



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e la Cooperazione Internazionale
Classe LM-38

Tesi di Laurea

A Study of Cultural and Pragmatic Aspects of British and American TV Series and of their Italian Dubbed Versions

Relatore
Prof. Erik Castello

Laureanda
Stefania Manfrin
n° matr.1063285 / LMLCC

Anno Accademico 2016/ 2017

Acknowledgments

This dissertation was made possible through the guidance and support of my professor, family and friends.

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Erik Castello, who shared with me with his expertise and for patiently guiding me through this entire process, continually motivating me to do more than I thought I was capable of.

Thank you to my mother, Gabriella, who instilled in me her unwavering determination and for all the hard work she did to provide me with a school education; my sister Federica and her wonderful family for their endless supply of repose and joy when I needed it; my aunt, uncle, and cousins especially Donatella, Bianca, and Giacomo.

A big thank goes to all those who are a second family to me: Iacopo for his love, patience, and for believing in me when I did not, Laura for always being there for me in good and bad times, Enrico, who is like a brother to me and was always there to encourage me, and Giacomo, for his total support and understanding. I also want to thank Valentina S. and Valentina B., with whom I spent a great part of my life and academic career; Martina, for always telling me that I could make it; Vanessa, with whom I shared part of this experience.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all the wonderful people I was lucky to meet during my academic career, who always encouraged me and pushed me to work harder. Laura, Sara and Giulia with whom I had the pleasure to experience the best and the worst during these years, who stayed by my side and supported me every time I needed. Agnese, Alice and Nicolò, who each in their own way helped me to improve myself more than I expected; Viviana, Gloria, Ilaria, and Alessandra, for their company and friendship.

One last thank goes to the community of Subspedia that inspired the subject of my research, in particular Margherita with whom I have the pleasure to share this experience with.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....3

CHAPTER ONE – AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

1.1 Introduction to Audiovisual Translation.....7

 1.1.1 Definitions.....7

 1.1.2 Types of Audiovisual Translation.....9

 1.1.3 Audiovisual Translation in Europe.....11

1.2. Subtitling.....13

 1.2.1 Definition of Subtitling.....13

 1.2.2 Classification of Subtitles.....15

 1.2.2.1 Interlingual for hearing audience.....15

 1.2.2.2 Interlingual and intralingual for the deaf and hard of hearing.....17

 1.2.2.3 Surtitles, Intertitles, Fansubs.....21

1.3 Dubbing.....22

 1.3.1 A definition of dubbing.....22

 1.3.2 The origins of dubbing.....22

 1.3.3 Dubbing in Italy.....23

1.4. Subtitling vs. Dubbing.....24

CHAPTER TWO – PRAGMATIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FILM LANGUAGE

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.1 Characteristics of conversational routines..... | 27 |
| 2.1.1 Vagueness..... | 28 |
| 2.1.1.1 Hedges..... | 29 |
| 2.1.1.2 Discourse markers..... | 32 |
| 2.1.1.2.1 Definitions..... | 32 |
| 2.1.1.2.2 Recent definitions..... | 33 |
| 2.1.1.3 Modals and Semi-Modals..... | 35 |
| 2.2. Characteristics of telecinematic discourse | 36 |
| 2.2.1 Predictability..... | 36 |
| 2.2.2 Taboo language..... | 38 |
| 2.3 Speech acts..... | 41 |
| 2.3.1 Philosophy of language..... | 41 |
| 2.3.2 Austin’s illocutionary, locutionary, perlocutionary acts..... | 43 |
| 2.3.3 Searle’s theory of speech acts..... | 45 |
| 2.3.4 Indirect speech acts..... | 46 |
| 2.4 Politeness Theory..... | 47 |
| 2.4.1 Politeness..... | 47 |
| 2.4.2. Negative and Positive face..... | 47 |
| 2.4.3 Positive politeness and Negative politeness | 49 |
| 2.4.3.1 Positive politeness | 49 |
| 2.4.3.2 Negative politeness..... | 52 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 2.5 Cultural aspects of language..... | 55 |
| 2.5.1 Cultural myths..... | 55 |
| 2.5.2 Cultural orientations..... | 55 |
| 2.5.3 LCC and HCC orientations..... | 57 |

CHAPTER THREE – THE DATA

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 3.1 Corpus: TV series, characters and contexts..... | 63 |
| 3.1.1 Skins..... | 63 |
| 3.1.2 Shameless..... | 64 |
| 3.1.3 Broadchurch and Gracepoint..... | 65 |
| 3.1.4 Veep and The Thick of It..... | 65 |
| 3.2. Characters in TV series..... | 66 |

CHAPTER FOUR – DATA ANALYSIS (1): cultural references, colloquial expressions, taboo language and discourse markers

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.1 Cultural References..... | 71 |
| 4.2 Colloquial Expressions | 74 |
| 4.2.1 Vocatives..... | 74 |
| 4.2.3 Greetings..... | 78 |
| 4.3 Taboo Language..... | 80 |
| 4.3.1 Jesus/ Christ..... | 85 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 4.3.2 Fuck | 87 |
| 4.3.3 Twat and Cock..... | 89 |
| 4.4 Discourse Markers..... | 92 |
| 4.4.1 So | 93 |
| 4.4.2 Right/ All right..... | 94 |
| 4.4.3 Okay..... | 95 |
| 4.4.4 You know..... | 96 |
| 4.4.5 I mean | 97 |
| 4.4.6 Well | 98 |
| 4.4.7 Yes/ Yeah | 98 |
| 4.4.8 Infrequently used markers..... | 99 |

CHAPTER 5 – DATA ANALYSIS (2): linguistic analysis of speech acts

| | |
|---|------------|
| 5.1 General introduction to speech acts..... | 101 |
| 5.2 Speech acts in detail..... | 104 |
| 5.2.1 Offers..... | 104 |
| 5.2.2 Requests and Orders..... | 107 |
| 5.2.3 Thanks..... | 110 |
| 5.2.4 Apologies..... | 111 |
| 5.2.5 Suggestions..... | 113 |
| 5.3 Comparison with the Italian transcripts..... | 115 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| CONCLUSION..... | 117 |
| Bibliography..... | 121 |
| Summary..... | 129 |

Introduction

The fascination for the world of TV series and a recent interest in audiovisual translation have led me to write this dissertation, the main aim of which is that of identifying differences between British and American English as gleaned from the analysis of TV series transcripts. To be precise, I will explore some cultural and linguistic aspects of the two cultures in the transcripts of both British and American versions of the same TV series. I will also take into account the Italian adaptation of the British transcripts, with a view to identifying differences between the British/American versions and the Italian dubbed one.

At the very beginning of this project, I attended a one week-course in audiovisual translation at the University of Salento in Lecce, in order to gain a better understanding of what audiovisual translation is and, above all, how the process of professional subtitling works. In Lecce I was also introduced to the main literature on the topic. Subsequently, I took into consideration a large variety of TV series, and eventually chose four popular British TV shows which had also been adapted for the American public and dubbed into Italian. The transcripts and video footages were retrieved from the Internet. The research then involved the study of a selection of linguistic features of both varieties, and also of the main speech acts performed in the films.

The first chapter of my dissertation focuses on the concept of audiovisual translation. Firstly, I give some definitions and talk about the evolution of audiovisual techniques throughout the years. Subsequently, various types of Audio Visual Translation (AVT) strategies are described, including both the most popular ones such as subtitling and dubbing, and experimental ones, such as re-speaking and audio description. In addition, I show the geographical distribution of these techniques in Europe, and discuss the historical and economical factors that led the countries to choose a given strategy rather than another. Finally, I will devote two separate sections to subtitling and dubbing, with a comparison between them. For each I present their specific features, their historical evolution, possible classifications, and their approach towards the audience. More specifically, as regards subtitling I distinguish between subtitling for hearing audiences and subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing audience.

The second chapter outlines all the pragmatic and cultural aspects I took into account for my analysis. In the first part of the chapter, I make a theoretical comparison between, on the one hand, the characteristics of everyday conversational routines and, on the other, of those of telecinematic discourse, which is the basis of my dissertation. Specifically, as concerns conversational routines, I introduce the concept of vagueness and its main features, namely hedging, discourse markers, and modality, which I use as variables for my study. For each of these three topics, I provide definitions, characteristics and functions in texts. I then provide a definition of predictability and taboo language, which are the features of telecinematic discourse. The second part of the chapter is devoted to pragmatics and to cultural aspects of language. First of all, as regards pragmatics, I define the term “speech act” and describe its function, the development of its concept throughout the decades, and the distinction between perlocutionary, locutionary and illocutionary acts. I also draw a comparison between Austin’s and Searle’s views on this matter. Secondly, I introduce Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory, and the concepts of positive and negative face and positive and negative politeness. As for the cultural aspects of language, I base my research on the distinction between Low Context Communication and High Context Communication orientations, focusing in particular on the languages I analysed.

The third chapter is in a way a link between the theoretical and the practical part. It presents the TV series I considered for my analysis: *Skins*, *Shameless*, *Broadchurch* (*Gracepoint* in the American version) and *The Thick of It* (*Veep* in the American version). Each of them is described in terms of plot, setting, duration, and characters. I also introduce the figure of characters in TV series, describing their influence on the text and context.

The fourth chapter is the first one related to the analysis of my data. After a brief introduction to corpus-based studies, I subdivide it into four parts, each of which focuses on the analysis of respectively cultural references, colloquial expressions, taboo language and discourse markers. For each section I present the results in the form of tables and graphs, and discuss the reasons for possible differences and similarities among the three versions of the same transcript and give relevant examples.

The final chapter is related to the cross-sectional analysis of the speech acts I chose to consider in my research, namely offers, requests, orders, apologies, thanks, and suggestions. The data are broken down according to several variables, including clause types, such as declaratives, yes/no questions, WH-questions, exclamations, modal verbs

such as would and could, and hedging expressions. Each one of the speech acts is analysed separately (except for orders and requests), and the differences between the speech acts belonging to the two varieties are highlighted and explained. Finally, a section is devoted to a brief comparison between the speech acts in the British version and those in the Italian dubbed adaptation.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Audiovisual Translation

This chapter introduces the field of audiovisual translation. First, I will give a definition of the term and I will list the types of audiovisual translation, with a focus on the distribution of the most popular one in Europe. Then I will examine in detail the characteristics of subtitling and dubbing in particular, making a comparison between the two.

1.1 Definitions

According to Perego and Taylor (2012: 15), Audiovisual Translation is a branch of translation studies related to audiovisual products. It consists in transferring the global meaning of a source text into a new one that is equal to the first but in another language. Although they share similarities, this kind of translation distances from both types, e.g. literary translation, as there are some limits that need to be taken into account.

Audiovisual translation takes place through two main channels: the visual, that includes, for instance, subtitles, captions, commentaries, and, on the other hand, the auditory channel, such as music, noise and silence. Sometimes, for instance, with dubbing and voice-over, the channel used in the original version is the same for the target version (the auditory in this case); otherwise, in subtitling, the channel is different, indeed it shifts from auditory to visual. For this reason the term Audiovisual Translation itself contains a large number of different types of translations that act also at a semiotic level. Roman Jakobson himself, in his works about translation, talked about *intersemiotic* translation: when linguistic and non-linguistic channels meet in order to create a translation that moves onto different levels. Studies about audiovisual translation have started in the late 70s, when a link between written texts and sign systems was acknowledged. From then, the term translation, along with the term *adaptation*, has been expanded to new approaches, for instance multimedia texts and sign language interpreting. During the early 90s the term audiovisual translation, abbreviated with AVT, started to gain ground together with other similar definitions like film translation or cinema translation. According to Cintas (2007: 12), “AVT was used to encapsulate different translation

practices used in the audiovisual media – cinema, television, VHS – in which there is a transfer from a source to a target language, which involves some form of interaction with sound and images”. As Pavesi explains (2007: 07), the subject of AVT is dialogue, that is the only part of an audiovisual product that can be manipulated and transferred from a type of audience to another (e.g. foreigners or hearing impaired) with the help of sophisticated software that is able to create high qualitative products, mainly film, TV series, documentaries, plays, musicals, live events, web pages, and videogames.

In recent years, two new ways of audiovisual translation have been introduced: audio description for the blind and subtitling for the deaf. Accordingly, two new concepts have been developed, namely *accessibility* and *usability*, words that were employed only in informatics until recently. Nowadays Information Technology plays an important role in our lives, as it is important for people to have the opportunity to access everything that deals with information and communication; that is why the levels of accessibility, i.e. how easy is it to get these technologies, and usability, i.e. to what extent are we capable of using them, of a certain technology are essential (Perego and Taylor, 2012: 15)

According to Perego and Taylor, the word accessibility refers to something that can be used by anyone, despite physical impediments or cognitive disorders. In other words, every limit, physical or sensorial, a person has, is completely adjusted by these technologies that are available to everyone no matter when or where. Since this topic is related to a wide range of disabled people, audiovisual translation has become a topic of interest, and has been hugely developed and spread out. Unfortunately not enough though, indeed, in Europe, this type of AVT is not employed with regularity and fair retribution, and most of the time, due to the high costs, the realisation and the distribution of this solution is not an option that is contemplated.

The term usability, on the other hand, is the characteristic of a particular device that makes it efficient, effective, intuitive and satisfying for the user. Taking into account subtitling, the way subtitles are transcribed in order to satisfy the user, is something related to accessibility. However, their syntax, the lexical choices and their clearness are a matter of usability. As with accessibility, the concept of usability started to spread during the 90s with the arrival of computers and the Internet, and with it the terminology related to subtitling developed. First of all, *learnability*, that is how fast the users learn to use it, and *efficiency*, how fast the user actually uses it. Also *memorability*, is an important concept, namely the ability to re-use the device without re-learning how to use it. Still

others are *errors*, that is the frequency and the weight of mistakes and the reaction of the user to them, and *satisfaction*, i.e. whether the product satisfies the user.

Related to accessibility, another term that should be mentioned is *legibility*, that is the complete availability of the product for any kind of audience. On the other hand, one can reach the top by improving the quality of the product by making its employment as easy as possible (*readability*). This last point is something that can be easily handled nowadays, but legibility is far more difficult to manage; indeed, the subtitler must pay attention both to the translation and the layout (character, size, number of lines etc.), in that subtitles are not only functional for the audiovisual product itself, but also represent a way to teach foreign languages and to decrease illiteracy.

1.2 Types of Audiovisual Translation

The most popular types of Audiovisual Translation are “dubbing” and “subtitling”. As Pedersen (2011:4) states, dubbing replaces the source language soundtrack with a target language soundtrack, while subtitling keeps the original soundtrack, and superimposes a translation on the visual image of the film or TV programme.

Apart from them, other AVT strategies are available:

- **Voice - over**, which is performed by a speaker that reads a script during a show on television, cinema, or a theatre; it is, usually, pre-recorded and placed at the top of the original soundtrack. It was used in the past for radio commercials that were broadcasted live, with actors, crew and an orchestra. Nowadays, it is common for TV programmes to use voice-over instead of the whole process of dubbing, because it is more demanding in terms of money and time. In these cases the audience hears the original voice at a lower volume, and the translator’s voice at a higher volume.
- **Simultaneous subtitling**, which is performed by means of speech - recognition technology. During a live show, a re-speaker listens to the live speech and repeats it (also summarise and simplify it if necessary) to a speech-recognizer that automatically creates captions. The re-speaker does not have to worry about repetitions or hesitations because the software erases them, and also about noisy

parts because all the work is done inside a soundproofed room. This is an actual advantage for hearing impaired.

- **Simultaneous interpretation**, which involves a pair of interpreters in a soundproof room who listen to the speakers' voice through a headset, and translate the message simultaneously speaking in a microphone.
- **Narration**, similar to voice-over, is a narration consisting of a speaker (usually a professional actor, reader or a journalist) that reads a prepared and translated text at the same time as the original soundtrack is reproduced.
- **Audio Commentary**, which is a comment added to a soundtrack by one or more speakers adding information to the audience. Synchronization is realised with images and not with the original dialogue. It is usually employed for documentaries or children programmes. Like *narration*, commentaries are half translation and half interpretation because of the changes made by the speaker to render the speech more linear.
- **Simultaneous translation**: this is a form of translation in which the interpreter translates the dialogues into the target language as quickly as possible, while the speaker is still speaking in the source language. Produced by a script, subtitles or a running text, it is used especially at film festivals.
- **Respeaking**: it is a technique in which a translator repeats, reformulates and translates the source text. His/her voice is transcribed by software that re-produces it in a written text. As Marks (2003:10) clarifies:

“Speech subtitlers will listen to the programme on headphones and will re-speak the words, precisising if necessary. [...] Recognised words [are] released at a preset word rate to be formatted into “snake” subtitles. (Marks 2003: 10).”

In this case, subtitles, which can be both intra-linguistic and inter-linguistic, are not synchronized with the image but, pop up a few seconds later. It is employed mostly for TV programmes such as sport events, parliamentary meetings, news and special events like famous people's funerals and important concerts.

- **Audio description**: a narration track that is usually used by blind or visually impaired in places like cinema, theatres and museums in order to understand what

is going on onto the screen, on stage or in the painting by describing them in detail in terms of colours, facial expressions, gestures etc. Unfortunately, this kind of facility is not available everywhere, that is why there are no specific criteria and rules. The important thing is to find suitable words and expressions to describe what is going on in order to make the hearer understand it completely.

- **Multilingual Diffusion:** the option of choosing the language on a TV menu among a range of languages.
- **Captions:** unlike subtitles, they provide further explanations that aim to let the viewer fully understand what s/he is watching. Usually written by the director, they consist of stage directions like places, dates, names, years and help clarify the context of the representation.
- **Displays:** they consist of, for instance, letters, newspapers titles, road signs, posters that belong to the image. Usually, they are subtitled or, in the case of dubbing, an audio description is used to describe the image.
- **Pop-up glosses:** used for Japanese anime, they are hints that pop up on the top of the screen with explanations, usually coming from the *manga*, that help the audience to fully understand it. (Kay, De Linde, 2009:02)

1.3 Audiovisual Translation in Europe

In the AVT environment, European countries are usually divided taking into account the three main types of AVT: dubbing, voice-over and subtitling. A clear distinction between them in these terms is quite impossible to make not to mention that things work differently for cinema and television. Following the survey made by EACEA, *Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency* in 2011, the countries that prefer dubbing over subtitling in the filming environment are Italy, Spain, France, Southern Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria and Switzerland. Subtitling, on the other hand, is mainly used in Great Britain, Ireland, Portugal, Northern and Eastern Europe (Former USSR). On television, dubbing is also used in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey and Hungary and subtitling is employed in Great Britain, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Greece, Estonia, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark. Still for the television industry, voice-over is another option in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Bulgaria. Otherwise, according to Pedersen (2011: 5), voice-over is adopted by all former

USSR countries, while Northern Europe countries, Portugal and UK use subtitling. Others, such as Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria, and Switzerland use dubbing. As can be noticed, therefore, some of the countries adopt two methods together. For instance, for the cinema dubbing countries have started to use subtitles in big cities, but for television the situation has not been changing because TV viewers are more methodical.

The choice between one strategy over the other depends on many factors. The most determining is the historical background. The choice of dubbing in Western Europe countries, indeed, is due to totalitarian regimes that wanted their mother tongue to be completely kept aside from any other language interference. This is the case of Italy, Germany and Spain with Fascism and Nazism; France, on the other hand, never faced Fascism, but decided to adopt dubbing anyway because of its strong cultural identity. Another main historical reason for the adoption of dubbing over subtitling was illiteracy; indeed, introducing subtitling to a population with a huge rate of illiteracy was quite worthless. Alongside with history, there is politics. For instance, in the past, in Ukraine, Russian-language movies were subtitled but, nowadays, because of the transformation of their politics, films are dubbed. Finance is another main aspect. Basically, broadcasting companies tend to spend as little as possible on AVT. Dubbing, indeed, is more or less ten times more expensive than subtitling, but subtitling is more expensive in dubbing countries; voice-over is 1/7 cheaper than dubbing but two times expensive than subtitling. The reasons for these differences are the translation and the editing of the scripts and, above all, the fact that dubbing always needs a new cast of actors per film or TV programme. Usually, the choice of dubbing is explained with reference to the size of population: if the country has more than 25 million people (that is Western Europe countries except from United Kingdom and Portugal) dubbing is the prevalent choice. Otherwise, subtitling is adopted by all the others, even though some bilingual countries like Belgium or Finland, bilingual subtitles have been adopted; however, the negative aspect is that the lines of the subtitles cover a great part of the screen. Genre is also another reason. As a matter of fact, even in subtitling countries, dubbing is always used when it comes to programmes for children. On the other hand, in dubbing countries niche films are subtitled instead of being dubbed, due to their narrower audience. Documentaries are always subtitled or voice-over-ed. Another reason is language policy, indeed every country tends to have its own perception of one's language, and it is clear that dubbing and voice-over remove the original soundtrack to enhance their target

language. So, basically the source language disappears, even if with voice-over it stays background.

This situation is not stable, indeed things are changing for instance in the cinema of dubbing countries, especially in the presence of a young audience. For the TV audience, on the other hand, the change is more difficult because if people have been accustomed for all their life to one AVT typology instead of another, they find more difficulties accepting a new one. According to Ivarsson (1992: 66), “viewers are creatures of habit” and preferences “depend on what the audience is used to rather than rational argument” (Cintas, 2009: 97).

2.1 Subtitling

1.2.1 Definition of Subtitling

According to Gottlieb (Pedersen, 2011: 08) “subtitling is prepared communication using written language acting as an additive and synchronous semiotic channel, and as a part of transient and *polysemiotic* text.” This definition, apart from displaying the differences between this strategy and the others, does not refer to the term “translation” at all because it opens to both intra- and inter- lingual subtitling.

Analyzing the definition in detail, we can see that subtitling, unlike dubbing and voice-over, is defined as “prepared”, “not spontaneous” and “written”. Subtitles are “synchronous” as well, because they start at exactly the same moment someone starts to speak and end when the speaker stops; to be precise, this does not always happen because, in particular cases, for instance when the product is destined to a specific audience, parameters can change and subtitles may start a little earlier and finish a little later than the usual. Unlike other typologies of translation, subtitles are portrayed as “transient” because they follow the image and they disappear soon after having read them, without giving the chance to re-read them again. Finally, subtitling is considered “polysemiotic” because it uses both visual and spatial channel.

As Gottlieb states (Pedersen, 2011: 18), the constraints of subtitles are “infamous”; indeed, the subtitling process has to follow a substantial number of rules where the main are space and time limitations. They include restraints in the number of characters which

usually varies from twenty-eight to thirty-eight maximum forty characters, taking also into consideration the size of the font, italics characters, capital letters and the size of the television format; as regards lines, they have to be no more than two with a maximum of forty characters each. These numbers are strictly linked to the exposure time of the utterance, so that there is a balance between the number of characters and the temporal length of the phrase; indeed, according to Pedersen (2011: 19): “Gottlieb notes a limit of 12 characters per second, something which has been called the 12 cps rule.” Also other factors that have to be considered while making subtitles, is the type of audience: unlike for adults where subtitles have from 150 to 180 words per minute, if the product is a cartoon film for children, sentences must be shortened and the time enhanced, otherwise, reductions are not needed. Usually these cuts consist in avoiding repetitions, excluding false-starts and other speech characteristics that would not change the meaning of the script.

The subtitling process for a film or a TV programme starts when a company hires freelance subtitlers (in-house subtitlers are unusual nowadays), who receive a copy of the film or TV programme and, sometimes, a script (not always the original one) that could help them with their work. The following step is dividing the source text into subtitles, then translate every piece into coherent and cohesive subtitles into the target language, and, finally, “cue” the subtitles to the exact time. The process of “cueing” is the synchronization of the subtitles with time-coding, which brings to a shortening of the time of work and a reduction of the costs; nowadays a large number of subtitlers use computer programmes that help them dealing with this process. In some cases, big companies use professional software to do so, in order to give the subtitler the opportunity to focus only on translation. Creating subtitles is not the only task required; indeed, subtitlers also have to edit all their work in order to respect space and time rules, and often diminishing the lexical density of the text. Furthermore, they have a complete knowledge of the source text, such as knowing the spelling of every name, cultural references, and every sort of vernacular expression, in order to make the audience fully understand what the intended message was. Finally, an editor will revise the whole work and send it back to the production company that will add the subtitles to the final product.

1.2.2 Classification of Subtitles

Subtitles are distinguished according to mainly five kinds of parameters. In this chapter I will use the first one:

- **Linguistic parameters:** Intralingual subtitles (for the deaf and the hard of hearing, for language learning, for Karaoke effect, for dialects of the same language, for notices and announcements); Interlingual subtitles (for hearers, for the deaf and the hard of hearing); Bilingual subtitles.
- **Temporal parameters:** Pre-prepared subtitles – offline subtitling (In complete sentences, reduced), Live or Real-Time subtitles (Human-made, Machine-translated).
- **Technical parameters:** Open subtitles, Closed subtitles.
- **Methods of projecting subtitles:** Mechanical and Thermal subtitles, Photochemical subtitling, Optical subtitling, Laser subtitling, Electronic subtitling.
- **Distribution Format:** Cinema, Television, Video/VHS, DVD, Internet (Pedersen, 2011).

1.2.2.1 Interlingual for hearing audience

According to Cintas (2007: 08),

“Subtitling may be defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voice-off). In some languages, like Japanese, cinema subtitles are presented vertically and tend to appear on the right-hand of the screen.”

As already pointed out, there is no fixed rule to write good subtitles. Yet, as authors like Ivarsson and Carol (Cintas, 2007: 10) published a book called *the Code of Good Subtitling Practice* containing general guidelines to create subtitles of high quality. After the development of new technology, rules for subtitles have changed and new guidelines have been written; among them, Cintas and Karamitroglou (Cintas, 2007: 11) wrote a new series of book for European translators.

In order to write g effective subtitles, the key rule to be respected is that they should not distract the viewer at all. Therefore, they should be developed in no more than two lines, except for bilingual subtitles. In this latter case the lines needed are four, two for each language, and their position has to be in the centre of the screen, usually horizontally. An exception is made when subtitling oriental languages, in which case subtitles are positioned vertically. The bottom of the scene is at times already occupied by a caption or some other element which is necessary to understand the story. In these cases the position of the subtitles changes along with the time of exposure, which can be reduced or slightly anticipated. Except for black and white movies, in which scripts are yellow, characters are usually written in white with a black contour and using specific fonts that make them readable. Although in the past subtitles were left-aligned, nowadays both on television and at the cinema, they are centered, as channel logos often hide the first characters on the left and, furthermore, because the action usually takes place at the center of the screen. In case of multiple voices and with a series of rapid exchanges, the subtitler has to decide which voice is the most important and leave out all the others. Yet, in case of a dialogue between two people, subtitles are usually written in two lines with a hyphen at the beginning. Nowadays, films are characterised by “shot changes” which aim to create more dynamism. When the subtitler has to deal with this issues, the basic strategy is to end the subtitle before the change of scene, because otherwise the audience would re-read it. The rule is, however, broken when the speaker is still talking when the scene has changed, or talks before the following scene starts.

Among all the aspects related to subtitling, synchronisation is the most important one. Indeed, what makes a subtitle excellent is the perfect timing between lips, scene and subtitle. Nowadays, subtitling software can spot subtitles that are not well synchronized and helps improve them. At times, when there is a long sentence that cannot be cut, little asynchronicity is allowed by starting the subtitle earlier and finishing it later, keeping some delay of about two or three frames between one another. With regard to timing,

“Subtitled television comprises three main components: image, subtitles and spoken dialogue. The integration of these components, combined with viewers’ reading capacities, determines the basic characteristics of the medium. Subtitles have to synchronize with both speech and image, present an accurate interpretation of a dialogue and remain on screen long enough for them to be read by viewers.” (Kay, De Linde, 2009: 39).

Taking into account the synchronicity between subtitle and sound, subtitles, which usually correspond to a speech segment, cannot anticipate the dialogue more than 1.5 seconds and stay on screen more than 1.5 seconds. An exception is given by documentaries where speech is not strictly related to lips movement. Subtitlers have to pay attention to the fluidity of the speech too, at least this is what it should be done, but every channel or film company commission subtitles following their own standards. As children have lower reading skills, subtitles for children programmes are different for adults. Sixty words per minute is the right solution for younger viewers on ninety words for adults. But the number of words is not the only issue: also time lapses and word choice are fundamental.

As regards the link between subtitle and image, subtitles have to be synchronised with speech and image because, otherwise, a considerable confusion can be caused to the reader. This is the reason why one shot change has to correspond to one subtitle, because surveys proved that, otherwise, the viewer tend to partially re-read the subtitle, causing distraction and confusion.

1.2.2.2 Interlingual and intralingual for the deaf and hard of hearing

Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Definitions

Before explaining how subtitles for hearing impaired are created, a clear distinction between the terms “deaf” and “hard of hearing” is needed. Deaf people are those who are born from deaf parents or that are born with complete or partial hearing loss caused by ear infections, exposure to loud noise, medications, birth complications or genetics. They consider themselves part of deaf community and sign language is their mother tongue; also, they do not consider themselves ill but just bearers of a “different condition”, with which they have to adjust and that is why most of the times they refuse clinical solutions like cochlear implants or hearing aids.

People who are hard of hearing, on the other hand, are not born from deaf parents but they have lost the hearing later in life, due to ageing or an illness. They do not consider themselves deaf, therefore their first language is not sign language and they often solve their illness with surgery or hearing aids (Kay, De Linde, 2009: 11).

According to Perego and Taylor (2012: 212), in Italy a further distinction is made between the terms “Sordi”, “sordi” and “sordastri”. “Sordi”, written with capital “S”, are those who are born deaf and belong to deaf culture, “sordi” are those who lost great part of their hearing capabilities and, finally, “sordastri” equals to hard of hearing. As Cintas states (2009: 154):

“Defining hearing loss is a fairly simple matter of audiological assessment, although the interpretation of the simple pure-tone audiogram is more difficult. Defining deafness is exceedingly complex; it is a much, if not more, a sociological phenomenon as an audiological definition.”

Indeed, on the medical level, it all depends on how many decibels one cannot hear, and accordingly the higher the loss, the more serious is the degree of hearing impairment. From a functional point of view, instead, if someone wears hearing aids they are considered hard of hearing, and without them s/he is considered deaf, in that s/he is incapable of hearing anything at all. Culturally, the difference between one and the other has something to do with identity: a person can decide if s/he identifies most with hearing or deaf people. Another way to distinguish them is the introduction of a cochlear implant: a completely deaf person who improves his/her hearing ability by using such a device should s/he be considered hard of hearing or still deaf? Establishing a neat line is in fact challenging, due to the fact that one defines him/herself deaf or hard of hearing depending on his/her psychological status: someone who is medically deaf can describe him/herself as hard of hearing because s/he is ashamed of his/her inability.¹

Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

The term “sub-title” derives from the term for a subordinate or additional title of a literary work (OED 1989). In history, this label was used for the text or “intertitles” of silent movies, which were cut into the film at various strategic points as a narrative aid (Zay, De Linde, 2009: 08).

