son of a bitch]. The dialogue often sounded artificial, hardly reflecting the reality of Spanish colloquial language and lacking authenticity. Nevertheless, some of them have become popular especially among young people: *estás condenadamente loco* [You're so damn crazy], *jodido coche* [fucked car] or *¿dónde demonios/diablos?* [Where the devil?]. In Spanish, *condenadamente* and *jodido* are never used in that position in a sentence. There are many other valid alternatives like *puto/ puñetero coche* [whore/fucking car], before the noun, or *el coche de los cojones/de mierda/de las narices* [the car of the bollocks/shit/noses], after the noun, which are more appropriate in Spanish.

The Reasons for the Interferences

In Spain, US films are usually dubbed and it is probably in the translation of spontaneous spoken language and colloquial expressions that most borrowings occur. Some US films can be too offensive and shocking for many people, but in order to retain a film's original artistic integrity, swearwords should be translated as and when they are spoken by the actors, however offensive, and both the sense and the appropriate level of intensity should be communicated to the target audience. The translation should be carried out avoiding calques from the original, but the reality is that some odd expressions literally translated from English have become part of the linguistic heritage of some Spaniards, who after a long time listening to them on TV have started to use them in their everyday life and conversations.

This phenomenon is not due to a lack of similar or equivalent expressions in the TL but rather to the increasing influence of the United States

in Spain, alongside the rest of the world. Films and TV shows made in Hollywood are an effective way to spread American culture: we drink Coca-Cola, we eat fast food, we read their bestsellers and we listen to their pop songs. And not only do we imitate America's way of life, we also transfer America's way of speaking to the Spanish language, which is mainly achieved through foreignisation (Venuti, 1995), characterised by allowing cultural and linguistic differences to stay intact in the translation. However, it is my contention that translated films should not adhere literally to the linguistic idyiosyncrasies of the original language, neither should they change the original dialogue into one too domesticated and familiar to the Spanish audience. These two approaches should be applied in a balanced way according to specific situations. In the case of swearing, it would be odd to translate 'get the fuck out of here' as *vete a freir espárragos* [go and fry sparragus] because it would sound too Spanish. On the other hand, the frequently used *lárgate de una jodida vez* [go away a fucked time] sounds odd and artificial because it is not what a Spaniard would say in spontaneous conversation.

On occasions, this phenomenon could also be due to the imperative of having to use the so-called neutral Spanish accent in some dubbed films, which excludes local terms, regionalisms and country-specific pronunciations, words or expressions, so that all Spanish-speakers can understand it. The result is that the translation of swearwords tends to be watered-down and generalised. Essentially, the use of neutral Spanish responds to economic imperatives since it allows film-makers to commercialise the same film throughout the Spanish-speaking market, reducing costs in marketing and distribution.

Although films normally imitate real life, their content is fictional as they are preconceived and scripted. Language in film pretends to portray everyday conversations, but the actors' words, phrases and manner of speaking have already been decided. Their dialogue is a written text made to sound natural and spontaneous. If when original characters get angry, their expressions are inappropriate or unconvincing, lacking swearwords, the dubbed version is bound to suffer from the same euphemistic drive.

Unnatural translations of swearwords can also be due to the media limitations. Lip sync is probably the biggest constraint on accurate translation since the priority is that the translation matches, as closely as possible, the lip movements of the person on screen. Given the differences between English and Spanish, it is normally very difficult to find Spanish words that match the lip movements. That is why sometimes translators or dubbing directors do not opt for the best semantic translation but rather prefer the one that best fits the character's lip movements. Finally, coarse language is toned down in translation because some translators and film

companies are concerned that using strong words may make films sound too offensive and frighten viewers off.

All these reasons account for the translations that we often come across in US films dubbed into Spanish, of which some do not seem to sound strange anymore as we have become used to accepting unusual collocations and exotic expressions in Spanish.

The *South Park* Phenomenon

In the following section I discuss and illustrate how swearing in the US film *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* (Trey Parker, 1999) has been dubbed into Spanish. The film is a spin off from the controversial animated television series *South Park*, well known for its offensive language and its simplistic animation. Both the film and the TV series are satirical and resort to extreme exaggeration of American society and its attitudes towards racism, homosexuality, violence, sex, and the like (Ruiz Guerrero, 2001). Despite being an animation film, *South Park* is clearly not for children but for an adult audience, mainly on account of its liberal use of offensive language and gestures: 399 swearwords, 128 obscene or rude gestures, and 221 scenes of violence (Sheehan, 1999). The humour lies in using the naïve, child-like simplicity of the animation to offset adult themes in the storylines, which are in turn propelled by a manic and unrelenting catalogue of obscenities. The film basically relies upon swearing being funny.

The plot of the film can be summarised as follows: Kenny, Kyle, Stan and Cartman go to the cinema to watch a film starring two Canadians (Terrance and Phillip), who basically fart and swear at each other. Soon, all the kids in town have seen the film and start imitating Terrance and Phillip. Their parents decide to rid the world of Terrance and Phillip, who are arrested. Canada then bombs the Baldwin's residence and the United States retaliate by declaring war on Canada. The children then decide to stand up to their parents and save Terrance and Phillip. Meanwhile, in Hell, a misunderstood and abused Satan is plotting to take over the Earth with his new gay lover, the deceased Saddam Hussein.

The attraction of *South Park* lies in its political incorrectness taken to the highest level. However irritating some viewers may find the film's reliance upon taboo language, it is essential that the translation of swearing be effective in order to retain the integrity of the film. If the translation is too literal or ineffectual, particularly if it tones down or masks the original text, the result will sound artificially distanced and the comic impact lost.

The Translation of Swearing in *South Park*

Fuck

For Sagarin

In the entire language of proscribed words, from slang to profanity, from the mildly unclean to the utterly obscene, including terms relating to concealed parts of the body, to excretion and excrement as well as to sexuality, one word reigns supreme, unchallenged in its preeminence. It sits upon a throne, an absolute monarch, unafraid of any princely offspring still unborn, and by its subjects it is hated, feared, revered and loved, known by all and recognised by none. (Sagarin, 1968: 136)

The word is 'fuck', which, together with its lexical derivatives 'fucker', 'fucking', 'motherfucker' and the like is, without a doubt, the most common taboo word in US films, 'used in curses and exclamations, indicating strong dislike, contempt, or rejection' (Ayto & Simpson, 1993: 75–76). Partridge (1970) defines 'to fuck' as 'to have sexual connexion' which in Spanish would be *joder* and, more frequently, *follar*. In our corpus, there are many examples with this meaning, all of them translated literally.

Example 1

Saddam: Yeah! Yeah! Man, I'm getting' so hot! Let's fuck!	
Sí, sí me estoy poniendo a cien, vamos a follar.	[Yes, yes I'm getting at a hundred, let's fuck.]

However, this verb is quite playful and there are other options, as proposed by Carbonell (1997: 296), that the translator could have used as well. In addition, 'fuck' has other meanings, such as in the exclamations 'fuck you' or 'go fuck yourself', which according to Sagarin (1968: 143) 'are not meant for literal interpretation' but considered 'a hostile order, a rejection, a command to go off and be unhappy and to do something unpleasant and unrewarding to yourself'. In film translation these expressions have often been translated as *¡que te/se/le jodan!* (Example 2), and in *South Park* the translator combines the latter with other expressions commonly heard among Spaniards:

Example 2

American Ambassador: Fuck Canada! Canadian Ambassador: Hey, fuck you, buddy!	
¡Que se joda Canadá! ¡Jódete tú, cabrón!	[Fuck Canada itself! Fuck yourself, swine!]

Example 3

Cartman: What? Fuck you, guys! I wanna get out of here!	
¿Qué? ¡Que os den por culo, yo quiero largarme!	[What? Get yourselves buggered, I want to get out!]

When the word 'fuck' is used by itself as an expletive, it is very often literally translated as *joder*, though there are other equivalent terms that can be also used so that the translation does not sound too redundant:

Example 4

Cartman: Stop! Mother fucker! Ah! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Stan: Fuck, dude, I wanna be just like Terrance and Phillip!	
¡Ay! Me cago en la puta. ¡Ayy! Coño ¡Ayy! Joder ¡Ayy! Cojones ¡Ayy! Joder, yo de mayor quiero ser como Terrance y Phillip.	[Ay! I shit on the whore. Ayy! Cunt. Ayy! Fuck. Ayy! Bollocks, Ayy!] [Fuck, when I'm older I want to be like Terrance and Phillip.]

