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*The Challenge of Translating Humour and
Cultural References in Audiovisual
Translation: Strategies in the Film
Back to the Future*

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*Once you overcome the one-inch tall barrier
of subtitles, you will be introduced to so
many more amazing films*

Bong Joon Ho, South Korean director,
Golden Globe 2020

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Introduction

The area of translation studies, which includes the theory and application of translation and interpreting, has undergone transformation over the years thanks to new types of social and cultural interconnections. Culture plays a fundamental role in this field, being closely connected to language. Both language and culture are two elements in continuous evolution, which therefore require constant updates and in-depth studies. Over the past fifty years, a new specific area of translation studies has emerged, an area that has attracted the interest of various scholars, who have recognized its potential. With the increase in multimedia texts and mass communication, audiovisual texts have seen a significant increase since the 1990s, with a consequent growth in interest.

Audiovisual translation refers to the language transfer from a source to a target language contained in products such as television programs, films, websites and musicals. This type of translation occupies a special place in translation studies. The purpose of this dissertation is to present an overview of this area, with particular attention to some of its features. The analysis will take place both from a theoretical and a practical point of view. In the first section, an overview of audiovisual translation will be presented, with particular attention to localization and domestication techniques. Particular importance has been given to the two most widely used methods of audiovisual translation, dubbing and subtitling. Various aspects of these two modalities are analysed specifically, with attention to some characteristics and constraints that distinguish them: as regards subtitling, the nature of subtitles as a constraint or a benefit is subject of discussion, together with the problem of reduction and the levelling effect. As for dubbing, the principal focus is on the issue of synchronization and the analysis of the typical language of films, defined by scholars as *filmese*, which is not the same as everyday language.

In the second chapter, the analysis focuses on one of the most complicated aspects to face in audiovisual translation, namely humour. In the dissertation, humour is one of the two main elements that are analysed within audiovisual translation. In addition to various categories proposed by scholars, the chapter compares the translation of humour in dubbing and subtitling modes. In this section, some translation techniques are analysed with a focus on the possibility of bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps, switching from one language to another.

Linked to the previous chapter, the third one deals specifically with the translation of cultural references in audiovisual translation. The humorous elements are in fact often connected to the culture of the source language, and the translation of cultural references deserved a separate chapter, given the numerous studies in this area conducted by scholars. Here, the aim was that of understanding whether it is possible to translate linguistic references while remaining faithful to the original product. If this is not possible, the question is how far one has to deviate from the original language to convey the same meaning. First, a general introduction of the complicated meaning of culture is presented, with the well-known Iceberg Theory. This theory is analysed to show the reader to what extent the meaning of culture is made up of countless constantly changing factors. Subsequently, attention is focused on strategies for translating the so-called ECRs (Extralinguistic Culture-bound References). In fact, some translation methods have been developed, among which the translator can choose to best translate the culture-bound reference. The choice of this strategy is essential in order to present a successful final product, but it is also difficult because with each strategy it is possible to obtain a different result. What I wish to underline in the dissertation is also the importance of the role of the translator in audiovisual translation. Beyond the translation software or the multiple tools available to undertake a good translation, the translator's choices are essential for the success of the final product. The choices made by a single translator or by a team influence the attitude that the target audience will have towards the audiovisual product.

The last chapter of the dissertation focuses on a more practical approach to this type of translation. In fact, a specific audiovisual product is taken into consideration to analyse its translation. The film *Back to the Future* was chosen because of the presence of numerous humorous elements and cultural references, which led translators to make interesting translation choices. In the chapter, several cases are presented, with the corresponding dubbed version in Italian and with the analysis of the strategy used by the translators. The various translation examples are classified according to the type of humorous and cultural elements, such as wordplay, idiomatic expressions, or domestication strategies. In the film, it is also possible to notice the presence of some censorship of bad language: this phenomenon is analysed since it represents an interesting translation choice that has led to a general change of tone of the film. Finally, the conclusion presents a personal reflection on the evolution of audiovisual translation, to

underline the differences that might occur today if facing the same translation. What I would like to analyse in my dissertation is whether the numerous translation strategies used to translate cultural references and humour were successful or not. In particular, I would like to stress which interesting translation choices have been made by translators and especially, which strategies are the most widely used to try conveying the same meaning from the source language to the target one in a cultural or humorous context, notoriously difficult to translate.

1. AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

The first chapter of my dissertation presents a general view of the role of audiovisual modalities and how they are linked to translation today. In this chapter I will briefly present the main approaches to audiovisual translation, with a focus on subtitling and dubbing, which are the widely used.

Over the last ten years, the growing globalization has increased the popularity of video streaming and video sharing websites, making audiovisual translation (AVT) more and more important (Pavesi 2005). The global market has made audiovisual products very diversified and facilitated the birth of centres of audiovisual world in cities such as London and Los Angeles (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 37). In the last twenty years, this kind of translation became necessary in films and television, quickly becoming part of our everyday lives. Today, the practice of audiovisual translation has become a wide field that involves many elements, characterized by constraints and by different opinions of scholars who wanted to analyse more this area (Ogea 2017). The term “audiovisual translation” (AVT) is often mistaken for the term “film translation” (Chaume 2004). The latter refers in particular to the sphere of influence of cinema and movies, while the former refers to any communication media, as radio, websites or videogames. AVT language is a specialized genre; it can be found in so many situations that people have become used to be in touch with a high level of quality and competence.

Audiovisual translation can be defined as the translation of an audiovisual text from a source language into a target language (Ranzato & Zanotti 2018), and it is argued that that this kind of translation has a higher level of difficulty compared to a normal written text (Chaume 2012). When you see a film, you do not only read words or listen to a dialogue, but you are experiencing many codes: you are listening to what actors are saying, but you are also watching their gestures, their expressions; you hear background noises and so on. Each semiotic modality contributes to the AVT, and represents a fundamental meaning for the final comprehension, so the person who receives the message can fully understand it only if he or she perceives all the signals at the same time.

As mentioned above, AVT involves of audio-verbal elements (dialogues and words), audio non-verbal sounds (the sounds in background), together with all the visual signs. Therefore, the verbal element in AVT is not simply verbal, it works together with

all the elements so as to convey the meaning. It is also important to remember that dialogues in films are not purely oral. As Bogucki states (2013) The main difference between oral and written communication is that the former is usually spontaneous and improvised, while a written text can be modified and rearranged. This distinction is important to understand that dialogues in films are not instinctive and are very different from reality (Bogucki 2013); they are prepared and deprived of the repetitions and the superficial elements that characterize everyday language; they are often dramatic and “fake” in order to respect time constraints and to entertain the spectators. In other words this kind of language is independent, it is a world on his own, to the point that the term “filmese” is now used in Italian (Perego & Taylor 2012), to refer to the phenomenon where the language on the screen is very different from the real life language (Taylor 2004).

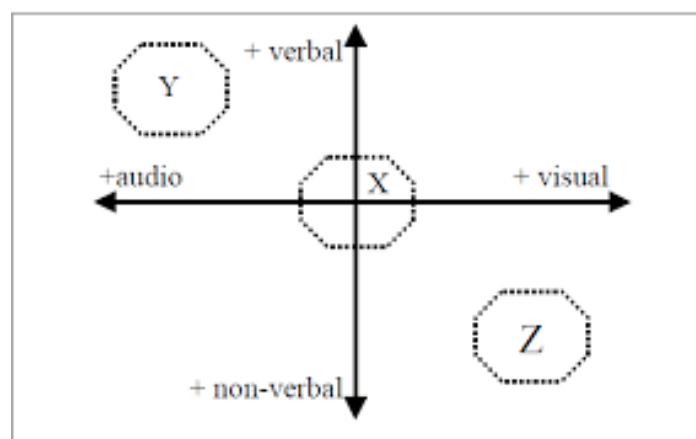


Figure 1. Zabalbeascoa’s four components of the audiovisual text (2008:29)

This diagram by Zabalbeascoa (2008) shows a Cartesian scheme to place different types of audiovisual texts, with:

A cline that indicates the presence (amount and importance) of verbal communication in proportion to other semiotic forms of expressions; another cline for measuring the relative importance of sound in the audio channel weighed against visual signs; (Zabalbeascoa 2008: 21-38)

The closer the AV text is situated to the centre of the scheme, the greater the balance will be between visual and verbal signs; when you move away from the centre,

there will be a greater influence of some elements. This permits the translator to classify the type of AVT translation, and it can also be useful to identify new future tendencies in the AVT world. Chiaro (2009: 143) tried to represent in greater detail the polysemiotic nature of audiovisual products, which are composed of multiple elements that interact to produce a distinct result. In the same scene, we have visual non-verbal elements such as costumes, scenes and actors' expressions, and verbal ones such as street signs, but also acoustic non-verbal elements such as noises and music, and also verbal texts such as dialogues and songs.

| | VISUAL | ACOUSTIC |
|-------------------|---|---|
| NON-VERBAL | SCENERY, LIGHTING, COSTUMES, PROPS, etc. ALSO: GESTURE, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS; BODY MOVEMENT etc. | MUSIC, BACKGROUND NOISE, SOUND EFFECTS, etc. ALSO: LAUGHTER; CRYING; HUMMING; BODY SOUNDS (breathing; coughing etc.) |
| VERBAL | STREET SIGNS, SHOP SIGNS; WRITTEN REALIA (newspapers; letters; headlines; notes etc.) | DIALOGUES; SONG-LYRICS; POEMS etc. |

Table 1. Chiaro's polysemiotic nature of audiovisual products (2009: 143)

Because of the presence of many elements which are not strictly related to translation, it has been questioned whether AVT is truly a form of translation, since the presence of other elements that influence the contribution of the translator could lead to some doubts (Remael 2007: 52). Today, this kind of consideration is old and obsolete: like many other things, translation evolves and even if audiovisual translation is a relatively new field, it does not mean that it cannot have many facets. In the 21st century, translation has reached new fields, and globalization has influenced this area of study. The translator who works in this field has to multitask, paying attention to many signals that influence the effect of the final translation. The audiovisual translator has to deal with several factors and has to take into consideration all these elements to convey the right message. However, we often hear people complaining about some choices of dubbing or

the subtitling of a film. In the last few years, people have showed an interest in watching films and television in the original language and for this reason, with an audience that is more and more demanding, “mistakes” and choices of translation are often criticised (Chaume 2013).