At that time, both deaf and hearing viewers had the same access to films. However, when in the early 30s *talkies* replaced silent movies, the issue of finding a solution to

¹ <http://deafness.about.com/od/deafculture/a/differencedhoh.htm>, last visited on 08/16/2015.

facilitate hearing impaired started to spread. In 1947, a deaf Cuban actor started adding inter-title cards for the dialogues and giving them to deaf organizations. This led to the effort of producing films with subtitles that were superimposed on the scenes in cinema theatres. With the arrival of television, other problems emerged; indeed, hearing people reacted positively to subtitles, but broadcasting companies feared big losses of money on advertising revenues caused by a possible decrease of ratings. Thus, closed subtitles were used, firstly only in the UK and US with special devices, and later on also in France, Belgium and Italy. Nowadays, the majority of programmes has subtitles available on their menu (even if they are often made for hearing people, because they lack any sound description) and, sometimes, also sign language interpreters on broadcasting news.

Since the auditory aspect of subtitling needs to be turned into visual, some aspects need to be modified to be made clear also for a non-hearing audience. The audio channel is characterised by two types of information: the phonological component and the non-verbal component.

As regards the former, many aspects should be taken into account. Firstly, talking about emphasis and phrasing, capital letters are used to indicate the increase of volume, different colours are used to emphasise a word, and dots are employed for hesitations, but only when it is strictly necessary. Other than that, another way consists in giving the viewer enough time to read and watch face expressions; however, when it is not possible, question marks or exclamation marks between brackets can represent a proper solution.

Specific accents or foreign languages are sometimes signaled in cinema movies. When these aspects are crucial to the plot, two options are available to help an hearing impaired to comprehend them: one is using non-standard spelling, the other are labels, such as writing in capital letters and putting a caption, e.g. “BRITISH ACCENT:”, before the sentence. Finally, related to the phonological component, humor is an aspect that is very hard to portray on subtitles and that is usually overcome by spelling the word at the center of the humorous utterance with the less obvious meaning.

Regarding the non-verbal component, sounds are displayed with capital letters in brackets but only when the sounds are “visible”. Indeed, writing down all types of visible sounds is really important because the non-hearing audience varies: some can hear at a certain decibel level but others cannot hear at all. Music, which is the other important feature, must be turned into subtitles (only if it is important to the plot) by writing the title and the lyrics with a # at the beginning and the end of every line (Kay, De Linde, 2009: 14).

Similarities and differences

To sum up, as Perego and Taylor (2012: 203) explain, subtitles for a hearing audience and for the deaf and hard of hearing share some features. First of all, they are synchronous (simultaneous to the dialogue) and transparent (same meaning of the dialogue); they are also a transparent translation, namely they allow the audience to make a comparison between target language and source language. Furthermore, they are both temporary and immediate because they are not available before or after but only in the meantime. Furthermore, they are also both subject to limits like length of the lines, space and time that force the subtitler to change or adapt the original dialogue without changing its meaning. Both types of subtitle consist in a readable text characterized by pauses, rhythm and punctuation: if the punctuation is incorrect, their usability is compromised. On the other hand, legibility in both cases depends on the font of characters, their dimension, position and style.

As regards aspects they do not have in common, their orthographic and linguistic dimension are different, along with technical aspects, synch strategies and edit strategies. Since the deaf are not only unable to hear dialogues but also to perceive any information related to the way of speaking, phonic elements and conversation aspects, this kind of subtitles consist of a richer track. The main concern is allowing the non-hearing audience to identify who is speaking in the scene: if the speaker is visible, a hyphen or a < can be used; otherwise, if the speaker's lips are not visible, the name has to be put in brackets before the line. Sometimes, colours are also used to identify multiple voices. In addition, another aspect that differentiates these two typologies of subtitling is the educational background of the audience: since deaf or hard of hearing have a lower education, difficult terms have to be avoided. Dialects, accents and idiomatic expressions are also to be avoided when they are not useful. For younger viewers, more has to be changed: periphrases, long sentences, idiomatic expressions, and indirect questions.

1.2.2.3 Surtitles, Intertitles, Fansubs

Surtitles

Surtitles, which are closely related to subtitles, consist in the lyrics of the opera written live on a screen at the top of the stage by a technician. They started to be popular in the 80s, mainly for opera but then, later on, also for theatres and live performances such as conferences and concerts. Commonly, they follow the same parameters subtitles have, but when surtitles are reproduced on screen, they scroll from right to left or are written in two or three lines. Recently, monitors have been put at the back of every seat in order to facilitate the audience.

Intertitles

Intertitles, the ancestors of subtitles, were used especially in the early 20th century in silent movies and consisted in a piece of filmed paper with a short piece of text, written in white on a black background. Their purpose was to explain what was going on in order to make the audience better understands the scene, but when sound films came up, intertitles started to disappear. In old movies, they used to be replaced by intertitles written in the target language, or left in their original language but explained by someone or, later these days, subtitled.

Fansubs

Due to the fact that audiovisual translation is nowadays a much wider field of research than years ago, and that subtitling programmes are available online (often for free), non-professionals have started to create subtitles on their own. This phenomenon started in the 80s when Western countries felt the lack of Japanese *anime* on their channels. In order to overcome the linguistic barrier, they started to produce subtitles themselves and post them on the Internet, despite copyright issues. Nowadays, this practice is common also for other types of TV products, which are performed totally for free by fans (from here the term *fansubbing*); they usually follow restricted rules with a personal touch like, for instance, commentaries or pop-ups (Cintas, 2007: 25-28).

1.3 Dubbing

1.3.1 A definition of dubbing

Dubbing consists in replacing the voices of the original soundtrack with those of other actors (called “dubbers”) who speak the language of the target country. In the film industry, dubbing is used to distribute audio-visual products, especially films and TV-series, in countries different from the ones where they are produced. According to Martínez (2004: 03), “Film script translation for the purposes of dubbing is one of the most peculiar disciplines within the field of translation.” The process of dubbing takes place at several stages, all of which are equally important. First of all, a client, usually a distributor or a television company, sends a copy (called “the master”) of the product with the original script and a list of directions to a dubbing studio, in order to facilitate the translator’s work. The original script, which not always corresponds to the definitive dialogues, has to be translated taking into account both the source and the target language. Many aspects might need to be changed in order to transpose the scenes. Specifically, translators also have to consider actors, places and sounds, which are aspects they cannot modify. Then, a proof-reader rewrites and adapts the script, after considering “synchronisation” (the length of the lines, gestures, the movement of lips) and also rhythm, intonation, pragmatics, and socio-cultural aspects (Pavesi, 2005). Finally, a dubbing director chooses the actors and assigns the parts to them. Dubbers are obliged to follow the guidelines without making any change; however, they are sometimes allowed to give a personal touch. Once all dialogues are recorded, they undergo the so-called process of “mixing” with the sound effect, usually produced by a Foley mixer.²

1.3.2 The origins of dubbing

The first uses of dubbing date back to the late 20s, when American film studios decided to distribute their products abroad. Indeed, at that time, “all-talking feature films” were gradually replacing silent movies, and several solutions had to be found to overcome the problems posed by the change of language. The first one was that of replacing parts of the film with captions that explained what was happening on the scene - a solution that

² http://www.enciclopediadeldoppiaggio.it/index.php?title=Pagina_principale last visited on 07/04/2015

worked only for a short period of time. The second one consisted in asking the actors to act in a foreign language (e.g. Stanley Laurel and Oliver Hardy on *Pardon Us – Muraglie*). The third one, and also the most expensive, was shooting different versions of the same film with different actors coming from the main developed European countries, such as Spain, Germany, France and Italy. The last one was introducing sequenced in which actors explained the scene.

These methods lasted for a few years, as they were too expensive, and the audience started to get tired of reading at the cinema. Therefore, the main media companies (especially 20th Century Fox) adopted a brand new method introduced by the Austrian physicist Jakob Karol: dubbing.³

1.3.3 Dubbing in Italy

When sound films such as *The Jazz Singer* and *Noah's Ark* were aired also in Italy in the late 20s, subtitles seemed the only way to make the audience understand the scenes. It did not take long until this solution resulted unsuccessful for two main reasons: the high rate of illiteracy and the Fascist regime.

In 1930, indeed, the rate of illiteracy in Italy was around 20%, due to the fact that the greater part of the population was composed of peasants, workers and farmers, and only the 2% of it belonged to middle class. Furthermore, on October 22th 1930, the leader of National Fascist Party Benito Mussolini forbade, with a decree, the distribution of any film who contained parts in any foreign language – a law that reflected the tendency of Fascism to completely deprive the Italian language (and culture) of any sort of foreignism, in order to keep it one hundred percent “pure”.

Film studios addressed this issue by turning voiced films into silent films, and by adding a large number of captions. The result was unsuccessful because a large part of the audience was not able to read or read that fast, and those who were able did not want to. That is why, Fox Company, which in the meantime had built their studios in Rome, decided to experiment Jakob Karol's solution which resulted extremely cheaper, faster and higher quality.

The first dubbed movie in the Italian history was *Common Clay (Tu che mi accusi)* by Victor Fleming (1930). Since that moment, the main production companies such as

³ http://www.enciclopediadel doppiaggio.it/index.php?title=Pagina_principale last visited on 07/04/2015

Metro-Goldwin-Meyer, Warner Bros and Paramount started to set up their studios in Italy as well, and a large number of actors worked as dubbers as a permanent job. Ever since, dubbing has become systematic in Italy, and it has always been considered a high-quality product, although recently, due to lack of time and scarcity of dubbers, the quality of TV-programmes is rather poor.

According to Pavesi (2005: 20), Italian dubbing has clearly changed throughout all these decades. As a matter of fact, probably because of their background, dubbers used to be more dramatic and more careful about their diction until the 70s. That is why Italian actors had been dubbed by professional dubbers in order to avoid any sort of accent or inflection for a large amount of time. Subsequently, dubbers started to pay more attention to the source language, and began to try to reproduce jargon and make up languages or accents, if they managed to do so. Nowadays, dubbing is still used in any kind of audio-visual e.g. films, TV-series, documentaries and cartoons, but some cable TV programmes have started to adopt subtitling too. This solution is very popular among young people, who have a better understanding of foreign films and can appreciate the original soundtrack (Cintas, 2008: 108).

1.4. Subtitling vs. Dubbing

Although, in the past decades, several experiments have been run to prove which of the two strategies is the best solution one can employ, it resulted that either subtitling or dubbing have both pros and cons. Indeed, if a country elects one instead of the other, it is only a matter of internal policy, economics and historical background; in specific cases, usually in small countries, more than one translating strategy is employed.

As regards the dialogues, the main difference between subtitling and dubbing is that the former is more similar to the original soundtrack, while the latter is inclined to alter the dialogues. Indeed, according to Taylor (1996: 112):

“La particolare interazione fra dialoghi ed immagini obbliga il traduttore a compiere determinate scelte, dettate dallo scopo della traduzione: come si è visto, la stessa scena può essere tradotta in modo anche molto diverso a seconda che l'adattamento sia fatto a scopo di doppiaggio o di sottotitolazione. Ognuna delle due tecniche ha

delle esigenze specifiche che, pur non limitando eccessivamente le scelte del traduttore, sicuramente le indirizzano in una certa direzione.”⁴

While in dubbing there is the tendency to keep the same amount of words as in the original script, subtitling has to comply with its spatial and temporal restrictions by cutting off interjections, multiple voices and *suspense*. On the other hand, as a foreign language learner would notice, in dubbing dialogues can sometimes be substantially modified up to the point that the initial meaning is partially or even completely altered, thus creating a sense of estrangement from the plot. The reasons for this can have to do with technical aspects such as lip synchronization and timing or on cultural aspects impossible to be rendered in the target language. In addition, another negative aspect of dubbing is that the decrease in the number of dubbers on the market, and the consequent employment of the same dubbers for a large number of roles, causes a sense of redundancy, monotony and loss of credibility. This is something that we do not encounter in subtitling in which the audience cannot hear the actors' real voices and, consequently, the actual emotions actors express while acting.

With reference to the audience, subtitling might seem to be the best solution, as it serves a larger number of people, including hearing impaired, foreigners and language learners. On the other hand, subtitles capture the audience's attention, causing a partial loss of what is projected on screen.

When it comes to audiovisual translation, translating aspects are one of the main issues. Indeed, keeping in mind that readability is a key aspect of subtitling, translators have to follow spatial and time restrictions by making slight omissions, if possible, without bringing important changes to the plot. If dialects are present in the film, employing subtitling might not be the right solution, in that, as said above, dubbing is clearly more likely to reproduce dialects using the dubbers' own or fictional accents. On the other hand, in terms of register, dubbing is orientated to keep the register higher by avoiding colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions. In other words, it is more focused on the target culture and less on the source culture. Indeed, as Cintas (2009: 88) states:

⁴ “The peculiar interaction between dialogues and images forces the translator to make specific choices, depending on the purpose of the translation: the translation of the scene, indeed, can be very different from the original, whether it is for dubbing or subtitling. Each of the two techniques has specific rules that do not cause an impediment for the translator but, as a matter of fact, they make him follow a specific pattern anyway.” (my translation).

“When it comes to keeping register and appropriateness of the SL-version dubbing can undoubtedly be at an advantage.”

On the contrary, two aspects that favour subtitling instead of dubbing are money and time: the former, indeed, is way cheaper and less consuming than the latter. However, the countries that traditionally adopt dubbing have a long tradition of “*family-dubbers*”, whose expenses are covered by revenues. According to Cintas (2009: 94):

“The argument seems to be the costs do not matter too much if revenues are big enough. If lip synchronization, can attract bigger audiences, increased translation costs would not present too much of a problem. The television business is increasingly preoccupied with ratings. If a network is able to get an edge on its competitors, costs are not likely to hold it back.”

In countries where dubbing is deeply rooted, a high rate of audience is expected, which consequently leads to a complete coverage of the costs that, instead, could not be possible with subtitling that attract a more restricted type of audience. A survey has revealed that countries that are accustomed to dubbing find it more difficult to understand foreign languages and, as a result, are less prone to learn them. Therefore, subtitling could represent a good way for foreign language learners to practice the language. Recently, in some dubbing countries, subtitling and voice-over have started to gain ground and to attract a wider range of audience, especially younger viewers.

Chapter 2

Pragmatic and Cultural Aspect of Film Language

2.1 Characteristics of conversational routines

According to Quaglio (2009: 05), conversational routines are “pre-fabricated linguistic units used in a well-known and generally accepted manner.” Based on a perfect balance between convention and creativity, conversational routines allow interlocutors to perform a social function characterised by a pre-established ritual and an accepted behaviour.

Conversational routines have been analysed from different perspectives by various scholars. The most important ones are related to pragmatics, especially speech acts, politeness theory and conversational relevance. Related to pragmatics, another area of enquiry is that of discourse markers, fixed expressions and phraseology. An important contribution has been given by Biber, Conrad and Leech (1999) in their *Grammar of Spoken and Written English* where they devote a whole chapter to the grammar of conversation and its relationship with discourse circumstances, basing their research on four registers: academic writing, news reportage, fiction, conversation.

Conversation takes place in a shared context, namely a surrounding physical context where there is background knowledge and minimal personal information about speakers. According to Quaglio (2009: 06), a shared context has peculiar characteristics such as the presence of first and second personal pronouns, deictic expressions such as *this* and *that*, substitute pro-forms such as *one*, *ones*, *do it*, *do that*, and the presence of ellipses, usually accompanied by auxiliaries. Conversational routines are also characterised by the avoidance of specification of meaning and, as a consequence, an apparent imprecision of the quality of conversation, given by the presence of hedges, vague references and vague coordination tags. The presence of hedges, for instance, is a sign that conversations are unplanned, indeed the use of these vagueness markers is employed by speakers who do not want to interrupt the conversation, even if the conversation itself could become imprecise. Also hesitators and discourse markers are two features employed by speakers which help them organize their thoughts while speaking and, in the meantime, “holding the floor”. The fact that conversation is unfolding reveals that it is also interactive, indeed discourse markers such as *well*, *so*, *I mean*, single-word responses such as “ok”

and “wow”, ellipsis and polite formulas are highly employed. As Quaglio (2009: 09) claims, conversation also expresses stance, which means that the speaker tends to convey feelings and opinions. This phenomenon takes place thanks to the use of evaluative adjectives (*annoying, amazing*), stance adverbs (*hopefully, sadly*), mental verbs such as *think*, adverbial intensifiers, interjections, and most of all expletives, such as taboo language and slang terms which reveal the interlocutor’s state of mind.

2.1.1 Vagueness

As Quaglio (2009: 59) suggests, there is a link between the linguistic features of television show dialogues and interactive registers as in face-to-face conversation, i.e. hedges, discourse markers, nouns of vague reference, vague coordination tags and stance markers.

A main characteristic of conversational routines is the employment of vague expressions. Vagueness is indeed an important conversational phenomenon exploited by speakers during everyday interactions, as a result of the pressure of oral production. As a matter of fact, while speaking, thinking about the appropriate term and/or the willingness of being too precise could give to the conversation a non-spontaneous nature. Thus nouns of vague reference “may shorten the length of individual turns, it may also require prolonged exchanges (more air time) due to the need of clarification” (Quaglio, 2009: 77). In detail, the use of vague expressions is important conversational routines, the employment of which is functional to the mitigation of the impact of the direct statements produced. They are also indicators of shared knowledge and in-group membership. More specifically, “vagueness occurs when the information you receive from a speaker lacks the expected precision” (2009: 57), and again “vague expressions are deliberately chosen for their contribution to the communicative message” (Channell, 1994: 197 in Quaglio 2009: 74). Using vague expressions exclusively depends on the intention of the speaker or the expectations of the hearer; indeed, vagueness is employed when the speaker needs to accelerate the process of communication, and at the same time share the construction of meaning. The hearer, on the other hand, can contribute by asking clarification questions that help the communicative process to proceed and keep it more dynamic and fluid. Even though there is an extensive literature about vagueness, the current terminology, as with

discourse markers and hedges, is unclear. Therefore, vague expressions are defined also as extension particles, vague category markers, general extenders, coordination tags.

As mentioned before, nouns with vague reference are a product of the pressure of on-line production, namely their employment is aimed at shortening the length of turns during a conversation which otherwise would be prolonged due to the thoroughness of the message. However, in TV dialogue vagueness is not always the solution due to the fact that the audience needs to fully comprehend the scene. Yet, a compromise should be found between comprehensibility and the need to have short dialogues.

2.1.1.1 Hedges

Hedges are also markers of vagueness and “are deliberately chosen for their contribution to the communicative message” (Quaglio, 2009: 74). Basically, they provide an acknowledgment of the lack of precision and are an invitation for the other speaker to complete the meaning of the sentence, and to participate in the conversation itself. They also have a mitigating effect, a sort of sense of informality that leads to a feeling of involvement towards the other interlocutor while, on other occasions, they are meant to create humour, leaving, in this case, no participation for the listener. Especially in American English, hedges are “markers of invited solidarity, a sign that the speaker is treating the interlocutor as one who shares (or is willing to act as if they share) the same background knowledge or experience” (Quaglio, 2009: 77).

According to a survey by Fraser (2010: 15), an expert in linguistics and education, hedging is “a rhetorical strategy that attenuates either the full semantic value of a particular expression (...) or the full force of a speech act”. It is deeply-rooted in the pragmatics of English language speakers. When a non-native speaker, who is not familiar with these pragmatic niceties, fails to use it or understand it, s/he may sound impolite, inappropriate or offensive.

The concept of hedging has evolved in the last fifty years. In his study “New approaches to Hedging”, Fraser (2010: 16) explains that the first one mentioning this term was Weinreich in 1966 using the words “metalinguistic operators”. Weinrich (1966) claimed that:

“for every language “metalinguistic operators” such as in English *true*, *real*, *so-called*, *strictly speaking*, and the most powerful extrapolator *like*, function as instructions for the loose or strict interpretation of *designata*”

However, a stronger impact was given by Lakoff (1972: 195 in Fraser, 2010: 16) who stated that hedging “involved the attenuation of the membership of a particular expression,” with the employment of words like *sort of* “or the reinforcement of the class membership”, using for instance words like *really*. Lakoff (1972) claimed that hedges modify words in their pragmatic meaning, but not always in the same way. In any case it is the truth value of the proposition that is modified, that is why he called it “propositional hedging”. In 1975, he introduced the concept of “hedged performative”, in which modals such as *can*, *must* or *should* are followed by performative verbs like *apologise* or *request*, and result in the illocutionary force of the speech act. The aim of the modal is also to soften the meaning of the sentence.

Even though Weinreich and Lakoff introduced this topic, a greater impact was given by Brown and Levinson (1978 in Fraser, 2010: 18) who introduced the concept of “speech act hedging”, linking the illocutionary force of a speech act to politeness theory. They claimed that:

“A hedge is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is *partial*, or true only in certain respect; or that it is *more* true and complete than perhaps might be expected.”

In addition, in Brown and Levinson’s (1978) view, the hedge itself attenuates or reinforces the meaning of a speech act’s illocutionary force.

Another perspective on this matter was given by Prince *et al.* (1982). The authors distinguished between two typologies of hedging: *propositional hedging*, in which the truth condition of the proposition’s content is affected, and *speech act hedging*, involving the relationship between the speaker and the propositional content, where the commitment of the interlocutor is based on the truth of the propositional content.

These authors divide hedging into two classes. The former consists of *approximators* that “operate on the propositional content and contribute to the interpretation by indicating markedness with respect to class membership of a particular item” (Fraser, 2010: 19). Approximators are sub-divided into two subclasses: *adaptors* (called “hedges”

by Lakoff) related to the class membership, and *rounders* which provide a range where the term is frequent (e.g. approximately, about). The latter represents *shields* that change the relationship between propositional content and the speaker by implicating a degree of uncertainty towards the speaker's commitment. Also shields have two subclasses: *plausibility shields*, where the assertions of the interlocutor are related to doubt, and *attribution shields*, where the responsibility is attributed to other than the speaker.

Later on, Caffi (2000) introduced the term "mitigation", namely the attenuation of undesired effects on the hearer, and its three components: *bushes*, that is lexical expressions whose aim is reducing the commitment to the propositional content of the sentence and introducing vagueness in its interpretation; *hedges*, i.e. lexical expressions that represent the illocutionary force of the speech act and reduce the speaker's commitment; *shields*, i.e. devices that help avoid one's "self-ascription" to the utterance.

More recently, hedging has been defined as a "rhetorical strategy by which a speaker using a linguistic device can signal a lack of commitment to either the full semantic membership of an expression (propositional hedging) (e.g. "*He's really like a geek*"), or the full commitment to the force of the speech act being conveyed (speech act hedging), e.g. ("*Perhaps you would sit down a minute*")" (Fraser, 2010: 22).

Hedging is necessary in circumstances where the speaker would otherwise sound insensitive or offensive. It is employed when the interlocutor wants to convey a negative message (e.g. *I must insist that you leave the room*), or when s/he wants to avoid taking responsibility for the truth of a statement carrying bad news to the other interlocutor. Also in circumstances in which the interlocutors have opposite views, hedging is highly employed in order to make the speaker look conciliatory and willing to find a compromise. In this way s/he is more likely to succeed in his/her intent. The interlocutor might also want to establish a relationship with a stranger, showing warmth and sensitiveness or to elicit sympathy. Finally, another hedging ploy is when the interlocutor wants to say the truth maintaining a vague attitude, for instance using expressions like "*it is possible that*", "*it seems to me that*", "*I think*", or modals. On the other hand, there are cases in which the language spoken has no equivalent hedging expression in the non-native speakers' language, and vice-versa (e.g. *Help me, can you?*).

2.1.1.2 Discourse markers

2.1.1.2.1 Definitions

Over the last thirty years, several studies have been conducted on discourse markers, and researchers have come up with a variety of labels to name them including: discourse connectives, discourse operators, discourse particles, discourse signaling devices, pragmatic expressions, pragmatic markers, pragmatic operators, and semantic junctions. A first hint of what discourse markers (DM) are is given, according to Fraser (1999: 932), by Labov and Fanshel in 1977, who state that:

"As a discourse marker, *well* refers backwards to some topic that is already shared knowledge among participants. When *well* is the first element in a discourse or a topic, this reference is necessarily to an unstated topic of joint concern."

Later on in 1983, Levinson referred to DMs as a topic that deserved to be studied and expanded, although he did not give it a proper name:

"It is generally conceded that such words have at least a component of meaning that resists truth-conditional treatment (...) what they seem to do is indicate, often in very complex ways, just how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse." (Levinson 1983: 87-88 in Fraser, 1999: 932)

Levinson and Fraser describe discourse markers as a sort of link between two utterances. As Zwicky (1985) stated, discourse markers should be conceived as a class of words that are independent, rather than considering them only clitics, because they are "prosodically independent", being separated from their context by pauses and intonation breaks.

Otherwise, the main effort in terms of defining speech acts was made by Schriffrin in 1987 when she claimed that "DMs do not easily fit into a linguistic class" (Fraser, 1999: 933.). Schriffrin goes so far as to suggest that paralinguistic features and non-verbal gestures are possible DMs. In addition, as Zwicky already affirmed, discourse markers have some rules to follow, namely they have to be syntactically detachable from a sentence, a range of prosodic contours, operate on local and global levels and on different planes of discourse, and finally, they are usually used in the initial position of an utterance.

Redeker (1990) criticizes Schiffrin's opinion and also proposes a list of what are not discourse markers: clausal indicators of discourse structure (e.g. *as I said before*), deictic expressions as far as they are not used anaphorically (e.g. *here, today*), anaphoric pronouns and noun phrases.

2.1.1.2.2 Recent definitions

Also known as pragmatic expressions, inserts, pragmatic markers and discourse particles, the purpose of discourse markers is that of functioning like cohesive elements that link segments of discourse, although, semantically speaking, they do not change the original sentence at all but they “signal the speaker's intended relationship between the segment and the preceding one” (Fraser 2009: 87). Their function, however, is still opened to debate; indeed, they both reveal an interactive relationship between the interlocutor and their message, and they function as a transition in the whole process of conversation.

In Fraser's view, despite different definitions, discourse markers share one main function, which is imposing a “relationship between some aspect of the discourse segment they are a part of, call it S2, and some aspect of a prior discourse segment, call it S1” which means they are both linked to the topic in the segment they introduce and also to the one in the former segment.

Anyway, a full definition that agrees with all the authors' different opinions is given by Carter and McCarthy (Quaglio, 2009: 80),

“Discourse markers function to organize and monitor an ongoing discourse, most commonly in speech, by marking boundaries between one topic and the next (*so, right*), by indicating openings (*well, right*) and closure and pre-closure (*okay*) of topics, by indicating topic changes (*well*) or by bringing a conclusion to the discourse (*anyway, so*). They also function to mark the state of knowledge between participants (*you know, you see, I mean*).”

As with definitions, also the classification of discourse markers has encountered different theories. Many researchers divide discourse markers into two main classes: discourse markers that relate topics and discourse markers that relate messages. Others classify them into two categories: reception markers, employed to *distinguish* a reaction to information provided by the counterpart, and presentation markers, used to “accompany and modify the speaker's own information” (Quaglio, 2009: 80).

As Fraser states (2009: 87), the great part of researchers although differentiate discourse markers into three great classes: contrastive discourse markers such as *but*, *however*, elaborative discourse markers, e.g. *and*, *furthermore*, *in addition*, inferential discourse markers such as *so*, *thus*, *as a result*.

Grammatically speaking, discourse markers relate independent sentences, usually in an alternative way than usual coordinate conjunctions. Analyzing different case scenarios, Fraser finds some counterarguments that disagree with the former definitions. Indeed he proves that discourse markers not only connect the sentence to the prior one but also to other prior segments before that or, in some cases, with elements that immediately follow them. In some other cases, a discourse marker is used to start a new conversation completely out of context (e.g. “*so*”). About the position of discourse markers in a sentence, they do not stand only between two sentences, at the beginning of the second one, but also at the end of it or at the beginning of the first one.

Concerning their grammatical status, discourse markers can be subdivided into three sources: conjunctions, adverbs and prepositional phrases although coordinate conjunctions such as *or*, *and*, and *but* in some cases cannot be identified as discourse markers while, on the other hand, subordinate conjunctions such as *so*, *since*, *while* and *because* can function also as DM. In addition, there are adverbials that are pressed into service only for being DM and finally, there are prepositional phrases whose function is only as discourse markers.

Semantically speaking, an expression functioning as discourse marker relates two discourse segments without contributing to the propositional meaning of the segments. In addition, they specify that the interpretation of the segment they introduce has to be interpreted in relation to the prior. Finally, as Fraser claims (1999: 944), “every individual DM has a specific, core meaning”, namely the meaning of the discourse marker itself (e.g. the contrastive meaning of *but*) is mixed with the context, so that the meaning of the DM is kept the same but it achieves an additional interpretation.

To sum up, discourse markers can be considered expressions that acquire the syntactic properties of the class they belong, specifically conjunctions, adverbials and prepositions; they have a procedural and core meaning. Finally, they are considered, always in Fraser’s point of view, as a pragmatic element because they contribute to the meaning and the interpretation of the utterance.

2.1.1.3 Modals and Semi-Modals

One of the functions of vagueness features is to indicate the degree of commitment speakers have towards a proposition using modals and semi-modals. There are nine types of modal verbs: can, may, shall, will (present and future time), could, might, must, should and would (past time). Among their functions, modals can be employed as auxiliary verbs in verb phrases; they precede the subject in yes/ no questions and express stance meanings like possibility, obligation or need. (LSGSWE, 2002: 174). Semi-modals as had better, have to, have got to, ought to, be supposed to, be going to, used to, instead, are “multiword constructions that function like modal verbs” (LSGSWE, 2002: 174).

Modals and semi-modals are divided into three categories, each of those has both personal and logical meanings: the first one is that of permission and ability and includes can, may, and could and might that express possibility and often convey doubt or uncertainty; indeed they are used in indirect speech and polite formulas. The second one is obligation and necessity, including must, should, have to. The latter is that of volition and prediction with future time meaning and includes will, would and shall. Personal meaning means that the subject of the phrase is a human being and the verb is a dynamic verb describing an activity or event that can be controlled; logical meaning occurs with non-human subjects and with verbs that express states.