The expletive 'fuck' can be followed by other lexical items such as 'this' or 'that'. On these occasions, the translator seems to give preference to other similar exclamations rather than the literal *que se joda*:

Example 5

Cartman: Fuck that! Ah! Kyle: Fuck this, dude. I'm getting out of here.	
¡Una polla! ¡Ay! ¡A tomar por culo! Yo me largo de aquí.	[A cock! Ay! To get it buggered! I'm getting out of here.]

Fucked, fucker and fucking

The adjective 'fucked', meaning 'mixed up' or 'finished', normally when a situation has been handled badly or ineptly, is never literally transferred as *jodido*, against the wide spread tendency of translating it that way in Spanish, and the solutions provided are good idiomatic expressions that sound true Spanish:

Example 6

Saddam: You're all really fucked now!	
Ahora sí que la habéis cagado.	[Now you have shit it.]

The original impact of some taboo words is often toned down probably due to their frequency of use, and they end up having an affectionate meaning such as 'fucker'. Nevertheless, some of its derivatives – *pigfucker, buttfucker* and *motherfucker* – behave in a totally different way. Sagarin comments that:

> when preceded by the word mother, a combination with fucker is made that is unique in its ability to incite aggressive anger even among people who have developed an armour of defence against the insults derived from obscenity. Perhaps mankind's overwhelming fear of incest is challenged when the word mother-fucker is heard; or perhaps the image of the mother as pure and inviolate is damaged when the tabooed sounds are spoken. Although an example of a term that is both sexually descriptive and figuratively insulting, mother-fucker seems to touch off such a sensitive area, even in the speaker and insulter, that it has not passed into the general language of taboos that are violated at the rate of several per minute. (Sagarin, 1968: 139–140)

In English, 'motherfucker' and the rest of derivatives can never be interpreted literally and their literal translation into Spanish would not make much sense. Carbonell (1997: 296) offers a catalogue of possible translations, such as *cabrón*, *cabronazo*, *mamón*, *soplapollas* and *hijoputa* among others. In the following example, the translator tries to maintain the tone of the original, which is based on a different wordplay, and conveys the same kind of contextual meaning:

Example 7

Phillip: Why'd you call me a pig-fucker? Terrance: Well, let's see. First of all, you fuck pigs.	
Terrance, ¿cómo puedes llamarme soplapollas? Espera, veamos, para empezar ¡porque me la chupas!	[Terrance, how can you call me cockblower? Wait, let's see, to start, because you do suck mine!]

Another derivative of 'fucker' in the film is 'uncle fucker', frequently used in the songs interpreted by Terrance and Phillip. When dubbing songs it is important to take into account factors like the rhythm and rhyme. In this particular case, the target text aims to convey the tone of the original text by using equivalent words, phrases and expressions in the TL and this is why 'fucker' is not translated in the same way

throughout the song. The translator's skills and creativity play and important role here:

Example 8

Terrance: Shut your fucking face, uncle fucka! You're a cock sucking, ass-licking uncle fucka! You're an uncle fucka, yes it's true, Nobody fucks uncles quite like you!	
Eres un cabrón, un hijo puta, un mamón y un pedorreta, un hijo puta. Tú eres un capullo y un cabrón, te jodes por ser tan mamón.	[You're a swine, a son of a bitch, a sucker and an irritating person, a son of a bitch. You're a dickhead and a swine, you fuck yourself for being such a sucker.]

'Fucking' is probably the most frequent swearword in English. It is used as an intensifier and it can modify almost every grammatical category: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs. However, despite its frequent use, 'fucking' is often translated morphologically and the result is often awkward: 'you're fucking crazy' as *estás jodidamente loco;* 'gimme the fucking report' as *dame el jodido informe*. In Spanish, *jodido* can be used as an adjective meaning 'sick' or 'mixed up' (*estoy jodido*), but never as an intensifier.

Valenzuela Manzanares and Rojo López (2000: 207) argue that to correctly translate this taboo word the translator should bear in mind 'the influence of syntactic (the syntactic category of the head it modifies), semantic (the semantic features of the head it modifies) and pragmatic (the communicative purpose in its use) factors in its translation into Spanish', though they are aware that 'these factors are frequently ignored, resulting in artificial translations which reflect the Spanish equivalent most commonly provided by dictionaries'. Fortunately these factors have actually been considered it the translation of *fucking* in *South Park.*

When fucking modifies a noun

In these cases, there are two possible ways of translating the term, according to Valenzuela Manzanares and Rojo López (2000). The first (Example 9) consists on translating it as an adjective placed before the noun, usually *puto* [whore]. The second option (Example 10) is to translate a prepositional phrase right after the noun, usually *de mierda* [of shit]. The result is an idiomatic translation into Spanish, equivalent to the meaning and intention behind the original.

Example 9

General: Oh, what's wrong with this thing? It's fuckin' Windows '98!	
¿Qué le pasa a este trasto? Puto Windows'98.	[What's up with this thing? Whore Windows'98.]

Example 10

Cartman: Hey, don't call me fat, you fucking Jew!	
Coño, a mi no me llames gordo, judío de mierda.	[Cunt, don't call me fat, Jew of shit.]

Sometimes the translator does not follow any of the patterns proposed by Valenzuela Manzanares and Rojo López (2000) and prefers a free translation, still close to the original intentions of the speaker.

Example 11

The Mole: Here I come, god. Here I come, you fucking rat!	
Aquí me tienes, Dios. Aquí me tienes, cabronazo.	[Here you have me, God. Here you have me, big bastard.]

When fucking modifies an adjective

It is in this situation where we traditionally find more unnatural translations as there is not an exact equivalent in Spanish of 'fucking' with adverbial meaning before an adjective. Valenzuela Manzanares and Rojo López (2000) propose to omit it and to add a different swearword, used as an expletive and placed right at the beginning or after the sentence, separated by commas.

Example 12

Kyle: Dude, that movie was fucking sweet! Cartman: Dude, this is fucking weak.	
Hostias, tío, qué pasada de película. Joder, esto no mola nada.	[Holy Host, man, what a great film. Fuck, this is not cool at all.]

When fucking modifies a verb

In this case the solution is the same as the one for the adjectives, that is, another swearword is used as an expletive and placed before or after the phrase separated by commas.

Example 13

Cartman: Everybody's already fucking seen it!	
¡Si ya la hemos visto todos, coño!	[But we've already seen it, cunt!]

However, it is in this position that 'fucking' tends to be omitted, loosing therefore the offensive nature of the sentence.

Example 14

Kenny: Why don't you just fuckin' leave him?	
¿Y por qué no le dejas?	[Why don't you leave him?]

In the following translation, 'fucking' is assigned to the noun *perros* [dogs] and not to the verb *hate* as in the original.

Example 15

The Mole: I fucking hate guard dogs!	
Odio a los putos perros guardianes.	[I hate the whore guard dogs.]

What the . . .?

Padding expressions such as 'the hell/fuck/heck' are inserted in sentences splitting them into two parts and giving more emphasis, as in 'what/where the hell?'. Traditionally, these expressions were translated as *¿qué demonios?* [what devils?] or *¿dónde rayos?* [where thunders?], losing the strength of the original and sounding rather odd in Spanish. In *South Park* we can still find similar translations or even omissions of these taboo words (Example 16), though *coño* [cunt] is a term very commonly used in Spanish on these occasions (Example 17):

Example 16

Stan's Mother: What the heck is a rim job?
Principal Victoria: What the heck is Terrance and Phillip?

| Stan's Mother: ¿Qué demonios es un volcán invertido? | [What devils is an inverted volcano?] |
| Principal Victoria: ¿Se puede saber quiénes son Terrance y Phillip? | [Can it be known who are Terrance and Phillip?] |

Example 17

| Kyle: We don't know where the hell we are! | |
| Que no sabemos ni dónde coño estamos. | [That we don't even know where the cunt we are.] |

Damn

The expletives 'damn', 'dammit' and 'goddamit' are sometimes translated into Spanish as *maldición* and *maldita sea*.

Example 18

| Surgeon: Dammit! I'm not gonna lose this kid. | |
| Maldita sea, no pienso perder a este chico. | [Damn, I'm not going to lose this kid.] |

They might not be ungrammatical but they simply do not express fully the frustration and anger of the speaker. In his dictionary, Carbonell (1997: 226) proposes various possible translations: *me cago en la puta* [I shit on the whore], *me cago en la hostia* [I shit on the holy host], and *me cago en la leche* [I shit on the milk]. However, if lip sync is an overriding factor, other translations are possible, such as *joder* [fuck] and *mierda* [shit].