Today, the sector of audiovisual translators is part of large well-organized networks. Some trace it back to the translation of intertitles in silent movies, but in the 1920s with the growth of the cinema industry, the role of the translator became more important in this area. It could be argued that the process of globalization started before the great acceleration in the economy after the Second World War, thanks to companies such as Paramount and Columbia. It also in this period that dubbing and subtitling became the “favourite” modality of translation and each country quickly chose the best mode, according to diverse factors. In the 1950s, the advent of television made possible to enjoy television programmes and films at home, so the need to be able to understand and enjoy movies contributed to the creation of screen translation. Since the main film companies were located in the US, the majority of the imported movies in Europe had to be translated, so the audiovisual translator started to gain importance, although this field remained unknown (de Linde 1999). In the 1990s, the development of the internet and the advent of the digitalization era (when the first DVDs appeared) helped to spread the cinema industry together with AVT theory (Levine 2011). The first to analyse the concept of “constrained translation” were Mayoral, Kelly and Gallardo, three scholars from the Escuela Universitaria de Traductores e Intérpretes in Granada. In particular, they focused on the theory, analysing the non-linguistic aspects of it, and in 1986 they already affirmed that

We must emphasize that both in the source and target culture messages, music, noise and image (which may also include text) unmistakably reveal themselves as belonging to the source culture. That is to say, the translator can only translate the text or speech (sometimes not even completely) while all the other media if the message remain untouched. This fact is a source of noise because of the bicultural nature of the message. (Mayoral, Kelly, Gallardo 1988)

These scholars also tried to classify the various constraints that different types of audiovisual modes imposed, in any case, we can notice how recent the first researches are, these scholars started to analyse the theory of audiovisual translation only in 1986,

which is less than 35 years ago. The interest in this subject grew exponentially, and it is still growing and evolving truly fast. Despite this, the role of the audiovisual translator is nowadays still controversial. As regards “classic” translators, in 1979 the Berne International Convention for the protection of literary and artistic works decided that translators can be considered authors, which meant they could make a profit from the author’s income. 177 countries joined the Convention, but this notion of translator as author is still questioned in many of them (Basalamah 2014). The personal and artistic aspects provided by a translator in his/her work is often not taken into consideration, and in AVT this condition is more adverse. In some countries, like Spain, translators of the dubbed version are considered authors, while translators who create subtitles are not, so they cannot make any profit from it (Zabalbeascoa 1997).

Since the field of audiovisual translation is taking giant steps, quality has become a crucial factor (Serban, Matamala, Lavaur 2011). Thanks to the studies conducted in this field by scholars such as Diaz Cintas and Chiaro, we can observe that the quality changes according to the country and to the modality. Quality also varies according to the format, television, cinema or DVD: television-subtitling quality is known to be quite mediocre (Gottlieb 2001), especially because the big television companies are always trying to cut costs, and linguistic experts are no longer involved. DVD subtitling is unacceptable, since often translations for multilingual versions of American movies are carried-out in non-English speaking countries, for example India, and often there is no guarantee of quality (Serban, Matamala, Lavaur 2011). Dubbing sometimes lacks of quality, especially on television, where the standard of translation is also often poor and sometimes realised by non-professional translators.

Sometimes AVT quality depends on the country, according to scholars such as Bogucki (2013), the quality in Eastern Europe is improving, while AVT in Western Europe remains stagnant, although it is quite high (Perego & Taylor 2011). According to a study of subtitling of 2007 conducted by Media Consulting Group, there are three elements that should be taken into consideration and that contribute to a good quality translation. The first one is the number of hours to translate: especially in television, the number of channels is increasing and providing a good translation in any AVT mode is difficult. The second element is tariffs, which in this period of new channels are dropping or not moving at all. This is due to the high competition caused by many new translators

from new and non-official areas, who make this field competitive. The last aspect is deadlines: it has been noticed that translators have to work with very strict deadlines, and this naturally influences the quality of their work (Media Consulting Group 2007).

Moreover, Torregrosa (1996) provides three areas that a translator has to take into consideration when translating a film, to which Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007) added two more: the first one includes words and phrases that can have multiple meanings in the target language depending on the cultural background, intonation and situation. Then Torregrosa identifies the area of gender and number of some nouns, pronouns and adjectives that are not marked in English, because of the gender choice and the number of people addressed. The latter is the degree of familiarity due to formal or informal context which involves a different grade of politeness. The two areas identified by Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 31) contain the use of “this/these” “here/there” and other elements that sometimes do not need to be translated thanks to the presence of a referent on the screen, and the use of exclamations as “Christ” or “oh, my” that gain a sense only in given context.

1.1 LOCALISATION, DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION

To understand the reasons for the growing interest in AVT, it is important to analyse the concepts of localisation and domestication. The process of localisation opposes widespread globalisation, and it is used to adapt a particular content (not only a film, but also videogames or websites), to a specific area, a country or a region. Thanks to localisation, audiovisual translation has become fundamental, but it is essential not to confuse translation with localisation: the latter is more complex and it is useful to meet cultural expectations, but also to help people understand some features of the source language and culture (Schäler 2013: 211). Sometimes it is very difficult to localise, and in this case, translators have to work hard to provide a good solution finding methods to translate cultural references closely related to the source country. While translating films, the process of localisation was more used in the past (for example in the 1970s and 1980s), when globalization had not reached its maximum power. It is possible to find several examples of 1980s films, which underwent to the process of localisation, for example with the translation of names. Proper names are used in books and films to characterise

protagonists (Manini 2014), for this reason there was the tendency of translating the names if they were considered particularly meaningful or complex for the audience. Consequently, some movies in the 1970s and 1980s present an alteration of some proper names, like for example the first three movies of the *Star Wars Saga*. Equivalence is another term directly linked to localisation. Toury (1985: 36) considers translational equivalence as a concept that identifies the degree of acceptability in the home system of the target translation, which is a secondary text that exists in an equivalent relation to a source one. It is usually adopted to define the quality of a translation, but it is necessary to analyse what kind of role equivalence has in audiovisual translation.

The term equivalence has given rise to debate, and in a relatively new field such as AVT, several questions have to be considered. Generally, thanks to equivalence, a translation replicates the same situation as the original one, but it is hard to understand what “replicating” means in the audiovisual field (Chaume 2018). Cultural elements are deeply rooted in products that reflect reality, such as films and television, and sometimes direct equivalence does not make any sense in another language. Moreover, the two principal channels in which AVT is expressed, subtitling and dubbing, convey equivalence in different ways, as we will see in the next sections (Chaume 2018).

For this reason, AVT has helped in building a new order where equivalence has another connotation: an equivalent product in this area has a close connection to the original work and presents the same meaning as the original element for the target audience. Therefore, in the “equivalence field”, audiovisual translation also presents blurred borders and in addition to this, it is constantly evolving (Diaz Cintas 2004).

Domestication is another translation strategy; it contrasts to foreignization, and together they represent two principal translation approaches (Venuti: 1995). The choice between the two influences the decision on whether to choose subtitling or dubbing. Domestication occurs when a text is adapted to the culture of the target text (Robinson 1997b), becoming more understandable for the audience. The domesticated product will be transparent and fluent, in order to not appear strange to the target audience, who will receive it more naturally (Yang 2010). In other words, domestication means adopting a transparent style removing all the elements that may sound “strange” to the audience and substituting it with familiar components. A clear example of domestication occurs in the film *Back to the Future*, an 1985 American film that will be dealt in the next sections.

The protagonist Marty McFly travels in time from 1985 to 1955, meeting his young parents. In a particular scene, he wakes up in his young mother's room after being hit by a car. She thinks his name is Calvin Klein because she read it on his underwear, since this brand still did not exist in 1955. In the Italian version, the brand becomes Levi Strauss, which was more popular in the Italian culture, while Calvin Klein was not known as nowadays.

On the other hand, foreignization refers to the strategy of translation where some significant trace of the original text is left (Paloposki & Oittinen: 1998). In this case, the cultural element is manifested in the translated text, which is not adapted to the new audience. Venuti (1995) criticizes domestication, defining it “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values” and naturally suggests foreignization as the best method of translation. Domesticating translation means “maintaining the status quo” (Venuti 2018), but it also influences the product, removing the cultural differences and reinforcing the separateness between the two. In AVT this situation is particularly complicated, due to the visual element. The linguistic part is closely related to images, so particular attention has to be paid to the connection between images and spoken part in order not to have contrasting results.

1.2 PRINCIPAL TYPES OF AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

As mentioned above, the field of audiovisual translation is not well defined, and there are many doubts about the number of its modalities. People tend to group them together, but if we want to comprehend the world of AVT, a separate analysis is required. Some of them are borderline, in the middle of two processes and this makes everything definitely confounding, but scholars have selected the principal methods used. Dubbing predominates over the others and it is also the most widely used in Italy, which is a country with a long tradition of dubbers (Chiaro 2009). Although it is the most widely used, it is not simple: the translator has to pay attention to transferring written language (the original script) on the screen, making it natural and synchronising it to the images. Dubbing is an accessible way to understand a foreign product but we will see that it has not the same importance throughout the world (Chaume 2012).

The second and the oldest of AVT modes is subtitling, which is quite popular in English-speaking countries, even if in the last fifteen years there has been a cultural opening in Italy, too (Gottlieb 2004). It consists of a brief text, which appears at the bottom of the screen while characters are talking,

Surtitling is directly connected to subtitling; its main difference stands in the position of the text, which is in the higher part of the screen. They are mostly used in theatres, where they became quite popular and where they are used to translate or to transcribe the lyrics when they are difficult for the audience to understand (Gottlieb 2004). Voice-over is another modality used in AVT, it is part of the “dubbing family” and it consists in the reproduction of the original speech together with the translation read by an off-screen voice (Cintas & Orero 2010: 442). Usually, the volume of the original soundtrack is reduced and it can still be heard in the background, and usually it is possible to listen to voice-over one or two seconds after the beginning of the original speech. It is mostly used in interview or documentaries. However, there are some countries that still use voice-over to translate the majority of foreign films, Poland for example (Cintas & Orero 2010: 441). This kind of AVT presents some issues and it is characterized by a set of inadequacies: the main one is the absence of naturalness, especially when there is just one person who translates all the actors. In this case then, the person who speaks does not act, but remains natural and with a flat voice, so it can result monotonous and boring. Moreover, if the volume of the original dialogue is more or less the same of the translation the voice-over is badly recorded, in this case the comprehension may become very difficult (Gottlieb 2004).

Since this phenomenon has spread in the AVT world, it is relevant to mention a development of subtitling, which is *fansubbing*. This aspect emerged in the 1980s and it can be defined as the amateur subtitling (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 26). The phenomenon was born in the 1980s, when fans translated Japan anime for the non-Japanese speakers, and arrived in Italy in 2005, thanks to the famous TV series *Lost*. Fans were too impatient to wait the release of the new season in Italian, so some fansubbing communities translated the episodes that had already been released in USA. Today it became a huge phenomenon, but it has received negative critics since it does not involve professional translators and it is not completely legal¹.