Modals combine with aspect and voice; indeed, if combined with perfect aspect, we find must and should expressing obligation and necessity in fiction and news, but mostly logical necessity; combined with progressive aspect there are will, shall, and obligation/necessities modals and semi-modals; finally, combined with passive voice, we find can (mostly in prose) and could where the permission meaning does not occur while possibility meaning occurs frequently. Semi-modals like *have to* and *be going to* are very common in written language and less common in conversation where the only formula we can find is future time, expressed by *going to*, followed by *have to*, expressing obligation (LSGSWE, 2002: 175).

2.2. Characteristics of telecinematic discourse

According to Perego (2012: 80), in the field of audiovisual translation, film language is the result of the imitation of everyday conversation, and, more specifically, an attempt to obtain a certain level of spontaneity employing features like: hedges, discourse markers, linkers and other markers of vagueness. The similarities between the two types of language are, unfortunately, limited because of the constraints an audiovisual text has, such as length of the text, synchronization, scene changes, immediacy of utterances etc... These restrictions, and also the need to capture the audience's attention, oblige the author to write more dramatic, and at the same time, less natural dialogues. In addition, although they are common in oral language, some oral language traits such as digressions, redundancies and hyperbatons, tend to be completely avoided in film language.

On the other hand, conversational routines, although they are extremely important to establish rapports between interlocutors, they provide a scarce range of information. Indeed, everyday language is stereotyped and full of repetitions, because, as studies have shown, people are unaware of employing only a limited number of words instead of their full lexical knowledge experience. Characteristics of social relationships such as greetings and leave-takings have a large space in English film language and they are the main element of orality in dubbed Italian (Bruti, 2011: 27).

2.2.1 Predictability

One of the features that distinguish film language from everyday language is predictability. Many studies have been conducted on this topic. A first area of research studies the specific traits of film language, and explores whether they are shared with everyday speech or not. Other studies have investigated the genres related to the macro-genre of film language, trying to see which kind of expressions is used in films. This research proved that TV series and films tend to follow a set of given speech patterns that should be kept unchanged in the process of dubbing and/or subtitling. However, sometimes it happens that the original dialogues change during the adaptation of the script, and that the actors do not follow the script to the letter, but rather consciously or unconsciously adds their spoken language specific traits (Taylor 2008: 167).

This way of translating audiovisual products has been common since the spread of cinematography in the earliest thirties, when talking films started to spread. The first "talkies", in particular, were completely deprived from everyday language, up to the point

that in some countries, including Italy, actors were dubbed in turn in order to erase any trace of vernacular (Cintas, 2009: 85). After a few decades, this tendency started to disappear, and being replaced by dialogues which gave actors more naturalistic characteristics. Indeed, since the editing of a screenplay is realised by a large number of operators, the final dialogue is a combination of written language features, such as the avoidance of repetitions, hesitations or overlapping speeches, and spoken discourse features, such as the recourse to para- and extra- linguistic elements. In addition, according to Taylor (2008: 168), studies have demonstrated that elements of spoken discourse such as hedges, tag questions, discourse markers are portrayed in a different manner when it comes to film language.

Different corpus-based studies have been conducted to explore the features of film language, focusing on a variety of sub-genres and genrelets, where everyday conversations, bar talks, telephone dialogues can be considered examples of daily situations that can be taken into exam. In Taylor's view, the phenomenon of intertextuality shows how a single text can be affected by previous texts belonging to the same field; for instance, telephone calls are depicted using the same patterns over and over again. In this respect, corpus-based studies have shown that words and expressions are bound to appear in certain patterns and environments instead of others. As a consequence, the language employed appears more "cued and crafted and thus more predictable" (Taylor: 2008, 173).

It has also been demonstrated that film dialogues often contain a low percentage of orality features, because of the presence of fixed words and expressions, maintained by the translators in the target language, with the aim of saving time and depicting consist characters, especially in long-running TV series. That is why dialogues tend to be used as part of predictable structures.

As Taylor (2008: 177) illustrates, predictable patterns are quite regularly transferred from the source to the target text; however, in some cases the cultural references do not have an equivalent in the target language. Therefore different solutions can be adopted, based on the type of issue the translator has to face. These solutions can usually be divided into three types depending on the level of involvement of the target-language culture: foreignisation, localisation and standardization. If the cultural reference is foreignised, it is left as it is because it is supposed to be known also by the target audience. If it is localized, the reference has to be slightly adapted to be recognisable by the target audience, and finally references are standardised when every reference to the

source language is largely lost in a mild translation. Choosing a strategy over another is a decision that the translator has to make based on several factors as the type of audience and the type of film product.

2.2.2 Taboo language

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2008) the definition of the word *taboo* is: "a cultural or religion costume that does not allow people to do, use or talk about a particular thing as people find it offensive or embarrassing." Taboo language is quite common in everyday language, employed especially in contexts of informality and closeness between interlocutors; on the other hand, it is less common but still present in high-ranking contexts. Even though it belongs to casual conversations, taboo language has been a matter of interest in many corpus-based studies, where quantity and quality, frequency and distribution are analyzed throughout corpora of film- or TV-series dialogues.

Language taboos are a psychological phenomenon as well as a social one. Consciously or unconsciously, our mind tends to hide and avoid them, as if they were completely forbidden. According to Azzaro (2005: 1), the key on when and how to use "bad language" is related to the context of use and it is often differentiated from the term "swearing", which includes a wide range of other similar features such as cursing, expletives and vulgarity. In this respect, the purpose of taboo language is "to release mental tension, to assert power or to make an impression on the listener", and is closely linked to cultural taboos in the field of religion.

As regards religion, Azzaro (2005: 02) draws a distinction between profanity on one hand and blasphemy, morality, scatological functions, sexual references and physical and mental illness on the other. Azzaro also distinguishes between swearing and insults. The former is employed during a stressing situation as a manifestation of an automatic, untargeted, non-reciprocal and neurologically motivated feeling of anger or frustration, and the latter, on the other, has a specific addressee and its aim is to cause a reaction on the interlocutor. Azzaro makes a further distinction between vulgarity and cursing: vulgarity is a matter of social class, in which a judgment upon one class over the other is expressed, while cursing can appear across every social class and it is more a matter of taboo breaking than judgment.

The level of formality or informality of language is established by the use of euphemisms, usually based on a phonetic resemblance (e.g. *bastard* becomes *basket*). As regards the function of swearing, each expression is linked to its communicative context. In Greenall's view, "swearing generates social implicature, i.e. it gives valuable hints regarding aspects of individuality and class membership, information is crucial in understanding where someone comes from and hence their emotions, motives, and goals." (Greenall, 2011: 47). Andersson and Hirsch (1985: 53) state that there are two main functions of curses: expletive expressions, that are emotive and characterised by the lack of the addressee, and abusive expressions that consist in conscious insults.

Generally speaking, the main function of taboo language is to provide information about the speaker and the social and cultural environment s/he lives in. Indeed, through the use of swearing or bad language, a hint of one's individuality and class membership is conveyed as well as one's emotions and attitudes. Quaglio (2009: 143), whose opinion differentiate from Azzaro's and Greenall's, states that the employment of taboo words is a projection of either an intimate or a hostile relationship among interlocutors that share an informal and friendly atmosphere. That is, while in real-life conversation swearing is used to express informality, in TV series it is meant to convey emotional content due to the limited background information, lack of time, and the fact that the interactions between the characters are not fully portrayed. Quaglio (2009: 145) explains that the expression of emotion is "realized by taboo words related to religion, sex and the human body, which are used figuratively and express the speaker's emotions and attitudes". Expletives are not the only markers of informality or, in the case of film language, "emotionally-loaded language". Even though a clear distinction between them is quite impossible, along with expletives also slang terms are very useful in this domain, indeed their combination with adverbial intensifiers helps stress the informality of the conversation, by adding emotional load to the circumstances.

As regards the use of taboo language, everyday conversation and TV discourse are similar, yet in audiovisual translation taboo language can be highly reduced during the processes of dubbing and subtitling. Among the different reasons for this, one is that in many cultures the constraint towards taboo language is deeply rooted: the stronger the constraint, the more attention is attracted. In audiovisual translation, the avoidance of swearing in subtitling, for instance, can be the result of a large variety of reasons. One of these is that a post-production script may have been used by the subtitler rather than the actual dialogues on screen which might have been different from the original idea, due to

actors' last minute changes while acting. Another cause is time and space constraints, which oblige the subtitler to sum up the main concepts by erasing words that are considered secondary to the understanding of the scene. Grennall claims that the transfer from the oral to the written mode can be considered the main reason why the subtitling process "leads to a more formal and much tidier text, with significantly fewer pragmatic markers" (2011: 55). In such domains, being the act of swearing a feature of spoken language for its spontaneous nature, its employment in written discourse could appear as a "result of a de-contextualising process" (Greenall, 2011: 57), where these kind of words can be considered by the reader as disturbing elements.

Based upon the premises discussed at the beginning of this paragraph about the definition of the word "taboo", a further reason why swearing is avoided in subtitles is that back in time preventing swear words in subtitles was mandatory. Also nowadays there is a certain level of censorship when it comes to literature, for instance. But, once this translational norm is breached, the focus goes on the acceptability of a foreignising strategy. In this respect Gambier (2003: 179) states that:

"An audiovisual product has to be different enough to be "foreign" but similar enough to what viewers are familiar with to retain their attention. In a way, the "other" has to be sufficiently similar to us to be accepted. In this respect, the needs and expectations of targeted viewers shape the adaptation of the source text. Thus, translation may ultimately be involved in exclusively domesticating programmes and films."

About this, Greenall claims that all the changes produced by the subtitler do not have to undermine the target culture but, instead, provide the audience the right level of communicative effect. The question of whether there is a loss in translation or not and the one about the social implicature of taboo language stays open. Anyway, in order to avoid a deep loss in the communicative effect of dialogues, the subtitler should keep in mind that a total removal of swear words from a target text could create a different response by the audience.

2.3 Speech acts

2.3.1 Philosophy of language

Language has always been considered to be a fundamental trait of human life and human beings, one of the main aspects that differentiate men from animals. In recent years, language has also become a topic that has been widely examined by philosophers and linguists. In particular, the topic of speech acts, such as actions like asking, requesting, thanking or apologizing, belong to the wide branch of philosophy of language, whose subject matter is how words relate to the world.

More specifically, its aim is that of explaining the nature of meaning (What is the difference between saying something and meaning it and saying it without meaning it?) and the relation between language and reality (How do words relate to the world?). Philosophy of language though needs to be distinguished from linguistic philosophy. The aim of the former is to give explanations and descriptions of a set of features of language like words, meaning and truth; the latter, on the other hand, bases its studies on methods for solving philosophical problems related to language (Searle, 1969: 3).

The search for meaning as the nature of linguistic representation and the investigation of truth is one of the main aspects of these branches; in this respect there are three lines of development.

The first line of development includes, among the others, Wittgenstein's work, which is based on meaning and truth, and on the analysis of language related to its objects. In his opinion, statements can be verified only by defining them as true or false. The second area includes more specific linguistic investigations that view syntax as central to language, Chomsky being the leading figure in this area. The third area comprises Austin and Searle focusing on the relation between language to its subjects, namely the use communities make of their language for communication and other purposes. Related to this area, there is the study of *speech acts*, conducted mostly by J.L. Austin in the first place and by J. Searle later on. A speech act is an utterance that has a performative function that is it has a purpose, an intention in human relations. Austin was the first one to introduce the term speech acts, after observing that utterances do not distinguish from each other for being true or false, but rather they can take the form of either performatives or constatives (1962: 4).

Performatives, based on the principle that “saying something is doing something”, are employed when the speaker wants the listener to perform an action. In Austin’s opinion, they share two basic characteristics: “they do not describe or report or constate anything at all, is not ‘true or false’; and the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as ‘just’, saying something” (1962: 5). Clearly, the simple use of performative verbs is not the only way that to portray a speech act. Indeed, in the example brought by Austin in which a priest during a wedding ceremony uses the formula “I now pronounce you husband and wife”, he explains that the priest is actually performing an action and fulfilling it, but the circumstances in which the action takes place are a key feature, too.

He also distinguishes between *explicit performatives* where the verb has a clear meaning, and *implicit performatives*, where the intention behind the sentence can be found in the context (Austin, 1962: 67). In particular, with explicit performatives the act performed is made explicit and, as a consequence, it leaves the listener with no possibility of misunderstanding. These criteria, however, do not suffice to identify explicit performatives, because “making explicit is not the same as describing or stating what I am doing” (1962: 69). That is why some features are essential in order to be fully explicit: mood, tone of voice, emphasis, adverbs, connecting particles, gestures and, most of all, circumstances. Furthermore, another feature is making the speech act explicit by stating it with clauses like “I promise you that...” or “I thank you for...”.

In order to be truthful, both implicit and explicit performatives should respect the required felicity conditions. Austin depicts his version of felicity conditions as follows:

- There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further;
- the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked;
- the procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely.
- where, as often happens, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the

participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently (Austin 1962: 14, 15).

The concept of felicity conditions is related to that of “illocutionary force”, which is the combination of the purpose of the speaker in fulfilling his/her utterance and the attitude that goes with it, in respect to felicity conditions. Contrary to Austin’s point of view, in his “Speech Acts – An essay in the philosophy of language” Searle portrayed felicity conditions as follows:

- a shared common language, that has to be socially accepted and logical;
- preparatory conditions that are pre-requisites fundamental to fulfill the action;
- propositional content, the type of meaning;
- sincerity conditions, the speaker’s intentions;
- the essential condition, a conventionalized formula to realize the speech act.

Constatives, on the other hand, are based on a non-action. They are present only in descriptions or assertions and, according to some philosophers, they are not performative at all, and consequently they do not respond to felicity conditions.

Austin did not manage to draw a clear distinction between performatives and constatives, because in his opinion saying something is still performing an action. Therefore, the overlap between them makes him draw a different kind of distinction, namely a distinction between **illocutionary**, **locutionary** and **perlocutionary** acts (1962: 133). This led Austin to depict the **General Theory of Speech Acts** based on the fact that all sentences are speech acts.

2.3.2 Austin’s illocutionary, locutionary, perlocutionary acts

As claimed by Austin in his most influential work “How to do things with words”, a large number of philosophers of language suggest that a statement can only describe some state of affairs, in that not all sentences are actual statements (1962: 3). In their opinion, it is often not easy to distinguish questions from commands, orders from exclamations and so on. In more recent years, this argument has been the subject of new scrutiny. Austin, indeed, analyzes the act distinguishing between illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary acts.

The **illocutionary act** is the basic speech act, and more specifically it is the “performance of an act in saying something as opposed to performance of an act of saying something” (Austin, 1962, 99-100). For a better understanding, several philosophers of language decided to classify illocutionary acts; Austin himself classifies them in five types according to their illocutionary force: *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behabitives*, and *expositives*.

Verdictives, as the name suggests, imply a verdict, a judgment that is not final but represents a kind of appraisal. Indeed, their concept is more related to the distinction between true and false, fair and not fair and right or wrong; in other words, they are judicial acts which need to be distinguished from the legislative and executive acts belonging to the second type, *exercitives*. Some examples are verbs like *rule*, *estimate*, *value*, or *describe*.

Exercitives express a right or the will to influence someone, such as the acts of voting, advising, warning, praying, ordering and, more drastically, degrading, dismissing, excommunicating. As Austin states “an exercitive is the giving of a decision in favour or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it. It is a decision that something is to be so, as distinct from a judgment that it is so” (1962: 155).

Commissives, on the other hand, have the only purpose to make the speaker do a certain action. They imply undertaking, obligation and declaration of intention as in the employment of verbs like promise, give someone’s word, agree, pledge, propose to, plan, and shall and so on.

The fourth, *behabitives*, include a large part of acts related to social behaviour and expression of feelings and the reactions to it. Some examples are verbs like apologizing, thanking, criticizing, challenging, congratulating, cursing, condoling and commending.

The last group, *expositives*, include the utterances we use to explain our reasons during an argument or a conversation, or, as Austin states, “expositives are used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references” (1962: 161). In the list of expositives, Austin includes the verbs: *affirm*, *describe*, *identify*, *ask*, *swear*, *agree*, and *accept*. He makes it clear that the last two categories are ambiguous when it comes to classifying them, because they can be included in other classes and stand by themselves at the same time.

The **locutionary act**, instead, is a vocalized sentence, the act of “saying something in its full normal sense” (Austin, 1962: 95). He subdivides locutionary acts into phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts. A phonetic act is an act of uttering certain noises; a phatic act is,

instead, an uttering of sentences or words related to the phonological and syntactic rules it belong. A rhetic act corresponds to the performance of a sentence with a specific sense and reference. These three types of acts are linked together. While performing a phonetic act, therefore, a phatic act is performed too but not the other way round. They are both reproducible, also with sounds and gestures. Rhetic acts are the one we report, also called “indirect speech acts”. Austin here also distinguishes meaning from force, where meaning is part of the locutionary act, while force is part of the illocutionary act.

Finally, a **perlocutionary act** consists in all the “effects upon feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them” (Austin, 1962: 101). In other words, it is the outcome of the illocutionary act. It is what the speaker expects to happen when s/he performs the illocutionary act.

2.3.3 Searle’s theory of speech acts

In 1969, John Searle published works on his view on speech acts, which he developed building on Austin’s work but offering a new perspective on it. Searle offers a psychological approach rather than a philosophical one, though. In his work the distinction between meaning and illocutionary force is inexistent, because meaning belongs to the illocution itself. In addition, he focuses on speaker’s intentions, stating that the entire speech act situation is in the act itself (Searle, 1969: 11). What Searle does is provide a model for explaining speech acts, rather than philosophical discussions, which can be difficult to understand and to deal with. In his opinion, language is a means of communication and a way to behave, too. In his opinion, the speech act is what Austin called the illocutionary act and he subdivides it in three parts: locution, what is actually said by the speaker; illocution, what is verbally accomplished by what is said; and perlocution, the effects of the action.

Searle criticizes the taxonomy of Austin related to the classification of illocutionary acts, so he provides his own taxonomy. He classifies them in five types too: *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressive*, and *declarations*.

The purpose of *representatives* is to commit the speaker to the truth of a statement, indeed they are discerned between true or false. They are usually compared to Austin’s verdictives and expositives even though they differ from them in terms of illocutionary force.

Directives, on the other hand, are compared to Austin's behabitives and exercitives, where the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something. Some examples are verbs that express obligations, suggestions or requests, such as *order*, *request*, *beg*, *invite*, *permit* and *advise*.

The third group is *commissives*. Here Searle explains that his idea is in line with Austin's view, even though in his opinion some verbs are wrong like *shall*, *intend* and *favour*.

With *expressives*, the speaker expresses his/her attitudes and emotions towards the proposition, whose truth is always presupposed. Some examples are verbs like *congratulate*, *apologize*, *welcome* and *thank*.

The last type of acts is that of *declarations*. The speech acts belonging to this category are successful when they bring a correspondence between propositional content and reality. They are included in Austin's performatives (Searle, 1969: 56).

2.3.4 Indirect speech acts

As Michael Geis explains in "Speech acts and conversational interactions" (Geis 1995: 122), Austin claimed that a speech acts can be performed directly by using both explicit performatives like "I ask you to open the window" or implicit performatives like "Open the window". Other philosophers including Searle and Lakoff, embracing Austin's theory, added that a speech act can also be performed with questions starting with "Could you please..." or assertions starting like "I'd like for you to...".

Consequently, the question arises as to when an indirect speech act occurs. According to Searle they are produced in "cases in which a sentence that contains the illocutionary force indicators for one kind of illocutionary act is uttered to perform, in addition, another type of illocutionary act" (Austin 1975, in Geis, 1995: 123). This equals to say that while performing an indirect speech act the illocutionary force indicator employed does not usually belong to that speech act. For instance, in the example above "Could you please (open the window)?" the indicator is that of a question which is used to make a request and not to ask for information. In other words, we can affirm that in saying something, the speaker could mean also something else. Searle also explains that while performing an indirect speech act, the speaker gives the hearer much more information relying on their shared information background. While with direct speech acts the structure of the utterance and of the illocution are in a mutual direct relationship, indirect speech acts

might be characterised by a violation of some of the felicity conditions of the type of speech act.

2.4 Politeness Theory

2.4.1 Politeness

According to Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, politeness is the demonstration of the awareness of the need to protect, enhance and defend the interlocutor's face, where with the term face the authors mean "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson 1978: 61). The meaning of "face" is related to the popular term associated to humiliation and embarrassment, from which the expression "losing the face" derives. According to Brown and Levinson's survey, politeness depends on several factors. The main one is the utterance in itself, which involves both benefits and costs for the interlocutor. Another factor is culture: every culture has its own politeness strategies that are understood by the members of the culture and can be misunderstood by a foreigner. Other factors are the interlocutor's mindset, the linguistic encoding and the context.

Elaborating on Brown and Levinson (1978), Taylor Torsello (1984: 190) claims that politeness is based on two basic wants of any individual. On the one hand, an interlocutor wants to be desired and appreciated by the other (positive face), while, on the other hand, at the same time s/he does not want to be imposed on by others (negative face). When people interact, it is in the interlocutors' best interests to save the other interlocutor's face in order to safeguard their own. But this is not what happens all the times, as satisfying another person's face wants is not mandatory. In addition to this, it must be said that face can be totally ignored in situations of urgency.

2.4.2. Negative and Positive face

In detail, negative face is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 61). In other words, it is the right to preserve autonomy and freedom of action throughout the interaction, and also the need to avoid intrusions and impositions by other interlocutors. Positive face, by contrast, is "the positive consistent self-image or

‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 61). Positive face can be considered as the need to be wanted, liked, approved and understood by the interlocutors, and also the need to share the same values and tastes with them.

Strictly related to the concept of positive and negative face, Brown and Levinson developed the concept of face threatening acts, which can be negative or positive, depending on the type of face that is threatened. A speech act perceived as a face threatening act puts the speaker in the position to mitigate or compensate for the “offence” and it can be performed “off-record”, which means using indirect language and removing the speaker from the potential to be imposing. Another option is to perform the speech act in a direct way but offering “redress” in the form of politeness (Taylor Torsello, 1984: 191).

Negative face-threatening acts take place when an individual behaves “contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 65), where the act as the subject of the behaviour can be a verbal or non-verbal communication act. When negative face is threatened, freedom of action is compromised, which can be damaging for both the addressee and the addresser. When the former is damaged, different situations can occur. For instance, an act that should be performed in the future could create pressure to either perform or not perform the act itself, which can be then translated in speech acts like orders, requests, suggestions, threats, and warnings. Another occasion is when a positive future act is predicated and, as a consequence, the addressee feels the pressure to accept or reject it, incurring in a debt with the addresser. Speech acts that perform this are offers and promises. Finally, acts that predicate the addresser’s desire might be considered as face-threatening acts, because they force the addressee to think that s/he has to preserve the interlocutor’s desires. Some examples are compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, and expressions of strong emotions. When the latter is damaged, the act shows that the addresser succumbs to the power of the addressee, and thus performs speech acts such as thanks, apologies, offers, and excuses.

On the other hand, when positive face is threatened, the speaker or the hearer does not care about the other interlocutor’s feelings or needs, namely s/he does not attempt to satisfy the other’s wants. Also in this case, both the addresser and the addressee can be damaged. When the addresser gets damaged, the act expresses the negative assessment of the addressee’s positive face, which can be performed in two ways: 1) in one circumstance, the speaker indicates his/her dislike about the hearer’s possessions or

desires; 2) on the other occasion, the speaker reveals his/her disapproval by stating that the hearer is wrong. Some examples of these acts are disagreements, contradictions, accusations, insults or challenges. Another way to express positive face-threatening is the expression of the speaker's complete indifference towards the hearer's positive face, namely the speaker avoid any attempt to enhance the hearer's positive face. According to Brown and Levinson (1978: 80), several occasions can occur in this situation. For instance, one case is when an expression of violent emotions by the speaker is uttered which induces the hearer to be afraid of the other interlocutor. Another possible scenario is when taboo topics are mentioned to indicate that the speaker does not care about the hearer's values. Yet another circumstance is when the addresser gives bad news to the addressee or good news about himself in order to cause distress. Also, being non-cooperative in a common activity or addressing to the hearer with status-marked identifications in initial encounters is considered an expression of non-attention. Finally, another way is to raise sensitive topics such as religion and politics, thus creating disagreements between the interlocutors.

When the damage is addressed to the speaker's positive face, it means that s/he is succumbing to the power of the hearer. This can happen with apologies, acceptance of a compliment, a breakdown of physical control, self-humiliation, confessions and emotional breakdown.

2.4.3 Positive politeness and Negative politeness

2.4.3.1 Positive politeness

Brown and Levinson put forward a series of positive politeness strategies that can be exploited in order to preserve one's positive face. As they state, "positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/ acquisitions/ values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 101). This strategy is employed to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face and, as a consequence, make him/her feel good about himself/herself, his/her interests, and possessions. In addition, the redress usually consists in satisfying the desire of feeling accepted, wanted and understood by others by stating that the speaker's wants are similar to those of the hearer. Indeed, positive politeness is realized when there is a close relationship between the interlocutors, namely they share

similar states of mind, a shared knowledge, and the approval of each other's personality. Two examples of positive politeness linguistic strategies given by the two authors are the use of informal pronunciation and of a shared linguistic variety.

Brown and Levinson (1978: 101) subdivide positive politeness into three main groups of strategies: "claiming common ground", conveying that there are two cooperators, and fulfilling the addressee's wants.

It is the first group of strategies, claiming common ground that is developed by the two authors. Claiming common ground means that the addresser and the addressee belong to a group of people that share the same goals and values. There are three ways to establish this: the addresser shows interest in the addressee's wants; the addresser can stress that s/he and the addressee belong to the same group that shares the same wants; the addresser claims the same perspective as the addressee, not necessarily belonging to the same group. As this series of sub-strategies suggest, in order employing positive politeness, the addresser has to notice any of the addressee's conditions such as changes or possessions in order to make him/her feel appreciated using expressions like "what a fantastic garden you have!" Something that would help the addresser in this is the exaggeration in intonation by intensifying the stress on the positive words. Moreover, the addresser needs to intensify his/her own contribution to the conversation by telling a "good story" and putting the addressee into the middle of the facts discussed; one effective strategy could be asking direct questions to the addressee, such as "You know?" "See what I mean?" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 107).

A further group of sub-strategies linked to the first strategy (claiming common ground) is related to identity markers, namely the employment of address forms such as imperatives, French "tu" and "vous" systems, and terms of address such as "mate", "buddy", "sweetheart"; furthermore, language strategies can be employed. Firstly, the switch between two varieties of a language or dialect could be an effective way to make the addressee feel wanted. Secondly, the use of jargon or slang can be advantageous for the addresser to recall all the associations s/he has in common with the addressee, such as in "lend us two quid then?"; finally, contractions and ellipsis during conversations are a sign of shared language background between the two interlocutors as in the sentence "mind if I smoke?" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 112).

Also, the addresser has the possibility to claim common ground by raising "safe topics" in order to satisfy the addressee's desire to feel right: the more familiar the topics are, the closer the interlocutors become. In her anthropological study, *Watching the*

English, Fox (2004: 12) portrayed a wide number of topics British citizens tend to talk about in order to feel at ease with their interlocutor, the “weather” being the most popular one. Also repeating part of what the other interactant has said, rather than simple perform yes/ no questions, is a way to show attention to him/ her.

When the addresser is not able to find topics that bring to an agreement, s/he can try to avoid disagreement by, for instance, pretending to agree with the addressee (a strategy called *token agreement*) using softening disagreement answers, such as “I don’t know...”, “I really sort of think...” Alternatively, instead of harming the addressee’s face, s/he can choose to lie. Otherwise, pseudo-agreement is another option, together with “hedging opinions”, which consist in non-gradable adjectives or intensifying modifiers used to “hedge the extremes.” Hedges are usually employed in negative politeness, but a small part of them such as *kind of, sort of, like* can have both a positive and a negative function and are used for making critics, suggestions, complaints, that is situations in which the addresser’s intent is blurred.

Two further positive politeness strategies are gossip and small talk. They are employed because talking about random topics allows the addresser to spend more time with the addressee in order to establish friendship. Also, presupposition manipulations are a way of employing positive politeness. Indeed, with the help of negative yes/no questions, the addresser presupposes knowledge about the addressee’s wants and attitudes. In a similar way, s/he is able to presuppose that the addressee’s values are the same as his/her own or, even presupposes familiarity between them by using terms of address or in-group codes. Finally, another common strategy among interlocutors is that of cracking jokes with the aim of making the addressee feel at ease.

The second group of strategies, “conveying that there are two cooperators”, aims to make the addresser and the addressee appear to be equal cooperative participants on the activity in order to share the same wants in the same domain. One strategy related to this is to presuppose the addresser’s concern for the addressee’s wants, namely the addresser desires to fit his/her wants with those of the addressee, for instance by stating: “ I know you can’t bear parties, but this one will really be good – do come!”

In addition, in order to demonstrate good intentions, the addresser can stress his/her cooperation with his/ her interlocutor by explicitly saying that his/her wants are the same as the addressee’s and later on, making offers and promises. S/he will also decide to be optimistic by assuming that the addressee wants to satisfy the addresser’s wants and that s/he will help obtain them. This is to highlight a mutual commitment between the two,

showing that they are both eager to perform the action: “Look, I’m sure you won’t mind if I borrow your phone”

Another way to include the addressee in the act involves the addresser’s giving reasons for his request, for instance. The addresser tests the addressee to check if s/he is cooperative by going from an off-record reason to an on-record request, such as in “Why don’t we go to the seashore?” and “Why don’t I help you with that suitcase” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 128). To test the cooperation, the addresser could assume reciprocity by claiming the existence of mutual rights or obligations between him/her and the addressee, as in “I’ll do it for you if you’ll do something for me.”

The third and final group of strategies involves the addresser trying to satisfy the addressee’s positive face by actually fulfilling one of the addressee’s wants with tangible or non-tangible gifts.

2.4.3.2 Negative politeness

Together with positive politeness, Brown and Levinson also depict strategies of negative politeness in order to safeguard negative face. More specifically “negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee’s negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 129). It minimizes the imposition on the addressee, according to the social distance that characterises relationships between interlocutors that want to put a social brake during the interaction in order to avoid embarrassing situations. Unlike positive politeness, negative politeness is specific and focused, a peculiar characteristic of western cultures that usually tend to employ it as an example of good behaviour. Examples of negative politeness are conventional indirectness, hedges on illocutionary force, polite pessimism, the emphasis of H’s relative power.

Negative politeness strategies are subdivided in five categories: one consists in being direct, one in making assumptions about the addressee’s wants, one consists in avoiding coercion of the addressee, one in satisfying the addressee’s demands, and finally redressing other wants of addressee’s wants.