'Damn' and 'goddamn' can also be used (like 'fucking') as intensifiers, modifying adjectives and nouns. And, like 'fucking', they are often translated literally into Spanish, resulting in unfelicitous phrases such as the following example:

Example 19

| Jimbo: Let's kill us some goddamn Australians! | |
| Vamos a cargarnos a esos malditos autralianos. | [Let's kill those goddamn Australians.] |

However, the following are examples where the expletive is translated more in tune with the Spanish swearing habits:

Example 20

Cartman: Hey, you're holding up the goddamn lunch line! Canadian Ambassador: What's so goddamn funny?	
¡Oye, estás bloqueando la puta cola!	[Listen, you're blocking the whore queue!
¿De qué coño se están riendo?	What the cunt are they laughing at?]

Bitch

'Bitch', a very common insult in English, 'when used in the strictly sexual sense, *the bitch* is less defamatory, and describes only the female, suggesting the combination of sexual desirability and moral undesirability' (Sagarin, 1968: 107). In the examples below, the translator not only opts for the most frequently used equivalent in Spanish, *puta* [whore], but also uses other sexually disparaging synonyms very commonly used, such as *guarra* [dirty], *zorra* [fox] or even the augmentative *putón* [slut], especially when 'bitch' is preceded by an intensifier or an adjective:

Example 21

Cartman: No, dude, I'd be scared. Your mom's a fucking bitch!	
No, tío, yo también me habría acojonado, porque tu madre es una guarra.	[No, man, I'd have been scared, because your mother is a dirty (one).]

However, 'bitch' does not always refer to a woman since 'as a word of insult, *bitch* simply describes a person who, in the eyes of the speaker, is nefarious or has done something contemptible' (Sagarin, 1968: 107). In *South Park* the Spanish equivalent chosen in these cases is *cabrón* [bastard]:

Example 22

Saddam: What are you waiting for, bitch.	
¿A qué esperas, cabrón? ¡Destrúyele!	[What are you waiting for, bastard? Destroy him!]

Shit

The expletive 'shit', a 'word of frustration, of disgust, of dismay or unhappiness' (Sagarin, 1968: 53) is practically universal. Although most of

the times it is translated literally as *mierda*, there are other equivalent expressions that can also be used:

Example 23

Kenny: Oh shit, dude.	
Joder, tío.	[Fuck, man.]

Being a very common swearword, there are many phrases in which it can be found, as in the example below, where the literal translation, *trozo de mierda británica*, would not be an option.

Example 24

Cartman: I heard you the first time, you British piece of shit!	
Que ya te he entendido, puto extranjero de mierda.	[I have already understood you, whore foreigner of shit.]

'Holy shit' is another commonly used exclamatory phrase. In Sagarin's (1968: 55) words: 'Contempt for the biological process is expressed in the phrase *holy shit*, an exclamation of surprise in which the aura of the sacred is imparted to the repulsive. Precisely because it is *shit*, it cannot be *holy*: the phrase thus brings together the most incongruent of phenomena'. Once again, the Spanish *South Park* follows the idiomatic preferences of the TL, always maintaining the intention and tone of the original, which usually means translating more freely:

Example 25

Cartman: Holy shit! Man, this V-chip is getting' all screwy!	
¡Hay que joderse! Oye, este chip empieza a hacer cosas raras.	[One has to be fucked! Listen, this chip starts doing rare things.]

Bastard and ass

According to Sagarin (1968: 108): 'Literally, of course, *the bastard* is the illegitimate child, the offspring of illicit sexual relations. [...] In ordinary slang, *bastard* is entirely unrelated to the status of birth without benefit of a previous marriage ceremony between one's parents. It is simply a dirty name to call someone'. In Spanish, however, the literal equivalent *bastardo* means illegitimate child and does not normally have an offensive meaning,

apart from when used as a rather awkward insult in dubbed films into Spanish. In *South Park* it is never translated literally:

Example 26

Saddam: I know I've been a dirty little bastard. Sheila: Throw the switch, Mr. Garrison! Goodbye, bastards!	
¡Ya sé que he sido un cabronazo! Conecte el interruptor, Sr. Garrison. ¡Hasta nunca, cabrones!	[I already know I've been a swine. Connect the switch, Mr Garrison. Until never, swine!]

'Ass' is never translated literally either. It is hardly ever used alone in the film and appears mostly in phrases or compounds such as 'to be a pain in the ass', 'kiss/suck my ass', 'asshole', 'ass-kisser' and 'ass-sucker'. In the case of 'suck my ass', a mutation of 'kiss my ass', frequently used in American English, the translator does opt for a literal translation, *chúpame el culo*:

Example 27

Pupil: Oh, fuck that, why the fuck should I have to spell forensics. Here you go: S-U-C-K-M-Y-A-S-S, forensics.	
No me joda, ¿para qué coño quiere que le deletree la palabra 'forense'? Yo se lo escribo: 'C-H-Ú-P-A-M-E-E-L-C-U-L-O'. Ahí lo tiene, 'forense'.	[Don't fuck me, what the cunt do you want me to spell the word 'forensincs'? I write it for you: 'S-U-C-K-M-Y-A-S-S'. There you have it, 'forensics'.]

For the rest of compounds, the solutions found by the translator are rather succesful, as they accurately convey the offensive intention of the speaker. In the case of 'asshole' the Spanish insult, *gilipollas*, is pretty common:

Example 28

Cartman: Asshole, I'm talking to you! The Mole: So I called him a cocksucking asshole. Then I get grounded.	
Oye gilipollas, que te estoy hablando. Así es que le llamé 'hijo de puta, cabrón' y me han castigado.	[Listen, twat, that I'm talking to you. So is that I called him 'son of a bitch, swine' and I've been punished.]

Conclusions

Swearing shows important cross-cultural differences between English and Spanish. In film translation, swearing has traditionally been a problem and many solutions tend to be too bland or too close to the original. Be it because of the need for lip synchronisation, the lazy disposition of translators, or the fear of changing the traditional way in which swearwords have been translated for years, the truth is that swearing is still one of the more problematic (and least explored) fields of audiovisual translation. Unnatural translations are still common, resulting in artificial, nonspontaneous and euphemistic dialogue, plagued with calque constructions totally unnecessary in cases where Spanish idiosyncratic expressions exist. Happily, *South Park* is a good example of great solutions.

Taboo language is part of our cultural heritage; every country and community follows different linguistic patterns when swearing and these should not be translated literally. Swearwords contain a pragmatic intention that needs to be taken into account in the process of translation, and translators must have intercultural pragmatic competence to be successful. A solution should be found that while playing with the meaning of the original, it still maintains the tone, the register and the intention in the TL, without forgetting being respectful to the idiomatic preferences and the sociocultural context of the target language. Not an easy task.

Chapter 16

The Translation of Compliments in Subtitles

SILVIA BRUTI

Introduction

The present chapter aims to investigate to what extent linguistic simplification affects the domain of politeness phenomena in subtitles, focusing on the translation of compliments, which are culturally-constrained speech acts. The process of simplification (Pavesi & Tomasi, 2000; Pavesi, 2002) at work in subtitles supposedly concerns the elements that can be recovered through nonlinguistic communicative channels or those that are less directly connected with the performance of the referential function and are instead linked to the area of expressivity (Searle, 1969), for example, terms of address, discourse markers, politeness formulae, reformulations dysfluencies and the like.

Compliments are speech acts that are primarily aimed at maintaining, enhancing or supporting the addressee's face (Goffman, 1967). More specifically, compliments are used for a variety of reasons: to express admiration or approval of someone's work/appearance/taste; to establish/confirm/maintain solidarity; to replace greetings/gratitude/apologies/congratulations; to soften face-threatening acts such as apologies, requests and criticism; to open and sustain conversation; to reinforce desired behaviour. Compliment-giving and responding behaviour are used to negotiate social identities and relations. Consequently, inappropriate choice of responses can lead to a loss of face. On the basis of several sociopragmatic studies, it is evident that speech acts are subject to cultural and sociolinguistic variations (Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989). So, apart from macroscopic cultural and linguistic differences in the giving and accepting of compliments, some interesting changes can also be observed across age and gender.

After briefly describing compliments, this chapter investigates how they are translated in the subtitled DVD versions of various British/US films – *Bend it like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002)*; Sliding Doors* (Peter Howitt, 1998); *Mickey Blue Eyes* (Kelly Makin, 1999); *Philadelphia* (Jonathan Demme, 1993); *Shallow Hal* (Farrelly Brothers, 2002); *There's Something about Mary* (Farrelly Brothers, 1998); *Tootsie* (Sydney Pollack, 1982) and if/how what is expunged can be recovered from the nonlinguistic communicative channels.