¹ “Fansubbing, n.d., Wikipedia, last visited 9th November 2019.

Putting together humans and machines, the outcome is given by the respeaking technique: a person (the “respeaker”) translates the source text while he listens to it, and thanks to a recognition software, his words are transcribed on the screen (Romero-Fresco 2018). In this kind of translation, technology has a fundamental part and in the years software have been improved, but the translator has to select his words in order to be comprehensible still being faithful to the original text. The translator in respeaking works live, so he or she has to show different skills, he should be able to understand selection and reformulate the speech in a clear way (Romero – Fresco 2018).

Some modalities of audiovisual translation are essential today for disabled people (for example deaf or blind people) one of them is subtitling for deaf or hard-of-hearing people (Perego & Taylor 2012). This kind of AVT is also called closed captions (CC) and it presents some differences from normal subtitling (Padmore 2015) indeed, it incorporates every sound element that would not be perceived by a deaf person. Closed captions include noises, music and sounds which are usually reported between square brackets on the screen. This modality presents some time constraints, since it has to integrate background sounds with dialogues without affecting the simultaneity of the subtitles. In addition to this, in order to help deaf people, when the original language of the film is not the mother tongue of people watching, simpler words are usually used in closed captions, in order to be more fluent and multiple repetition of very simple words like “yes” or “ah” are sometimes eliminated to save some reading time. The final product in this case will be more informative and rich of information compared to the normal subtitling, in order to have a communicative balance (Perego & Taylor 2012).

Audio-description is part of a particular class in audiovisual translation, since it involves blind or visually impaired consumers. Holland (2009) defines them as

an enabling service for blind and partially sighted audiences [...] describing clearly, vividly and succinctly what is happening on screen or theatre stage in the silent intervals between programme commentary or dialogue — in order to convey the principal visual elements of a production (Holland 2009)

Audio description is a form of narration of the visual content, to allow blind people to follow the video and it involves the scenery, the costumes, the actors’ gestures and everything that could be useful to fully understand the plot. This area of audiovisual translation was developed in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s, but as Bogucki affirms

(2013: 24), it took a long time to arrive in Europe. Today, the efforts to make any visual products accessible to everyone are increasing, and audio description is making its way in streaming platforms (e.g Netflix) and on live events. This modality still presents some limits, the main one is time. The audio describer has little time to provide a description, so he has to select what is fundamental and what can be left out, but he/she has also to pay attention to not be subjective and to not give personal shades to the speech. There is not any rule about any guideline that an audio describer should pursue, so it is up to the person to choose and to be careful not anticipating elements from the story and to not giving personal conclusions (Perego and Taylor 2012: 53).

1.3 SUBTITLING

One of the well-known debates on film translation lays in the discussion on subtitling or dubbing as the best method of translation. This debate has still several supporters in both parts, so we will see advantages and disadvantages for both. As Díaz Cintas states

Subtitling consists in rendering in writing the translation into a TL of the original dialogue exchanges uttered by the different speakers, as well as of all other verbal information that is transmitted visually (letters, banners, inserts) or aurally (lyrics, voices off). (Díaz Cintas 2010)

When creating subtitles, translators have to develop something that goes well together with images and the spoken language. Subtitles have many constraints, and one of them is the combination between reading a written text while watching images at a certain speed. Usually, they contains two lines of thirty-two characters each and naturally, they are synchronized with the images (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007). The time a subtitle remains on the screen depends on the speed of the dialogues and on the estimated readers' speed, (e.g. usually the time of subtitles for hard-of-hearing people stays on screen for a longer time). The time is also given by the presence of closed subtitles, which can be unnecessary for hearing people and often can be removed by the screen. There seems to be a general "6 seconds rule" (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 96-99), according to which two lines can be easily read in six seconds, with the only exceptions of songs, in which case the subtitles can stay on the screen for a longer time. In any case, with the advent of

streaming platforms and there is a growing opinion that the audiovisual readers of today are faster, so subtitles are usually quicker.

Subtitling is also called “overt translation” since it maintains the original dialogues and sound giving the written translation to the audience and it is opposed to dubbing which is defined as “covert translation” (House 2010: 245).

1.3.1 Classification of subtitles

Subtitles have been classified into three main classes: intralingual, interlingual and bilingual (Diaz Cintas 2010: 347). Intralingual subtitles are subtitles within the same language, defined also as “vertical subtitling”, since the medium to convey the message changes but the language does not. In this situation, it is possible to find all additional information that is useful for the comprehension of the story and the atmosphere (such as music or sounds), especially for the hard-of-hearing. For deaf people subtitles are also in different colours, to better understand which character is speaking (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). This type of subtitles are also very faithful to the original text, firstly to be understandable for the people who cannot hear well, but also if the film or television series presents some language variations, such as dialects, which prove difficult even for the people of the same language. Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007) provide the example of a well-known film, *Trainspotting*, where one of the characters speaks with a strong Scottish accent, so much so as to be subtitled in the entire movie for an English audience. Italian also presents a similar example, to be precise in the Italian television series *My Brilliant Friend* (*L’Amica Geniale*), inspired by Elena Ferrante’s book quadrilogy. The series is set in the 1950s in a poor district of Naples, and since it is faithful to the reality of time, the majority of the characters speak with a strong Neapolitan accent. Consequently, Italian subtitles have been added to aid the comprehension. In addition to this, people who want to access a foreign language programme to learn a language (Lertola 2015: 248) often use these kinds of subtitles.

Interlingual subtitles concern the subtitling between two languages, when a translation occurs and there is a transfer from a source language to a target language. There are still some cases where we do not know how to classify some categories, such as dialect. Can a Scottish dialect subtitled for an US audience be classified as an

intralingual translation? There is not a general rule to decide. (Munday 2009: 6). Interlingual subtitles involve a translation from a language and culture to others; they are usually adopted in DVDs and online streaming platforms, such as Netflix or Amazon Prime. In this case, subtitles are not entirely faithful to the source text since there is not a close relation between visual and audio channel (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007).

Finally yet importantly, bilingual subtitling is mostly widely used in places or in circumstances in which people speak two languages or when there is a considerable number of people with different languages (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). It happens when the translated language of the audiovisual material appears on the screen together with the source language (García 2017). The negative aspect of bilingual subtitling is given by the amount of space that two series of subtitles occupy on the screen, but it has to be considered that they are used only in particular circumstances. Indeed, bilingual subtitling can be usually found in international film festivals and events, such as the Cannes Festival, where films are usually projected in English and in the language of the hosting country.

This classification realised by several scholars as Diaz Cintas (2007) and De Linde (1999) is not universal and fixed, thanks to the constant development of technology some new types of subtitles have been added to the already existing classification, by consequence some others may be added in future.

1.3.2 Subtitling: constriction or benefit?

Subtitling is the oldest AVT mode, it was introduced in 1929 when the first sound film appeared and dialogues made the presence of translation needed (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). It shares some characteristics with its “relatives” of audiovisual translation, but it is naturally defined by a series of constraints, indeed there are several disadvantages in subtitles that give rise to doubts. Firstly, since sometimes there is a lack of attention for this mode, there could be some contrasts between the audio and the visual content due to some mistakes of the translator (Gottlieb 2004). Often they have to reduce the text, being careful at the information that they omit, in order to make it readable for the audience. Indeed, due to the lack of space on the screen, the text always has some spatial constraints, so usually redundant aspects of the language are deleted. The reduction of words is also

due to the temporal constraints and sometimes the subtitler chooses to reduce up to 50% of the time of the speech. The general rule is that the subtitle should appear when the person starts speaking, and disappear when the person stops, also because if a subtitle remains on the screen too much, there is the tendency to read it again (Diaz & Remael 2007: 88). For this reason, subtitling is often defined as a “reductive translation mode” (Gottlieb 2004: 22), because what you read is never completely faithful to the media you are watching.

Another problem is given by the position of the subtitles on the screen, which usually is in the low half of the screen. The colour of the words is usually white, so when the background is too bright, subtitles are moved on the top of the screen, this can result uncomfortable for someone who is following the visual content. Another problem is given by the use of subtitles to manipulate a film: in countries where the censorship is often adopted, TV series and movies that include sexual or sacrilegious language are eliminated. This happens particularly for the Arabic speaking audiences, but in general subtitles are usually weaker than the oral speech. As Roffe affirms (1995: 221) “the audience will be more offended by written crudeness than by actual oral usage”, probably this depends also on the single person, but in any case, there can be some circumstances where the subtitles are not faithful. Taboo words are often linked to local traditions according to the cultural and religious background; in any case, they are often toned down in subtitles (Diaz Cintas 2007: 196)

Moving on with the negative sides, some very informal dialogues appear to be more ceremonial than they are, since they are not spontaneous but previously written. Subtitles are then a distraction and the attempt of reading, listening and watching images at the same time can be disorienting for the audience. Indeed, they turn the audience’s attention from what is actually happening in the visual content and this is a problem especially for a slow reader. Chiaro (2009: 151) agrees that it is plausible that subtitling public pay less attention to the dialogues rather than dubbing public, however, subtitles are nowadays simpler to read and user-friendly. Finally, as mentioned above, subtitles are a translation from spoken to written but they do not substitute the original one (which is the verbal element), they are simply added. Therefore, hesitations or particular features of the speech, which are inadmissible information in common written language, are

deleted, so “paradoxically, subtitles, a form of writing, are unable to conform to ‘real’ writing by virtue of the fact that they are reflecting speech” (Chiaro 2009: 151).

| Formal constraints | Informal constraints |
|---|--|
| Spatial constraints: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Position on the screen 2) Colour of subtitles Temporal constraints | Synchronization Distraction for the audience Possible manipulation of subtitles Readability |

Subtitling constraints in brief. (Adapted by Gottlieb 2004, Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007, Chiaro 2009)

It is also true that quality assessment in AVT is almost inexistent, especially in subtitling world, where you can find even fansubbing, which is under no type of control (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2004). Probably, because of the combination of many semiotic systems that work all together it becomes difficult to control all the aspects of the translation. We can identify three main types of errors typical of AVT, and they can occur in subtitling as in dubbing (Bogucki 2013: 37). Errors can be technical (like positioning subtitles incorrectly or exceeding in the number of lines), semantic (when the initial meaning is misinterpreted or translated wrongly) and stylistic (when the register is incorrect). The drawback of subtitles is that if a spectator knows the original language of the product, it is natural to compare the original and the translation, and consequently to criticise inappropriate choices. Concerning subtitles quality, there are of course some methods to check it, like computer assisted translation tools (or CAT tools). This kind of software applications enhance the accuracy of subtitles thanks to translation memories, databases that include sentences of even paragraphs that had been previously accepted by “human” translators (Naldi 2014).