The first group of strategy involves the indirectness employed by the addresser who has the desire to go on record and to give the addressee an “out”. In this case the addresser shows his/ her desire to have conveyed the same message, but indirectly, in order to achieve each other’s wants. Indirect speech acts are examples of conventional

indirectness and they have reached good attention by linguists; Gordon and Lakoff (1971) state that “indirect speech acts are the product of stating or questioning a felicity condition.” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 132). Some examples are: “Why are you painting your house purple?” “Can you please pass the salt?”.

The second group focuses on making assumptions about the addressee’s wants. One way of doing this is with the use of “hedges”, a particle or a phrase that lessens the impact of an utterance employed both in written and spoken language. These strategies operate on the level of illocutionary force (Performative hedges) or in relation to Grice’s maxims; in that the two interlocutors do not share the same wants or are unwilling to cooperate. Grice’s maxims (or cooperative dimensions) are four: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. The maxim of quality consists in being truthful without adding false or unproved information (“I think...”, “With complete honesty I can say...”); the maxim of quantity consists in saying neither more nor less than what is necessary to be successful in the conversation, using expressions like “roughly”, “more or less”, “to some extent”; the maxim of relevance consists in saying only things that are pertinent as in “this may be misplaced, but would you consider...”; the maxim of manner, on the other hand, is the need to be as clear as possible by avoiding ambiguity (“You’re not exactly thirsty, if you see what I mean”).

In everyday conversation, maxim hedges are very frequent and are applied in politeness strategies. Specifically, hedges that comply with the quality maxims consist in redressing advice and criticisms (e.g. “All I know is smoking is harmful to your health”), hedges that relate with quantity hedges consist in redressing complaints and requests (e.g. “They told me that they are married”), hedges complying with relevance hedges for offers and suggestions (e.g. “By the way, you like this car?”) , and, finally, hedges related with manner to redress all kinds of face-threatening acts, even insults (e.g. “I am not sure if all of these are clear to you, but this is what I know”). Gricean maxims are a tricky field for translators since they change in each culture; translators will need the context the interlocutors in order to have the correct interpretation of the statements. A narrower category is that of prosodic and kinesic hedges that indicate emphasis or hesitation, which are markers of the presence of face-threatening acts.

The third group of strategies is based on not coercing the addressee by giving him/her the chance of not performing the act, and also minimizing the threat. One possible way of performing these strategies consists in being pessimistic, namely “by explicitly expressing doubt that the conditions for the appropriateness of the speaker’s speech act

obtain” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 173). Three ways to be doubtful are the use of negative (“Here you wouldn’t have brought any money here, would you?”), the use of subjunctive (“Could you do x? instead of can you do x?”) and the use of remote-possibility markers. Other possible strategies are minimizing the imposition on the addressee and give deference which means lowering the addresser’s image and, in the meantime, raise the addressee’s: “we look forward very much to dining with you.”

The fourth group of strategies is based on “communicating the speaker’s want to not impinge on the addressee” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 187), which indicates the addresser’s will to express the awareness of the presence of negative – face demands by the addressee. There are two ways of doing so: apologizing immediately for doing a face-threatening act as in the phrase “I know this is a bore but...” or implicitly express reluctance on imposing on the addressee by employing dissociation (“I don’t want to bother you, but...”). As for the first way, the addresser can express apology by admitting the action indirectly (“I know this is boring but ...”), indicate reluctance employing hedges or expressions like “I don’t want to disturb but ...” or give overwhelming reasons for doing it. The more direct way is, of course, beg for the forgiveness of the addressee, which has to cancel the debt in the face-threatening act. As regards the second way, a dissociation from the agent and the recipient of the face-threatening act is possible by avoiding personal pronouns such as “I” and “you” and replacing them with indefinites such as “one”. Other methods consist in the use of imperatives, where the avoidance of “you” is basic, in the use of impersonal verbs and passive voices, reference terms, where the speaker distances himself as an individual from the acts, and in using point of view operations where the addresser distances himself from the act by manipulating time, for example.

The last group of strategies is based on redressing the addressee’s other wants, which means essentially offering a part of the compensation for the face threat caused by the face threatening act by redressing the other wants of the addressee. This can be obtained by indicating the superiority of the addressee, such as with “I could do it easily for you” or by acknowledging that in performing the face-threatening act that imposes on the addressee, the addresser has incurred in debt that s/he will have to be able to repay eventually, by using expressions such as “I’ll never be able to repay you” or “I could easily do it for you” (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 211).

2.5 Cultural aspects of language

2.5.1 Cultural myths

According to Katan (1999: 161) communication can be conceived in two ways: “myth” and “rationalistic language”. Myth can be considered as the tantamount of culture, because it “orients people to reality, transmits societal values, and helps members of the society to find a sense of identity. Myths give significance to our existence and unify our societies” (Schneider, 1976: 203 in Katan, 1999: 161). They belong to centuries of literature, art, and mass media that contributed to creating a cultural imagination that is no less important than history. On the other hand, these myths proved to belong to a collective memory that distances from collective reality, even though they are almost inexistent in 21st century.

Trompenaars (1993: 23 in Katan, 1999: 163) delineates a different perspective on this topic by making a comparison between myth-related values and culture-bound norms, where the former are ideals, while the latter are rules that guide people’s behaviour. In this respect, Kramsch (1993: 208 in Katan, 1999: 164) adds that every culture believes in its myths no matter what reality it represents. Giving Italian culture as an example, she claims that the distortion that Italians have about their own culture influences in turn the perception that they have towards a foreign culture – that is they practically create an anti-image of their culture.

Interpreters need to fix this distortion in order to allow a correct communication. More specifically, as Venuti explains (1995: 47 in Katan 1999: 164), “all translation is fundamentally domestication and is really initiated in the domestic culture, there is therefore a fundamental ethnocentric impulse in all translation”, namely the ethnocentric perception of the target culture is strengthened and then domesticized.

2.5.2 Cultural orientations

Orientations, intended as “perceptual filters that we habitually act on” (O’Connor & Seymour 1993: 149 in Katan, 1999: 167), tend to be consistent, systematic and habitual even though they are likely to change throughout contextual changes. As Katan (1999: 169) adds, “a cultural orientation is a shared metaprogram: a culture’s tendency towards a particular way of perceiving.” As already explained before, orientations influence, distort

and generalize our perception of reality; their structure is based on core values that, in turn, generate more values. Kluckhohn and Stodbeck (1961) coined the term “value orientation” that she defines as:

“Complex but definitely patterned (rank-ordered) principles, resulting from the transactional interplay of three analytically distinguishable elements of the evaluative process – the cognitive, the affective, and the directive elements – which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human acts and thoughts as these relate to the solution of “common human” problems.” (Kluckhohn and Stodbeck 1961: 341 in Katan 1999: 170)

Every person of any culture should have access to every orientation, but in reality people tend to favour one rather than others; the mediator, in these terms, is “obliged” to have equal access to all of them in order to fulfill his/her tasks. Many researchers share various opinions about this topic, in particular about the dimensions that characterize orientations. The most credited version is that of Brake who depicted an amalgamation of other researchers’ orientations with a “Cultural iceberg”. He indeed gave an iceberg as an example of what happens in our mind, where culture and language are placed above the water surface and orientations under water. Indeed, what is placed above water represents our external behaviour; on the other hand, what is placed under water is our unconscious behaviour. In particular two kinds of orientations have been analyzed by experts: orientations towards action and those towards communication, two features that influence language.

A typology of orientations is “contexting”, a term introduced by Edward T. Hall, by the end of the seventies. The concept of the term refers to how much information has to be explicated in an act of communication. The context here is conceived as “the amount of information the other person can be expected to possess on a given subject” (Katan, 1999: 177), and also the environment of a text. Text and context indeed are the two main factors that communication needs to be considered as such. They are interconnected, namely while two people interact they are “making inferences from the situation to the text, and from the text to the situation” (Halliday and Hasan 1989: 5 in Katan 1999: 176). The speaker and the listener have their own perception of the context, the more they share about it, and the more the two can anticipate what will be said later. A rather different opinion is that of Halliday, who depicts context as a tangible construct made up of three

components: field, tenor and mode. Field is the subject matter and the nature of the activity, such as what is happening, to whom, where and when; tenor refers to the social relationships between those involved in terms of power and status and how they feel about each other; mode is related to language employed, the text and how it is written or spoken (Taylor, 2009: 79).

2.5.3 LCC and HCC orientations

One's orientation changes according to the situation: text and context complete each other. When the context is missing, the text has to fill the gap and vice versa. Researchers refer to orientation by dividing it into two typologies: High Context Communication orientation or HCC and Low Context Communication orientation or LCC. The former shows a preference for context, which means that the approach to it has to be deductive (*theories, logic and principles*) and systemic (*holistic, full picture, background*), while the latter has a preference for text which makes its nature inductive (*pragmatics, specific, facts, statistics*) and linear (*detail, precision, cause-effect*). HCC are related to deep rooted cultures, such as the Italian one, which are considered "tightly knit", in which participants should need to share more about the text. Indeed, in HCC the emphasis is, other than on context, on relationships, indirectness, flexibility, appearance, circumstance. On the other hand, LCC are generally related to shallow rooted cultures, like the American, where their culture is considered "loosely woven". Here the emphasis is on the text, which means that the context is not taken for granted, but rather the stress is on facts, directedness, rules and consistency (Katan, 1999: 181).

In the association between cultural orientations and countries, a clear distinction between those that follow the two is impossible. Indeed, a great part of them tend to privilege one orientation even though sometimes they show characteristics belonging to the other. Countries that are extremely bounded to HCC orientation are Japan, Latin America and the Arab states, while countries that are extremely bounded to the LCC orientation are Switzerland, Germany and great part of Scandinavia. Mediterranean countries and Anglo-Saxon countries share some characteristics of both, even though usually the former are considered HCC, while the latter are perceived as LCC.

Among Anglo-Saxon countries, a distinction between British and American is needed. According to John Dodds (1989: 12 in Katan 1999: 185), the United States have a greater

orientation to LCC, because they show a predominance of extreme objectivity and control of the situation. Their history and geography are relevant causes of their attitude, as Bryson explains about what happened after the Pilgrim Fathers' landing in this country, "gradually, out of this inchoate mass a country began to emerge – *loosely structured*, governed from abroad, populated by an unlikely mix of refugees, idealists, slaves and convicts, but a country nonetheless" (Bryson 1994: 35 in Katan 1999: 185). Even the Declaration of Independence itself represents a proper example of LCC orientation, and the way President Jefferson decided to write it was meant to be explicit and understandable to every citizen.

Hall (1983: 60 in Katan 1999: 186) claims that the distinction between LCC and HCC is closely related to the distinction between left cerebral hemisphere (the text) and right cerebral hemisphere (the context). This is usually more marked in childhood, while later in life the dominance depends on the parents' action. As a matter of fact, the left hemisphere, the one that Chomsky defined as "surface structure", is considered responsible for logic, facts and language. In relation to language, according to Watzlawick (1993 Katan, 1999: 187), the left hemisphere is responsible for grammar, syntax and semantics, while the right hemisphere, which Chomsky defines "deep structure", is responsible for relationships, intuitions, fantasy and emotions. In this case Watzlawick states that it is responsible for all the "experiences of our inner world." Hall makes a distinction also in terms of geography indeed, according to his theory, left brain hemisphere inspired our Western, scientific culture, while right brain hemisphere produced the artistic cultures of the East (Katan, 1999: 188).

LCC cultures and HCC cultures have different orientations in terms of interpersonal communication as well. To draw a distinction between the two, it can be said that HCC cultures appear to be more sensitive to communication that affects "face", while in LCC cultures "affective" and "interpersonal" are two distinct matters. Indeed, another way to distinguish them is to link the former to indirect communication and the latter to direct, explicit communication. When the approach is indirect, in order to maintain a face-saver attitude, the language employed is indirect too, and, as a consequence, a high percentage of conditionals is used together with a non direct behaviour such as eye-contact avoidance. On the other hand, when the approach is direct, present tense and imperatives are the most employed verb forms in order to express a *feeling* of immediacy and collaboration. In order to be fully cooperative, an LCC text (either oral or written) has to deal with the maxims of cooperation articulated by Paul Grice.

In order to explain the difference between HCC and LCC cultures in a practical way, Wierzbicka gives English indirectness as an example. In her view (Wierzbicka 1986b in Katan 1999: 215), English indirectness is related to the English values of freedom, respect for privacy, wish not to impose, in other words in English a predominance of negative politeness can be noticed. This form of politeness, called “independence”, represents their search for individuality and the will for not being dominated by other social values. Italian values, otherwise, are based on the concept of “involvement” rather than independence, in which the priority is satisfying self-expression and contextual value orientations, namely a predominance of positive politeness strategies.

In terms of politeness cultural differences are strictly related to the characteristics that distinguish these two cultural orientations. In LCC cultures, as Dressler (1992: 14 in Katan, 1999: 217) points out, little information is given by the context in order to interpreting the text, which contains the characteristics of the politeness strategy employed, while in HCC cultures a large part of information to interpreting the text is included in the context, which contains politeness.

The degree of indirectness also depends on other factors such as the relationship between the addresser and the addressee; indeed the more formal their relationship, more negative politeness strategies are employed together with indirect behaviour. Other essential characteristics are the social status of the interlocutors, the type of speech act they perform, the social context, the urgency of and the level of the relationship between the two (Katan, 1999: 218).

In their orientation, cultures also vary in terms of expressive or instrumental communication. When the orientation of the culture is expressive, the language employed is affective, namely it focuses on feelings and how they are expressed, as happens normally in Italian culture. On the other hand, when the orientation is instrumental, the language is neutral, which means that the interlocutor is focused on “what” s/he says because the focus is on facts. An example of this attitude can be seen in British culture where emotions normally are non-verbalized in the first place, but only as a sign of communication breakdown.

Another distinction reported by Hofstede (1991: 79 in Katan 1999: 223) is between overstatement, an example of typical LCC orientation, and understatement orientation, a characteristic of the HCC orientation. While the former requires an effort by the hearer in building the meaning of the message, the latter does not require any effort as the meaning of the message is fully expressed by the speaker. In this case, the orientation of British

culture is perceived as understating along with Northern Europe culture. On the other hand, the United States, Italy and other Southern Europe cultures are perceived as overstating. In this case, behaviour contrary to its own cultural orientation is perceived as an act of face-threatening.

Speaking of English and American culture and the difference between them in terms of personal involvement, a good example is brought by Biber in his multi-dimensional study of the comparison between British and American register variation. Comparing texts from nine different registers, Biber depicts the differences in the “use of certain forms, which reflect differing functional priorities in the dialects” (Biber, 2001: 171). His results prove that in telephone conversation, Americans show more involvement than their British counterparts, especially among friends than among colleagues, while, in face-to-face conversation the two dialects show more similarities. Indeed, American English employ fewer formalities than the British. The features used by speakers to underline the degree of involvement of the conversation are WH-questions, contractions, first and second pronouns, hedges and discourse particles. In terms of overtone, the situation between the two is similar: the American variety shows more overtone in phone conversation, because it tends to be more persuasive and argumentative. In business telephone conversations the degree of the use of the modal *would* is high. The presence of “would” in British English, instead, is an indicator of hypothesis rather than persuasion. On the other hand, British telephone conversations are less abstract than the American ones, but their texts contain less subordination and fewer passive constructions. “Concreteness” is more valued by British speakers than by Americans, where gestures and abstractedness are avoided. Biber concludes that registers in the American variety are generally more informal, more interactive, more abstract and colloquial. In terms of involvement, overtone and abstractedness telephone conversation are very different from face-to-face, being the former more involved, argumentative and persuasive than the latter.

In other words, in high involvement cultures, people talk and interrupt more, they are expected to be interrupted in turn, and they talk faster and more quickly. Yet the distinction is not drastic because within a country there are differences too, for instance the distinction between North and South in Italy (Levine and Adelman, 1993: 66 in Katan, 1999: 229). Hearers and speakers dictate the length and the overlaps during conversation, and turn-takings are portrayed in different style possibilities depending on the culture they belong to. Anglo-Saxon cultures avoid conversation overlaps, while Latin cultures consider frequent conversation overlaps as appropriate, even though a further

distinction has to be made: if men interrupt their interlocutor the aim is that of gaining power. If women do so, the aim is to be more cooperative in the conversation. Also voice quality is an essential element in determining the typology of the orientation. In expressive orientation cultures, a wide variety of tones is highly used while in instrumental orientation cultures this variety is quite rare. The loudness of the voice is interpreted in different ways specifically depending on the country. For instance in Italy, while using a loud tone of voice is considered a conversation floor, in Britain it is perceived as an invasion of privacy, since they have a perfectly balanced use of their voice volume. In the United States using a loud tone of voice is a distance keeper, also determined by the fact that people do not normally care if someone is eavesdropping (Edward T. Hall, 1982: 188). Many studies have been conducted by Trompenaars (1993: 68 in Katan 1999: 230), who states that:

“For some (instrumental) societies, ups and downs in speech suggest that the speaker is not serious. But in most Latin societies this “exaggerated” way of communicating shows that you have your heart in the matter. Oriental societies tend to have a much more monotonous style: self controlled, it shows respect. Frequently, the higher the position a person holds the lower and flatter the voice.”

A contribution on the topic is also given by Edward T. Hall in his guide to cross-cultural proxemics, called “The Hidden Dimension” (1982), where he describes the English behaviour towards telephone conversations. Being the use of telephone perceived as an invasion of privacy, English people tend to use it only in cases of emergency; otherwise written communication is the best option.

Non-verbal language is no less important in a conversation. Expressive cultures encourage non-verbal language and reactions and value them positively while instrumental cultures do not. Edward T. Hall (1966: 242) conducted a survey demonstrating that non-verbal language is a main cause of misunderstanding between interlocutors that belong to different cultural orientations. As a matter of fact, the way one speaks, the way s/he employs time and space, the gaze, his/her gestures are misinterpreted by the interlocutor that is not able to understand them properly. For instance, HCC cultures, which are more visual, will concentrate more on non-verbal signals while LCC cultures, which are verbal, will perform a small pattern of signals. Mediators, in this case, need to be able to pick up these communicative acts and change the channel of communication from visual to verbal.

Chapter 3

The Data

The aim of this chapter is that of introducing the data I used to conduct my analysis. In particular, I will introduce the TV series I chose (both British and American version), by describing the plot, the characters and the setting of each of them. Then, I will dedicate a paragraph on the figure of characters in TV series and their influence on film language and audiovisual translation.

3.1 Corpus: TV series, characters and contexts

Four British TV-series along with their American remakes have been purposefully selected to make up the corpora analysed in the practical part of the dissertation. The four series, namely *Skins*, *Shameless*, *Broadchurch* and *The Thick of It* were re - filmed by the same director, with basically the same plot and the same scripts that have been adapted to the target country.

3.1.1 Skins

Skins is a British teen-drama aired for seven seasons (2007- 2013) on Channel 4. The TV-series depicts the lives of a group of teenagers who live in Bristol during their last two years of high school. Despite the apparent lightened atmosphere, *Skins* faces serious issues, such as drug addiction, eating disorders, mental illness, sex, bullying and death too. Each episode focuses on one character in particular, thus allowing the audience to learn more about his/her life and personality. The two episodes I chose for my analysis focus on Tony and Chris, and the reason I chose them is that these episodes are the two more similar to the American equivalents. Tony is an intelligent, popular yet narcissist young man who comes from a middle-class dysfunctional family. He usually treats his friends and girlfriend like instruments in his hands. He will be involved in a bad car accident at the end of season 1 which will lead him to struggle with brain malfunctions.

Chris, who is living a difficult family situation because he had to face the death of his brother which caused the divorce of his parents, is basically a drug-addict, an animal party and, in spite of that he is a very sweet boy who is involved in a romantic

relationship with his psychology teacher in the first place and then with his schoolmate Jalander. He will die at the end of season 2 because of the same brain illness that killed his brother.

Despite their different personalities and family backgrounds, the two characters at a first sight seem to share the same vernacular, characterised by colloquialisms, swearing and cultural references too. However, digging deeper into their language, some differences can be found. Tony has a higher level of education, and so his language is more complex: it is more varied; he invents neologisms and provides more cultural-referred jokes. On the other hand, Chris's language is plainer and more repetitive.

The U.S. version of *Skins*, under the guide of the same director, lasted only one season due to low ratings, a consequence of controversies which arose because of the language and the contents of the series. It was set in a North American region, and the characters' identities were the same as the British versions, except for their names.

3.1.2 Shameless

Shameless is a British adult "dramedy" series set in Manchester that was aired for eleven seasons on Channel 4. It tells the story of the Gallaghers, a working-class family living in the suburbs and composed of an alcoholic father and his six children who have to struggle to live a decent life. Although they have to constantly deal with economic problems, they seem to be, after all, a very close family where all the children try to help each other.

Due to the place where they live, their low education and an absent parental figure, the language employed in the TV-series is completely off-limits: it contains sexual references and much swearing, even when the youngest characters are speaking. Frank, the father, is an alcoholic who lives most of his everyday life constantly on the edge, leaving their children facing their problems alone with their older sister Fiona, a school dropout that struggles with a precarious job to give her younger siblings a decent life with the help of her boyfriend Steve. Lip, is a smart boy who is engaged in different relationships throughout the episodes which will get him into trouble. He is very close to his younger half-brother Ian, and he is the first who discovers Ian's homosexuality. Debbie is the other sister, she is very down-to-earth, although she will have to face adolescence's troubles. Throughout the series she always takes care of her two younger brothers Carl and little Liam.

The U.S. version of the show, which gained more success than the British version, is still airing on Showtime. It follows quite the same pattern, even though the location switches from Manchester to Chicago.

3.1.3 Broadchurch

Broadchurch is a British television crime drama, to be more specific a “whodunit”, and airs on ITV. It is set in a fictional village of South England, Broadchurch, whose plot focuses on a murder of an eleven-year-old boy and the two main characters, Detective Inspector Alec Hardy and Detective Sergeant Ellie Miller, who investigate on the case. *Broadchurch* depicts a wide range of characters, all of whom are all involved in some way in the case.

The language here is quite different from the other two TV-series mentioned before, because the characters are mostly detectives or people with an average cultural background, and so the way they address to others is more polite and less vulgar. Despite that, especially with male characters, taboo language is present, with a few slang expressions in specific scenes that require this type of feature.

The U.S. version, *Gracepoint*, set in Northern California, is directed by the same director of *Broadchurch* and with the same actor for the main role. It was axed after only one season due to low ratings.

3.1.4 The Thick of It

The Thick of it is a British comedy TV- series that lasted for four seasons. It is basically a satire of the inner working of the modern British Government. More specifically, it shows the struggles between politicians and media dealing with pseudo real political events. Indeed, it usually depicts actual facts but without mentioning real names or parties. Despite the technicalities and the sophisticated way of speaking of the majority of the characters, the show is also famous for its colourful language which was partially censored abroad, especially in the United States.

Unlike the TV-series described above, no real American remake of *The Thick of It* was done, but, the director, Armando Iannucci, was asked to create a U.S. version of it,

portraying the life of the Vice President of the United States, a fictional character named Selina Meyer, and her professional relationships with her staff members and U.S. politicians. The series, called *Veep*, at its fifth season, has been airing on HBO and has become very popular.

The language, although full of technical terms, is sometimes colloquial and full of profanity too, even though the level is a little lower than its British counterpart, due to the American tendency to be more prudish about taboo language in television. Fortunately, the channel in which the show is aired, being a cable channel, allows a larger range of swearing than others.⁵

3.2 Characters in TV series

Characters in TV series as well as in films represent a crucial part of the *ensemble* because they add a big contribution to the plot, to the narrative development and contribute to give a realistic pattern to the ensemble. Indeed, the plot is mostly bound to characters' change of behaviour and mood and to the relationship between their dialogues and their body and voice that, according to Bednarek (2010: 18), are “the medium through which skill (television dialogue) is expressed”. In this respect, linguistic aspects are considered a product of native-speaker intuition, because screen writers themselves provide dialogues using their imagination and skills, create characters that are based on their cultural background, and make them as personified as possible, providing a full description of their age, sex, skin colour and style (Bednarek 2010: 18). Along with screen writers, also scriptwriters, casting directors and costume designers contribute to depicting the characters' identity.

A character's mindset includes emotions, values and ideologies (expressive identity). When they perform them use scripted language. However, performance features which can be described as “multimodal”, such as emotive interjections, evaluative statements and ideological beliefs, are highly influenced by their cultural backgrounds. Indeed, psychologists suggest that emotions are “socially and culturally shaped and maintained, especially by means of collective knowledge that is represented in linguistic convention, everyday practice, and social structure” (Kitayama and Marcus 1994:10).

⁵ Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com/> (last visited on 14/11/2015).

Unlike prose fiction, in television and cinema characters cannot be verbally described on screen, but the combination of verbal behaviour, namely the language employed by the actor, and their non-verbal behaviour, allow the audience to comprehend the complexity of the character. More specifically, what really helps the viewer comprehend the emotional apparatus of the character, along with the employment of accents, intonation, and paralinguistic phenomena (e.g. the tone of the voice), is the way actors act on screen: their movements, gestures, body positions, posture changes, facial expressions, and the direction of their gaze. In such domains, Fairclough (2010: 19) explains that “who you are is a matter of speak, how you write, as well as a matter of embodiment – how you look, how you hold yourself, how you move, and so forth”, which means that the different ways the body performs or is represented is a key to the character’s performance (Quaglio, 2009: 19). In this respect, Bednarek (2010: 18), an expert of telecinematic discourse and characters’ identity, claims that characters need to be “conveyed externally and visually”, where dramatic discourse depends on the face of the actors, and that thoughts and emotions are related to their expressions and performance. Indeed, in this respect, Pearson (2007: 44) adds that television characters are “conflated with the actor who embodies them”, which means that the characters resemble their actors who portray a set of characteristics aimed to detach the character’s personality and look. This can be achieved, for instance, by choosing a given language, body movements and characteristics that could be similar to those of the chosen actors themselves. A direct consequence of this is that the audience develops a strong interest and feeling of involvement towards the characters/actors, to the point that they consider them as “role models”, or identifying themselves with them, especially if it is a TV-series, whose serial nature allows people to have plenty of time to get attached to them and develop an interest towards their future performance. In this respect, Cohen (1999: 327) argues that “it is the cast of characters, rather than the events, that are the show’s main vehicle for influencing audiences.” A TV show being a long series of episodes, the nature of the characters should stay relatively stable, leaving room for biological details and emotional development. That is why in Pearsons’ view (Bednarek, 2010: 23) the right term in this case is not “character development”, but “character accumulation and depth”, because unlike two-hour films, TV shows provide up to about 24 hours per season to give the scrip-writer the opportunity to add significant details that are fundamental to the core of the story. In other words, characters are those who bring a fundamental contribution to the complexity of the plot, due to characters’ decisions, histories, reactions, feelings,

intentions and goals that make them as authentic as possible. Indeed, in these domains, Bednarek explains that:

“Stories become complex through the influence of characters. It is the character that impinges on the story, dimensionalises the story, and moves the story in new directions. With all the idiosyncrasies and willfulness of character, the story changes. Character makes the story compelling” (Bednarek 2010: 22).

Based on these premises, Diaz Cintas, an expert of audiovisual translation and film language, explains:

“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”. (Diaz Cintas in Bednarek, Piazza, Rossi 2009: 7 - 8)

Chapter 4

Data analysis (1): cultural references, colloquial expressions, taboo language and discourse markers

This Chapter is the first of the two chapters devoted to the analyses of my corpus. It focuses on what distinguish British from American TV series scripts in terms of cultural references, colloquial expressions, discourse markers and taboo words. For each category, I will introduce the data, showing differences and giving examples taken from the dialogues. In addition, I will draw a further distinction between the British dialogues and their Italian adaptation. Finally, I will try and relate my results with the LCC and HCC cultures theory illustrated in Chapter 2.

Corpora-based studies

In my study, I compare British English and American English employing a number of spoken corpus resources I acquired from British TV dramas scripts and their American counterparts. In detail, my aim is to analyze specific traits of these two varieties and, at a later time, to compare the British versions with their adaptations for the Italian audience. The whole analysis is conducted from two different points of view: that of cultural aspects (Chapter four) and pragmatics (Chapter five).

The kind of investigation I decided to conduct can be defined as corpus-based. This type of data analysis started to gain attention after the development of corpus linguistics between the 60s and the 70s alongside pragmatic studies whose main function was that of studying the relationship between language-in-use and its context, in an empirical manner. Indeed, having a large number of lines to analyze, this method helps avoid misunderstandings that come from invented and standalone examples (Adolphs, 2008: 23). Biber and Conrad suggest that “[a] corpus-based analysis is much more than *bean counting*” (Biber and Conrad, 2001 in Quaglio, 2009: 29), because, as a matter of fact, while comparing corpora, frequency counts bring to light some important results, yet without directly accounting for situational factors, such as speaker characteristics, sex, age, settings or the type of interaction (Quaglio, 2009: 30).

In order to conduct my analysis, I collected a corpus consisting of three British TV shows, i.e. *Skins*, *Shameless* and *The Thick of it*, and of their American counterparts. I found the scripts in the fans-dubbing website “Subscene”, a platform which provides detailed transcripts of films and TV series for entertainment purposes. They present the typical features of everyday language such as pauses, hesitations and contractions. I edited them by removing credits, comments, descriptions for hearing impaired and copyright information. At times I also had to correct typos, too. As shows the table below, the script of *Skins* UK, first episode, consists in 4225 words, while the fourth episode is made up of 2813 words. The *Skins* US’s scripts, by contrast, consist in respectively 3553 and 3665 words. In *Shameless* the two version’s scripts consist of respectively 3479 and 3656 words. The scripts of *The Thick of it* and *Veep* consist in more or less 15000 words.

Table 4.1: *number of words contained in the scripts*

| | SKINS | | SHAMELESS | THE THICK OF IT/VEEP |
|----|-------|------|-----------|----------------------|
| UK | 4225 | 2813 | 3479 | 15878 |
| US | 3553 | 3665 | 3656 | 15325 |

Once the corpora were set up, I started to explore them with concordance tools and checked the transcripts of the dialogues as examples of language- in-use. The concordance software used was AntConc (version 3.3.0w) together with Microsoft Excel. In order to analyze the scenes from the TV series together with the subtitles and make comparisons, I also employed a subtitling freeware called *Visual Sub Sync*.

As regards *Skins* I could choose only episodes 1 and 4, as only in these cases the plot was unaltered. As for *Shameless*, I chose the first episode only. The approach to *The Thick of it* had to be quite different, because its American version (*Veep*) does not mirror the British version as is the case of *Skins* and *Shameless*. Therefore, so I had to choose a large number of episodes which proved to be useful for the analysis of discourse markers.