Compliments in Discourse

Even though compliments can serve a plurality of functions in different contexts, there is widespread agreement on their nature as 'social lubricants' (Wolfson, 1983: 89), that is, strategies that aim to establish or reaffirm common ground, mutuality or social solidarity. Often compliments – or the compliment event if we also mean to include the response to the compliment – are quite independent from the linguistic environment in which they occur, although they are frequently related to the topic of the exchange. They can also be an unrelated insertion in a conversation, a sort of aside comment which has no evident link with the current topic. This independence makes them suitable tools to use in opening sequences such as greetings or in thanks.

The Compliment Formula: Syntactic Patterns and Vocabulary

The most interesting results on compliments in American English are those that emerge from the studies by Manes and Wolfson (1980; Wolfson & Manes, 1980). On the basis of their investigation of a corpus of 686 compliments from a wide range of everyday interactions, Wolfson and Manes (1980) recognise the formulaicity of compliments and identify nine syntactic patterns that account for the majority of the structures in their data. In particular, the first three patterns cover 85% of the compliments in their database. The patterns are the following, in which: '*really* stands for any intensifier; *look* stands for any linking verb other than *be*; *like* and *love* stand for any verb of liking; ADJ stands for any semantically positive adjective; NP stands for a noun phrase that does not include a positive adjective; PRO stands for *you*, *this*, *that*, *these*, or *those*' (Wolfson & Manes, 1980: 408):

(1)   NP is/looks (really) ADJ   *Your sweater is really nice*
(2)   I (really) like/love NP   *I like your car*

(3) PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP   *That's a good question*
(4) You V (a) (really) ADJ NP   *You did a great job*
(5) You V NP (really) ADV   *You sang that song very well*
(6) You have (a) (really) ADJ NP   *You have a beautiful living room*
(7) What (a) ADJ NP!   *What a pretty shirt!*
(8) ADJ NP!   *Good shot!*
(9) Isn't NP ADJ!   *Isn't that ring pretty!*

Formulaicity can also be observed in the limited choice of vocabulary. Manes and Wolfson (1980) notice that *nice* and *good*, two semantically positive adjectives that are characterised by low specificity, cover together 42% of adjectival occurrences in compliments. If *beautiful*, *pretty* and *great* are added to the group the percentage increases to reach two thirds of all adjectival compliments. Among verbs, *like* and *love* are the most frequent and occur in 90% of verbal compliments. Semantically positive nouns and adverbs (*genius, well*) are very rare, showing that compliments are preferentially expressed with a positive adjective or a verb of liking (Manes & Wolfson, 1980: 400–401). Intensifiers (*really, very, such*) often accompany verbs of liking to emphasise the expression of appreciation, whereas the presence of deictics (mainly *this* and *that*) helps establish reference to the object of the compliment.

As compliments can occur at any stage of an ongoing conversation and at times quite independently from the choice of the current topic, Wolfson and Manes (1980: 405) argue that it is their formulaic quality that allows speakers to understand them as an expression of solidarity and to recognise them in any context.

Features of Compliments: Topics, Gender, Status

Studies on compliments point out that even though an ample variety of topics would potentially be possible, only a few account for the majority of compliments in the collected data (Holmes, 1988a, 1988b; Ishihara, 2001). The topics that occur with high frequency are: appearance, ability, skill or performance, possession, personal traits or qualities. Compliments on appearance are the top-rank items but it is of particular significance that they have their highest proportion in female-to-female interactions. In New Zealand English, differently from American English, males are often complimented on their appearance (Holmes, 1988b). Complimenting on appearance across sexes may yet be perceived as too intimate or containing seductive overtones; therefore, males prefer to compliment females on performance or skills, not only or not always as a sign of their

superior social status, but so as not to be perceived as inappropriate or sexually biased.

There are certainly correlations between complimenting and gender. On the whole it appears that women tend to compliment more than men and normally perceive complimenting as affiliative or cooperative, whereas men sometimes see it as competitive and face-threatening. However, if on the one hand women are deemed to be better addressees of compliments because of their lower social status (Wolfson, 1984: 243), it is also true that women see compliments as an appropriate strategy to strengthen rapport in a wide variety of contexts. Men, on the contrary, seem to express solidarity and in-group membership in different ways.

As for the status of complimenters and recipients, Holmes (1988a, 1988b) points out that 79% of the compliments she collected occur between equals, a result that is confirmed for American English by Wolfson (1983). However, when compliments are exchanged in asymmetric dyads, they are preferentially addressed to higher status females, probably because they are considered less intimidating than higher status males.

Compliments in Films

The most inspiring study on the structure and distribution of compliments and compliment responses in films is the one by Rose (2001), whose findings are quite surprising in comparison with those in the various articles published by Manes and Wolfson.

Rose establishes the validity of film language in the teaching of pragmatics in language classes, showing that it is undoubtedly representative of naturally-occurring exchanges, especially from a pragmalinguistic perspective (perhaps less so from a sociopragmatic one, as the scenarios that occur in films are somewhat idealised and often stereotypically played out). His focus of attention is the compliment event, for which he keeps Manes and Wolfson's description as a reference model. His findings are however remarkably different from those arrived at for naturally occurring compliments. In fact, he finds that the second frequent type in Manes and Wolfson corpus, that is, the type *I (really) like/love NP*, is not particularly frequent in the corpus of films that he collected and analysed. Furthermore, Rose (2001: 315) also discovers a certain number of syntactic patterns that are not included in the nine types of Manes and Wolfson's taxonomy. Adjectives in films also tend to vary a great deal and are therefore not limited to the restricted selection of the five top-most recurrent ones (*nice, good, pretty, beautiful* and *great*). Quite predictably, Rose also

finds that *nice* occurs less frequently in films than in the reference database: the adjective is in fact semantically quite vague and therefore scarcely informative in a compliment event. Another feature that emerges from Rose's research is that in films the distribution of compliments in relation to gender does not resemble Manes and Wolfson's findings on casual conversation, for quite a high proportion of compliments are exchanged between males.

Rose's analysis offers interesting and provoking results that I try to test in my corpus of films. My task, however, is not limited to the analysis of compliments in the original English soundtrack of the film material I have selected, but also involves their translation into Italian subtitles.

Compliments in Films: English Soundtrack vs Italian Subtitles

Subtitling is a translational strategy that turns an oral source text into a written target text. This transfer entails three transformations: a translation proper from one language into another, a diamesic shift from oral to written and a reduction from longer units to shorter ones. The latter aspect depends on both objective and subjective constraints: on the one hand factors such as viewing time, good readability and synchronisation but on the other also the audience's reading skills, which in turn depend on its age and on its linguistic and cultural background, and the balance between length and informative load.

In deciding what to omit, the ideational function (in Hallidayan terms) is well taken care of, whereas the interpersonal and the textual ones are considered less significant (Kovačič, 1996: 299), despite the loss of important pragmalinguistic meaning that this choice usually involves. The transfer from oral to written seems to be responsible for the quality of the language of subtitles, which is adapted to the conventions of the written language so that the natural flavour of speech and the effects of sociolinguistic variation are almost completely obliterated. This is especially important when the portrayal of characters is entrusted to language only (Blini & Matte Bon, 1996: 329).

Presumably, therefore, the utterance of compliments should be profoundly affected by the reduction process at work in the creation of subtitles, as they belong to the realm of expressivity and do not provide the viewer with strictly factual information. Yet the compliment event performs a variety of pragmatic functions, especially in establishing or reaffirming common ground, mutuality or social solidarity.

Discrepancies in the Translation of Subtitles: Different Syntactic Structures and Lexis, Different Pragmatic Effects

The analysis of the seven films in the corpus has shown that the syntactic patterns used to perform compliments are more varied than expected. The translation of compliments in subtitles sometimes shows discrepancies across the two languages involved. This may be due to systemic differences between the languages at stake, to the constraints imposed by subtitles, to cultural preferences and to idiosyncratic choices. Let us consider some different cases.

Example 1: Philadelphia

Andy: Anthea, just the paralegal extraordinaire I was hoping to see. Anthea: I know what that means. The answer is no. Andy: I'm talking of dinner at Felicia's. Anthea: I've got a class. Andy: I've got some crazy compelling briefs that need proofing. Anthea: You've got to exploit somebody else. Since you've asked … Andy: Your exam! Anthea: Thank you. 98. Andy: 98! 98? Congratulations!	

Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Anthea, proprio l'assistente legale che speravo di incontrare.	[Anthea, just the paralegal assistant I was hoping to meet.
La risposta è no.	The answer is no.
Cena al Felicia.	Dinner at Felicia's.
–Devo andare a lezione. –Ho dei casi che vanno rivisti.	–I must go to a class. – I've got some cases that need to be revised.
Sfrutta qualcun'altro. Non dimentichi nulla?	Exploit somebody else. Aren't you forgetting anything?
–Il tuo esame! –Ho preso 98.	–Your exam! –I got 98.
98! Congratulazioni!	98! Congratulations!]