On the other hand, subtitles have many advantages, for example the possibility to hear the real actors’ voices. This opportunity is excellent to hear the performance of the actor, to see what message he/she wanted to convey during the scene, in which maybe the dubber is not perfect. Being able to hear the real voices of the actor is also crucial if accents and cadences are a main feature of the movie. Moreover, subtitling is not as

expensive as dubbing, indeed this facilitated the growth of fansubbers mentioned before. In this way, a lot of niche material can reach all the foreign people interested. The importance and usefulness of subtitles are proven by the huge presence of interlingual subtitling for alien language in sci-fi or fantasy movies. These inexistent idioms are usually included to add credibility to the story (Bogucki 2013: 49) and are used in all the most famous franchises (e.g. Star Trek, The Lord of the Rings, Game of Thrones etc.). The need of subtitles in these successful works define subtitling as a well entrenched film making technique (Bogucki 2013).

Another great advantage is given by the usefulness of subtitles for deaf or hard-of-hearing people and for students that want to approach a new language, too. It has been demonstrated that captions facilitate language learning (Danan: 45-55) and that

In general terms, extensive viewing of films with L1 (or standard) subtitles seems to facilitate incidental learning, as demonstrated in European countries where subtitling is the norm and where users are exposed to a considerable number of hours of English-language TV programming and films. Captions with L2 sound and text also appear to help with language acquisition, especially in relation to vocabulary and listening comprehension, (...), reverse subtitling (with L1 audio and L2 subtitles) usually facilitates vocabulary acquisition since learners can quickly comprehend the message thanks to the L1 soundtrack. (Danan 2015)

Indeed, the use of subtitled audiovisuals is often implied in formal and informal foreign languages learning context, but the preference changes also according to the age range. During a survey in 2015, a group of 40 English students from 19 to 40 has been asked what kind of audiovisual translation they preferred. The survey has been conveyed in Spain, a country with a long tradition of dubbing as mode of AVT, nevertheless they showed their clear preference for subtitled material rather than dubbed (Talaván 2015: 156).

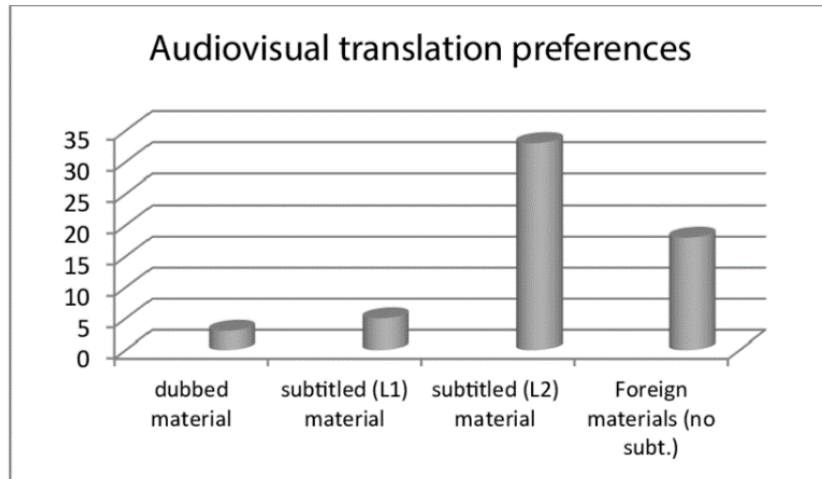


Figure 2. Survey on audiovisual translation preferences – (Talaván 2015)

Professor Jankowska from Jagiellonian University in Crakow (2019: 28) has conveyed another survey. It shows the linguistic accessibility in the cinema among senior citizens, forty people over 60 showed their preference to dubbing and voice-over (very popular in Poland) over subtitling. The majority declared that they had difficulty and discomfort in reading subtitles and that they preferred to listen rather than hear (Jankowska 2019: 28).

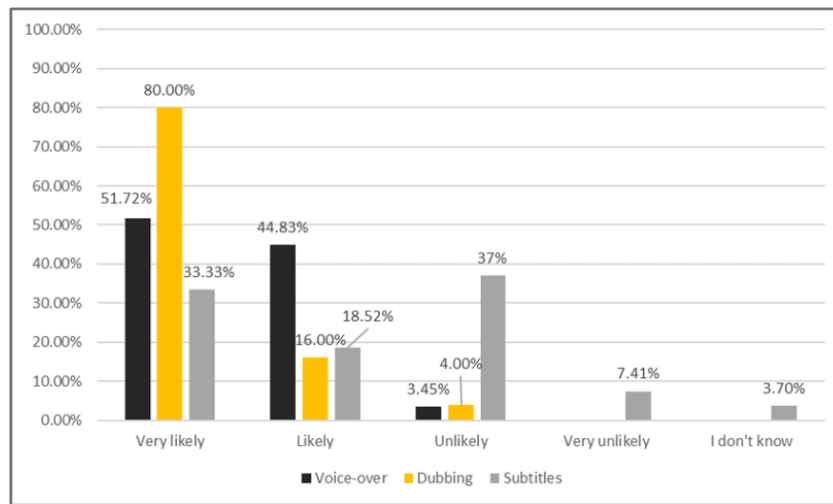


Figure 3. Preferences in audiovisual translation among senior citizens – Jannkowska.

Looking at the statistics, it can be noticed how the preference for different AVT modes changes according to the age range, and not only according to the country, so the appreciation for subtitling mode can be considered subjective. However, as previously

mentioned, subtitling is the oldest mode of AVT, but we can also consider it as modern. Especially in Europe, the attitude towards foreign audiovisual material is increasing, this is a step further since Europe has always been quite closed to it. Over the last years, subtitling has found acceptance in many large cities where movies are now projected in original language too. Naturally, this is a preference expressed mostly by young people, as we have seen before, older people are still attached to dubbed material, but as Danan affirms, it is interesting to see how dubbing-centric countries like Italy are now evolving with conventions and meetings on audiovisual translation and subtitling.

1.3.3 The levelling effect

Sometimes there are some particular and important features in the audio message, like a particular accent or a specific dialect that need to be conveyed in subtitles so as to not impede the comprehension. In most cases, subtitlers decide to replace these variations with a synonym, reporting in standard language in order to be comprehensible for the audience. This kind of naturalisation (Fong 2009) makes foreign elements easier to assimilate, but if exaggerated, the complete absence of foreign elements could increase in excess the loss resulting from the process of translation. The level of naturalisation also depends on the political issues of a place and on the level of censorship (Fong 2009). The transfer from the original language to the subtitled translation has a “levelling effect” (Hatim and Mason 1990) and the result is a neutralisation effect: all the cultural and linguistic aspects are smoothed, facilitating the comprehension for the viewer. There are some linguistic features that frequently appear in the target text, which are free from the influence of the source text (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001). These features are called universals of translation and they are common to all the translated texts. Among them, it is possible to find simplification, to reduce and omit repetitions, explicitation, to express more clearly the content of the texts, and normalization, to better organise the structure of the text and make it more readable (Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001). Moreover, Toury (1995) adds a further universal of translation: the law of interference. He claims that every translation is influenced by the source text, and that this is due to the mental processes of the translator. Indeed, he/she tends to transfer the language directly from the source, without going through their own linguistic ability (Toury 1995).

According to Fong (2009), naturalisation does not represent a loss for the audience: the presence of multiple elements in films allows the viewer to understand the message. Moreover, the neutralisation of some features of the audiovisual product favours the use of imagination and helps the spectator to be more involved in the decoding process (Fong 2009). Besides the neutralisation of cultural and linguistic aspects, also marked and emotional language is neutralised in subtitling (Perego & Caimi 2002), since many of the non-verbal features implied in the oral discourse, are inevitably lost in subtitles. More specifically, Perego and Caimi (2002) claim that:

The nuances and specific aspects of a dialogue cannot be fully reproduced in written form, nor is it possible to capture the functional and communicative effects of the non-verbal component that characterizes oral speech (Perego & Caimi 2002)

However, the level of loss also depends on the degree of standardization already existing in the film. If the actors have the same linguistic variant in the audiovisual product, the presence of subtitles will not cause an important loss, but if these features are distinctive, they should be represented. Thus, in this case it is necessary to check if the connotation is useful to understand the direct meaning.

In conclusion, there are conflicting opinions about the levelling effect of subtitles and some scholars (such as Perego and Caimi) claim that there is an important loss when transferring oral material into a written mode, while others (such as Fong) suggest that this practise favours the involvement of the viewers, and therefore it does not represent a problem. In my opinion, during the transfer from oral into the written mode of subtitles there is not any significant loss. Subtitles give the possibility to read the translation while listening to the original soundtrack, which may contain some nuances that are lost during dubbing. All the losses of subtitling mode are minimal comparing to the possibility of watching a film in the way it was originally conceived.

1.3.4 The issue of reduction in subtitling

As mentioned above, one of the most important issues in subtitling is the level of reduction that occurs with the transfer from one language to another (Hatim & Mason 1990). Beside the personal preferences that the audience may have for each audiovisual modality, several scholars (Pavesi 2005, Hatim & Mason 1990) affirm that there is a

significant loss of meaning and a simplification of features. Regarding humorous elements, Jankowska (2009) affirms that the quantity of loss in the translated text is normally 10%; on the other hand, as we will see in the next section, dubbing tends to preserve more elements after translation. Pavesi (2002) defines the subtitled translated version as a skeleton, which works as a guide and where the essential meaning elements are added. If on one hand the reduction causes a loss, on the other hand the audiovisual product will be more accessible for the viewer, who will be able to follow the storyline in a linear way. This contraction takes place in several ways: the first one is cancellation, which takes place through the elimination of elements such as words or also entire expressions (Pavesi 2002). In the next chart, it is possible to notice an example of cancellation from the original version to the subtitled translated version of the film *Back to the Future*. The elements that have been eliminated in the translation have been underlined.

| Source text (ST) | Subtitled Italian translation |
|---|---|
| <u>In other news</u> , officials at the Pacific Nuclear Research Facility have denied <u>the rumour</u> that the case of missing plutonium was in fact stolen <u>from their vault</u> . | Alla sede della Pacific Nuclear per le ricerche sul nucleare, negano che la cassa di plutonio scomparsa sia stata effettivamente trafugata. |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

A further means of reduction in subtitling is condensation, which is more complex than cancellation. In this case, the contents of the subtitles are condensed and summarised, with all information are presented in a briefer way (Pavesi 2002).

| Source text (ST) | Subtitled Italian translation |
|--|---|
| I noticed your band is on the roster for dance auditions after school today. | Il tuo gruppo fa l'audizione oggi dopo la scuola. |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In both methods, there should be a process of hierarchization, where all the information is analysed and then only the most important is kept. Usually, the redundant elements and

hesitations are at the lower part of this hierarchic scale and therefore the former to be removed (Pavesi 2002). Redundancy and hesitations are normally considered the typical features of face-to-face conversations, and give the oral speech nuances of meaning. The extreme removal of these aspects, as in the example below, can lead to a complete modification of the sense and, therefore, of the understanding.

| Source text (ST) | Subtitled Italian translation |
|--|---|
| Okay, okay you guys, oh ha ha ha very funny. Hey you guys are being really mature. | Ok ragazzi. Molto divertente. Siete molto maturi. |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

Looking at the translated subtitles, the elimination of less important elements is visible, but the sentence seems much more serious, while in this scene the actor, who is laughing nervously, pronounces it ironically.