4.1 Cultural References

As regards the analysis of the cultural expressions, I took into account two episodes of *Skins* whose plots are virtually identical to their American counterparts. In the other cases, some differences emerged between the British and American series in terms of language and, more specifically, cultural expressions. Indeed, the reasons why the American writers decided to make changes on the original scripts may be well due to censorship and to the cultural differences between the two countries.

American censorship of TV series is common in the US, and *Skins* is no exception. When the remake of this British product was publicized in America, a large number of viewers criticized it from the very beginning due to the decision of censoring a great part of it. The success of the original TV series mostly depended on its stories about teenage realistic lifestyles that had to do with sensible topics, such as drugs, sex and food disorders. The choice to censor their language and images and soften topics that were deliberately outspoken depended on the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) whose task is that of "making available so far as possible, to all the people of the United States, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, rapid, efficient, nationwide, and world-wide wire and radio communication services with adequate facilities at reasonable charges."⁶ This, together with a tendency of American culture to be more conservative than European culture(s), brought about an unsuccessful result in terms of rating for *Skins* US, which was axed only after one season. In the Italian version, on the other hand, there is no censorship at all when it comes to translate insults or similar words. Nonetheless, when the original meaning is standardized or normalized, it might be so because the adaptors did not really want or manage to render it, and not for a wish to respect moral restraints or to be "polite" with and respectful to the audience.

⁶ <https://www.fcc.gov/> (last visited on 17/06/2016)

Some examples of censorship I noticed in the first episodes of both versions will help illustrate these differences. In terms of “visual” censorship, the very first scene contains a case in point. As can be noticed from Images 1 and 2, in the original version Tony sleeps in a duvet with a naked man and woman painted on it (see Image 4.1), while in the American version the two naked people are changed into a group of spiders and other insects (see Image 4.2).

Image 4.1: Skins UK - first scene



Image 4.2: Skins US - first scene



Another nude scene is censored when, later in the episode, Sid is at the drug dealer’s where some paintings hang on the wall representing undressed women. In the same scene in *Skins US* the same women are instead partially dressed. In addition, in relation to the use of drugs, another scene was subjected to censorship: in *Skins UK*, the large part of the characters stand in their college field while Chris smokes cannabis freely (see Image 4.3). In *Skins US*, on the other hand, the characters smoke hiding altogether in a bathroom stall (see Image 4.4).

Image 4.3: Skins UK - smoking scene



Image 4.4: Skins US – smoking scene



I have noticed a large number of differences also concerning the cultural references at issue in the episodes. More specifically, I found a number of examples showing how the scripts were changed in order to adapt to the target culture. For example, as regards the changes of names, in two cases the original characters’ names were changed for cultural reasons: Anwar, with Pakistani origins, was turned into Abbud, who is of African

descent, and Jalander, of Indian descent, was turned into Daisy Valero, of Latino-America ancestry. The decision of changing these names was probably due to the fact that in England a large number of the population comes from India, while, on the other hand, the US is populated by a large number of Latino-Americans.

Other examples come from art, history and music. Indeed, for instance, the drug dealer's nickname of Sid is "Mad Twatter" in the original version, which is a clear reference to the character of the Mad Hatter in the British novel "Alice in Wonderland". In the US version, being the word "twat" uncommon in American English, his nickname is instead Mad Mao Le Dong, with reference to Mao Zedong, the communist leader. In the Italian version, the adapters managed to keep both the original nicknames, but also added an extra explanation with the literal translation while the character was not on camera.

At the beginning, when Tony is arguing with his verbally abusive father, he says: "You take me for a complete James Blunt, don't you?". In the American version the reference to the famous British pop singer is cut out and replaced by the word "bitch", as happens in the Italian version too. This choice was due to the fact that after James Blunt became famous, British people started using his name as a rhyming slang for a bad word which is not used in America. Later on in the British version of the episode, while Tony is auditioning for the college choir, he sings "On the Street Where You Live", a song played in the popular British musical "My Fair Lady". Also in this case, the song was changed into something more suitable for the American taste, namely a song originally played by Ella Fitzgerald, "Let's Do It! (Let's Fall in Love)". Finally, there's also a difference in the character played by Maxxie, who is a girl in the US version: he is actually a tap dancer in the British version, while his American counterpart practices "cheerleading", a popular American tradition.

Other examples related to English culture can be surmised from the words used. In *Skins UK* at some point the protagonist refers to banknotes as "smackers", a slang term for a big sum of money. In *Skins US*, the terms predictably changes into "grand", which is a common word in the US that equals to one thousand dollars. What is really interesting is that the Italian adapters in this case decided to keep the reference to the source culture by translating "smackers" with "regine", with a clear reference to the fact that pounds in Great Britain have the face of Queen Elizabeth on one side. Later in the episode, one of the characters refers to a party organized by a high-up group of people as "Poshville", a made-up term with the word "posh" in it, as a reference to the way British people call

those who live a wealthy life. Being the word “posh” uncommon in the US⁷, in the American version it was changed into “Lame Gossip Girl party”, where Gossip Girl is the name of a popular American TV show, in which a group of boys and girls live their teenage lives in a rich area of Manhattan. In Italian, the translation is quite close to the original British version, as “posh” is translated with “puzza sotto il naso”, which is a metaphor that reflects the same meaning.

Adaptors can find it difficult to translate all the cultural references related and also those about the knowledge about cinema, which might well be familiar with the source culture but not necessarily with the target cultures. In our globalised world, however, we are all influenced mostly by American (and partly British) culture. It is therefore probably not necessary to seek for the exact equivalents in Italian. That is why the dubbers often decided to rely on *foreignisation*, and thus the translations often keep a great part of the original cultural references.

4.2 Colloquial Expressions

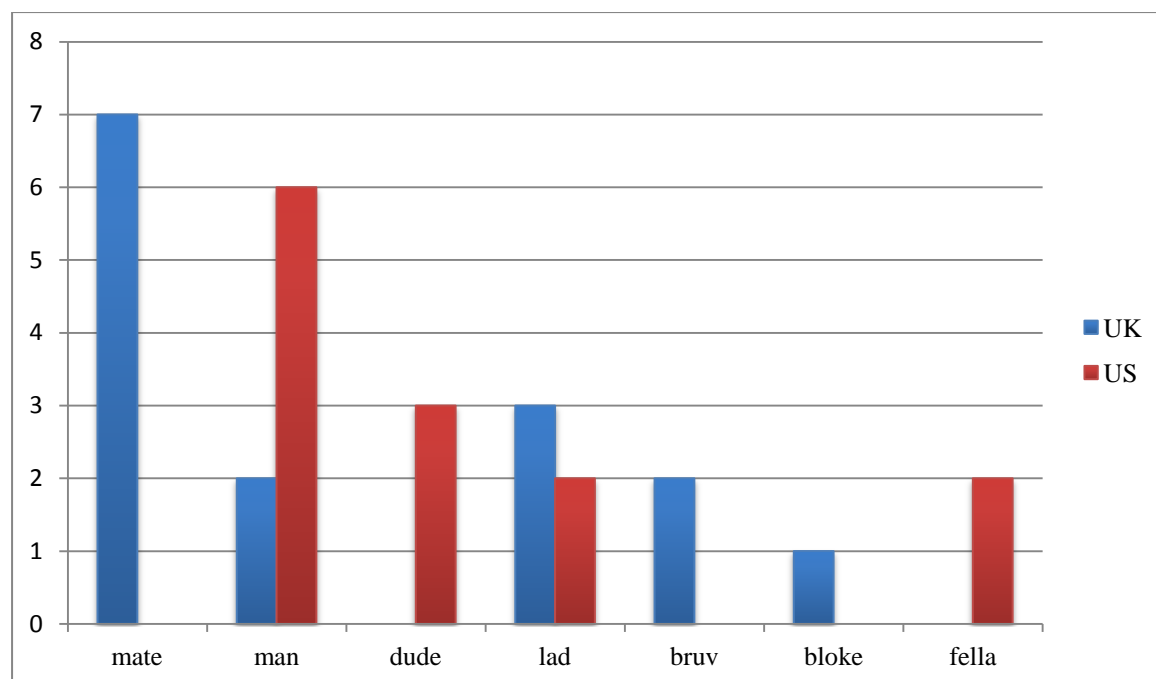
4.2.1 Vocatives

Degrees of formality in English can be marked by the use of vocatives, also called “familiarizers” (Quaglio, 2009:114) and the use of greetings and leave-takings. In this section I will explore the use of vocatives in a large number of scenes in *Skins* and in *Shameless*, in which the characters, most of whom are lower-middle class teenagers, meet at home, at school, at the bar or at the disco that is in familiar environments.

Vocatives can be distinguished by forms of endearment (e.g. *honey*, *sweetie*) or formal honorifics (e.g. *madam*). As Leech states, “[vocatives] mark the relationship between speaker and addressee as a familiar one, thus having a purely social band-maintaining function” (Quaglio 2009: 114). A popular vocative in the scripts is the word “friend”. Graphic 4.1 shows the frequency of the often synonymous vocatives that are used the most: *mate*, *bruv* (brother), *lad*, *fella* (fellow) *man*, *bloke* and *dude*.

⁷ *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th edition.*

Graph 4.1: *vocatives in UK and US versions of Skins and Shameless*



The synonym for friend which is exclusively used in the British scripts is the vocative “mate”, which often occurs at the end of an affirmative or interrogative clause, and is used to address a boy or a man in a friendly way. It was originally a working class term of address used among equals, which then it became a popular vocative to express common membership both in a formal and informal way. “Man”, on the other hand, can in a way be considered the American equivalent of “mate”. Other frequent terms in the British transcripts are “bloke”, “bruv” (the short version of brother) and “lad”, while their American equivalent in the remaining dialogues is “dude”, which is a synonym for “mate” and “man”, but not always. Indeed, one can refer to someone as a “dude” even without knowing them, because it is a term that expresses respect, being “dude” a word that often positively connotes the person one addresses. “Fella”, the short version of “fellow”, is another American term used among equals.

In the Italian dubbing of the British version these words are generally replaced by their equivalents *ragazzi*, *fratello*, *bello*, *amico*, *giovanotto* or even the more “creative” *bambolo*. What comes to mind is that three of the four types of translations do not fit well with our way of calling someone a “friend”. Indeed, the terms “fratello”, “amico” and “giovanotto” are simple versions of the English words, and by consequence they might be perceived as misplaced and as clashing with our way of addressing other people. For example, the word “giovanotto” is used in a scene in *Shameless* were one of the

characters is speaking to a young policeman. Even though in the British and American versions the words “bloke” and “dude” show a close relationship between them, in the Italian version a more formal word as “giovanotto” is used, in order to establish a hierarchy between the policeman and the young man.

At times, the vocatives used at the end of utterances are completely cut out in translation due to lack of time and to lip synchronization constraints (see Table 2). For instance, as regards “Bambolo”, the scene of *Skins* where it is used is about a telephone call between the protagonist, Tony, who is addressed by his friend Maxxie with “Bambolo”. The choice of using a word starting with a “b” could be related to the need of lip synchronization with the “b” of *bruv*. The choice of using this particularly creative word might be linked to the whimsical behaviour of Maxxie’s character, an openly gay dancer that is not afraid of showing his real self with his close friends, as can be seen from the following extract:

UK - TONY: *Hey, Maxxie. We need you tonight.*

MAXXIE: *Sorry, Bruv. Big, gay night out. You know, me and the lads.*

ITA - TONY: *Ciao Maxxie, dovrei parlarti.*

MAXXIE: *(while practicing tip tap dancing) Scusa, Bambolo. Mi sto allenando per la serata in compagnia dei miei ragazzi.*

In episode four of *Skins*, Chris, the protagonist of the episode, meets a stranger in his own house after a big party. The stranger, careless of the situation, greets Chris with a “Hey, buddy, hello?” whose Italian rendering is “Ehi, bello?” while the American counterpart was “Hey, little bro?”. All the three versions denote the willingness of the interlocutor to ingratiate himself with Chris by using colloquial words as “buddy” and “bro”, which are marks of close relationship between two people.

UK - STRANGER: *Hey, buddy, hello? You all right? That was some ride.*

CHRIS: *Look, I think you should go.*

US - STRANGER: *Hey, little bro. Hello? You all right? That was some fall.*

CHRIS: *Look, I think you should go.*

ITA - STRANGER: *Ehi, bello, mi senti? Tutto bene? Hai fatto un bel voiletto.*

CHRIS: *Devi andare adesso.*

Table 4.2: vocatives in *Skins* and *Shameless* in both British, American and Italian versions

| UK | US | ITA |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Mate | Dude | - |
| Bruv | Stud | Bambolo |
| Lads | - | Ragazzi |
| Bruv | - | Fratello |
| Man /Yes, man | Man. | Gia', non parlarmene |
| Dunno, mate | No idea, man | Evaporata |
| It's all right, mate | Don't worry, man | Un istante |
| ... mate ? | ... man ? | - |
| Nah, man | No | No bello |
| Hey , buddy, hello? | Hey , little bro? | Ehi , bello? |
| Wait up, mate , please | Wait up man | Vuoi aspettarmi un momento per favore? |
| Mate ? | Dude ? | - |
| Mate | Man | Amico |
| Bloke | Dude | Giovanotto |
| Hiya, lads . | Hey, fellas | - |

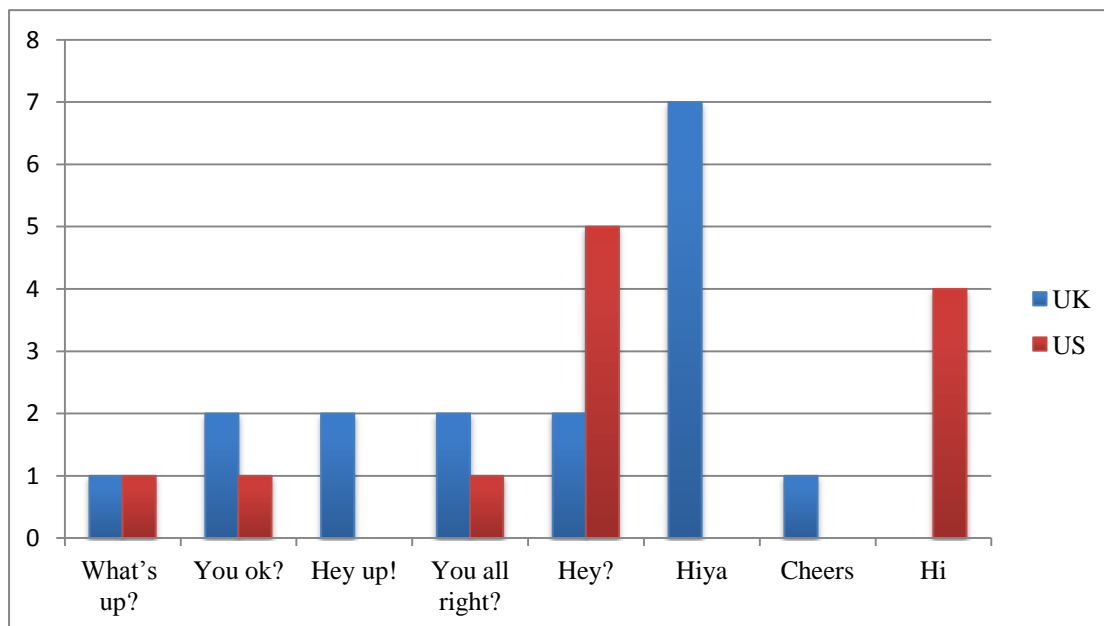
As can be seen from Table 4.2, the Italian version does not always respect the British dialogues. In fact, there is the tendency to cut off a large number of vocatives at the end of the sentence for two main reasons. Firstly, the use of the word “friend” or synonyms of it at the end of an utterance is unusual, that is why it sounds odd when adaptors decide to translate it. Secondly, Italian can at times be a verbose language, and which might involve

leaving out unnecessary words from the translated script. Being all the scenes based on exchanges between young men and women, these translation choices can be unfortunate in some cases, as they leave out colloquial features that could make the dialogues fit the young characters in the films and for the audience too.

4.2.3 Greetings

As regards greetings, in British English the most employed one is *hiya*, which is a cheerful way to say “Hi you” or “Hello you”, in response to “*Hi*” or “*Hello*”. It is interesting to notice that in American English it is replaced by *hi* and *hey*. Other exclusively British forms are *hey up?* And *cheers*. On the other hand, other greetings such as *you ok?*, *you all right?* And *what’s up?* are present in both versions, as Graph 4.2 shows.

Graph 4.2: comparison between British and American greetings



In Italian the greeting “*You ok?*” is translated literally, while other expressions are translated with a neutral and possibly less informal “*salve*” or “*ciao*”. Even in this case, Italian adaptors make some questionable choices. First of all, “*come butta*” as a translation for “*what’s good?*”, could be an interesting choice if the words “*come butta*” really belonged to Italian language; but here, instead, the tendency is that of following the

pattern of trying to relate to the source culture instead of the target culture. On the other hand, the utterance “*what’s swinging*”, which is a slang word, is rendered by the translator to with “*cosa ti prude?*” which is a rather creative way to ask how someone is doing, but still very effective in terms of colloquialisms (see Table 4.3).

A case in point is when the two interlocutors are not close friends. The characters are Sid, Tony’s best friend, and his drug dealer whom Sid has never met before. The drug dealer greets him in a very informal way (“What’s up kid?”), even though its purpose is that of being even scarier to Sid’s eyes. The Italian “*cosa ti prude?*”, together with an unpredictable behaviour, denotes the fact that the drug dealer wants to stress out his interlocutor even more, by stating essentially that he noticed that Sid was afraid of him.

Table 4.3: *greetings in Skins and Shameless in both British, American and Italian versions*

| UK | US | ITA |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| What’s up, kid? | What’s swinging? | Cosa ti prude? |
| You ok, Chris? | You ok, Chris? | Tutto ok, Chris? |
| Hey up! | What’s good? | Come butta? |
| You all right, Chris? | You all right, Chris? | Tutto ok, Chris? |
| All right, Chris? | What’s up, Chris? | Ciao Chris |
| Hey up | Hey fat | Salve |
| You ok? | Are you ok? | Tutto ok? |
| Hiya | Hey | Ciao |
| Hi | Hiya | Ciao |
| Hey, buddy, hello? | Hey, little bro? | Ehi, bello? |
| Hi | Hiya | Ciao |
| Hey, fellas | Hiya, lads. | - |
| Yo | Hey | Ehi |

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Hi | Hiya | Ciao |
| Hi | Hiya | Ciao |
| See you, Fiona | Cheers, Fiona | Figurati |
| Hey, fellas | Hiya, lads | - |

4.3 Taboo Language

Cultural aspects also impact on taboo language. Each and every culture has got its own swear words related to religious, social and historical factors, which are employed in everyday life to express feelings and stress one's state of minds. They are employed in film and television, too, to convey information about the identity of the characters and their mindset. Indeed, according to Taylor and Perego (2009:59) "it is through talking that information is exchanged, that a genre or a specific era are characterised, that characters are introduced and their identity revealed, that emotions are expressed, and relationship are shown." That is why translators, while adapting a product for foreign countries and cultures, should respect the way characters express themselves by keeping the translation of taboo language too.

In my survey I investigated bad language subdividing it into two categories: swearing and insults (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5). According to Azzaro (2005: 2), a further subdivision of swearing and insults can be developed: swearing could be related to religion, sex or human waste, while insults, on the other hand, can be mental, sexual, physical and scatological. As seen in section 2.4.2, Azzaro (2005) in his work illustrates how important is the use of taboo language in our society and yet undermined and marginalized. The tables break down taboo language into two main categories: swearing and insulting. Swearing is subdivided into religious, sexual and scatological swearing while insulting is subdivided into mental, sexual, scatological and physical insulting.

Table 4.4: Taboo Language in Skins

| SWEARING | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------|
| Religious | | Sexual | Scatological |
| God/ Christ | | Fuck/ Fucking/ Fucker Motherfucker Shag Get Laid Bitching Dick | Shit Piss Crap |
| INSULTING | | | |
| Mental | Sexual | Scatological | Physical |
| Bugger | Twat | Sodding | |
| Idiot | Wank | Turd | |
| Jackass | Cock | Scum | |
| Lame-ass | Dick | Tosser | |
| Jock | Bell end | | |
| Doofoid | De-bollocked | | |
| Moron | jerkoff | | |
| | Pervert de-balled | | |
| | Anus | | |

Table 4.5: Taboo Language in Shameless

| SWEARING | | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Religious | | Sexual | Scatological |
| Jesus/ Christ | | Fuck/ Fucking | |
| INSULTING | | | |
| Mental | Sexual | Scatological | Physical |
| Gutless | Asshole | | Fat (twat/ wanker) |
| Asshole | Bitch | | |
| Bollock brains | The cunt | | |
| Stupid | Arse | | |
| Bastard | Twat | | |
| Gobshite | Spunkface | | |
| | Wanker | | |

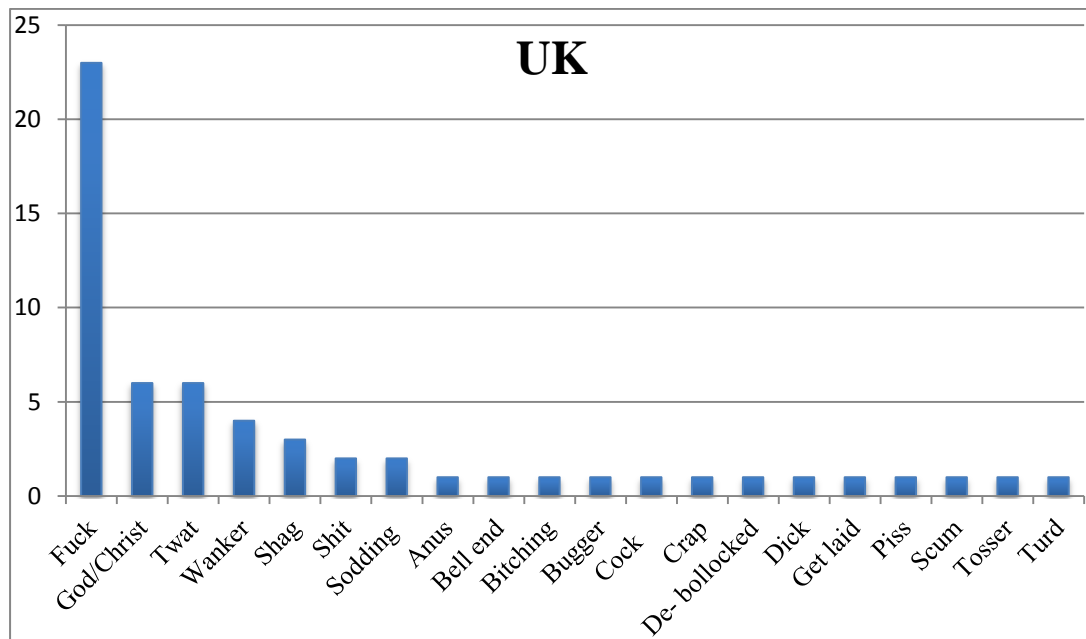
As for sections 4.1 and 4.2, in order to conduct my investigation I chose the same two episodes of *Skins* and the first episode of *Shameless* that provided me a large number and variety of bad words, as shown in the table below:

Table 4.6: Number of bad words in *Skins* and *Shameless*

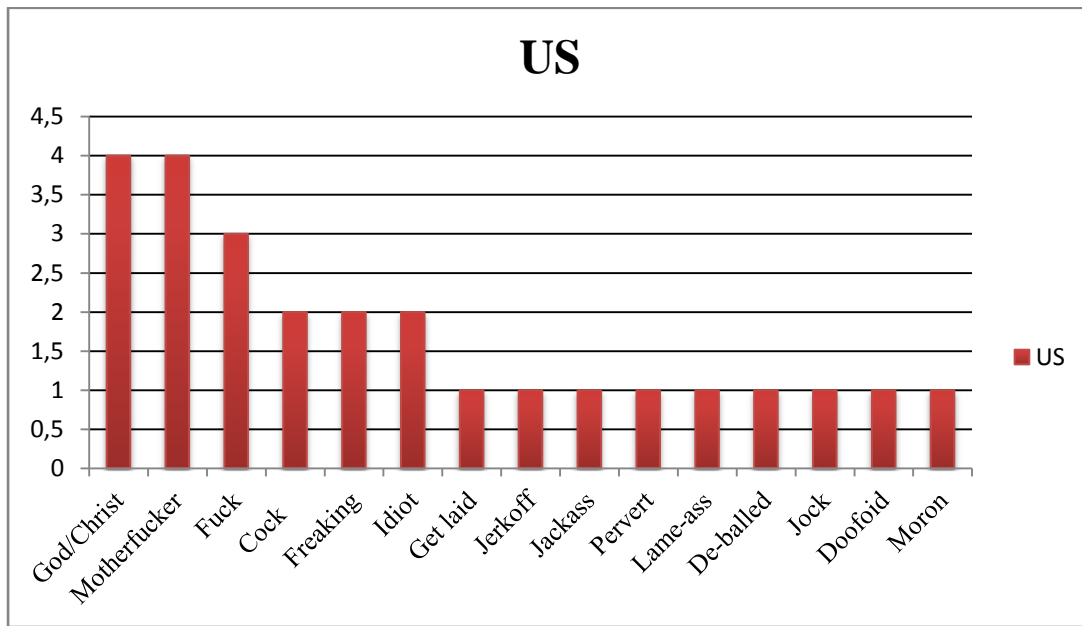
| | UK | US | ITA |
|------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| SKINS | 59 | 26 | 35 |
| dur. 45'58'' | 1.39% | 0.92 % | 1 % |
| SHAMELESS | 16 | 5 | 5 |
| dur. 48'38'' | 0.45% | 0.13% | 0.13% |

Due to their plots and characters, as shows the graphics below, the two TV series present a large variety of examples of taboo language but it is obvious that in the British version coarse language is employed more frequently (almost a bad word per minute in *Skins*) than in the American version.

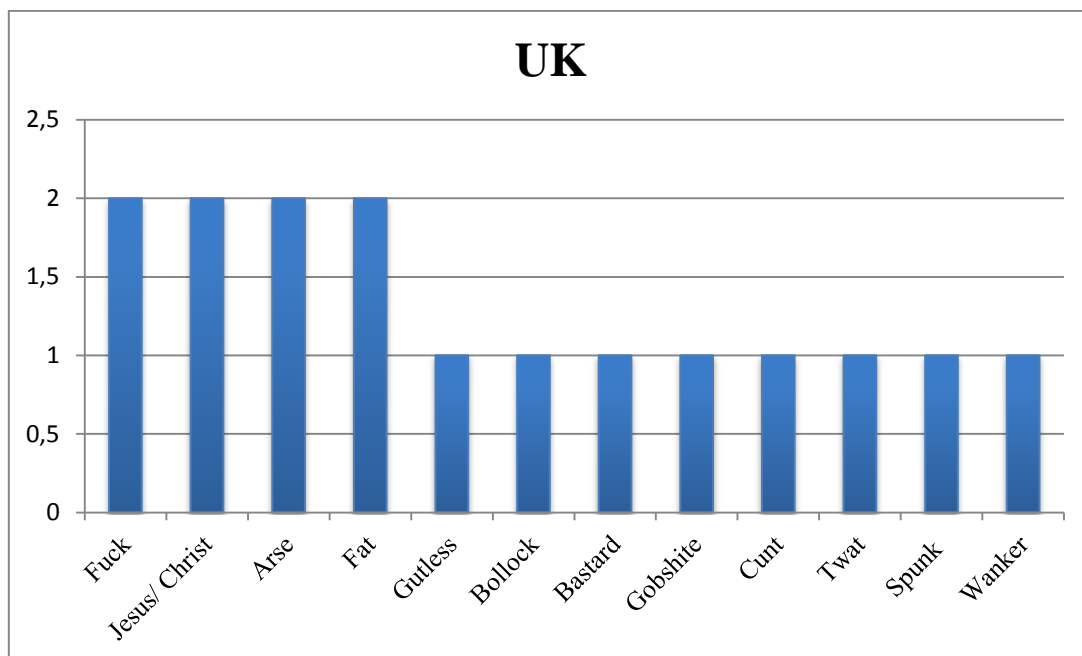
Graph 4.3: Taboo language in the UK version of *Skins*



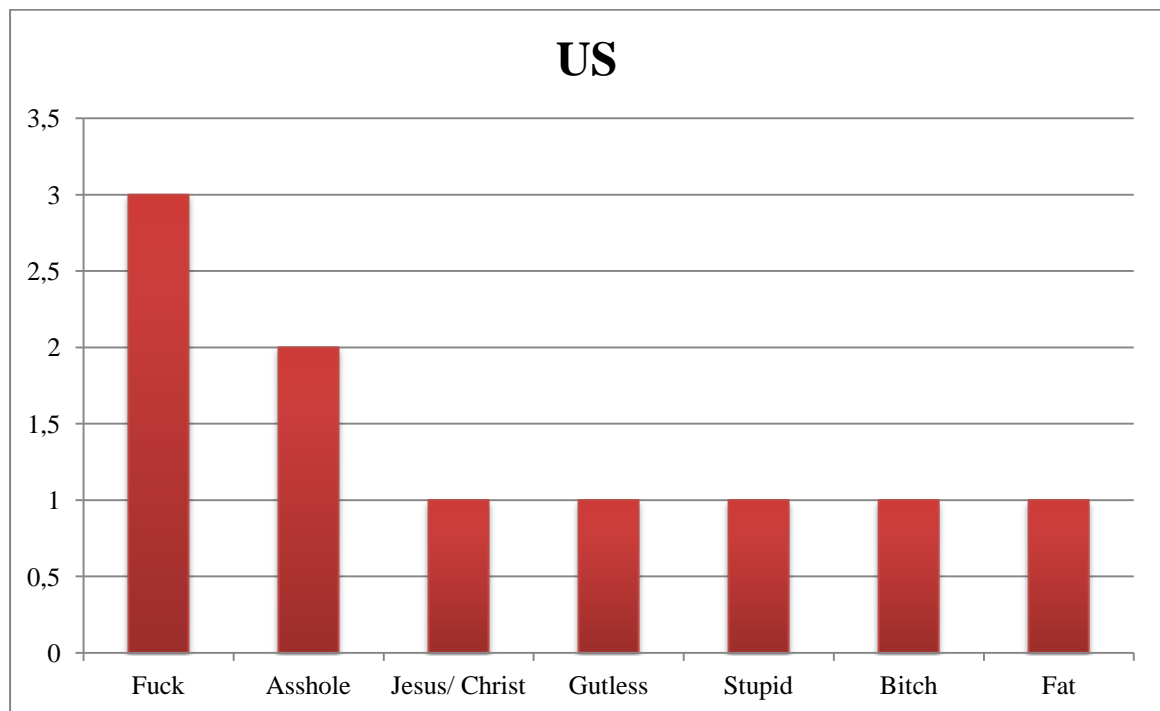
Graph 4.4: Bad words in the US version of Skins



Graph 4.5: Bad words in the UK version of Shameless



Graph 4.6: Bad words in the US version of Shameless



The taboo words related to religion that appears more frequently in both British and American are *Jesus* and *Christ*, those related to sex, on the other hand, are *fuck*, *twat* and *cock*. Other examples of insults are those related to mind such as *bugger*, *idiots*, *jackass*, *doofoid*, and *moron* while other forms of insulting are those related to scatology such as *turd*, *scum*, *tosser*, *piss*, *crap* and *shit*.