Example 1 illustrates two interesting phenomena. Syntactically, it can be classified as a reduced form of pattern 3 'Anthea, (you are) an extraordinary paralegal', which is enriched by a relative clause and which subverts the normal order ADJ + NOUN because the French-derived adjective 'extraordinaire' can only be used in post-nominal position, for example, extraordinary paralegal > paralegal extraordinaire. Furthermore, the vocabulary that has been chosen to express the compliment rests on the combination of adjective + noun, where the adjective is a superlative that is used, often humorously, to describe someone who is very good at doing something, and is reinforced by the verb in the relative clause 'I was hoping to see'. The subtitles almost completely obliterate the compliment. In this case the adjective 'extraordinaire' is omitted, therefore the compliment is visibly watered down because the expression of praise is entrusted only to the relative clause 'I was hoping to see'. The humorous tone conveyed by 'extraordinaire' is also lost.

Sometimes the translation changes the topic of the compliment and although the results are far from statistical accuracy, the trend is always the same: a compliment on a performance in the English original is usually turned into a compliment on some personal qualities of the addressee in the Italian subtitles.

Example 2: Tootsie

Ron: It's a good one.
John: That was great.
Julie: Thanks, John.
Rita: Lovely job. First rate.
Ron: You were wonderful.
Julie: Yeah. Thanks to my coach.

Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Perfetta.	[Perfect.
–Sei stata grande.	–You were great.
–Grazie.	–Thanks.
–Buon lavoro. Ottimo.	–Good job. Excellent.
–Sei stata magnifica.	–You were wonderful.
Grazie alla mia maestra.	Thanks to my teacher.]

In Example 2 both 'It's a good one' and 'That was great' are compliments that refer to a scene that has just been performed by Julie, an actress starring as a nurse in the soap *Southwest General*. Reference is therefore quite easily exophorically established. The use of a pronoun is possible because reference is being made to an action or an event that is currently relevant and therefore easily accessible. Deictics are in fact a typical feature of spontaneous conversation, where participants rely on such extralinguistic cues as facial expressions, mimicry, gesture, posture and, above all, a shared context of situation to make sense of what their partners say. The translation of the second compliment in the subtitles also shifts the focus from the performance, the shooting of the scene, and insists instead on one of the character's personal qualities. In the subtitled version the compliments uttered by John and Ron have therefore the same syntactic pattern, whereas they differ in the original.

Example 3: Shallow Hal

Hal: And in summation, I feel that these measures will help JPS and all of our customers. OK. Colleague 1: Nice job, Hal. Hal: Thank you. Colleague 2: Nicely done. Hal: I appreciate it.	
Subtitles in Italian	**Back translation**
Insomma, credo che sarebbe positivo sia per la JPS che per i nostri clienti. –Complimenti, Hal. –Grazie. –Bravo. –Grazie molte.	[All in all, I think it would be positive for both JPS and for our customers. –Congratulations, Hal. –Thank you. –How clever. –Many thanks.]

In Example 3 the topic of the compliment is Hal's successful presentation of his new proposal to implement business in the company where he works. So he is praised for his well-argued talk and the brilliant ideas that he has put forward. In the translation, instead, little importance is attached to his performance, for the first compliment, *complimenti*, is very generic. The second, *bravo*, is also quite vague as it refers to a

person and not to a performance, but is an adjective that can be used on an unlimited number of occasions and, unless reinforced otherwise, is weak informatively.

Example 4: Philadelphia

Joe: You saw me on TV? It's a good school, Penn. What year are you in? Student: Second. Listen, I just wanted to tell you this case is tremendously important and I wish you to know you're doing a fantastic job. Joe: Thank you. When you graduate, give me a call.	
Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Mi hai visto in TV? L'università di Penn è molto buona.	[Did you see me on TV? Penn university is very good.
Sono al secondo anno. Volevo solo dirle questa causa è tremendamente importante.	I'm in my second year. I wanted to tell you this case is terribly important.
–E Lei è fantastico. – Grazie. Chiamami quando ti laurei.	–And you are terrific. – Thank you. Call me when you graduate.]

In Example 4, the second compliment in the original concerns a successful performance, whereas it is turned into recognition of some stable personal qualities in the subtitles.

Omissions and Reductions in Subtitles

Considering the technical requirements that the medium imposes – length of the subtitle, readability, different medium of communication, synchronisation with the image, and so on (Caimi & Perego, 2002; Kovačič, 1996) – omissions and reductions are strategies very frequently and extensively implemented to transpose the original soundtrack. As has been shown, the aspects that are usually deleted from the linguistic code pertain to the emotive, conative and phatic functions. They may be more or less successfully conveyed by the other codes in the film. With the utterance of compliments we can hypothesise that both the visual and the auditory code are ancillary to the performance of the speech act. Therefore if the linguistic form of the compliment is somehow reduced, the characters' tone of voice and their attitude can be charged with the expression of the interlocutor's appreciation. Reductions seem to be more likely than complete omissions,

which would drastically subvert the pragmatic texture of an interaction (Hatim & Mason, 2000: 438).

Example 5: There's Something about Mary

Mary: Tucker, what happened to your crutches?
Tucker: Uh, well, uh yeah. That's a very good query, Mary. Well done.
Healey: Come on! Tell her the truth, pizza boy.

Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Tucker … che ne è delle tue stampelle?	[Tucker, what about your crutches?
Beh, ehm … Ottima domanda, Mary.	Well, erm … Good question, Mary.
Forza diglielo, 'portapizze'.	Come on, tell her, 'deliveryman'.]

In Example 5 the original contains two compliments, the first belonging to type 3, and the second, which is a slightly modified version of type 5: *You V NP (really) ADV*. They are syntactically different but both of them concern Mary's behaviour, therefore a performance. They are condensed in the subtitle, where emphasis is placed on Mary's question, which is qualified as *ottima* [optimal].

Example 6: Mickey Blue Eyes

Uncle Vito: Now tell me what you think of this one. You like it (a painting)?
Michael: Wow. It's very … intriguing, isn't it? Tell me, why does Jesus have a machine gun?
Uncle Vito: It's symbolic. You have to ask Johnny. He does them as part of his therapy.
Frank: You have a very gifted son, Vito. No two ways about it.
Michael: Well, I must say, I like the way … the blood oozes out of his cranium.
Frank: I like that. He's very talented, wouldn't you say that, Michael?
Michael: Yes, I think he certainly has something.

Subtitles in Italian	*Back translation*
Dimmi cosa pensi di questo. Ti piace?	[Tell me what you think of this. Do you like it?
E' molto … intrigante, no? Perché … Gesù ha una mitragliatrice?	It's very … puzzling, isn't it? Why … Does Jesus have a machine gun?

E' simbolica. Devi chiedere a Johnny. Dipingere per lui è terapeutico.	It's symbolic. You must ask Johnny. Painting is therapeutic for him.
Tuo figlio ha un grande talento, Vito.	Your son is very talented, Vito.
Devo dire che mi piace … quel sangue che sgorga dal cranio.	I must say I like … that blood that spurts out of the skull.
E' vero. Ha talento, non credi?	It's true. He's talented, don't you think?
Sì, ha qualcosa di speciale.	Yes, he's got something special.]

The interjection 'Wow' is omitted and the adjective 'intriguing' is badly translated into Italian in the example above. This is in fact a typical instance of a false friend. The English adjective shows approval, even though something intriguing may not be fully understood or penetrated (e.g. *an intriguing remark*). The second compliment paid by Frank is translated with a different syntactic pattern and is certainly less strong in the Italian subtitle. In English the syntactic pattern is type 6 *(You have (a) (really) ADJ NP)*, whereas in Italian the initial pronoun 'you' is replaced by a full noun phrase. The focus of the compliment is therefore shifted from 'you', referring to Uncle Vito, to *tuo figlio*, pointing to his son, the author of the painting that is being commented upon. Furthermore, the strength of the compliment is reinforced by Frank, who emphasises the certainty of his assertion with the idiomatic expression 'no two ways about it'. The reinforcement of the commitment to the truth of the compliment is irreparably lost. The remainder of the exchange contains some more compliments which have been quite faithfully and effectively transposed. Expectedly, a repetition by the second speaker, Frank, has been cancelled: 'he's very talented' becomes *ha talento*, which is certainly more natural than the uncommon and ornate adjectival form *talentuoso*, but the adjective *dotato* could also have been used; 'something' is made more explicit with an elucidating adjective, *speciale*. The original, however, is purposely ambiguous, as Michael is trying to please Uncle Vito without saying something he does not believe.