Simplification does not concern only the linguistic part of subtitles, but also the semiotic one (Pavesi 2002); the removal of elements, even though they have less importance, implies the loss of some pieces that help the general comprehension of the product. The simplification takes place also at a micro linguistic level (Pavesi 2002): jargon and colloquialisms are left aside, as well as some subordinates. The smoothing of speeches and sentences causes the modification of the general sense of the audiovisual product. In the following chart it is possible to notice a simplification of colloquialisms (underlined)

| Source text (ST) | Subtitled Italian version |
|---|--|
| Well, Jennifer, my mother <u>would freak out</u> if she knew I was going up there with you. And I get this standard lecture about how she never did <u>that kind of stuff</u> when she was a kid. | Mia madre <u>si arrabbierebbe molto</u> se sapesse che esco con te. Farà la solita predica: lei non ha mai fatto <u>queste cose</u> da ragazza . |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

1.4 DUBBING

Dubbing is probably the most familiar method of audiovisual translation and in several countries it represents the dominant mode, including Italy. It consists in replacing the original speech soundtrack with a recording that replicates the original message in the target language (Diaz Cintas & Orero 2013: 442). Naturally, the focal point of this kind of AVT is represented by audio content, which literally eliminates the original one, so we can also define it as a kind of covert translation. In fact, dubbing creates the illusion that actors on the screen are speaking the same language as the spectator, to the point that Cary (1960) defined it as “total translation”, to show that this process involves many elements, such as phonetics, intonation and rhythm. As mentioned above, the three Spanish scholars who analysed the concept of AVT, defined it as “constrained translation” (Mayoral, Kelly, Gallardo 1988) to underline the dependence of the predetermined non-verbal codes and the world represented on the screen. The substitution of the spoken element represents a constraint for the quality and the quantity of the dialogues.

The process of dubbing is not as simple as it may seem. Usually, a film or a television series is chosen and it is decided if it is better to subtitle or to dub it (or neither of them), then dubbing actors have to be chosen according to gender, age and other features (Bogucki 2013). The same voice actor in every country usually dubs film stars; in Italy it almost a tradition. The dubbing company then chooses a dubbing director and a screen adaptor. Before starting, a duplicate of the material in the original language is given to a network of translators (or a freelance translator), who have to translate the script. Frequently, it is a word-for-word translation and after that, the translation is adapted for time sync and it can be arranged to respect the lip sync. The dubbing director undertakes this of work; he/she has to respect all the aspects of synchronization and he may also modify the translation in order to make it sound more natural. The voice actors have then to rehearse in order to memorize the timing of the lines, and each actor records his/her part individually (Bogucki 2013).

Even if the process of translation in dubbing has undergone a few changes, the register in Italy changed over the years. This country has a long tradition of dubbing, as will be seen in the next section, and early films in Italian were defined by a very formal

register that made the dialogues artificial and theatrical. However, since the 1990s, Italian voice actors have attempted to be more natural, trying to reproduce the register of the target language rather than that of the source text (Perego & Taylor, 2012), even though many nostalgic supporters of “old cinema” still prefer this artificial style. Pavesi (2005: 32) also observes a progressive effort to reproduce many mechanisms of spontaneous speech, such as hesitations, but also dialects and slang, to show the geographic or social origins and to make everything more realistic. In the last few years, we can also observe more creativity in translation, which is less dependent on the original script. Vocabulary is the one aspect that has gained scholars’ attention, since any unnatural translation solution can immediately be perceived because of the choice of words. Some translation choices have become a routine: expressions that occur in many films and that over the years became fixed expressions. Some examples are “nessun problema” from the expression “no problem” or the tendency to begin some sentences with “bene” to reproduce the English “well”, which is quite unnatural in Italian everyday language (Bogucki 2013). Over the years, Italians have become used to this kind of formality, and they learnt to accept it.

Finally yet importantly, the phenomenon of fandubbing is present but still not widespread. This kind of dubbing undertaken by fans is particularly used in Japanese “anime”, which are then distributed on the Internet for everyone. The main reason for this practise is the absence of official dubbing because of companies’ choices, but also when the official dubbing is deemed. The phenomenon of fansubbing is more widespread thanks to its simplicity, but fandubbing is growing, to the point to organising online auditions to choose the best voice actors².

The dubbing modality has its advantages and disadvantages. The greatest benefit comes from the chance to hear the real voices and by consequence the accents of the actors (Bogucki 2013). In many cases, accents and regional dialects are used to define a character or to add something crucial to the story. In dubbing, it is difficult to find an Italian equivalent for an English/American accents, especially if they want to convey some cultural background given by the accent. Generally in this case they use standard Italian, since it is impossible to transfer it in the target language. Moreover, dubbing allows viewers to focus on the images without worrying about looking up and down the

² “Fandubbing”, Wikipedia, last access 24th October 2019.

screen, as happens with subtitles. Naturally then, dubbing allows everyone to watch an audiovisual product without language barriers, especially in EU countries such as Italy or Spain. Beside people who do not speak foreign languages very well, dubbing is essential for people with vision impairment problems who may otherwise be unable to understand.

On the other hand, being unable to hear the real voice of the actor may represent a problem: one of the most well known voice actors in Italy was Ferruccio Amendola, who dubbed both Al Pacino and Robert De Niro. When appeared that the two actors acted together in the same movies (in *The Godfather: Part II* and *Heat*) Amendola dubbed just one of the two actors. For this reason, there were many complaints from viewers who heard another voice dubbing either De Niro or Pacino, since they were used to the voice that usually dubbed them (Bogucki 2013: 34). Moreover, often the same artist is used to dub a large number of actors, so it can become disturbing to hear him/her multiple times. Dubbing is a difficult process caused by the effort of matching the translation with the mouth movements, but sometimes the translators have to change the words for a better fit. The outcome may be some “strange” and less natural translations, which are anyway not as disturbing as a speech that does not match the lips movements. Dubbing may also contain numerous censorships, altering the general sense of the film. A heavy manipulation of the source text for politic or cultural reasons of the target country may alter the cinematic experience, changing the message of the film. Finally, dubbing can be up to fifteen times more expensive than subtitling: translating the script, matching the movements, recording and editing for the final audio replacement takes time and money. For this reason, subtitles are used to translate foreign films for less common languages. (Bogucki 2013)

| Positive aspects | Negative aspects |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possibility to hear actors’ voices and accents; ○ Focus on the images; ○ Possibility for people with visual impairment to understand; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lip sync constraints and problems; ○ Possibility of censorship with alteration of the general meaning; ○ The most expensive audiovisual modality; |

Positive and negative aspects of dubbing modality in brief (adapted from Bogucki 2013)

1.4.1 Filmese and spontaneous speech

When talking about dialogues in films, it is easy to notice that they are very different from the spontaneous speech (Perego & Taylor 2012). Pavesi (2005: 30) distinguishes between spontaneous speech and film dialogue: the former is the typical everyday communication that occurs in our lives; in this situation, language is used in a stereotypical way, the conversation is banal and people tend to repeat themselves (Perego & Taylor 2012). In everyday conversation there are several “fixed expressions” that people tend to use as interlayers and that are often implied, such as “I do not know”, “well” and also “please” and “thank you”. When listening to a spontaneous conversation, it is possible to notice that they may seem confusing from an external point of view, because of interruptions, repetitions and hesitations (Perego & Taylor 2012). This kind of conversation often gives origin to other sub-topics, which are often introduced by words such as “anyway” or “you know”.

Secondly, Perego identifies film dialogue; this type of speech is characterised by indirect and unidirectional communication towards an audience. Due to time and spatial constraints, there is the necessity to eliminate all the superfluous elements (Perego & Taylor 2012). The dialogues in any audiovisual product have the function of keeping the plot, and condensing the narration for the audience, but it is also useful to give a general or specific framework of the characters (Pavesi 2005). Compared to spontaneous speech, we can observe more slowness and accuracy in diction, in order to be comprehensible to a heterogeneous population. This kind of speech has been called *filmese* (Antonini 2005, Chiaro 2005, Pavesi 2005, Perego & Taylor 2004 and 2012). This term has been created to underline that the kind of language on the screen is different from the that in real life (Taylor 2004). The need to follow the plot makes dialogues highly clear and relevant, characters usually respect their turn to speak and there is little or no voices overlapping. Moreover, pauses are often longer and give a particular dramatic force to the scene (Perego & Taylor 2012), while, according to research, in spontaneous speech pauses of more than two seconds are quite rare (Taylor 2004). Moreover, in filmic speech we do not find the typical abbreviations of everyday speech, the sentences are well-articulated and clearly taken from a script. The definition *filmese* comes not only from the nature of the speech but also from the attitude of the characters. In real life people play multiple

roles, according to the situation and their interlocutors, and especially according to the previous experiences and interactions. A film character has his/her development in the two or three hours of the film, so he/she may appear more two-dimensional. Also for this reason, the choice of the actor and his/her ability to enter in the character is essential for the success of the movie (Perego & Taylor 2012).

Halliday (1978, quoted by Suzanne Eggins 2005) claimed that three aspects, called register variables, affect linguistic situations. These three elements are field, mode and tenor, and they have a particular influence on a text, since they represent the three levels that language covers (Eggins 2005). Field concerns the ideational part of language, it involves what is communication about and it provides information; it involves subjects (people or thing), and processes (verbs). Tenor concerns relationships and interpersonal connections and who you are communicating with. Tenor involves commands, statements and questions. The last aspect is Mode, and it concerns the “how” of the situation and the way you are communicating. In this case, it is given importance to the channel of communication and the how the text is constructed (Eggins 2005).

In conclusion, we can affirm that *filmese* can be placed between spoken and written language, since it has influences from both parts. In any case, in the last ten years, some studies have shown that this gap between spontaneous and real conversation is being bridged, in order to give films and television series a more natural structure (Perego & Taylor 2012).