In the Italian versions, the majority of swearwords in *Skins* are kept, while in *Shameless* there is a higher rate of omission.

4.3.1 *Jesus/ Christ*

Table 4.7 illustrates all the utterances present in the British version and its equivalent adaptations containing colloquial expressions with the words *Jesus* and *Christ* in it.

Table 4.7: Translations of *Jesus* and *Christ* in every version

| <i>US</i> | <i>UK</i> | <i>ITA</i> |
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------|
| | For Christ's sake, Tony! | Cristo Santo! |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Ah, Motherfucker you cocksucking fuck!</p> <p>-</p> <p>Get your skinny motherfucking ass in here.</p> <p>And whatever you do, don't buy the drugs.</p> <p>Ah, sweet Jesus</p> <p>-</p> | <p>Jesus Christ, Tony!</p> <p>Oh, Jesus wept!</p> <p>Jesus, dozy fuckers.</p> <p>Come in, for Christ's sakes.</p> <p>Sid, for Christ's sake, don't buy the dope.</p> <p>Oh, Jesus Christ, no.</p> <p>Jesus Christ</p> | <p>Porca vacca, ma sei sordo?</p> <p>Oh, Gesù, che male ho fatto?!</p> <p>Gesù, è la fiera degli idioti.</p> <p>Vieni dentro, per l'amor dei clienti.</p> <p>Sid, non fare lo stronzo, non comprare la roba.</p> <p>Oh, porcaggio Giuda, no!</p> <p>Non ci credo.</p> |
|---|--|---|

The words *Christ* and *Jesus*, usually compounded with *sake*, appear frequently in the British scripts to express anger or astonishment. In the US version, the adaptors chose to avoid a great part of them by replacing them, in the great part, with “motherfucker”, which is very common in America. The choice to mitigate the references to religion could be based on the tendency in American society to be more prudish when it comes to religion; that is why they usually, for instance, change the exclamation “God” into “Gosh”.

The Italian adaptation is still more faithful to the British version even though the dubbers made some changes. Only in three cases swearwords were translated literally: “Jesus” translated with “Gesù” and “For Christ’s sake” translated with the Italian equivalent “Cristo Santo”. In the other cases, the word choices appear to be less blatant. As table 7 shows, the adaptors prefer, for instance, using the word *Giuda* (Judas) instead of Jesus or slang expressions such as *porca vacca*.

4.3.2 Fuck

The following table recollects all the cases in which the word fuck and its variants appear in the transcripts.

Table 4.8: Translations of Fuck in every version

| USA | UK | ITA |
|--|---|--|
| Every fucking morning | Every fucking morning! | Ogni schifosissima mattina! |
| The motherfucking plug! | Pull the fucking plug out, you twat! | Stacca quel maledetto affare dalla corrente, ridicola testa di cazzo! |
| Perming his fucking pubes or something? | Perming his fucking pubes or something? | Si sta facendo la permanente ai peli dell'uccello? |
| - | Every fucking morning! | Ogni schifosissima mattina! |
| Gosh golly, yours are hilarious. | Believe me, yours are fucking hilarious. | Da sghignazzo al cubo. |
| - | Where the fuck is everyone? | Dove cazzo siete tutti? |
| What are you talking about, moron? | What the fuck are you talking about, Tony?! | Ma di che cazzo stai parlando, Tony? |
| - | Wake up, you complete and total fucking sodding waste of fucking space! | In piedi, inutile puzzolente spreco di spazio se non vuoi che ti apra come un ventaglio! |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| It's like a parallel freaking dimension. | It's totally fucking weird. | Cristo , è tutto così strano qui. |
| For crying out loud, Tony, I'm doing it, <i>ok?</i> | I told you, Tony. I'm fucking doing it, <i>OK?</i> | Vaffanculo Tony, non scassare continuamente... |
| There's cameras everywhere in this whitebread ghetto. | The neighbours are right fucking bitching with the digital cameras. | I vicini friggono dalla voglia di riprendermi con le loro telecamere. |
| - | Fucking weed. | Una vagonata di fumo. |
| She's all pillled up. | She's pillled up, for fuck's sake . | Ha ingoiato una farmacia intera. |
| Cheer up, idiot | Cheer up, you fucker | Sta allegrotto, giavellotto |
| Seriously crazy | Fucking nut | Pazza sclerata |
| Shut up | Fuck off | Vattene affanculo |
| - | Stop being a fucking pussy | Smettila bianconiglio, muoviti |
| Tell you what | Fuck it | Fanculo |
| Fucking incredible | Fucking notch | - |

The dominance of the word *fuck* in the scripts shows that this type of swearword and its variations is one of the most used in the English language. According to the Oxford Dictionary, *fuck* refers to a sexual intercourse and is “a swear word that many people find offensive that is used to express anger, disgust or surprise”⁸. It also expresses impatience, annoyance and emphasis (Azzaro, 2005: 08)

Comparing the British and the American versions of these TV shows, I noticed that, as it often happens, the American one contains fewer *fucks* (or variations such as *fucking*,

⁸ Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th edition, pag.627

fuck it, fuck off, for fuck's sake) than the former. Indeed, the adaptors opted for three different solutions: keeping the f-word, replacing it into something lighter or getting rid of it completely. For instance, *fucking* becomes *freaking* and *fucker* becomes *idiot*.

The multiple-meaning of this term also allows Italian adaptors to translate texts with a wide range of different solutions, depending on the context. Indeed, *fucking* has been translated literally in a few moments, but also changed into other words such as *schifossisma*, *maledetto* and *cazzo* and the interjection *Cristo*, with the aim of keeping the same tone as the original with more softening terms. As shows table 4.8, contrary to the American version, the numbers in the Italian and the British versions are more or less equal.

4.3.3 Twat and Cock

Table 4.9 illustrates all the occasions in which the words “twat” and “cock” occur in the texts.

Table 4.9: Translations of Twat in every version

| USA | UK | ITA |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| The motherfucking plug! | Pull the fucking plug out, you twat ! | Stacca quel maledetto affare dalla corrente, ridicola testa di cazzo! |
| Motherfucker! | Oh, fucking, bollocking, twat , fuck. | Non prendermi per il culo, avanzetto di immondizia! |
| - | Sodding, fucking, bollocky shit, wank. Where is the twat ? | Lurido bastardaccio di una cooperativa di battone asmatiche, dove ti sei ficcato? |
| - | Wake up, Sid, you twat ! | Apri gli occhi, coglioncello! |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Doofoid sexual invalid. | Dippy twat . | Pensi solo al tuo 'tappabuchi'. |
| You lazy little cock roll, answer your phone. | Answer, you twat ./absolute and utter lower colon. | Vuoi rispondere, imbranato? / Lurida faccia da culo spaccato. |

Table 4.10: Translations of Cock in every version

| US | UK | ITA |
|---|---|--|
| Homecoming cock . | Cock of the year. | Cazzo dell'anno. |
| You lazy little cock roll, answer your phone. | Answer, you twat /absolute and utter lower colon. | Vuoi rispondere, imbranato? / Lurida faccia da culo spaccato . |

In *Skins* and *Shameless* the majority of taboo language items resides on insults related to sex such as, besides “fuck”, *twat*, *cock*, *dick*, *get laid*, *shag*, *asshole*, *bitch*, *wanker*, *arse*, *anus* etc. *Twat* and *cock*, which are a reference to the female and male genitalia respectively, are used as “offensive words for unpleasant or stupid people”⁹. The former is highly employed in British slang, while the latter is used in both varieties. In this case too, the word in the British version is deleted in the American version or replaced by the word *cock*, as a synonym. On the other hand, Italian is more “colourful” than the American counterpart, and, the translation choices adopted are multiple: *imbranato*, *bastardaccio*, *coglioncello*, *testa di cazzo*.

⁹ *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th edition, pag.1653*

The reason for the different approaches of translation/ adaptation between the two varieties and also the larger employment of strong language in the original (British) version, are likely to be due to different factors. Firstly, the situation and tradition in the country in which the programme is aired is the main reason why in some cases the choice is that of erasing or diminishing the level of taboo words. The adaptors need to take into account the kind of audience of the target language. For instance, the differences between the British and the American versions of these TV shows can be explained with reference to the tendency of American society to be more “puritan” when it comes to certain topics such as sex or religion. British society, on the other hand, appears to be more “liberal” and accepts bad language more frequently.

The channel and the time slots in which *Skins* and *Shameless* are aired play an important role too. *Skins* is aired on both youth entertainment channels such as Channel 4 and MTV, but in late night time slots. By contrast, the decisions made in the US concerning this TV show make it clear that the approach to bad language in this country is way different from that in the UK. In 2011, when *Skins* US aired, MTV US decided to censor a great part of the scenes because of the many complaints from associations of families. Eventually, these complaints made the showrunners decide to close the TV series after only one season.¹⁰ The series *Shameless*, on the other hand, aired on Showtime, an American cable TV channel for which censorship is not as strong as in broadcast TV channels, while in Italy this TV show was aired on Mediaset at late night hours in order to avoid an high rate of language manipulations and no cause any harm to the audience’s sensitivity.

To sum up, to conduct my analysis I first made a brief introduction of what are all the taboo words employed in the scripts, and then, I focused on the most frequent ones: *fuck*, *God*, *Christ*, *twat* and *cock*. Comparing the three versions of the scripts, it came out that, for every type of bad word examined, the British culture appears to accept bad words more freely than American and Italian. Indeed, British transcripts have the highest rate of taboo words, while American’s have the lowest. Italian adaptations stays in the middle between the two: a great part of taboo language did not vary or it was translated with synonyms, while a small part was cut off.

¹⁰ <http://www.ew.com/article/2011/06/09/mtv-cancels-skins> (last visited on 01/07/2016).

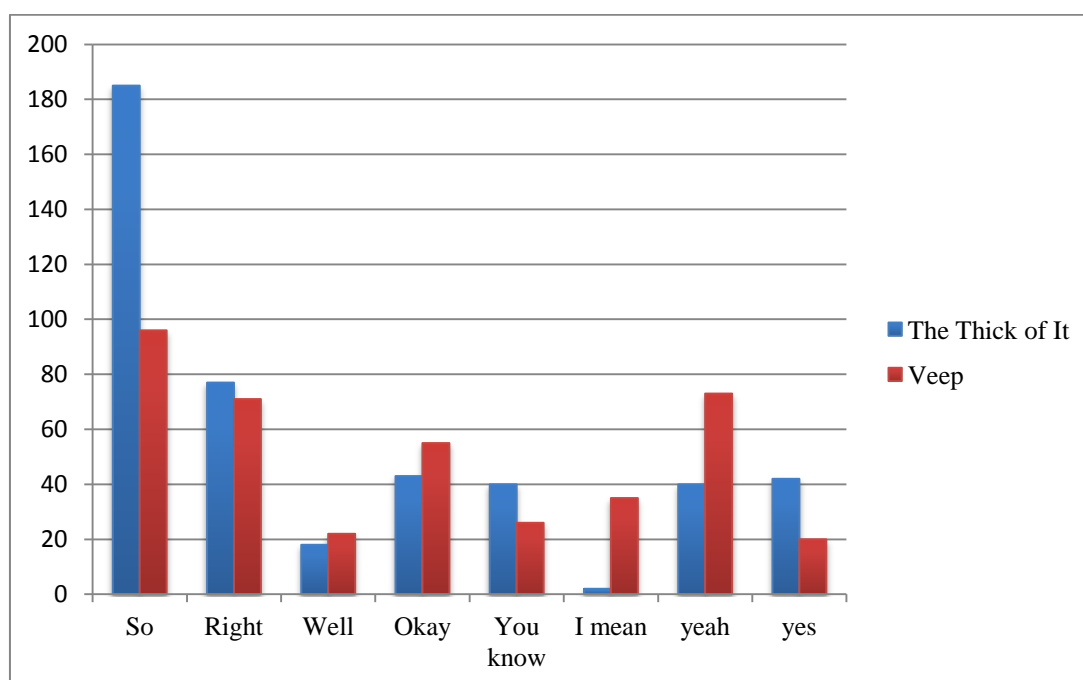
4.4 Discourse Markers

In order to investigate the use of discourse markers in British and American English I did not use the *Skins* and *Shameless* transcripts as I did for the other parts, but, instead, I opted for “*The Thick of It*” and its American counterpart “*Veep*”. Given their storyline, at first they did not seem to fit well with purposes of this study. Yet, contrary to all expectations, their dialogues appeared to be full of colloquialisms. These two TV series have as protagonists respectively the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the Vice President of United States and their staff but, in spite of that, they are both perceived as a comedic satire on politics full of unconventional dialogues.

As previously stated in Chapter 2, discourse markers are usually defined by researchers as optional features expressing a transition in the process of conversation and indicating relationships between parts of the discourse, as well as between speaker and hearer and between interlocutor and context (Quaglio, 2009: 78). They do not influence the lexical meaning of the sentence but contain pragmatic functions; they also help the speaker to highlight some aspects of the conversation and convey emotions and attitudes towards it.

For this study, I decided to investigate the use of the reception markers *okay right, yes* and *yeah* and the presentation markers *so, well, okay, you know, and I mean*. By checking for the presence of these discourse markers in the British and American dialogues, as shown in the graphic below, some quantitative differences can be spotted. *So, right* and *okay* are the most frequent both in British and American English. In particular, the instances of *so* are twice as many in British English, while *okay* and *right* are more or less the same. As regards the others, *well, I mean* and *yeah* are preferred in American English while *you know* and *yes* are the most employed in British English by far.

Graph 4.8: *Discourse markers in The Thick of It and Veep*



4.4.1 So

The marker *so* ranks 61th among all the words in the script, which is however the highest rank in terms of discourse markers. It is always employed at the beginning of an utterance to introduce, change or resume a topic. According to Schrifin (1987: 218) “so is a turn-transition device which marks a speaker’s readiness to relinquish a turn”. *So* is fundamental for the organization of transitions, which means it is employed to take a turn during the talk and also organize and maintain discourse topics to invite the hearer to come to a conclusion. For instance, in *Veep*, the character called Amy, the chief of the Vice President’s staff, asks to her colleague Dan that she despises

AMY: “So, Dan, are you enjoying working for Hallows?” (From *Veep*)

introducing a topic of conversation. The question here is used not only to change the subject but also to emphasise the question she is making with the purpose of making him angry. Indeed, with this utterance she is underlying the fact the she works for the Vice President unlike him who is working for someone less important.

In another scene of the same episode, the Vice President, Selina Meyer, is complaining about an unsuccessful meeting she had when her Director of Communications, Mike, rapidly change the topic by asking

MIKE: “So today at the 3.30 press call, what do you want me to say about plastics?” (From Veep)

Jonah, the White House liaison to the Vice President, asks Mike to change the speech he has prepared for Selina, explaining the situation and finally ask him one more time to do the job by giving him an order.

JONAH: “It doesn’t come from me, okay, so just do it”. (From Veep)

In the British version, *The Thick of it*, the frequency of this discourse marker is much higher than in the American counterpart. Here, apart from the previous functions, *so* is largely employed as a means to gain time during a conversation, conveying a feeling of uncertainty and vagueness.

4.4.2 Right/ All right

Taking as an example the scripts of both British and American TV series, *right* and *all right* are used mostly at the end of an utterance followed by a question mark to enhance the request for comprehension by the interlocutor – the speaker wants the message to be completely understood by the listener. Here some examples from both *The Thick of It* and *Veep*:

MALCOLM: *The line is now, I did announce the Snooper Force this afternoon at the school. OK? That’s what happened. All right?*

The use of *all right?* for Malcolm is quite frequent, due to his irascible behaviour that lead him always underline what he has just said by checking if the hearer has understood it correctly.

GARY: *Well, they work together, they probably socialize together. I’m sure they did, right?* (From Veep)

On the other hand, Gary, which is always insecure, uses this discourse marker as a way to seek everyone's approval.

At times, the position at the end of the utterance can also take on a negative connotation, if the two interlocutors are arguing. For instance, in *The Thick of It* the chief of staff of the Prime Minister is commanding his secretary to mind her tone:

"And Terri, you can drop that tone, all right?" (From *The Thick of It*)

In *Veep*, the Vice President Selina Meyer is having an annoying conversation with another senator where the latter is sarcastically questioning Selina's abilities as Vice President.

BARBARA: *Yeah, they're the guys who fund the members of your clean jobs commission. I could draw you a diagram, but it would be a very simple diagram.*

SELINA: *Oh, I can handle geometry, Barbara, all right?*

(From *Veep*)

Apart from these cases, I noticed that generally speaking in the British version the use of *right*, as a synonym of *okay*, performs the function of compliance and agreement with the previous remark, as if the speaker attempts to reassure the listener about what s/he is saying. On the other hand, in the American version *right* is never employed as a standalone, but, rather it is placed at the beginning of the utterance, usually taking the form of a question, to gather attention or to cut it short, as the example below taken from *Veep* shows, in which Selina is trying to escape from a bad situation:

AMY: *Can we not strategize in a closet?*

SELINA: *All right, what we're gonna do is we're gonna walk slowly to the car, okay?*

(From *Veep*)

4.4.3 Okay

Similarly to *right*, *okay* is another reception marker which is highly employed in both varieties. According to Biber *et al.* (1999: 146), *okay* is often employed to express the reception or as a response to suggestions, offers or to ask for permissions. In these cases,

okay is always used at the end of a question, in order to investigate the understanding of the interlocutor, such as in the following example:

SELINA: “All right, Mike, here's what we do, *okay?*”. (From *Veep*)

This extract is taken from the British version of the TV series (*The Thick of It*), in which the characters often happen to argue with each other about politics in the majority of dialogues and keep ending their utterances by adding *okay?* as a request for approval or understanding. In the example below we can notice the frequency of the use of this discourse marker while Prime Minister Hugh Abbot is talking to his staff about an alternative solution for a big problem:

HUGH ABBOT: *Okay. Well, ehm... listen. The situation is, ehm, it's pretty terrible, but things have changed. Okay? The line is now, I did announce the Snooper Force this afternoon at the school. Okay? That's what happened. All right? So now you have to tell the media in case they... missed it. Okay? Great.* (From *The Thick of It*)

In *Veep*, by contrast, if there is a high social distance between the speakers, the meaning conveyed discourse marker is equals that of an order imposed on the interlocutor, as in the following lines, where Jonah talks to Mike, where Jonah is in a higher social position:

JONAH: *And, Mike, you need to be there, too, okay? So no going home to walk your dog.* (From *Veep*)

JONAH: *White House says we need to majorly redact this, okay?* (From *Veep*)

4.4.4 You know

The discourse marker *you know*, which is more frequent in British English, occurs in a wide range of environments both in the middle and at the end of an utterance, often followed by a question mark in the transcripts, that is it expresses a question. It is composed of “you”, a second person pronoun used as an indefinite pronoun and “know”, which expresses an information available to the listener. The main function is that of establishing a shared base of knowledge between the interlocutors, where on one hand the speaker wants to give information to the hearer and on the other hand the hearer is

welcomed to accept the information or, otherwise, to “convert an opponent to one’s own side in a dispute” (Schiffin, 1987: 278).

In addition, *you know* may be used also in monologues, specifically when the speaker’s purpose is that of keeping the hearer’s attention focused on the last piece of information the speaker has given and reaching an understanding. Here some examples:

AMY: Uh, senator Reeves just died. (From Veep)

SELINA: He was the first senator to welcome me to the Capitol, you know? (from Veep)

MALCOLM (to the PM): This could be a great deal worse. You have had a good innings, you have been here for 18 months. And you know, I have written some very nice things about you in the PM's reply to your resignation. (From The Thick of It)

And again:

OLIVIA: Can you give me one good reason why I shouldn't do a big story on the, you know, the day of spin? (From The Thick of It)

In these cases it does not always used as a question, that is it not always followed by a question mark.

4.4.5 *I mean*

As Schiffin states (1978: 296), “*I mean* marks a speaker’s upcoming modification of the meaning of his/her own prior talk”, which means it is used to admit the vagueness of the already made utterance and signal a clarification that is going to follow it. Indeed, *I mean* marks the speaker’s orientation to two aspects of talk, ideas and intentions, due to the double meaning of the word “mean”. It also makes the hearer maintain the focus on what the speaker has previously said to see if it will be modified. It is largely employed in American English, usually at the beginning of the utterances. The following are some instances from the transcript of *Veep*’s, where Selina is having difficulties explaining her strategies; the use of *I mean* here functions also as a short pause to reformulate the sentence:

SELINA: *Look at this. This is classic clean jobs stuff. I mean, if I can get Cornstarch Utensils in most federal buildings by the fall, well, then the VEEP has landed.* (From Veep)

And again:

SELINA: *I mean, I misjudged things. Fundamentally, I would say I misjoked. I mean, if we were gonna really be ...* (From Veep)

4.4.6 Well

According to Schiffrin (1987: 102), the discourse marker *well* is hard to label because it is defined as a noun and an adverb but also a filler, an interjection, a particle or an initiator. It is usually positioned at the beginning of the sentence as a pre-closing device, “offering its recipient a chance to reinstate an earlier or unexpanded topic, or to open another round of talk, prior to conversational closure (Schlegoff and Sacks 1973 in Schiffrin 1987:102).” *Well* also introduces disagreements and rejections to requests. Here are two examples from Veep and The Thick of It, where *well* is used to gain time to find the exact words:

BARBARA: *Come on, I've got to get going.*

SELINA: *Yes, well, I have ... a ton on my agenda as well.* (From Veep)

OLIVER: *Bec... No, well, the truth is that I ... acted beyond my brief.*

(From The Thick of It)

4.4.7 Yes/ Yeah

According to Jucker and Smith (1998: 127), *yeah* is a reception marker that marks a response to a statement. It works as a confirmation signal of interest and attention towards the speaker's words; in other words, it also shows an attempt or a request by the listener to participate in the conversation, as new information is always brought up by the participants. In both Veep and The Thick of It, the marker is placed in initial position to express a complete understanding of what has been said before, such as in these extracts for instance:

MIKE: *Sorry about the Senate meeting.*

SELINA: *Yeah, it was like a funeral for a homeless guy.*

(From Veep)

On the other hand, *yeah* is employed also as a wish of the interlocutor to express total understanding of the topic and, at the same time, to introduce a new one, as in the following example taken from Veep:

MIKE: *And today with the senators, don't forget to smile.*

SELINA: *Yeah, is that a poppy seed there in your teeth?*

(From Veep)

The equivalent most used version in British English is *yes* and it has the same functions as *yeah*. As Fox (2004: 14) claims, *yes* “virtually guarantees that you and your acquaintance will reach a happy agreement” which means it is highly employed to let the interlocutor know that the listener has understood what s/he has said, without expressing agreement or disagreement. It is also placed at the end of a question as a synonym of *ok* or *right*:

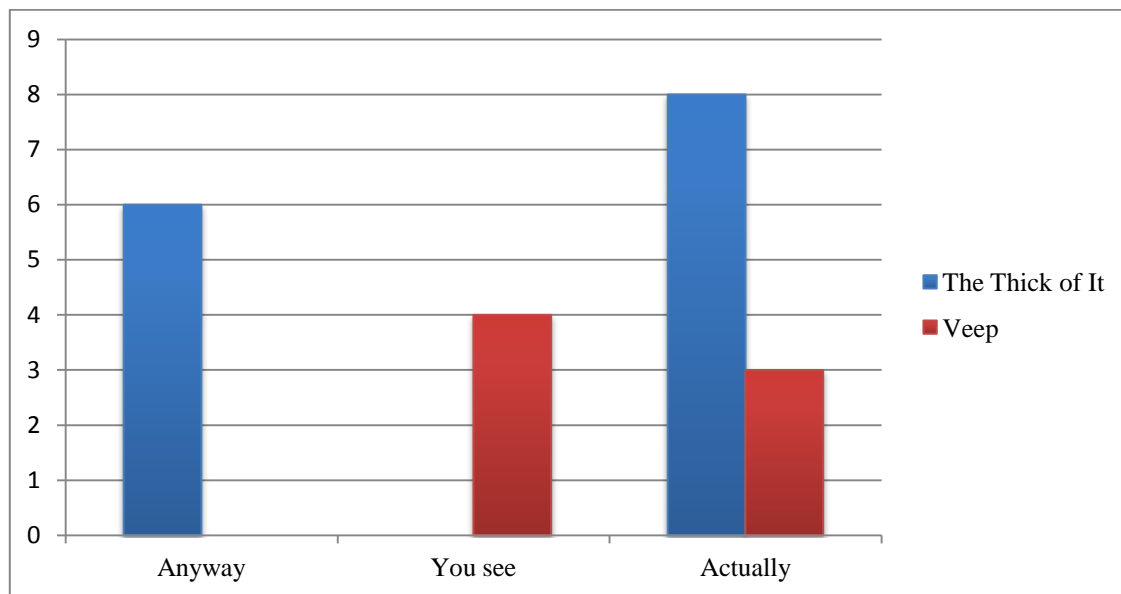
MALCOLM: *We'll double bubble it, leak it to the Standard for the early editions and trail it on The World At One, yes?*

(From The Thick of It)

4.4.8 Infrequently used markers

The transcripts also infrequent – discourse markers are used such as *anyway*, *you see* and *actually* which are very common in British and American English but play a small role in my data. As Graph 9 graphic shows, *anyway* is used only in British, while in real life conversation it is quiet common in American English too.

Graph 4.9: *Infrequently used markers*



Anyway expresses the wish of the interlocutor to change topic or bring the listener's attention to something mentioned before. *You see*, on the other hand, is more used in American, usually to capture the listener's attention while explaining a topic. *Actually*, placed in initial position or final position, is the only marker that appears in both varieties.

Chapter 5

Data analysis (2): linguistic analysis of speech acts

This second chapter devoted to the analysis of the data focuses on pragmatic and linguistic aspects of the language of the TV series. To be precise, I used the scripts to select the six most frequent types of speech acts, i.e. offers, requests, orders, thanks, apologies and suggestions, and then explored the differences among them. Firstly, I listed the frequencies of their occurrence in each TV series, both the British and American version and the Italian adaptations, studying the possible variations and discussing the reasons for the differences. Subsequently, I described them separately in terms of clause types (e.g. imperatives, questions, and plain declaratives), the presence of modals and hedging expressions, specifying the frequencies of these characteristics for each and every speech act. Finally, I compared the two English versions with the Italian adaptation to see how these speech acts are realised in Italian.

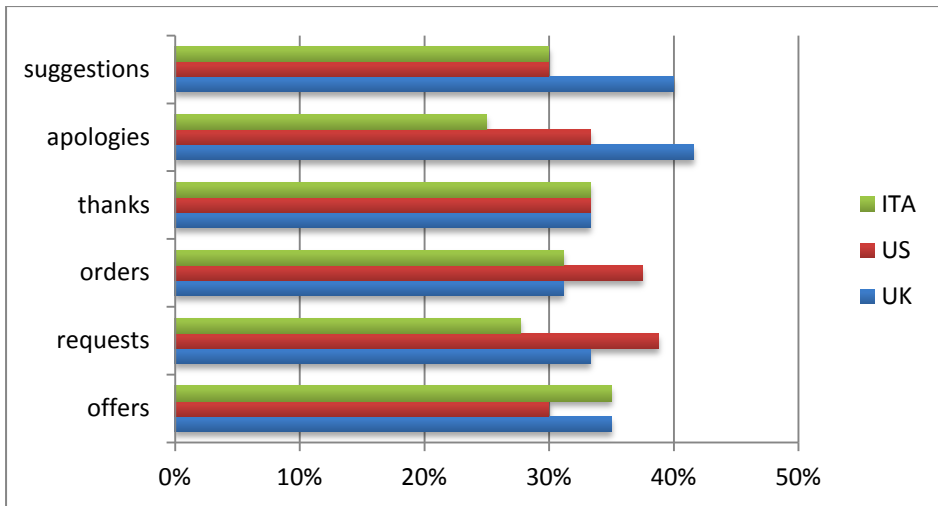
5.1 General introduction to speech acts

The types of speech acts I chose to explore are: offers, requests, orders, thanks, apologies and suggestions. Observing the different speech acts, every one of them presents specific linguistic characteristics that will be fully displayed in the following paragraphs.

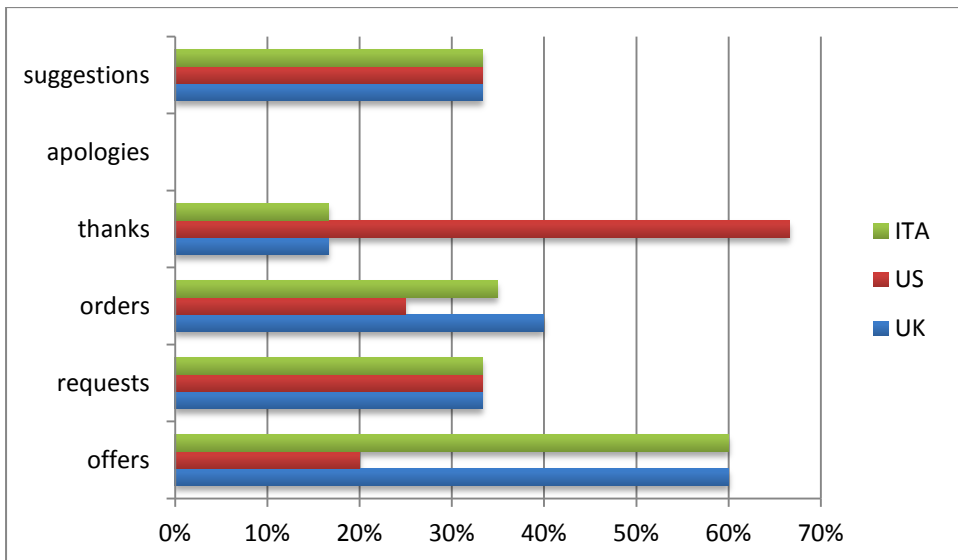
The speech acts encountered in the scripts are categorized considering the relationships between the speakers. Indeed, they can reflect two types of conversations: intimate and professional. The intimate environment is present in *Skins*, whose characters are a group of friends, and in *Shameless*, whose principal characters are part of a family. The professional environment, on the other hand, is characteristic of *Broadchurch*, where most of the conversations are played by an unfriendly detective inspector and his detective sergeant that barely know each other.