Sometimes, more exceptionally though, it may also happen that the speech act in the subtitle is richer than that in the original, not so much quantitatively, but qualitatively, because the expression, and consequently the message that is conveyed, is richer. Let us consider the following case:

Example 7: Bend it like Beckham

Tony: Don't tell anyone (about his homosexuality).	
Jess: Of course not! It's ok Tony. I mean it's ok with me.	
Tony: Yeah. And if you fancy your coach is ok with me. Besides he's quite fit.	

Subtitles in Italian	Back translation
Non dirlo a nessuno.	[Don't tell anyone.
Certo che no, Tony. Stai tranquillo, puoi fidarti di me.	Of course not, Tony. Don't worry, you can trust me.
Grazie. Io non dirò che ti piace il tuo allenatore bianco.	Thank you. I won't say that you like your white coach.
Fra l'altro è un gran fico.	By the way he's quite dishy.]

Here Jess and Tony, two Indian friends, are discussing their problems. On the one hand Jess is in trouble because she wants to go on playing football in a professional girl team but there are few chances that her parents will agree to that; on the other Tony reveals his homosexuality. In this example, the quite neutral expression of the original soundtrack is turned into a deeply felt expression of liking in the subtitle, one which is also more appropriate to the age of the speakers, who are in their teens.

Another example where the subtitles are more explicit than the original is the following, where the sincere, deep admiration for Jess's outfit is arguably more strongly and effectively conveyed in the target text. Here the subtitle translates more explicitly what is already being conveyed by the visual and aural codes, that is, Jules's smiling look of approval and admiration and the cheerful tone in her voice:

Example 8: Bend it like Beckham

Jess: I didn't bring anything for a club. I didn't know they would take us clubbing. That is too glow (pointing at a T-shirt).	
Jules: (dialling Mel's extension) Mel? We need some help.	
Jules: (following Jess, who's wearing a sexy outfit) She looks good?	
Girl: It's good.	

Subtitles in Italian	Back translation
Non ho niente per uscire, non sapevo ci portassero per locali.	[I have nothing to wear to go out, I didn't know they would take us to a night club.
Mel? Ci serve aiuto.	Mel? We need help.
Non è una meraviglia?	Isn't she a beauty?]

Conclusions

On the whole this introductory study on the translation of compliments in subtitles has confirmed some of Rose's (2001) findings. Compliments in film language seem to exploit a more varied repertoire of linguistic expressions than the few, stereotypical formulae identified in the sociolinguistic studies by Manes and Wolfson (1980) (*cf.* Example 1). Some adjectives tend to occur with regularity: *brilliant* (especially in British English, *Bend it like Beckham* and *Mickey Blue Eyes*, where Michael/Mickey is an Englishman), *cute* and *terrific* (*Tootsie, Sliding Doors*). Actual frequency of occurrence should be checked in corpora of natural dialogue.

The limited data that has been analysed so far suggests that in Italian subtitles there appears to be a preference to compliment people on their personal qualities rather than on their performances (Examples 2, 3 and 4). This tendency should however be double-checked both in more film subtitles and also in original data in Italian, to see whether it is a feature of subtitles or a general preference of the Italian language.

There is a marked preference for omissions and reductions in subtitles (Examples 5 and 6), but some instances of better constructed compliments (Examples 7 and 8) show that the translator may decide to reinforce through the subtitle what is expressed by the images (look, posture, facial expression) or by the nonverbal qualities of the auditory channel (tone of voice, speed of speech), attempting thereby to translate the global essence of the original text as a whole, and not just as a local chunk.

Chapter 17

Greek Soldiers on the Screen: Politeness, Fluency and Audience Design in Subtitling

OLGA GARTZONIKA and ADRIANA ŞERBAN

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate some of the ways in which the English subtitles of the Greek film *Loafing and Camouflage* (*Λούφα και Παραλλαγή*), directed by Nikos Perakis in 1984, represent the interaction between the characters on screen, with special focus on the politeness strategies which are adopted and, in particular, the ways in which potential face-threatening acts in the original dialogue are dealt with in the subtitles.

The film is a comedy about soldiers doing their military service in 1967 and 1968 in Greece, before and during the military dictatorship. It is full of disrespectful mockery of the military regime and of amusing asides on army life. Based on satire and dialogue, the film has been one of the big commercial successes of modern Greek cinema. It is still occasionally broadcast in Greece, though it is watched in a different way than 20 years ago when it was first released. The film still inspires laughter, though the original political satire may be lost on present day young audiences for whom the seven-year military dictatorship in Greece (1967–1974) is a fairly remote episode in history. Also, due to the lapse of time, scenes which were very funny when the film was first released have lost part of their original appeal, and may even seem predictable (soldiers being caught by their superiors while they are with women) or naïve (soldiers peeping at beautiful fashion models who are changing their clothes). Older generations who first saw the film when they themselves were young watch it with nostalgia, and recognise many of the young actors in the film who have in the meanwhile become stars of the Greek television.

Undeniably, the (somewhat dated) humour created in the verbal exchanges between soldiers, the way in which characters are portrayed and their ceaseless attempts to break rules and get away with doing so, appeal to a broad audience at home, and it is not an exaggeration to say that the film is a family movie, that can be watched by people of all ages. However, the fact that the film is about military service and army life, and that virtually all the characters in it are men, make it easier for a male audience to identity with the issues which are presented. It is plausible to assume that, among present day Greek audiences, educated people are more likely to understand the original political dimension of the film because they would be able to recognise historical references and to pick up clues such as the fact that those characters in the film who speak *katharevousa* (a form of 'pure' Greek) are likely to be supporters of right-wing ideology and to be in favour of the military regime. It then appears that, even at home in Greece, the film has a fairly heterogeneous audience, and that different audience groups are likely to access different aspects of the film and to experience them in different ways.

As far as reception abroad is concerned, Greek cinema in general has not achieved as yet the popularity which can make large audiences crowd to see a film. A famous film such as *Zorba the Greek* (Michael Cacoyannis, 1964) is not a local Greek film, the main character Alexis Zorba is played by Hollywood superstar Anthony Quinn while Basil is played by another non-Greek actor, Alan Bates, and the film was distributed by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment. More recently, a very different type of movie namely the much publicised family film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Joel Zwick, 2002), which plays on stereotypes about Greek families and boasts quite a number of people of Greek heritage in its cast comes, once again, from the United States.

Efforts to make Greek cinema known to the world are, however, being made. The Greek Film Centre in Athens, an organisation supervised by the Greek Ministry of Culture, has as its main aims 'the protection, support and development of the art of film in Greece' and 'the production, dissemination and promotion of Greek film productions both domestically and internationally' (www.gfc.gr).

A discussion of the reasons for which certain national cinemas, including the Greek, have so far failed to reach international recognition, is beyond the scope of this paper. We would need to go into issues of cultural politics and world trends in the circulation and consumption of cultural products. What is important, for the purpose of this research, is to notice that the difficulty of Greek films and directors to become famous abroad inevitably involves the fact that they only manage to attract smaller

audiences for whom Greece has prominence in one way or another, either because of travel, or because of scholarly interest in the country, language or culture, or because of Greek ancestry. There is evidence that, apart from presence at international film festivals, Greek films are also regularly screened in the United States as part of cultural events organised by Greek immigrant communities, by Hellenic student associations of various universities, and are also occasionally shown at the end of scholarly conferences on topics linked to Greek language, culture, or history. There are also regular Greek Film Festivals in the United States, such as the 2004 San Francisco Festival jointly sponsored by the Centre for Modern Greek Studies at the San Francisco State University, The Greek Film Centre in Athens, and the Consulate General of Greece in San Francisco. It is likely that a significant part of the audience has at least some knowledge of the Greek language and that English subtitles (when available) are there in order to support comprehension rather than as sole source of information.

Politeness, Fluency and Audience Design

Loafing and Camouflage is a talking film where dialogue is instrumental in moving the action forward, and one of the most important sources of humour. In other words, the film is not of the kind which one could watch and appreciate for its cinematography, even with only partial understanding of what the characters say, and this is why subtitles are important.

The framework for analysis we adopt in this study is a pragmatics-oriented one, which means that subtitling is conceptualised as an act of communication which is not different in nature from any other type of communication, spoken or written. Consequently, the focus here is not on investigating subtitles in isolation from the communicative event as a whole but, rather, on asking questions such as why did the subtitler say this in this way on this occasion, in view of particular constraints, aims and purposes, and in view of other people's expectations or needs. Contextualisation is particularly important because as noticed by Bakhtin (1990: 428): 'at any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions […] that will ensure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions'.