1.4.2 Synchronization

An important element of dubbing is synchronization (also called adjustment or adaptation), which is the correspondence of lip and body movements to the words heard (Pavesi 2005). It is interesting to notice how translation can be affected by something as physical as articulatory and body movements, which represent a challenge for the translator. Fodor (1969) was the first person to introduce some approaches to this area of dubbing, identifying three kinds of synchrony. The first one is phonetic, which is usually called lip sync, and it is about the movements of mouth and lips, which have to open and close with a logical rhythm. In this case, the sentences are usually changed in order to be visually identical to the movements on the screen. This is a challenge for translators, who

have to create an illusion; in order to do so they usually adjust the rhythm and change entire sentences, maintaining the general meaning. The second type identified by Fodor is character synchronization, which consists in making sure that actors' body movements and gestures do not contradict what they are saying. The last type is isochrony, which is naturally about time. In this case, it is essential to guarantee that the length of the translated text is the same as the original one.

Fodor (1969) did not stop here, but he suggested making dubbing translation effective thanks to the correspondence of the sounds of the source and the target language. He also proposed some techniques for dubbing actors to achieve this level of excellence. Unfortunately, the costs of the complete process would be unacceptable for a dubbing company. Indeed, the degree of lexical and syntactic choices is mostly provided by lexical or morphosyntactic correspondences between the source and the target language (Zabalbeascoa 1997: 338), but a high level of precision would take much extra time and even if this kind of translation is 100% verbal, there are in any case nonverbal factors that influence it. We can define another two different types of synchronization: articulatory and kinetic (Pavesi 2005: 13). The former one can be classified as quantitative or qualitative: quantitative synchronisation concerns the perfect matching of the beginning and the end of the articulatory movements and is completely based on the speed of the speech; qualitative synchronization concerns the compatibility of the dubbed utterances and the articulatory movements. The latter affects elements such as the volume of the voice, but it can be left out when the actors' faces are not visible. The other main kind of synchronization is paralinguistic (or expressive), which corresponds to the connection to the speech and body movements and facial expressions. The role of synchronization in dubbing is fundamental so as to give the illusion that actors are really speaking the language of the viewers and usually great attention it is paid to. However, there is a certain level of flexibility in professional practice, especially when the dialogues are very long and dense, and no information can be omitted (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 90). In conclusion, it can be argued that neither subtitling nor dubbing is the ideal way to translate. Each modality presents some problems that may be more or less important for the viewer.

1.4.3 Dubbing from Italian into English and vice versa

As we will see in the next section, certain larger European countries tend to prefer dubbing as an audiovisual translation modality, while others prefer subtitling (de Linde & Kay 1999, Perego & Taylor 2012). The majority of the audiovisual material that has to be translated comes from English-speaking countries, but there are also products that have to be translated into English. When a television series or film has particular success in Italy, it may be exported to English-speaking countries. In such a case all the typical dubbing and subtitling constraints appear in the English to Italian translation (Perego & Taylor 2011). As already mentioned, *filmese*, which is the typical filmic language, is characterised by unnaturalness and by several differences from spontaneous dialogue (Pavesi 2005). Although this characterises also the relationship and the transfer between the two languages, it has been observed that this artificiality in language is changing and becoming more natural in both ways of translation, from English into Italian and vice versa. Indeed, there is the desire of screenwriters of reducing unnaturalness that typically characterises the language of audiovisual translation. Nevertheless, some complications characterise the translation from and to these two languages.

The most significant problem of English dubbed in Italian is probably the phonetic neutrality of some Italian dubbed material; often, the varieties of the English speaking countries material are impossible to reproduce, and the outcome is an unusual and weird language. Indeed, it is possible to notice a considerable difference between the way of speaking in Italian films and dubbed films (Pavesi 2005, Perego & Taylor 2012). In addition, the choice of words usually depends on the original language, the use of calques and a more formal register give to the product a fictional nature, since it involves terms and expression that are never really used in real life. Minutella (2015: 266) analysed the role of calques in two television series of two different periods: the musical drama series *Fame* (1982) and *Glee* (2009). Besides noticing the higher number of calques in the more recent television series, she made several example of typical calques that are often repeated in audiovisual products.

| English | Italian calque | Italian correct translation |
|---------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Class | Classe | Lezione/corso |

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Damned | Dannato | Maledetto |
| Cut it out | Dacci un taglio | Finiscila |
| Man/dude | Amico | Bello (or omission) |

Examples of calques. Adapted from Minutella (2015)

In any case, Italian dubbing represents a tradition and the process has been perfected, so much that Italy has become a leading country in this field.

On the other hand, translation from Italian into English presents also some difficulties, especially because this kind of translation is quite rare in the audiovisual translation field. The quantity of audiovisual material that is translated from Italian is very low, and often subtitling is preferred to dubbing. The critical aspect of the translation is given by the distortion that the Italian language undergoes when it is translated into English. Some examples that have been taken into consideration by Perego and Taylor (2012) involve 1950s and 1960s films, such as *Ladri di biciclette*, directed by Vittorio de Sica, or *La dolce vita*, directed by Federico Fellini. The English translation of these films show the lack of tradition in the English dubbing process, presenting some characteristics that alter the final product. A typical feature of these films is the use of language: if the original version presents the use of Italian with some Roman dialect expressions, while in the English version, it is possible to notice a mix of English, standard Italian and Roman dialect (Perego & Taylor 2012). Moreover, some English dialogues have been played with a heavy Italian accent, since the director probably did not want to lose the original features of the film. On the other hand, the lack of translation of exclamation, some names, greetings, thanks or songs makes it clear to the audience that they are watching a foreign film. In this case, there will be a high level of foreignization, which can be appreciated or not by the audience. Moreover, these characteristics give films some additional meaning that were not planned by the director in the original film, and that may add some further unplanned connotations (Perego & Taylor 2012).

Dubbed language presents several problems and difficulties in translating from Italian into English and vice versa, due to semantic, lexical and stylistic changes. The dubbing modality choices arouse much criticism, to the point as to be defined as *doppiaggese*, naturally with a negative connotation (Perego & Taylor 2012). Adapters seem to pay attention to not produce this kind of language, but as Sileo (2015) argues, the

presence of *doppiaggese* and the lack of naturalness in a film or television series do not appear to interfere with the success of the product. The main reason is a suspension of unbelief by the audience in presence of an audiovisual product (Sileo 2015). In order to enjoy the cinematographic experience, the viewer accepts everything he/she sees and hears, even a modification of the natural way of speaking. It is important to observe that these interferences from English are also becoming part of the Italian language. In our everyday lives, there are examples of semantic calques, such as the verb “realizzare”, which means “to carry out” but which is also used with the meaning of the English verb “to realise” that is “to be aware of something” (Sileo 2015). There are also several examples of phraseological calques that have been adopted by Italian everyday language, such as the use of “assolutamente”. In English, the word “absolutely” is used with an affirmative meaning, however, the Italian “assolutamente” has no meaning on his own, since it is employed as an intensifier of “yes” and “no” (Sileo 2015). It is not rare to hear the single use of the adverb, as an imitation of the English use.

To conclude, it should be stressed that *doppiaggese* not only includes the incompetent and bad quality translation from English into Italian, but it represents an actual characteristic of the filmic language (Sileo 2015). Certainly, it has assumed particular importance, becoming not only a natural component of the Italian audiovisual material, but also part of our everyday lives (Sileo 2015).

1.5 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE

As mentioned above, dubbing and subtitling are the two most widespread audiovisual translation modalities, and they have different importance throughout the world. As Chiaro affirms (2009: 143), Europe is divided into two main blocks: the first one includes the UK, Benelux, Scandinavia countries, Greece and Portugal, which are mainly subtitling nations. The second block contains central and southern European countries, such as Germany, Italy, Spain and France, where dubbing is widespread. The reasons for this division date back to 1930s, when dubbing was used to exalt the language for nationalistic reasons, but also to censor troublesome content. The fact that the second block is still attached to dubbing does not mean that these countries are linguistically closed, but that thanks to historical events they now have a long tradition of dubbing. It

is also true that the majority of films come from the English-speaking world, so the translation from foreign products into English is quite rare, even though in the last years there has been an increase in successful European films. As we mentioned in the previous sections, there are some examples of Italian films dubbed into English too, for example *Once Upon a Time in The West* (1968) directed by Sergio Leone or *Girl with a suitcase* (1961) directed by Valerio Zurlini.