As regards the frequency, Graphs 5.1 to 5.3 below show how many times the speech acts **offers**, **requests**, **orders**, **thanks**, **apologies** and **suggestions** appear in the scripts of *Skins*, *Shameless* and *Broadchurch*

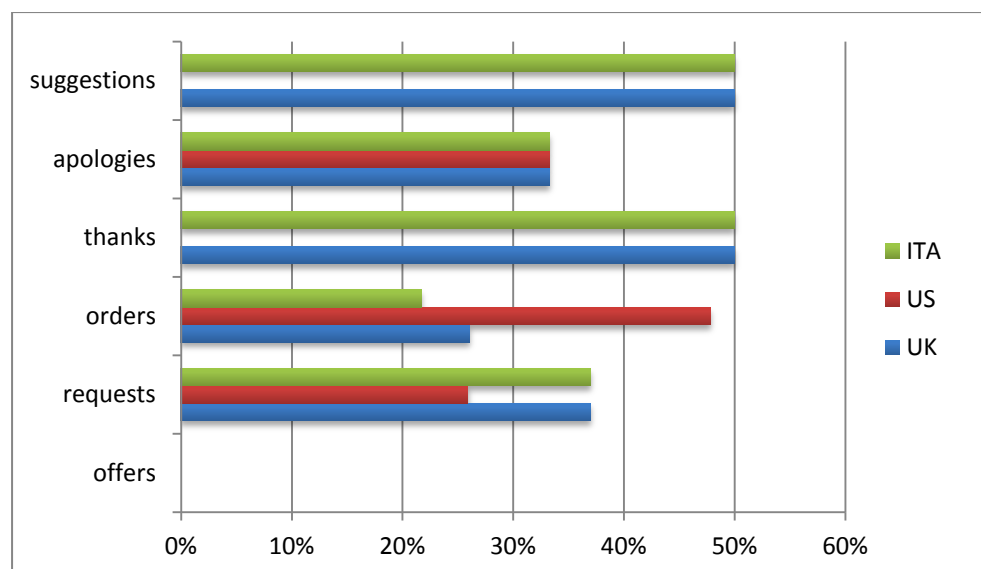
Graph 5.1: *frequency of speech acts in Skins*



Graph 5.2: *frequency of speech acts in Shameless*



Graph 5.3: *frequency of speech acts in Broadchurch/ Gracepoint*



A look at the graphs suggests that some differences occur between the speech acts found in the various versions of the TV series as well as between the three shows as a whole.

The first main difference that can be noticed concerns **requests**. It can be noticed that the numbers of requests in Broadchurch/ Gracepoint is higher than those in *Skins* and *Shameless*. At first blush, on the one hand, *Skins* and *Shameless* share similar characteristics when it comes to the nature of dialogues, relationships between the characters and language. Indeed, the transcripts are characterised by short utterances, fast interchanges and avoidance of long and articulated speech acts. In these two TV series, the speech act of request is performed among friends or relatives, which is why they are very immediate and short. On the other hand, in Broadchurch, and in its American counterpart Gracepoint, requests are more frequent because the plot (described in section 3.1.3) requires them. Specifically, most of the requests are performed by the protagonist Detective Inspector Alec Hardy, who is an unfriendly person and colleague who utters statements that are always formal and indirect.

For exactly the same reason, the complete absence of **offers** in Broadchurch and Gracepoint is likely to depend on the plot. In *Skins* and *Shameless*, where they are frequent, the majority of the dialogues depict everyday life in which offers are very common. Apart from this, the British police drama focuses only on murders and on characters' involvement in the murder case, rather than on everyday actions which might at times involve offering something or offering for help.

Considering the British and the American versions of *Broadchurch*, some differences can be noticed when it comes to **orders** and **thanks**. Indeed, as previously discussed in section 2.4.3, American culture is perceived as more direct and less implicit than the British, which might be the reason why in the transcripts of this TV series **orders** are more frequent than in the British and Italian version, and, on the other hand, **thanks** are completely absent. The majority of **orders** in the American show *Gracepoint* appears to be the equivalent of the **requests** found in its British version, *Broadchurch*. For example, a request such as “*Ellie. Welcome back. Can I have a quick word?*” becomes an order in American English: “*Ellie. My office.*” Another example is the request “*Can you give me a call straightaway?*” which becomes “*Call me now*”. In the British version, **thanks** are fewer, but they are still present, while in the American version **thanks** are completely cut off, probably due to the tendency to be more straightforward in that culture and, as a consequence, less polite than in British English.

5.2 *Speech acts in detail*

5.2.1 *Offers*

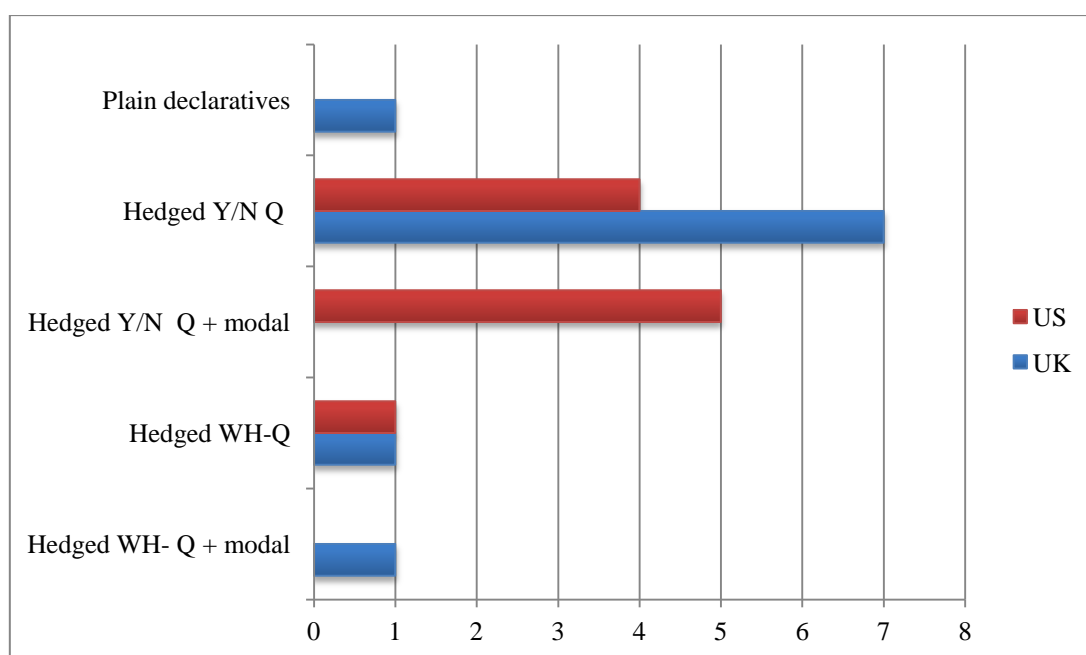
Rabinowitz (1993: 94) defines the speech act of **offering** as “a proposal to perform an action or to provide a service or good for someone when there is no obligation to do so”. In order to identify an offer, an possible candidate needs to have a receiver and an item to be offered (e.g. “*Hey, sweetheart, do you want some eggs?*”), or alternatively a service (e.g. “*Hi, Tony, what can we do for you?*”). Sometimes, instead of being mentioned explicitly, the goods and services that are offered can also be alluded to by mentioning the action that the hearer should perform to obtain a certain benefit. In this case the action of offering becomes closer to a suggestion, rather than a mere act of giving. As Hancher suggests, “to offer something to someone is both try to direct that person’s behaviour, and also to commit oneself to a corresponding course of behaviour” (Hancher 1979: 6 cited in Aijmer, 1996: 189). Indeed, the circumstances needed for an offer to be performed are, on one hand, the willingness of the speaker to perform the act and provide the service, and, on the other, the benefit for the hearer.

Offers can be distinguished from other types of speech acts also through some linguistic features, such as the rise of intonation in case of an interrogative, often introduced by the modal *can*, and the presence of verbs such as “want”, “like”, “need”,

“help” or “try” together with the personal pronoun “you”. Other features are formulaic expressions such as “Why don’t you?” and “Feel free to”. All these characteristics can also be found in other types of speech acts, that is why context is essential to identify offers as well.

Graph 5.4 below shows the main features that characterize the realizations of offers in the transcripts and how many times these are employed and in which version of the series. These supplementary features are: hedging, modal verbs and combinations of them. If offers are “plain”, no such feature occurs in the speech act.

Graph 5.4: Linguistic features of offers



According to the data collected, **offers** are completely absent from Broadchurch, while they are recurrent in both *Skins* and *Shameless*, where characters communicate in a more informal way. As regards their lexicogrammatical encoding, as seen in the following examples taken from *Skins*, a large part of them takes the form of yes/no questions, such as in the following example:

“Do you want to come and say hello, Chris?” (From *Skins* UK)

In the scene to which this extract belongs, Chris goes to his step mother who lives with his father and their newborn child. His step mother asks him the question above in a kind

way, but at it is clear that she is embarrassed about the fact that he might want to accept the offer and go inside the house and meet his step-brother.

Differently from the former, the following extract is an example of an offer performed by two acquaintances:

“Hey, do you want a hand?” (From Shameless UK)

In this case Tony, the local policeman, brings Fiona’s alcoholic father home and kindly offers her help to take her of him. “Hey” is a marker of informality, which they employ as they are of the same age and have known each other for a long time.

In the US version, differently from the UK one, offers are also realized as yes/no questions together with modals, as can be seen from the following extract:

“We were wondering if you and your friends would like a little something?” (From Skins US)

In the case of this example Tony is at Tabitha’s party and offers her some drugs. The speech act uttered to introduce the offer, “*we were wondering*”, and Tony’s intonation convey uncertainty and doubt about the offer itself.

In a small percentage of cases, in British English offers often take the form of WH-questions including modals:

“Hi, Tony. What can we do for you?” (From Skins UK)

It can be seen that in this case the modal verb “can” is used, while in American English they are often used without any modal verb, such as in the following example:

“Why don’t you come over and say hi to Sammy, Chris?” (From Skins US)

Like in the previous cases, these pragmatic differences are likely to be brought about by cultural differences.

5.2.2 Requests and Orders

According to Trosborg (1995: 187), “a request is an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker.” According to Safont-Jordà (1997: 145), the speech act of requesting consists in the head of the request and in its peripheral elements influencing the force of the speech act. It can be realised through imperatives, negatives, interrogatives and declaratives, as can be seen from the following examples:

- 1) Imperative: *Clean it!*
- 2) Negative: *Please, don't drop it!*
- 3) Interrogative: *Can I touch him?*
- 4) Declarative: *We ask the media respect the family's privacy.*

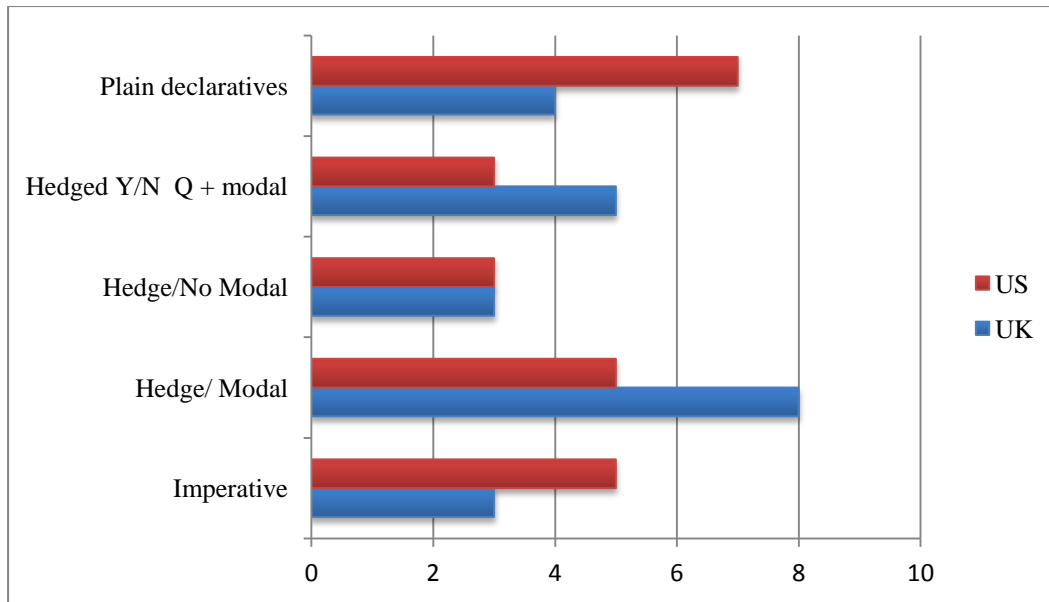
On some occasions, speakers employ direct requests such as the one in example 1) above by making the intention explicit. They usually use imperative clauses to realize impolite requests, or use modals to perform polite obligations. However, there are cases in which a speaker employs vague expressions to show his/her intentions *implicitly* and to check the hearer's availability. These are called “indirect requests”, a category that includes wishes and desires.

Request modifiers which are appended to the request do not change the head act itself, but rather function as a means to change the level of politeness, that is mitigate or aggravate the force of the request. Among the modifiers are hedges, which are employed either as intensifiers, that is they are used as signs of polite behaviour, or as softeners, that is to increase the threatening force of the request. The use of modifiers, according to Safont- Jordà (1997: 145), is affected by several factors. A large number of modifiers can be used when there is high social distance between the interlocutors or when the speech act performed is face-threatening. On the other hand, modifiers are in principle not necessary when the speaker has more power than the hearer or when the “weight” of the request is low.

Orders, on the other hand, display an act of request, the aim of which is to ask the hearer to perform an action s/he is not in a position to refuse to perform. They are generally expressed with imperatives or exclamations.

Graph 5.5 represents the percentages of use of the various features used in combination with requests in both the British and the American TV series under investigation.

Graph 5.5: Linguistic features of requests



As can be seen, in the UK series requests are frequently performed as plain declaratives with the addition of a combination of hedging and modality, which is likely due to the hierarchical relationship between the characters in the UK versions. These linguistic materials are the same modal verbs and hedging devices in both the UK and in the US versions. In the two examples below, the same utterance is performed in the UK and in the US series respectively:

“And, sir, do you mind not calling me Miller?” (From Broadchurch)

“I would prefer that you call me Miller (From Gracepoint)

This specific request is uttered by Detective Sergeant Miller and addressed to his superior Detective Inspector Hardy. Hardy keeps calling Sergeant Miller by surname to keep a distance between the two, while Miller would like to establish a bond with him, since they will have to conduct a difficult and long investigation together. These two versions of the same request present different features: in the British version, the request takes the form of a question introduced by the vocative “Sir” remarking the hierarchy between them. It is introduced by the hedging question “do you mind” which marks

politeness. In the American version, by contrast, the request is a declarative clause introduced by the modal “would”, which softens the directness of the request and makes it less polite.

When imperative clauses are deemed to be inadequate to perform requests, yes/no questions are employed in both versions of the TV shows and are usually introduced by modal verbs:

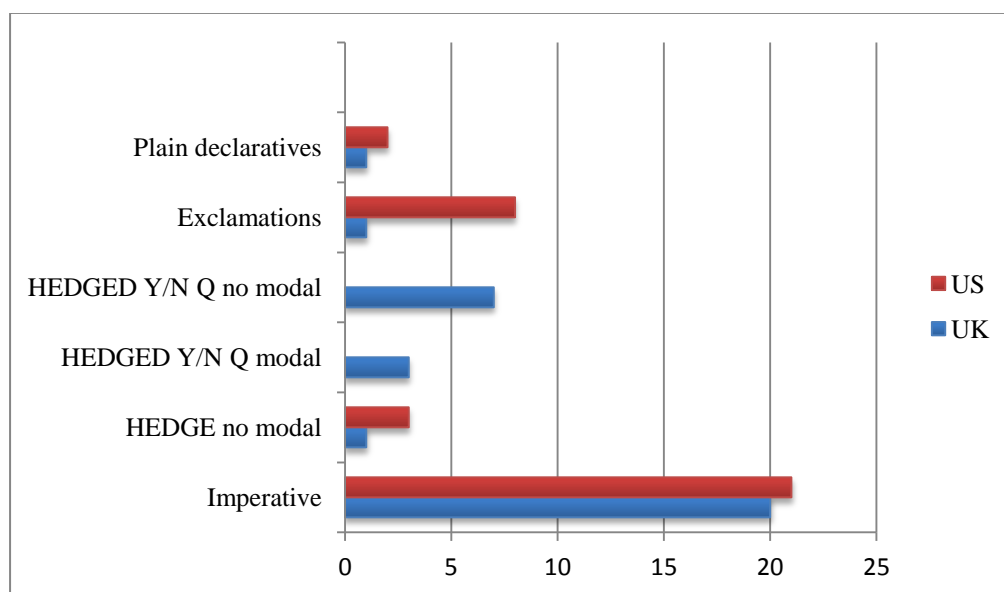
“Can't you go 'round and get Sid?” (From Skins UK)

“Mom, can I ring you back?” (From Skins UK)

“Can you go wake Stanley up?” (From Skins US)

Graph 5.6 shows the frequency of the main linguistic features of orders:

Graph 5.6: *linguistic features of orders*



It can be seen that orders are mainly characterised by the use of imperative clauses in both the UK and US varieties. The majority of orders in Skins and Shameless are uttered using the imperative mood, which is a marker of imposition and directedness:

“Take your shoes off!” (From Shameless UK)

In the part of the TV series from which this extract is taken, Lip is going to Karen's house to help her with her homework. Yet, before going in her mother asks him to take his shoes off. It is the first time that Karen's mother meets him, and therefore the use of an imperative clause might sound impolite, aggressive and possibly inappropriate.

Also in *Broadchurch* (the UK series) and *Gracepoint* (the US series), orders are always realized by imperative clauses, even though in some cases they contain hedges that soften the order and add a touch of politeness to them, such as in the following example:

"No, Beth, Beth, Beth, you can't be on the beach. Stop, please." (From *Gracepoint*)

The speaker in this extract is the Detective who orders Beth to stop running. In the film she is actually running to the beach in search of her son.

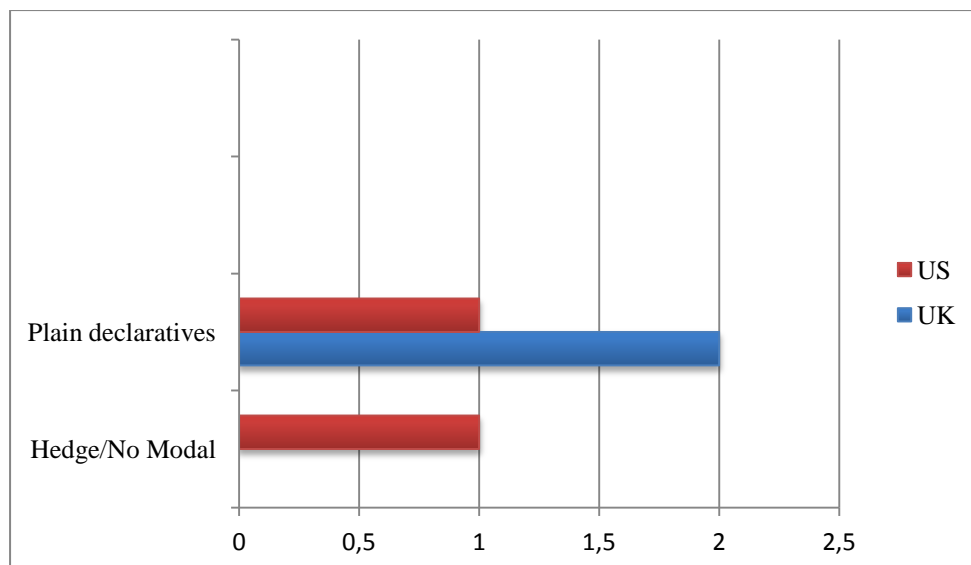
5.2.3 Thanks

In Cheng's opinion (2010: 262), the speech act of thanking can be realised in two ways: by stating a simple thanking such as "Cheers" and "Thanks" or by elaborating a basic form of thanking. This elaboration can be done by using intensifiers or by mentioning the reasons for the thanking, such as in the following example:

"Tony, man. You do not know what means to me, man." (From *Skins US*)

Thanking is clearly employed to express gratitude, but it can also perform minor functions such as showing relief, greeting, expressing politeness or refusing an offer (Coulmas, 1981: 74). Graph 5.7 presents data about the thanking expressions used in the UK and US versions:

Graph 5.7: Linguistic features in thanks



Expressions of gratitude are easily recognisable, and as the Graph shows they are always realized as plain declaratives, such as in the examples below:

“Tony, man, you do not know what means to me, man.” (From Skins UK)

“Thanks, Tony. I appreciate it.” (From Shameless UK)

“Ah, cheers, Tony. You don't know what...” (From Shameless UK)

Declaratives are sometimes accompanied by hedges, for example “listen”, used at the beginning of the utterance:

“Listen, thank you for trying to get my purse back and stuff.” (From Shameless US)

All these examples are taken from Skins and Shameless because in Broadchurch (the UK series) the act of thanking is completely absent.

5.2.4 Apologies

Differently from requests, apologies are used when the event has already taken place. By apologizing “the speaker recognizes the fact that a violation of a social norm has been committed and admits to the fact that s/he is at least partially involved in its cause” (Blum-

Kulka, 1982: 206). As a consequence, apologies involve a loss of the speaker’s face in favour of the hearer’s face.

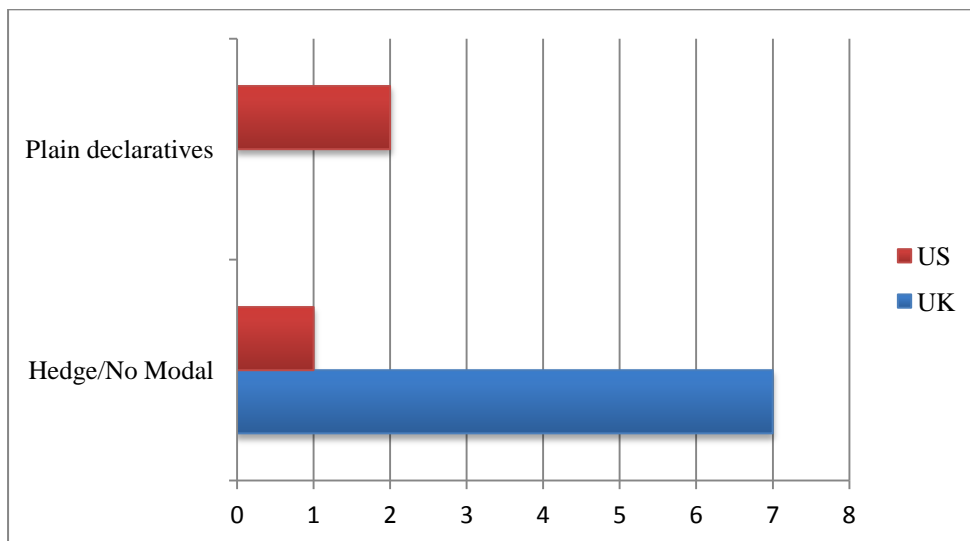
The speech act of apology can be portrayed in different ways. First of all, it can be performed through explicit formulations of apology such as “sorry” and “I apologise”. Alternatively, it can involve stating the cause of the offence, the responsibility of the speaker towards the offence, or the offer to repair the damage, such as in the following example:

“I was wrong to post that news. I’m sorry.” (From Gracepoint)

Apologies can also contain intensifying expressions (repetitions), expressing concern for the hearer or using combined strategies.

Graph 5.8 shows that apologies tend to present a given set of characteristics. They tend to be realized by declarative clauses and to be hedged, especially in the UK versions.

Graph 5.8: *linguistic features of apologies*



In *Skins* and *Shameless* apologies take the form of the former kind of apology, that is explicit apologies without any hedging. An example is provided by the following utterance:

“Sorry” or “Sorry I was just...” (From *Skins* UK)

This type of apology occurs in a variety of scenes in *Skins*, where the protagonists are teenagers. They very often express apologies in a very direct way, while in *Broadchurch* apologies are more articulated, such as in the following extract:

“I shouldn't have posted Danny's name. I apologize.” (From *Broadchurch*)

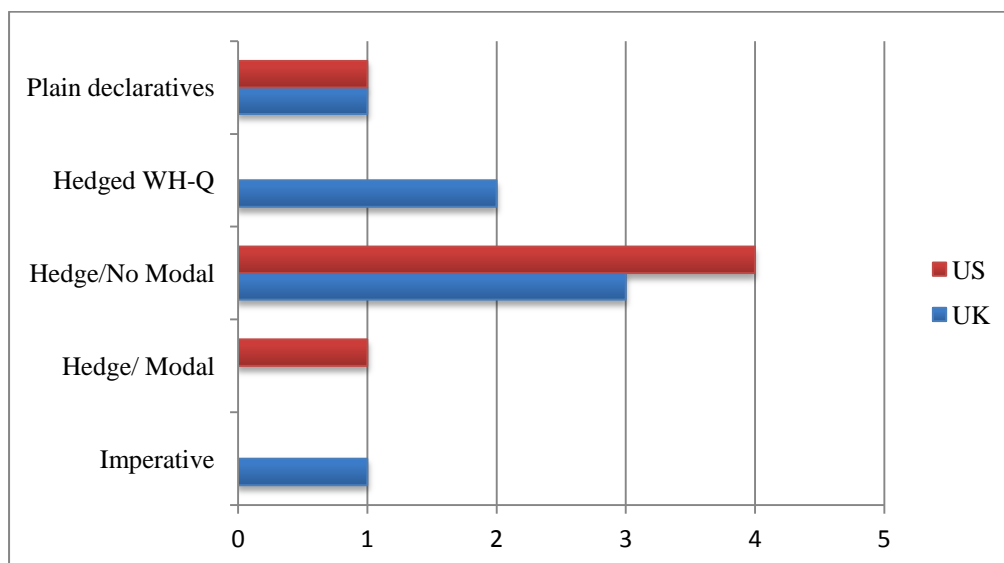
In this case the journalist of a local newspaper apologizes to Detective Hardy for having posted online the identity of the murdered child involved in the investigation. before information about the case is released by the police. Because of the social status of the hearer (the detective), the journalist does not use a short form for apologizing (e.g. “sorry”), but rather employs a long utterance explaining the cause of the offence. In the first utterance he also uses modality.

5.2.5 Suggestions

According to O’Keefe, Clancy and Adolphs (2011: 92), “suggestions can take a number of different forms and are often introduced with either a speech act verb or a set of prefabricated units (prefabs) that make their function easily identifiable.” Their function is clearly that of offering a benefit to the hearer. Searle (1969), categorises suggestions as “advisement”, and conceives them as a sub-category of “directives”. Tsui (1994) also distinguishes between suggestions that include the speaker, such as in the sentence “Let’s get a taxi”, and those that include the hearer as in “Why don’t you get the thing fixed?”. The difference between them lies in the “burden” imposed which is higher if addressed only to the hearer than to both the hearer and the speaker.

In both the UK and in the US series, suggestions are mainly realized as WH- questions and declaratives. In either case they are characterised by the use of hedging expressions, as shown by Graph 5.9:

Graph 5.9: linguistic features of suggestions



In the US version of the series, modals verbs are largely employed to hedge the suggestions in the films. The following is an example taken from *Skins*:

“Why don't we look for some baby photos of Chris?” (From *Skins* UK)

This example is taken from the scene explained in Section 5.2.1, in which Chris steps in his step mother's house together with his friend Jal. As a way to avoid a situation of embarrassing silence, his mother utters the above suggestion that they should have a look at an old photo album.

In a few cases also imperative clauses and modals are used, such as in the following examples:

“Pull yourself together.” (From *Skins* UK)

“You should go say hi to Cadie” (From *Skins* US)

In both cases, Tony is suggesting his friend Stanley to make up his mind and go to talk to the girl he is in love with instead of keeping for himself his feelings towards her.

5.3 Comparison with the Italian transcripts

The TV series under examination have been adapted and dubbed into Italian. The transcripts of the adaptations are based on the British version of the corresponding TV series, which means that they broadly contain the same speech acts of the UK version which have already been analyzed in the previous sections.

Offers, for instance, share the same characteristics. Indeed, they both employ modality and yes/no questions, such as in the examples below:

“Desideravo farti un regalo di benvenuto.” (From Skins)

“Vuoi una mano?” (From Shameless)

The same is the case for requests, which also share features with the original UK requests. As can be seen from the following extracts, modals and yes/no questions are the two strategies employed:

“Non puoi passare da Sid?” (From Skins)

“Vuole qualcosa?” (From Broadchurch)

In addition, in the British version hedges are performed by both modals and expressions of courtesy, such as “please” or “do you mind”, while in Italian hedging is often realized by the expression “per favore”.

Orders, on the other hand, are always performed by exclamations and imperative clauses, such as in the following examples:

“Levati le scarpe!” (From Shameless)

“Sta fermo!” (From Shameless)

“Portatela via.” (From Broadchurch)

Similarly, also thanks and apologies share the same features of the British version. To be precise, thanks take the form of plain declaratives while apologies are principally realized using “Scusa” and “mi dispiace”, that is the Italian equivalents of the hedging expression “sorry”. Here is one some example:

“Ho sbagliato a divulgare la notizia, mi dispiace.” (From Broadchurch)

In this scene, the journalist is asking for forgiveness to Detective Hardy, as he posted the identity of the murdered child too early (see above).

Another case in point is the following apology:

“Mi dispiace, scusa, hanno tanto insistito.” (From Skins)

In the scene this extract is taken from Sid is forced to enter Tony’s room, and he apologises for disturbing.

Finally, also in Italian suggestions are realized either as imperatives or as declarative clauses which contain modal verbs, such as in the following extracts:

“Piantala coi lacrimoni” (From Skins)

“Potrei cercare qualche foto di Chris” (From Skins)

The first example is likely to have been realized as an imperative clause because there is a close relationship between the interlocutors, i.e. Tony and Sid. By contrast, in the second example the social distance between the two characters, i.e. Chris and his step-mother whom he hardly knows, triggers the use of the modal verb as a way to hedge the utterance. .

Conclusion

Audiovisual translation is very popular in countries like Italy in which dubbing and subtitling have been common practice for many years. Besides professional dubbers and subtitlers, an increasing number of (especially young) amateurs do audiovisual translation for fun (e.g. “fansubbers”). Also, students of foreign languages and of translation are often introduced to this practice during their university career. One of the reasons for the popularity of dubbing is likely to be, on the one hand, the prestige that certain TV series have achieved in the last decades and, on the other, the new ways TV products are made available to the audience. In fact, television is being replaced at least partially by streaming media services such as Netflix and Hulu, video-sharing websites as YouTube, and also illegal online streaming. The audience has thus the possibility of choosing between watching the original, the dubbed or the subtitled version of a given series. Furthermore, if no version has been released in the target language, amateurs can themselves propose their own version.