The following pages aim to give a brief overview of the main theoretical aspects underpinning our analysis of the English subtitles, in particular politeness theory, audience design, and issues of domestication *versus* foreignisation in translation. We then proceed to the actual analysis of examples from the film, and will conclude with a number of remarks

about the way in which face-threatening acts are managed in the English subtitles of this film, and implications for audience design.

Politeness Theory in a Cross-cultural Context

According to politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) face-threatening acts (FTAs) are an inevitable part of interaction, and a main concern for people, in communicating, is to preserve their own face (Goffman, 1981), and that of their interlocutors (both 'negative face', that is, the want to remain unimpeded, and 'positive face', or the want to be approved of and to feel part of a group). To achieve this, various strategies are used to cope with face-threatening acts, that is, verbal acts which may be perceived as threatening the positive or negative face of participants. A countless number of FTAs take place whenever we interact with other people, and they include requests, suggestions, orders, various types of statements, and many more. The strategies used to carry out what may be perceived as a face-threatening act mainly fall into several categories: not carrying out the FTA at all (i.e. not saying anything), off record strategies (allowing for ambiguity of intention), and on record strategies. The latter involve either going bald on record and doing the face-threatening act, or mitigating a potential FTA by employing positive politeness strategies (expressing agreement or approval, claiming solidarity, for example, via the use of inclusive pronominal forms such as 'us', 'we') or negative politeness strategies (expressions of deference and formality, and hedging, for instance by using passives or modal verbs as in 'could you do this?' compared to the unhedged 'do this'). Considerations of power and distance are involved in any such strategies.

Politeness considerations are culture-sensitive. Hirschon (2001) points to the fact that there is a lot of directness and positive politeness in Greek interactions, including the use of insults affectionately, to indicate solidarity and in-groupness ('insults with impunity', as she calls them). She notices that insults and cursing of a formulaic kind take place more frequently in the Athenian Greek context (the film *Loafing and Camouflage* is set in Athens, with the exception of a few scenes which are set somewhere near the Bulgarian border), where everyday interaction is sprinkled with words or phrases, such as *μαλάκας* [jerk, wanker], which to a foreigner may seem rude, insulting or even shocking, but which are treated lightly by those they are addressed to (except in some serious cases where the insult threatens the honour or sexual integrity of one's family). She concludes that there is a certain nonaccountability of words in Greek, and that language is often used playfully and almost has a life of its own.

Research on request strategies employed by Greek learners of English (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2003) also points to the fact that Greek learners' requests reveal a significant trend for higher degree of directness, compared to British English native speakers' requests. There are important differences between the ways in which Greek learners and English native speakers assess situations in terms of relative weight of familiarity, power and distance. In conclusion, the way in which face management is conducted differs between languages and cultures, and may differ even in cases where people actually share the same language, for instance British and American English.

When it comes to subtitling film dialogue and, consequently, representing in another language the interaction between the characters on screen, a number of factors need to be taken into consideration, in addition to issues of cross-cultural pragmatics. First of all, in subtitling, there is a transfer from the spoken to the written mode. The differences between spoken and written texts have been well documented (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001), and among other aspects they involve the fact that in writing communicators tend to be less colloquial, use fewer false starts, and fewer interpersonal markers (such as 'you know', 'well', 'OK then'). This is not to say that written texts do not have an interpersonal dimension. On the contrary, any act of spoken or written communication involves the management of interpersonal interaction (Myers, 1989).

Working within a politeness theory framework, Hatim and Mason (2000) analyse excerpts from the English subtitles of Claude Sautet's film *Un coeur en hiver* (1992). They find that interpersonal markers which contribute significantly to the representation of the unfolding relationship between characters tend to be left out from the subtitles even when there is no concern for space. It is almost as though the interpersonal dimension of the act of communication were considered less important than, say, the informative dimension, despite the fact that the way in which interpersonal interaction is managed conveys crucial information about characters and plot.

Audience Design

The gist of audience design (Bell, 1984, 2001) is that communicators design their style primarily for and in response to their audience. In other words, style itself is what an individual communicator does with language in response to other people. Style is understood by Bell (1984: 161) to refer to all the levels of a communicator's linguistic choices, ranging from the selection of one language rather than another (in bilingual situations), the

way in which words are pronounced, the very choice of one word rather than another, and politeness strategies. All of these choices have a bearing upon the identity which communicators claim for themselves and the way in which they position themselves *vis-a-vis* their audience. Designing for an audience can be deliberate or non-deliberate, and it is frequently based on unwarranted stereotyping assumptions about other participants, and about appropriate ways of reaching particular aims.

In mass communication audience, design is made more challenging by the difficulty of knowing who exactly your interlocutors are, accessing feedback from them, and adjusting one's communication in response to their reactions. This is why Bell (1984) makes the distinction between 'initiative audience design', in mass communication, and 'responsive design', in cases where the interlocutor is known. Bell (1984: 160) further suggests that a text producer's style is influenced in different ways and to varying degrees by a number of receiver groups which are potentially part of the audience. In order of decreasing impact on the style of the communicator, these audience groups are: addressees (ratified participants in the exchange, whose presence is known to the communicator, and who are addressed directly), auditors (whose presence is known and ratified, but who are not directly addressed), overhearers (whose presence is known but not ratified, and who are not addressed) and, finally, eavesdroppers (their presence is not even known to the communicator).

As noticed by Hatim and Mason (2000) in subtitling, the interaction takes place initially between the characters on screen (addressees), and it has to be plausible as such, but at the same time is also presented – and indeed, constructed – for the benefit ot the film audience (the auditors). And in this case the auditors may be more important than the addressees.

Broadcasters are aware of the importance of achieving the right targeting of a desired audience. Commercial television, for example, survives on the basis of advertising fees, and in order for marketers to pay for advertisements to appear on a given channel, at a particular time, they need to be sure that the right audience is watching. Television audiences are increasingly segmented and can choose among a wide range of thematic channels. It is inevitable that developments in the world at large, and in the audiovisual industry, should impact the way in which we think of audiovisual translation. Gambier (2003) suggests that broadcasting is moving in the direction of narrowcasting, as we become increasingly aware of the fact that audiences are not homogeneous, that we have more precise targets (e.g. thematic channels) and viewers, who expect to hear 'a certain register and terminology, a certain style and rhetoric' (Gambier, 2003: 182).

Domesticating vs Foreignising Strategies: Fluency and Translator Invisibility

The final theoretical aspect we draw on in this research is that of domestication vs foreignisation in translation, a dichotomy which takes us back to the age-long debate of whether in translation we should aim to take the text closer to the reader, or to take the reader towards the text. A domesticating strategy aims 'to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognisable, even the familiar' (Venuti, 1995: 18); the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with the values, beliefs and conventions which pre-exist in the target language. One of the main ways in which this can be achieved is by using, in translation, a fluent discourse which ensures readability, adheres to current usage, eliminates stylistic peculiarities, and conceals the fact that the text is in fact a translation (Venuti, 1995: 1). This strategy also helps to hide the presence and intervention of translators, to make them invisible, as it were. Foreignising translation, on the other hand, involves less violence to the source text and, in fact, makes a task out of preserving, as far as possible, the otherness of the source text. The overall tendency is for (literary) translators into English to adopt domesticating strategies, and to aim for fluent-sounding discourse.

In subtitling, the translator's visibility or invisibility takes on additional meanings, including the very literal one of intrusiveness of nonintrusiveness in the overall experience of watching an audiovisual programme, that is, the subtitles should not obscure the image and they should be fairly easy to read so that the audience does not need to spend too much time on them at the expense of other components of the audiovisual programme, such as image. Furthermore, subtitles are frequently not considered to be on a par with the other components of a programme; thus, according to Smith:

> the goal is subtitles which, while perfectly legible, actually give the impression of merging into the background. They are no more than a support for the visuals. Ideally, the audience should leave the cinema or switch off the television having understood the film but without having made any conscious effort to read the subtitles. (Smith, 1998: 148)

Aiming for this kind of invisibility is clearly linked to issues of domestication and fluency in translation and with the levelling out of linguistic features which are perceived as being too salient and attracting viewers' attention at the expense of the visuals.

There are, however, other issue to consider. Audiences are likely to find subtitles nonintrusive when these adhere to the norms they are accustomed to, even if the particular norms in operation are not always in conformity

with best subtitling practice. The fact that audiences are almost always heterogeneous and that audience groups differ in terms of cognitive environment, processing ability and interest in the audiovisual programme makes it plausible to suggest that what is comfortable reading for one group may prove difficult (and hence intrusive) for another, and too easy for yet a third group.