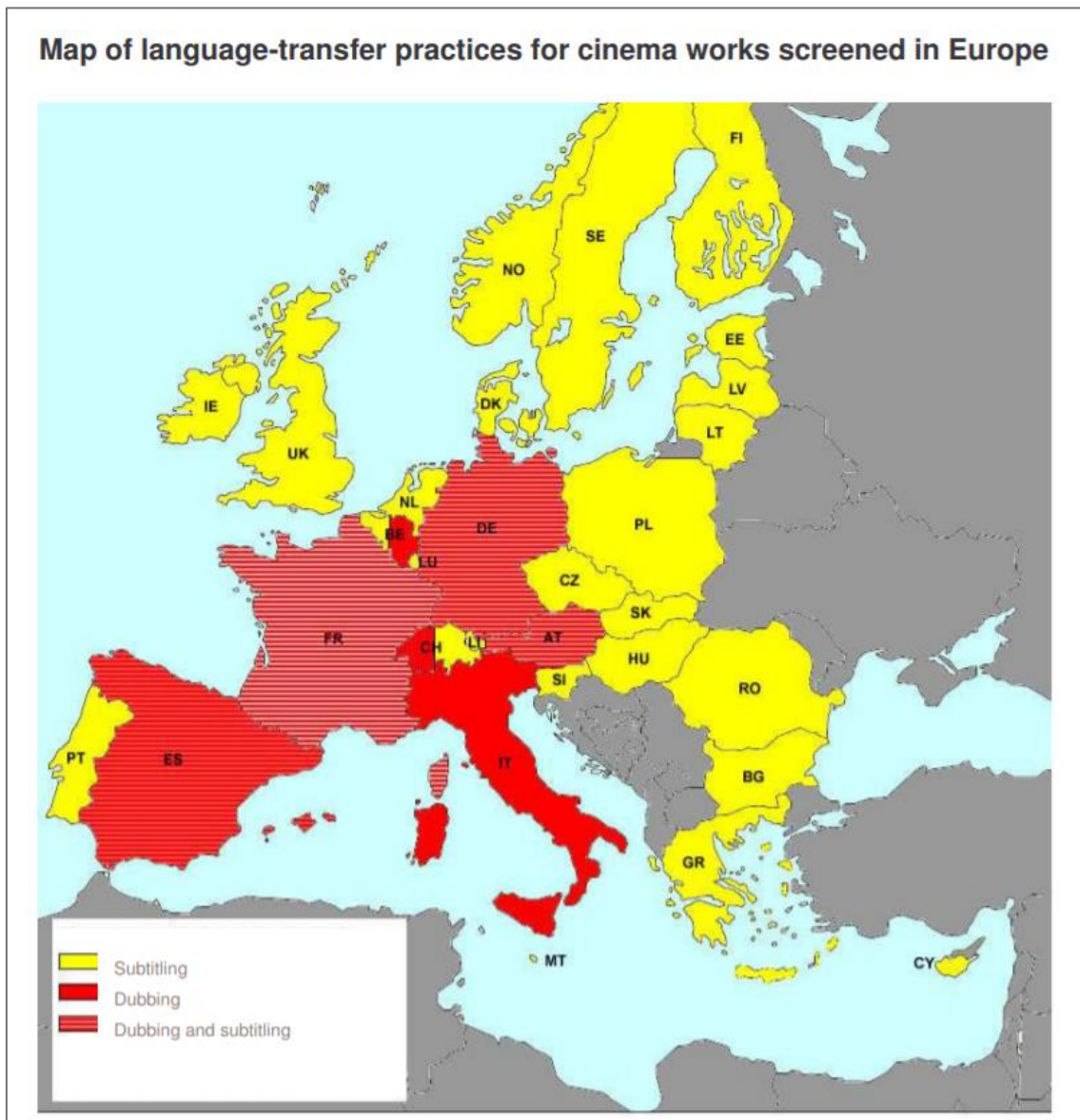


Figure 4. Media Consulting Group - Rapport Final 14/11/2007

As the map shows, the two blocks described by Chiaro (2007) are clear: Italy is the country where dubbing is the most successful mode of translation, followed by Spain, Germany and France. Portugal is the only country of this block, which uses only subtitling rather than dubbing, together with all the Scandinavian countries and Eastern Europe. The reasons for choosing between subtitling and dubbing are not purely historical but also economic: as we mentioned, dubbing is quite expensive, so wealthy countries prefer it on the other modality (Media Consulting Group 2007). Moreover, very small countries with a language that is not familiar around the world tend to use subtitling.

2 HUMOUR IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

The second chapter of my dissertation deals with the critical role of humour translation. This subject, which has been analysed by many scholars, (see for example Delabastita 1996, Chiaro 2005 and 2010, Vandaele 2013) is still researched and studied. In particular, wordplays and puns are the most challenging elements for a translator (Chiaro 2010). In the second part of this chapter, there will be mention of translating humour in subtitling and dubbing, in addition to a section concerning the difficulty in translating culture.

Defining humour may appear easy; it is what makes us laugh, what causes amusement or smiling reactions, and it is a simple and common human phenomenon (Vandaele 2013: 147). Over the past five centuries, several scholars have tried to give a definition of humour, but trying to put this phenomenon into specific boundaries means simplifying it too much (Chiaro 2014). Over the last ten years, thanks to the spread of new media and technologies and thanks to a new interest in positivity and well-being, humour became an attractive subject in several fields (Antonini 2010; Chiaro 2014). The common feeling in this period is that humour is now common online or in films, also because in this way it is possible to share whatever a person wants without necessarily revealing his/her identity (Chiaro 2018). Furthermore, thanks to social media, humour has changed; today everyone can generate content and post it on the Internet. Even if the principles of humour remain the same, the different technologies that we use change the ways we joke (Weitz 2016).

Translating humour presents several obstacles and this process is generally known as one of the most difficult tasks in any kind of translation (Antonini 2010). Considerable studies about AVT concern the rendering of humour both in dubbing and subtitling (Perego 2014: 10), since as mentioned above the two modalities have many differences, and also in translating humour there are some disparities.

One of the first to discuss the untranslatability of humour was Joseph Addison, an essayist of the eighteenth century. In particular, he considered the study of puns, the humorous use of a word that has several meanings or that sounds as another word. Particularly, Addison defined it as

A Conceit arising from the use of two Words that agree in the Sound but differ in the Sense. The only way to try a Piece of Wit, is to translate it into a different Language: If it bears the Test you may pronounce it true; but if it vanishes in the Experiment you may conclude it to have been a Punn (Addison 1711: 343)

A according to this scholar, a pun is characterized by untranslatability, or it cannot be defined as such (Chiaro 2014: 16 and Chiaro 2018).

A well-known feature of humour is that it usually provokes visible reactions, like laughter, smiles or at least minimal feedback, especially relevant to audiovisual translation (Vandaele 2013:149). By consequence, it is evident when the translator achieves only a mediocre translation, if no viewer understands the joke. Vandaele (2013: 148) identifies two main aspects that define humour, the so called “superiority theory” and the “incongruity theory”. The first one can be traced back to Ancient Greece, when Plato affirmed, “when we laugh at the ridiculous qualities of our friends we mix pleasure with pain (Plato 360-345 B. C, quoted by Chiaro 2018: 23). The feeling of superiority given by the social or physic distance from somebody naturally presents a cultural shade, where someone or something is ridiculed and where the speakers involved feel more important than the others, creating inclusion between them. In this case, a hierarchy or a situation of exclusion is created, making the “comprehenders” feel superior. As stated by Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 212-228), in this theory being superior means being superior to someone. “Incongruity theories” focus instead on humour as a contradiction of the cognitive schemes to whom we are used. The result is a comical reaction produced because the fact that the expectations of the listener are not fulfilled, in order to provoke a reaction of surprise (Vandaele 2013).

The origin of humour in audiovisual material can be traced back to the works of silent movie actors, such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. At the time, humour was expressed only physically so there were no problems of translation, even if also today we can notice recent comedy works where translation is not needed, such as the well-known Mr. Bean played by Rowan Atkinson (Chiaro 2014). However, a part from some rare exceptions, translating verbal humour is common, but still problematic. Zabalbeascoa (1996: 243) analyses humour in audiovisual texts distinguishing between three different planes based on the evaluation of priorities and restrictions. In the first plane, we notice a scale of importance, where at the top we find television comedy and joke-stories and in

the lower part, we find moments such as humour in Shakespeare's tragedies. A second plane, linked to the first one, is given by the level of comedy on a global scale (referring to the entire text) or locally (only in certain parts). If humour has a marginal importance in an entire text, it is possible that the translator does not consider it, in order to give importance to other priorities. On the other hand, if humour has a considerable importance and the jokes need to be translated in order for the text to make sense, humour will be a local priority of high rank. (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). The last level is based on equivalence; it is characterized by the need of the translation to be faithful to the source text or if an original joke should be replaced by a different one, more suitable for the target audience.

2.1 CATEGORIES IN HUMOUR

As mentioned above, humour is not just difficult to translate but also to classify, since it is subjective and there are no clear-cut categories (Minutella 2014: 68). Spanakaki (2007) clarified some ways that can be used to translate humour. The first one is wordplay, which Delabastita (1996) defined as:

the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) are used in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings (Delabastita 1996: 128)

He also specified four categories of puns that occur in this category: homonymy (when words have the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings); homophony (when two words are pronounced the same but with different spellings and meanings); homography (when words are spelled identically but have different meanings); and paronymy (with a small difference in spelling and sound). As well as wordplay, Spanakaki identifies allusions, which Leppihalme (1997: 6) defines as a series of uses of linguistic elements in order to convey an implicit meaning. Allusion can also be defined as humour which involves knowledge about the world that the listener has to share in order to understand the ambiguity (Ross 1998: 11). Allusions are often culture-bound, so the degree of comprehension among viewers of different cultures and languages may vary. A third tool to translate humour is verbal irony (Spanakaki 2007), which is a rhetorical

device, a disagreement or incongruity between what a person says and what a person understands (Singh 2012). Irony is usually found in situation of emphasis in a dramatic way, always giving a shade of humour, but the context in which irony appears always influences the relationships between words and actions. Context is essential to establish if something is amusing for the viewer or not. The incongruity theory (Ross 1998) states that

“humour is created out of a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke. This accounts for the most obvious feature of much humour: an ambiguity, or double meaning, which deliberately misleads the audience, followed by a punchline.” (Ross 1998: 7)

Although it is very difficult to define and to classify verbal humour (Vandaele 2010), Chiaro (1992: 7-10) affirms that there are some universal common denominators and some others that apply only to a small number of audiences. A subject which is often used is degradation, and it has several application: inferiority can be represented by people with disabilities or mentally sick. In several western societies, there is an inferior group for each country, such as a Belgian in France (Chiaro 1992); in Italy an often mocked minority is represented by the police, in particular the force of *carabinieri*. Others discriminated groups involve homosexuals and women in general.

Women have frequently been a target of verbal humour, figures such as wives and mothers in law are the usual target, even if from the growing influence of feminism, also men have become a target of puns (Chiaro 1992). It started especially with the third wave feminism, started in the early 1990s, and with the fourth wave feminism, which started in the 2010s³. This kind of humour takes the name of “postfeminist” (Chiaro 2018: 99) and it does not concern women (in)abilities, but rather the differences between male and female from a more balanced yet still ironic point of view. Directly linked to humour about men and women, it is possible to find another main subject of humour, which is sex; humour about this field changes according to different countries, but the “dirty joke” still is one of the favourite ones. Sex can be defined a taboo area, but which can be still mentioned, as well as death (Ross 1998: 63). Death is another delicate taboo subject, appearing to result shocking and offensive. Religion too, represents the last taboo area

³ “Third way feminism”, Wikipedia, last visited 7th December 2019;

and probably the most dangerous one (Ross 1998: 70). References to religion may naturally prove offensive and against the law in some case, for example in Britain, where a blasphemy law is currently in force (Ross 1998). Finally yet importantly, the absurd is another field of humour; talking objects and animals, or actions that go against the law of physics represent another common denominator in the world of humour.

Humour in general (and not only irony) is heavily conditioned by culture and time, a joke that can be funny for a certain person in a specific moment and part of the world may arouse complete indifference in another space-time context (Rollo 2010). Often humour give rise to different reactions among people with the same cultural background, so usually someone needs to share a common denominator in order to understand the same humour. As Nash (1985) states “Humour is not for babes, Martians, or congenital idiots. We share our humour with those who have shared our history and who understand our way of interpreting experience”. For these reasons, humour is often considered untranslatable, because of the loss of several elements in the target language. There are still some alternatives that translator have learnt to use throughout the years. When two cultures have some similar categories of humours, for example when it is based on degradation that has been mentioned before, the target of the joke of a country will have to be substituted with the underdog of the target language (Chiaro 1992). In this case, if in a film someone tells a joke about an Irishman, which especially in the past was the classic underdog in England, an Italian audience may have difficulties in understanding. In this case, the Irishman would probably become a *carabiniere*, as previously mentioned, facilitating the comprehension to the Italian viewer. However, as globalisation changed audiovisual translation over the years, the language of jokes changed too (Chiaro 2018).