As a matter of fact, audiovisual translation has developed in the last decades, in order to fulfil the needs of the audience, by changing the distribution of the different techniques in the different countries. In Italy, for instance, until two decades ago, dubbing was the only technique employed to distribute foreign TV products. Subsequently, in order to approach the hearing impaired audience too, subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing were introduced in television. More recently, cable TV programmes can be watched in the original language with subtitles. The Internet is a source for audiovisual translation too. Indeed, in the last ten years, fansubbing websites have become one of the major sources for subtitles for almost every kind of film product coming from America, Europe and Japan. It was indeed in one of these websites that I was able to find the transcripts for my dissertation. In order to expand my knowledge of this topic, I decided to experience both professional and amateur subtitling, by attending a one-week course in subtitling at the University of Salento in 2014 and also by joining one of the most followed fansubbing communities in Italy. These experiences helped me understand more clearly what the strengths and the limits are of this technique and, as a consequence, analyze the transcripts I took into consideration for my dissertation.

My dissertation has mainly analysed British English and American English film language. I considered four types of TV series that were aired in Great Britain and that

were remade for an American audience. To be precise, I investigated the transcripts of their subtitles, and focused on the language they contain and on the conversational routines. I also explored their Italian adaptations. The aim of my study was to see if there are differences between the British and the American scripts, by also taking into consideration the cultural and pragmatic aspects of this language. I have then attempted to draw comparisons between the British versions and their Italian adaptations following the same parameters. After reviewing previous work on the topic, I selected TV series and specific episodes that were suitable for my purposes, focusing my attention on cultural references, mainly colloquialisms, discourse markers, and taboo words, and on the realisation of a variety of speech acts. As regards the analysis of the cultural aspects in these TV series, the main hypothesis was that there are differences between British and American English concerning them. As expected, the two varieties proved to be characterised by different repertoires of vocatives, greetings, discourse markers and taboo language. Vocatives are largely employed in both varieties, especially at the beginning of utterances with the aim of arousing the hearer's attention. In terms of frequencies, the two main differences lie on the word *mate* in British English that can be considered the equivalent of the American *man*. The other main difference can be found in the frequency of the word *dude*, which is a very common form of address in America, while its British counterpart is *lad*. As for greetings, the study has shown that while in British English one frequent way to greet someone is *cheers*, in the American English transcripts it is always replaced by the word *hello*. Another difference could be noticed in the use between the use of British *hiya* and American *hey*. As regards discourse markers, my analysis has showed a major inclination of British speakers to employ the discourse marker *so* at the beginning of an utterance, while in American English *yeah* is preferred. Other markers used are *yes* and *ok*, which are mainly employed in British and American English respectively. Finally, as concerns taboo language, the words *fuck*, *God* and *Christ* are the most used in both varieties. Conversely, some differences have been found in the use of less frequently used words such as *jerk*, *idiot* and *cock*. This latter group of American taboo words often corresponds to *twat*, *shit* and *wanker* in the British versions.

While analysing taboo words and cultural references in particular, it emerged that there is a significant difference between the two varieties of English, due to different cultures and possibly also different ways of thinking and behaving. Indeed, if on the one hand, Americans have the tendency to be more direct and explicit, on the other, when it comes to taboo topics, they tend to be more prudish and reserved. This study showed that while

the British transcripts present a large variety of taboo language and references to topics such as sex and drug, in the American transcripts most of these words or scenes are deleted, which is likely to be due to censorship, which by the way could be a topic to further investigate.

The hypothesis according to which there are differences between the British and American TV series with regard to the realisation of speech acts has also been proven. As explained in section 2.4.3, although rich in similarities, American culture is mainly a Low Context Culture (LCC), while British culture shares more characteristics with what have been defined as High Context Cultures (HCC). The main difference between them is the relationship that speakers have with the concept of indirectness. Indeed, as proven by the analysis of a selection of speech acts (i.e. offers, requests, orders, apologies, thanks, suggestions), British people seem to favour indirectness rather than directness and vice versa. As can be noticed from the following extract, the same request is performed in a more direct way by the American speaker, while the British one prefers the use of a more structured utterance:

“Send me the link.” (From *Gracepoint*, US)

“Have you got a link you can send me?” (From *Broadchurch*, UK)

The examples above also display other typical characteristics arguably related to the distinction between LCC and HCC orientations. Indeed, the choice of a short and direct request is a sign of indifference towards the hearer’s “face” and the speaker’s wish to focus only on the explicit delivery of the message. That is why in the American versions of the TV series the uses of the present tense and of imperatives are favoured over the use of modal verbs and hedges, which are, by contrast, largely employed in British English with a view to keeping a reasonably high level of formality and involvement among interlocutors. This distinction has been supported by the speech acts of requesting and ordering, which in my data contain fewer hedges and more imperatives in American English, while in American English they include hedging expressions and modals. As for the part of my analysis related to the Italian language, previous studies have proven that when it comes to the realisation of utterances, Italian culture shares more similarities with American culture. The Italian translated dialogues are the result of an adaptation from the

British versions, however, and apart from a few cases, the Italian transcripts reflect the British dialogues. The adaption into Italian is also influenced by the restrictions imposed by dubbing, e.g. time, space, and lip synchronisation, and the findings have therefore to be taken with extreme caution.

Investigating the transcripts has allowed me to approach them both in terms of audiovisual products and language phenomena. Having said that, it must be said that although I chose TV series containing dialogues that are very close to conversational routines in real life situations, I cannot claim that the transcripts are the most accurate example of everyday language. Indeed, while analysing them, I noticed some limitations. For instance, the dialogues lack some peculiar aspects of everyday conversation, such as overlaps between interlocutors, interruptions, and, unlike real life dialogues, their structure is thorough and complete. For instance, the amount of discourse markers and taboo language in real life dialogues is likely to be higher than those found in my data, since they are two of the aspects that characterise spontaneity in everyday language. The speech acts encountered also appeared to be rather well structured and clearly expressed, which gave me the chance to find them easily and analyse them rather accurately.

Another limitation resides in the number of scripts I have taken into consideration. For my study, I selected only one or two episodes from each TV series, in the British and in the corresponding American version. A larger corpus would enable researchers to conduct a more in-depth analysis, for instance by taking into account more speech acts than those I analyzed, and also by considering more variables than those explored in this study, such as for example a larger amount of characters and situations.

To conclude, I can claim that analysing these transcripts from a different perspective other than translation has been both interesting and challenging for me. It gave me the opportunity to study the material in a more elaborated way, taking into consideration a large number of variables. I believe that the results of this study could be helpful for subtitlers and adaptors. In fact, the production of subtitles and of dubbing adaptations for a foreign audience is not only a matter of translation but also a matter of taking into consideration the cultural background behind the source text. Indeed, more attention should be given to the character (e.g. Who is speaking? What is his/her age? What is his/her cultural background?), the setting, and the context too, thus seeking for the correct balance between source and target language.

Bibliography

- Adolphs, S. (2008), *Corpus and Context - Investigating Pragmatic Functions in Spoken Discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Adolphs, S., Carter, R. (2003), *And she's like it's terrible, like*. In *International Journal of English Studies* vol. 3(1). Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, pp. 45-56.
- O'Keefe, A., Clancy, B., Adolphs, S., (2011), *Introducing Pragmatics in Use*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Aijmer, K. (1996), *Conversational Routines in English: Convention and Creativity*. London: Longman.
- Andersson, L.G, Hirsch, R. (1985a), *Swearing. Report No1-A Project on Swearing*. Department of linguistics, University of Goeteborg.
- Andersson, L.G, Hirsch, R. (1985b), *Swearing. Report No1-A Project on Swearing. Perspectives on swearing*. Department of Linguistics, University of Goeteborg.
- Austin, J. L. (1965), *How to do Things with Words*. New York: OUP.
- Azzaro, G. (2005), *Four - Letter films - Taboo Language in Movies*. Roma: Aracne Editrice.
- Baldry, A. (2006), *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*. London: Equinox.
- Bednarek, M., Piazza, R., Rossi, F. (2010), *The Language of Fictional Television - Drama and Identity*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Biber D., Conrad S. (2001), *Variation in English: Multi-Dimensional Studies*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Biber D., Conrad S., Leech G. (2002), *Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1993), *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Brown, P., Levinson S. (1978), *Politeness – Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Bruti, S. (2006), *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: The Translation of Implicit Compliments in Subtitles*. Pisa: University of Pisa. In *Journal of Translation* (6), pp. 185-197.
- Bonsignori, V., Bruti, S., Masi, S. (2011), *Formulae across Languages: English Greetings, Leave-Takings and Good Wishes in Dubbed Italian*. In Serban, A., Matamala, A., Lavaur, J.M., *Audiovisual Translation in Close-Up Practical and Theoretical Approaches*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 23-44.
- Bryson, B. (1994), *Made in America: an Informal History of the English Language in the United States*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Caffi, C. (2007), *Mitigation*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Carter, R. McCarthy, M. (2006), *Cambridge Grammar of English. A Comprehensive Guide to Spoken and Written Grammar and Usage*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Channell, J.M. (1994), *Vague Language*. Oxford: OUP.
- Cheng, S.W. (2010), *A Corpus-Based Approach to the Study of Speech Act of Thanking*. In *Concentric: Studies in Linguistics* Issue 36.2, Hsinchu: National Chiao Tung University, pp.257-274.
- Cohen, J. (1999), *Favorite Characters of Teenage Viewers of Israeli Serials*. In *Journal of Broadcasting Electronic Media*, Vol. 43, pp. 327-345.
- Coulmas, F. (1981), *Poison to your Soul. Thanks and Apologies Contrastively Viewed*. In Coulmas, F. *Conversational Routine. Explorations in Standardized Communication Situations and Prepatterned Speech*. Paris: Mouton Publisher, pp. 69-91.
- Curl, Traci S. (2006), *Offers of assistance: Constraints on syntactic design*. In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38 York: University of York, pp. 1257-1280.
- Deckert, M. (2013), *Meaning in Subtitling - Toward a Contrastive Cognitive Semantic Model*. Frankfurt am Mein: Peter Lang Edition.

- Diaz Cintas, J. (2007), *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press Group Ltd.
- Diaz Cintas, J., Remael A. (2007), *Audiovisual Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Diaz Cintas, J., Andermann, G. (2009), *Audiovisual Translation. Language Transfer on Screen*. New York: Palgrave Mcmillan
- Dodds, J. M. (1989), *Translation Tropes Compared and Contrasted*. In Dodds, J.M., *Aspects of English: Miscellaneous Papers for English Teachers and Specialists*, Udine: Campanotto Editore, pp. 11-18.
- Dressler, W, U. (1994), *Marked and Unmarked Text Strategies within Semiotically based Natural Textlinguistics*. In Hwang, S.J.J., Merrifield, R. (eds.), *Language in Context: Essays for Robert E. Longacre*, Arlington: The Summer Institute of Linguistics and University of Texas, pp. 5-17.
- Fava, E. (1995), *Speech Acts and Linguistic Research - Proceedings of the Workshop July* pp. 15- 17 Padova: Edizioni Nemo.
- Fox, K. (2004), *Watching the English. The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Fraser, B. (2010), *Pragmatic Competence: The Case of Hedging*. In Kaltenböck, G., Mihatsch, W., Schneider, S. *New Approaches to Hedging*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 15-34.
- Fraser, B. (1999), *What are Discourse Markers?.* In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, Boston: School of Education, University of Boston. pp. 931-952.
- Gambier, Y. (2005), *Screen Transadptation. Perception and Reception*. In *The Translator* 9(2), pp. 171-189.
- Geis, M. L. (1995), *Speech Acts and Conversational Interaction. Toward a theory of conversational competence*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Gordon, D., Lakoff, G. (1971), *Conversational Postulates*. In *Papers from the Seventh Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Chicago, pp.63-64.

- Greenall, A.K. (2011), *The Non-Translation of Swearing in Subtitling: Loss of Social Implicature?* In Serban, A., Matamala, A., Lavaur, J.M., *Audiovisual Translation in Close-Up Practical and Theoretical Approaches*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 45-60.
- Hall, E. T. (1982), *La Dimensione Nascosta*, Milano: Bompiani.
- Hall, E.T. (1983), *The Dance of Life*, New York: Doubleday.
- Halliday, M.A.K., Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*, Oxford: OUP.
- Hofstede, G. (1991), *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Ivarsson J., Carroll M. (1998), *The Code of Good Subtitling*. Simrishamn: TransEdit.
- Jucker, A.H., Smith S.W. (1998), *And People just you know like “wow”: Discourse Markers as Negotiating Strategies*. In A. H. Jucker & Z.Yael (Eds.), *Discourse Markers: Description and Theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 171-201.
- Katan, D. (1999), *Translating Cultures. An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- De Linde, Z., Kay, N., (2009), *The Semiotics of Subtitling*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Kissine, M. (2013), *From Utterances to Speech Acts*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Kitayama, S., Marcus, H.R. (1994), *Introduction to Cultural Psychology and Emotion Research*. In Kitayama S. *Emotion and Culture. Empirical Studies of Mutual Influences*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 1-19.
- Kluckhohn, C., Strodtbeck, F. (1961), *Variations in Value Orientations*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.
- Kramersch, C. (1993), *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, Oxford: OUP.
- Kruger A., Wallmach K., Munday J. (2011), *Corpus-Based Translation Studies - Research and Applications*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

- Lakoff, G. (1972), *Hedges: A study in meaning criteria and the logic of fuzzy concepts. Papers from the Eighth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, 183–228. In *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 1973, 2: 4, 458–508, and in D. Hockney et al. (eds.). *Contemporary research in philosophical logic and linguistic semantics*. Dordrecht: Fortis, pp. 221–271.
- Levine, D.R., Adelman, M.B. (1993), *Beyond Language: Cross-Cultural Communication*. NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Marks, M. (2003), *A Distributed Live Subtitling System*. BBC Research and Development White Paper.
- O'Connor, J, Seymour, J. (1993), *Introducing Neuro Linguistic Programming*, London: Aquarian Press.
- Orero, P. (2004), *Topics in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Papi M., Bertacca A., Bruti S. (2008), *Threads in the Complex Fabric of Language*. Pisa: Felici Editore.
- Pavesi, M. (2005), *La Traduzione Filmica - Aspetti del Parlato Doppiato dall'Inglese all'Italiano*. Roma: Carocci Editore.
- Pearson, R. (2007), *Anatomising Gilbert Grissom: the Structure and Function of the Televisual Character*. In *Michael-Allen (ed.) Reading CSI: Crime TV under the microscope*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 39-56.
- Pedersen, J. (2011), *Subtitling Norms for Television*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Perego, E., Taylor, C. (2012), *Tradurre l'audiovisivo*. Roma: Carocci Editore.
- Piazza, R., Bednarek, M., Rossi, F. 2011, *Telecinematic Discourse: Approaches to the Language of Films and Television Series*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- Prince, E., J. Frader and C. Bosk (1982), *On Hedging in Physician-Physician Discourse*. In R. J. Di Pietro (ed.), *Linguistics and the Professions. Proceedings of the Second Annual Delaware Symposium on Language Studies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, pp. 83–97.
- Quaglio, P. (2009), *Television Dialogue*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Rabinowitz, J. F. (1993), *A Descriptive Study of the Offer as a Speech Behavior in American English*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania dissertation.
- Redeker, G. (1990), *Discourse Markers in Attentional Clues at Discourse Transitions*. In Fischer, K. *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, pp. 3-26.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A. and Jefferson, G. (1974), *A Simplest Systematic for the Organization of Turn-taking for Conversation*. *Language* 50(4), pp. 696-735.
- Safont Jordà, M. (2008), *The speech act of requesting*. In Alcón-Soler (ed.), *Learning How to Request in an Instructed Language Learning Context*. Bern: Peter Lang. pp. 41-46.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987), *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Schneider, D. (1976), *Notes towards a Theory of Culture*, in *Meaning in Anthropology*, K. Basso and H. Selby (eds.), Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, pp. 203-206
- Searle, J. R. (1969), *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. London: CUP.
- Taylor, C. (2012), *From Pre-script to Post-script: Strategies in Screenplay Writing and Audio Description for the Blind*. In Dalziel, F., Gesuato, S., Musacchio, M.T. *A lifetime of English Studies*. Padova: Il Poligrafo, pp. 481-292.
- Taylor, C. (1996), *Tradurre il Cinema*. Trieste: Università degli Studi di Trieste.
- Taylor, C. (2008), *Predictability in Film Language: Corpus-assisted Research*. In Taylor Torsello C., Ackerley K., Castello E. *Corpora for University Language Teachers*. Berna: Peter Lang.
- Trompenaars, F. (1993), *Riding the Waves of Culture. Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. London: The Economist Books.

Trosborg, A. (1995), *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Tsui, A. (1994), *English Conversation*. Oxford: OUP.

Venuti, L. (1995). *Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities and Debate*. In Schäffner, C. and Kelly-Holmes, H. (eds.), *Cultural Functions of Translations*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 9-54.

Watzlawick, P. (1978), *The Language of Change*. New York: Norton.

Wierzbicka, A. (1986b), *Italian Reduplication: Cross-Cultural Pragmatics and Illocutionary Semantics*. In *Linguistics* 24, pp. 287-315

Zwicky, A.M. (1972), *On Casual Speech*. In *Papers from the Eighth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Chicago, pp. 607-615.

Summary

La traduzione audiovisiva è un ramo della traduzione che si occupa di rendere fruibile un prodotto multimediale ad un pubblico estero. I canali attraverso il quale opera sono quello uditivo e quello visivo; talvolta nel passaggio tra una lingua e l'altra avviene un cambiamento, per esempio da uditivo a visivo nel caso della sottotitolazione. I primi studi sulla traduzione audiovisiva iniziarono a diffondersi nel corso degli anni Settanta ma ebbero maggior riscontro agli inizi degli anni Novanta, quando i concetti di accessibilità e usabilità entrarono a far parte anche di questo campo, insieme alla distribuzione di nuovi metodi di fruizione multimediale: l'audio descrizione per ciechi e la sottotitolazione per sordi. Sono molte infatti le strategie traduttive che hanno preso piede negli ultimi due decenni; a parte i più comuni, sottotitolazione e doppiaggio, abbiamo anche il *voice-over*, la sottotitolazione simultanea, l'interpretazione simultanea, la narrazione, l'audio commento, l'audiodescrizione, la traduzione simultanea, il *respeaking*, le didascalie e i sottotitoli *pop up*. A livello Europeo, la sottotitolazione, il doppiaggio e, in parte il *voice-over*, sono le principali strategie traduttive utilizzate per diffondere prodotti televisivi e cinematografici. Le ragioni di una scelta rispetto a un'altra possono essere per esempio di carattere storico, come lo è stato per l'Italia che adottò il doppiaggio in seguito alle direttive del regime fascista, di carattere economico, essendo la sottotitolazione e il *voice-over* più economici del doppiaggio, o sociali, come la scarsa percentuale di alfabetizzazione che non permetteva alla maggior parte del pubblico di poter seguire i sottotitoli sullo schermo. Altre ragioni possono risiedere nel tipo di pubblico, come, ad esempio, la scelta da parte di Paesi che normalmente si avvalgono di sottotitoli, di adottare invece il doppiaggio per un pubblico giovane; oppure possono risiedere nel concetto di lingua che un Paese possiede: talvolta l'uso del doppiaggio tende a snaturare la lingua di partenza per far prevalere la lingua di arrivo.

Per ciò che concerne la sottotitolazione, essa si suddivide in due tipologie: la sottotitolazione per udenti e la sottotitolazione per non udenti (o sordi). Sebbene queste due soluzioni condividano diverse caratteristiche, tra le quali il fatto che debbano essere sincronizzati all'audio, che debbano rispettare limiti di lunghezza e tempo, che debbano rispettare il ritmo delle battute e che debbano rispettare il testo originale, i sottotitoli per non udenti sono dotati di ulteriori caratteristiche fondamentali per una maggiore comprensione da parte dell'utente. Infatti, va tenuto in considerazione il fatto che non

sempre lo spettatore non udente ha la possibilità di osservare il labiale o percepire l'esatta intonazione, pertanto vengono utilizzati diversi colori in caso siano presenti più di un interlocutore, talvolta introdotti dal nome proprio, e, una punteggiatura coerente al tipo di intonazione presente. Inoltre il tipo di traduzione, soprattutto se diretta ad un pubblico giovane, viene semplificata rispetto a quella per un pubblico udente, in quanto talvolta un non udente potrebbe riscontrare difficoltà di comprensione. Esempi meno diffusi di sottotitolazione sono i sopratitoli, gli intertitoli e i *fansubs*, sottotitoli amatoriali forniti da community online.

Il doppiaggio, d'altro canto, trae le sue origini negli anni Venti, dalla sostituzione dei film muti con i film *parlati* sebbene nel corso dei decenni abbia dovuto subire diversi mutamenti prima di raggiungere lo status attuale. Infatti inizialmente il doppiaggio consisteva nel rimpiazzare solamente le didascalie dei film muti con spiegazioni da parte di persone reali, oppure il far recitare agli stessi attori lo stesso copione ma in lingue diverse. Per quanto riguarda l'Italia, in particolare, a causa del "purismo" linguistico che il regime fascista imponeva e la scarsa alfabetizzazione, il doppiaggio diventò ben presto e per molti decenni avvenire, l'unica strategia di traduzione audiovisiva adottata dal Paese. Oggi si differenzia molto da passato in quanto si presta molta meno attenzione alla dizione e ai colloquialismi, anche se d'altro canto, il livello della qualità si è abbassato a causa dei costi elevati che questo processo comporta.

L'oggetto preso in esame nella mia tesi è il linguaggio filmico. Nel campo della traduzione audiovisiva, l'obiettivo è quello di ottenere in questo tipo di linguaggio un determinato livello di spontaneità impiegando caratteristiche tipiche del linguaggio informale; d'altro canto il tentativo risulta vano nel momento in cui l'adattatore o il sottotitolatore devono confrontarsi con restrizioni di carattere tecnico come i tempi, il cambio scena e la lunghezza del testo.

Il linguaggio colloquiale necessita di un determinato contesto e ha caratteristiche ben precise tra le quali la presenza di riferimenti culturali, espressioni culturali, marcatori del discorso (*discourse markers*) e *hedges*, conosciuti in italiano con il termine "mitigatori". Questi elementi, che sono stati presi in esame uno ad uno nella mia ricerca, sono caratteristiche tipiche del linguaggio informale in quanto indicano un coinvolgimento dell'interlocutore e la presenza di un contesto condiviso da entrambi. In dettaglio, I marcatori del discorso sono elementi linguistici la cui funzione cambia a seconda della posizione e del contesto: possono servire da connettori, per cambiare argomento, per prendere tempo o assumere il controllo della conversazione, per accertarsi che

l'interlocutore abbia compreso il messaggio o per verificare una certa informazione. I marcatori presi in esame nella mia tesi sono: *okay right, yes, yeah, so, well, okay, you know, e mean*. Gli *hedges* sono piccole parti del discorso (avverbi, aggettivi, ma anche frasi in alcuni casi) che hanno la funzione di mitigare la conversazione tra due interlocutori o di invito a partecipare alla conversazione stessa; alcuni esempi in inglese sono *just, please, sort of, really, e like*.

Per quanto riguarda il linguaggio filmico, le caratteristiche principali che si collegano al linguaggio verbale sono la prevedibilità (*predictability*) e il turpiloquio (*taboo language*). Per quanto riguarda la prevedibilità, essa è parte integrante del linguaggio filmico in quanto, anche in situazioni informali come telefonate o dialoghi tra conoscenti, essa prevede che vi siano degli schermi ben precisi al suo interno che debbano essere mantenuti anche durante il processo di traduzione audiovisiva. Le soluzioni traduttive in questi casi risultano essere tre: la “foreignization”, la localizzazione e la standardizzazione. Il turpiloquio anch'esso è una caratteristica comune sia al linguaggio verbale sia a quello filmico. Esso viene ritenuto un fenomeno sociale e psicologico in quanto contribuisce a definire il contesto e la personalità dell'interlocutore. Nell'ambito della traduzione visiva il turpiloquio è soggetto a restrizioni che dipendono da diversi fattori quali il tipo di pubblico a cui è rivolto, il formato di distribuzione del prodotto stesso e il livello di censura del Paese in cui viene distribuito.

La seconda parte della mia analisi si concentra invece sulla pragmatica, in particolar modo sull'analisi di alcuni atti linguistici (*speech acts*), di cui una parte di essi presenti nei miei dati. L'atto linguistico è stato soggetto di diversi studi nell'arco degli ultimi decenni; in particolar modo, Austin, prima, e Searle, in seguito, si sono occupati di delinearne le principali caratteristiche. L'atto linguistico infatti si compone di una locuzione, che rappresenta l'azione stessa di enunciare l'atto, di una perlocuzione, ovvero le conseguenze che l'atto ha sull'interlocutore, e di una illocuzione, ossia l'obiettivo dell'enunciato. In proposito, Searle ha suddiviso gli atti linguistici in diverse classi a seconda della tipologia di atto illocutivo: atti rappresentativi, atti direttivi, atti commissivi, atti espressivi e atti dichiarativi. Assieme al concetto di atto linguistico, nel 1978 Brown e Levinson sviluppano il modello di *Politeness Theory* (teoria della cortesia) che prevede una serie di norme da mettere in atto durante un'interazione con lo scopo di mantenere la coesione sociale tra gli interlocutori e la salvaguardia della “faccia”(in inglese, *face*). Vengono introdotti infatti i concetti di “positive face”, ossia il desiderio da parte del soggetto di sentirsi apprezzato e accettato, e “negative face”, ovvero la volontà,

invece, di mantenere un distacco, salvaguardando la propria libertà di azione ed evitando alcun tipo di imposizione. Collegati a queste due nozioni, infine, vi sono i concetti di “positive politeness” e “negative politeness” che consistono in una serie di strategie impiegate dagli interlocutori per salvaguardare rispettivamente la propria e la altrui “positive” e “negative face”.

Essendo incluse nella mia analisi tre culture diverse tra loro come quella inglese, americana e italiana, un ultimo aspetto impiegato nella mia analisi, riguarda le caratteristiche culturali del linguaggio, in particolare, faccio una distinzione tra culture ad alto e a basso contesto (in inglese, *High Context Culture* e *Low Context Culture*). Sebbene essa non sia netta, i principali studiosi del campo, David Katan in particolare, hanno messo in evidenza una serie di caratteristiche appartenenti a una e all'altra categoria. Le culture considerate ad alto contesto, tra cui quella britannica, tendono a essere meno diretti, preferendo una comunicazione più implicita in cui si valorizza molto la propria privacy e quella dell'interlocutore. Il linguaggio quindi è caratterizzato da un ampio uso del condizionale, di marcatori del discorso e di “mitigatori”. D'altro canto, culture ritenute a basso contesto, come quella americana, possiedono un tipo di comunicazione più diretta, in cui il messaggio è esplicitato e in cui si intraprende un contatto interpersonale con l'interlocutore; il linguaggio dunque preferisce l'uso dell'indicativo e del tempo verbale. Per quanto riguarda la cultura italiana, essa comprende caratteristiche comuni a entrambe le tipologie di orientamento.

L'analisi svolta nella mia tesi si suddivide in due parti. La prima tratta gli aspetti culturali che si ritrovano nel linguaggio filmico inglese, americano e, in parte, italiano e i risultati che se ne ricavano se messi a confronto tra di loro e con il linguaggio verbale informale. In base alle serie televisive che ho analizzato, *Skins*, *Shameless*, *The Thick of It* e *Broadchurch*, e i corrispettivi remake americani, ho potuto appurare alcune differenze di carattere linguistico e culturale. Ad esempio, per quanto riguarda i riferimenti culturali, che sono il primo punto della mia analisi, si è notato come, nella trasposizione dei dialoghi dalla versione inglese a quella americana, vi sia stata una cura nel modificare aspetti relativi a fattori sociali (come ad esempio i cognomi di alcuni personaggi), e culturali come riferimenti alla musica, al cinema o alla letteratura in modo che risultassero più comprensibili al pubblico di arrivo. Curioso il fatto che alcune scene della versione inglese siano state modificate apportandovi un discreto livello di censura. Per quanto riguarda le espressioni colloquiali, mi sono soffermata particolarmente sull'uso dei vocativi, come ad esempio *mate* (inglese britannico) e *man* (inglese americano), e sui

saluti, come ad esempio *hello, cheers, what's up?*, sottolineando come la trasposizione da una all'altra variante della stessa lingua abbia creato un certo schema predefinito. Anche nel turpiloquio, altro oggetto di verifica, ho potuto osservare il comportamento di una e dell'altra lingua, notando come l'influenza del pubblico americano, più pudico rispetto a quello inglese, abbia portato gli adattatori a dover diminuire notevolmente l'uso di parole considerate tabù e di riferimenti a tematiche "scomode" come il sesso o la religione. L'ultimo punto relativo alla prima parte della mia ricerca riguarda i marcatori del discorso. In questo caso, in entrambe le varianti viene utilizzato un alto numero di marcatori, sebbene abbia riscontrato delle differenze nella scelta di uno rispetto a un altro. Ad esempio, *so, you know e yes* vengono molto utilizzati nell'inglese britannico mentre *well, I mean e yeah* sono più frequenti in inglese americano.

La seconda parte della mia analisi invece è di natura pragmatica. Ho infatti, utilizzando tre delle quattro serie tv scelte per la parte precedente, selezionato sei tipi di atti linguistici diversi, ovvero offrire, richiedere, ordinare, scusarsi, ringraziare e suggerire, e li ho analizzati singolarmente e poi confrontati usando come metodo di giudizio delle variabili: la tipologia di frase (esclamativa, interrogativa, dichiarativa), l'uso dei modali e dell'imperativo, il tipo di domanda (in caso di domanda) e la presenza o meno di *hedges*. Effettuando questo studio incrociato ho potuto confermare come vi siano delle differenze culturali tra le due varianti nel rapporto con l'interlocutore. Infatti evidenziando alcune differenze in particolare, come per esempio il diverso modo di richiedere e ordinare, si evince come la cultura inglese preferisca un approccio più indiretto, al contrario di quella americana che ha confermato prediligere un rapporto più diretto con l'interlocutore. In entrambe le parti della mia analisi ho anche sottoposto il doppiaggio italiano della versione inglese dei telefilm presi in causa, evidenziando come il concetto di prevedibilità sia molto presente. Infatti, se da un lato ho potuto in parte trarre conclusioni sugli aspetti culturali e linguistici anche della cultura italiana, dall'altro la mia analisi è risultata molto influenzata dalla schematicità che il doppiaggio ha imposto nei dialoghi.