Interactional Politeness in *Loafing and Camouflage*

Loafing and Camouflage starts with a scene set in the border between Greece and Bulgaria, where three soldiers in an isolated post are cooking a meal for themselves. The news arrives that one of them, Papadopoulos, has had his request for transfer to an army unit in Athens approved, and he is overjoyed and leaves straight away. The rest of the film is set in Athens, mostly in the army unit where Papadopoulos is now serving the remainder of his military term and where the army runs an experimental television station.

This fairly self-contained world is populated by a variety of somewhat stereotypical characters who are contoured in terms of what they believe in, what their priorities are, what they say and what they do. Papadopoulos is portrayed as a decent, well-meaning person and a caring family man who can hardly wait to finish his military service and return to his wife and baby daughters. The corporal in charge of guarding the entrance of the army unit is unkind and patronising; his position is only every so slightly superior to that of ordinary soldiers but he uses every opportunity to humiliate them – though on occasions he only succeeds in making himself ridiculous. The officers are conservative (many of them speak *katharevousa*), almost all of them are scared that the communists will come and take over the country, and those who are not very well educated resent ordinary soldiers who have had an education (e.g. 'Even if you're a scientist, you'll be cleaning shit!', translated literally in the English subtitles).

In Example 1 below, soldiers Papadopoulos, Lambrou and two others are at the gate of the army unit. They are going in town to make a video clip for broadcasting on the television channel run by the army. The corporal stops them and asks:

Example 1

Greek original	*English subtitles*
Corporal: Για πού το βάλατε, πουλάκια μου? [Where are you going, my little birds?] Soldier Lambrou: Μπουρδελότσαρκα. [Walkabout whorehouses.]	Where to, my birdies? Going places.

The almost literal translation 'my birdies' for the Greek πουλάκια μου sounds somewhat unusual; an alternative could have been 'Where are you going, girls?' which would have preserved the patronising tone of the corporal and the attempt to offend the soldiers by calling them 'girls'. In the Greek, Lambrou's answer is Μπουρδελότσαρκα, which could be rendered as 'We're going whoring'. Given that on this occasion the soldiers have nothing to hide, Lambrou's refusal to give a straight answer signals that he has no intention of recognising the corporal's status and his right to ask questions. The translation preserves Lambrou's avoidance strategy but the face-threatening act involved in saying 'We're going whoring' is softened by the use of the ambiguous and neutral 'going places'. If Ivarsson and Carroll (1998: 126) are right in saying that 'swear-words and obscenities […] seem to have a stronger effect in writing than in speech, especially if they are translated literally', then Example 1 may be an illustration of such a toning down strategy. However, in most instances in the film strong language is not toned down ('Go away, jerk!', 'You are all screwed!'), and Examples 2, 3 and 4 below illustrate the use, in subtitles, of language which is actually more offensive than the original communication in its context.

Example 2

Greek original	English subtitles
One soldier (about a woman): Τι παιδί ήταν αυτό! [What a child was that!]	What a piece of ass!

Example 3

Greek original	English subtitles
One soldier to another (about a beautiful woman): Καλά! Πολύ περίπτωση! [Well! Lot of case!]	Quite a piece of ass!

Example 4

Greek original	English subtitles
Soldiers (peeping at models changing clothes): Μέγας είσαι Κύριε και θαυμαστά τα έργα σου! [Great are you Lord and your works are admirable!]	That's an ass blessed by God himself!

Examples 2 and 3 sound like plausible American army talk in the 1970s; the translation in Example 4 sounds somewhat strange. The repeated use of 'piece (of ass)' is dehumanising. The soldiers appear to regard women as objects and, furthermore, to reduce them to one single aspect, that is, their 'ass', which is not the case in the original Greek. A more accurate translation for Example 2, in terms of equivalence of effect, would have been 'What a babe!'. Why then does the subtitler choose to raise the level of the face-threatening act, in the three examples above? The fact that the film is set in an army unit and virtually all the characters are male soldiers may help associating *Loafing and Camouflage* with the military film genre, where strong language is at the order of the day. But *Loafing and Camouflage* is a comedy, more akin to *M*A*S*H* (Robert Altman, 1970) than to war films such as *The Thin Red Line* (Terrence Malick, 1998). One would consequently assume that the main aim of the film is to entertain as large a number of viewers as possible, and the systematic use of strong language in the subtitles may feel intrusive and offensive, which is not the intention of the original. Reading the subtitles while at the same time watching the fairly innocent behaviour of the soldiers, it almost feels as though a confusion of genres is taking place. Subtitles which would be perfectly appropriate for a war film are here associated with a comedy, and the outcome is somewhat implausible.

Sell (1991) makes a distinction between politeness in texts, where the focus is on the interaction of characters, and the politeness of texts, a notion pertaining to the overall level of the interaction between the writer and readers. According to him, entire texts may be polite or impolite, depending on the degree to which they conform to the expectations of the readers or, in our case, viewers. It is possible that subtitles 2, 3 and 4 will feel more offensive to certain audience groups rather than to all. The fact that the level of the face-threatening acts is raised in those instances where soldiers talk about women may be acceptable to (some) male audiences, but might not feel so to women viewers of the film. It may be the case that a (deliberate or nondeliberate) prioritisation of a male audience is at work (see De Marco, this volume).

In Example 5, the last one in this analysis, soldier Papadopoulos sees his baby daughters for the first time in two months. He exclaims:

Example 5

Greek original	*English subtitles*
Ρε τιζ πουτανίτσεζ πωζ μεγαλώσανε σε δυο μήνεζ! [The little whores, how they grew up in two months!]	The little whores, how they grew up in two months!

The subtitler opts for a literal rendition of the Greek original, and the outcome is very unusual indeed, in the sense that very few English speaking fathers would express themselves in this way upon seeing their young children. The viewer might either conclude that Papadopoulos is a very bad father and a vulgar person, or perhaps that there is something wrong with the subtitles – especially as Papadopoulos's body language and the expression on his face actually indicate love for his children and joy at seeing them.

This way of expressing oneself seems to be acceptable in Greece, in informal interactions between young people (though not when their parents are around), and no real offence is meant. In fact, politeness strategies in Greece differ from those used in, broadly speaking, English language cultures, and people may take offence at different things. The subtitler may not have realised this, in which case Example 5 is an illustration of poor management in the translation of cross-cultural pragmatic differences. However, other issues could also be involved.

On one level the interaction in the film takes place between the characters on screen, on another level it is actually addressed to the audience watching the film. But audiences are not homogeneous and several audience groups can be watching at the same time, perhaps reacting in different ways to what they see. It is then possible to envisage a target audience group which will respond favourably to the subtitler's option for a literal, nonmediated (and, ultimately, foreignising) translation; this could be because this group has some understanding of the source language and of Greek conventions of interpersonal interaction. Such a group could be, for example, the second and third generation of Greek immigrants in Britain or the United States; it was pointed out earlier that Greek films are regularly screened as part of Greek cultural events in the United States. Example 5 can therefore be interpreted as evidence of the subtitler's deliberate or nondeliberate design for a particular audience. Other examples seem to support this, for instance the fact that the name of a Greek traditional cake, *touloumba*, appears as such in the English subtitles and members of the audience who are not familiar with Greek culture cannot be expected to know about this type of cake.

Concluding Remarks

There seems to be an inconsistent strategy of managing interpersonal interaction in the English subtitles of *Loafing and Camouflage*, in that the level of face-threatening acts is lowered in some cases but raised in others, and it is maintained in yet other instances (though, if we take Greek-English cross-cultural politeness differences into account, it is possible

that the level of FTAs is raised in translation even when at first sight it appears to be maintained). The film is on DVD and this means that the subtitles would have been less likely to be censored compared to, say, subtitles for television. The fact that more offensive language is used in the subtitles in those instances when the characters on screen refer to women suggests that a predominantly male audience is addressed, which may not have been the intention of the film's director. The presence of many foreignising and nonfluent sounding subtitles points to the fact that an audience who is to an extent familiar with the Greek language and culture may have been targeted.

Admittedly, it is difficult to state with confidence that the English subtitles target a combination of these two particular audience groups. Indeed, it is even possible that some of the offensive or nonfluent translations discussed in this chapter are, quite simply, evidence of the subtitler's limited training and skills. Irrespective of whether this is the case or not, what the analysis does suggest is that some subtitling decisions work better for certain audiences, and that subtitles which feel offensive, intrusive or difficult to understand for some viewers may actually be acceptable to others. Politeness and fluency in subtitling are, inevitably, linked to audience design.

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