2.2 TECHNIQUES IN TRANSLATING HUMOUR

Chiaro (2010) analysed different kinds of translation of verbal humour on the screen, distinguishing between four kinds of translation. In this analysis, humour is named VEH (verbally expressed humour) to indicate a linguistic construct created to obtain a humoristic effect. VEH elements can be considered the most difficult challenges for text translators; for the audiovisual translator the work becomes more complicated, because of the several constraints on the screen. As mentioned above, Chiaro (2010) studied for

four different ways to translate VEH. The first one is leaving it unchanged, not providing a translation, since the joke is still comprehensible for a foreign audience. The second one is the most difficult solution, and it consists in replacing the wordplay or the pun with a different one in the target language. This is probably the most satisfying solution for the translator, especially if the original humour is incomprehensible for the target country viewers (Chiaro 2010). A third solution is the replacement of the VEH with an idiomatic expression in the target language, while the last solution tends to remove and ignore the VEH, completely losing the sense of the joke. Ignoring the VEH may be due to an intentional choice of the translator or also to a missed recognition of the original humour (Chiaro 2010: 12)

Before deciding the method of translation, the translator also has to be able to identify the VEH cases, although humour is subjective and its perception varies according to the single person. Some people are more subjected to humour, they are easily amused, so if the translator is more open to humour it will be easy for him to recognize the cases. The translator also has to recognize incongruities and the different ranges of comedy, which are related to particular humoristic genres, so the act of the translation per se is only the last step of the process. During research about the difficulties that an audience may encounter, Antonini (2005) places verbally expressed humour and allusions in the middle between culture-specific references and language-specific references.

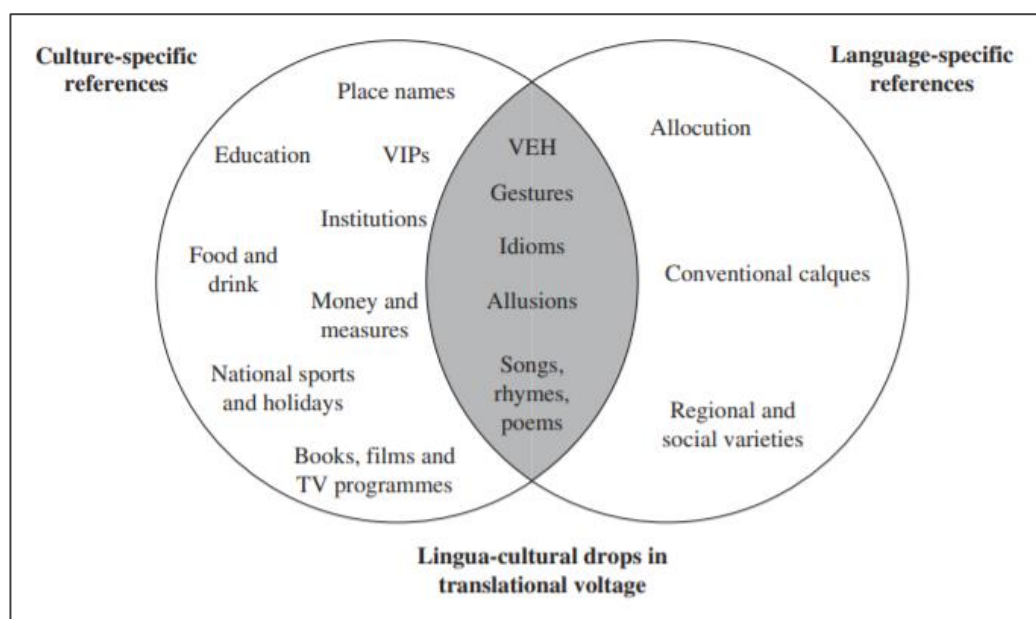


Figure 5. Lingua-cultural drops in translational voltage – Antonini (2005)

The figure above shows the reason why translating humour can be so difficult and most important, the risk that humoristic elements in the source language may not be understood in the target one. A translator may face several problems in this situation. In some cases, humour represents some constraint that cannot be ignored, and therefore translating audiovisual humour can be defined a full-fledged translation constraint (Pavesi 2005). Indeed, on the screen, humour is conveyed both verbally and visually, to the point that in some talk shows and television series the presence of the public or canned laughter underline the joke.

Culture plays a leading role in humour, Chiaro states (2006):

we can never be certain whether audiences appreciate the films in the same way from culture to culture. For example, watching the same film do Italian audiences laugh in the same place as British audiences? And does this depend on a different sense of humour or could it depend upon the translation [...] (Chiaro 2006)

Thus, Chiaro makes it clear that the incomprehension of humour in a film could depend on the sense of humour of the audiences with different cultural backgrounds, but also on the ability (or the inability) of the translator. Naturally, the sense of humour of the audience is not the crucial aspect; there are some factors that contribute to the quality in translation of the language play. The first one is the importance that a joke has in the text, whether it is recognizable or more subtle (Schröter 2010: 145), and as a result if the humour was intended or not. Other factors are the complexity of the language play, if the humour is particularly subtle and could be hard to understand even for target language speakers, it will become more incomprehensible for foreign viewers. A further aspect is the level of interaction between the wordplay and the non-verbal elements of the film. If the humour is closely related to the images, the translator will have to pay attention to be coherent (Schröter 2010: 148). We have then the level of accessibility, which is determined by the effort needed to understand the joke. All these features are naturally not measurable; it is impossible to quantify the level of how much the humour was intended or not by its authors, so there is not objectivity in these characteristics (Schröter 2010).

Today, humorous discourse is spread around the whole world thanks to the internationalization of culture (Chiaro 2018: 46), but when humour is linked to a visual

element on the screen the difficulties increase. The Italian translator often has to deal with some basic problems, for example, when an accent is used as a source of humour: in this case, it is necessary to choose another accent able to convey the same humoristic meaning, but there is the risk to transmit a different message, because of the different cultural backgrounds. An additional problem is the use of swear words, which are often used in humoristic contexts; in the target culture swear words may not be as acceptable as in the source one (Chiaro 2018). In conclusion, underestimating the translation of humour can lead to unsatisfactory results; often it represents an essential element in audiovisual products and the difficulty in translation is complex since it is closely bound to language and culture. There is still much to know about humour, and scholars as Chiaro, Vandaele and Delabastita have devoted several studies and analyses to this field (Chiaro 2018).

2.3 SUBTITLING HUMOUR

As mentioned above, translating humour presents several difficulties which can be overcome with different techniques (Chiaro 2010), but when it comes to translating wordplay and puns specifically with subtitles, additional elements come into play. Subtitling humour involves technical and linguistic restrictions that limit the translator, because of the constraints outlined before. This field has been analysed by several scholars (Chiaro 2005; Diaz Cintas and Remael 2007; Vandaele 2010), who took into account the cultural and linguistic challenges. The function of the subtitler, in this case, is to work at a cognitive level and try to be faithful at a logic level to the target text. This means that the subtitler should not deviate much from the original humour, but only enough to be clear to the viewer. Subtitling humour requires creativity, but most importantly, the ability to establish priorities on the part of the translator, especially when time is limited as in the case of subtitles (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). In this case, it may sometimes be necessary to evaluate the importance of humorous passages. Especially in sit-coms, some jokes have a marginal importance, so it could be necessary to ignore some passages, especially when the translation is particularly problematic (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). In any case, the level of tolerance in translating humorous culture-bound terms varies according to the country, and a certain audience can be

expected to understand humour in a different way in relation to a different target audience (Chiaro 2005).

Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007) identified seven types of humour that are used in audiovisual material: the first one is international jokes, which refer to another country. This kind of joke refers to a subject that is sufficiently well-known in the target culture, for example famous tourist monuments, well-known politicians or political events. The two scholars include in this category all the jokes referring to body functions, which are usually recognizable at an international level (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). Usually this kind of joke does not cause subtitling problems usually and the translation for this type of humour is completely faithful to the source text. The second type of humour identified is national jokes referring to a national culture; this humour may be difficult to distinguish, since the border between national and international is often blurred (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). When talking about Halloween in humour, for example, we know that North-American fashions and films have exported this tradition to several parts of the world, such as Europe.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>“Now could you see her? She’s dead. Not only is she dead, she’s even been cremated. It’s not even Halloween”</p> | <p>Come puoi vederla? È morta. Non solo è morta, è stata anche cremate. E non è nemmeno Halloween.</p> |
|---|--|

Taken from the film *Manhattan Murder Mistry* (1993) (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007)

The example taken from the film *Manhattan Murder Mistry* directed by Woody Allen in 1993 (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007) includes a joke about Halloween. For many viewers there is no problem in understanding that Halloween is the night of the dead and zombies, but it is also probable that for a some viewers Halloween could represent just the “trick or treat” night for children, or even represent nothing at all. For this reason, the subtitler has to decide which categories include the different jokes so as to translate in a suitable way (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007).

A further kind of humour is represented by jokes depending on linguistic constructs; this type of humour has already been mentioned as VEH (Chiaro 2010) and it consists in puns and wordplay based on language. As previously stated, Delabastita

(1996) also distinguished between several types of lexical wordplays in order to facilitate the translation, but it is essential to recognize that all these forms appear in different combinations. The subtitler has to be able to identify the type and the intended function. Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007) identified that jokes reflecting a community's sense of humour, which consists in humour related to a particular cultural group (Zabalbeascoa 1996); this kind of humour is closely related to the cultural proximity of the countries, since if a nationality is well-known, it will be easier to understand a certain joke. Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007) then identify visual jokes, where the humour is directly linked to the facial expressions, gestures or scene of the visual element. In this case, humour is not conveyed through words, but just through images, actions of the protagonists who do not speak but only act.

A typical product that bases its humour on the visual element is *Mr. Bean* (Chiaro 2014), or, tracing back to its origin, Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. In this case, the work of the translator has a minor role. Together with visual jokes we find aural jokes. These two kinds of humour have been associated since they occasionally require translation, in fact aural jokes usually rely on sounds and noises that are already meaningful and do not need a clarification (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007). Finally, they identified complex jokes, which occurs when two of the previously mentioned types are combined together. Aural humour can be associated to international jokes, in such a case the translator has to be able to recognize the several types and decide how to convey the meaning.

Besides being able to recognize different kinds of humour, it is also important to understand the meaning inherent the scene. Kostovčik (2009) has analysed the importance of producing humoristic reactions throughout subtitling, stressing the need to “capture the mood and evoke in the target text audience the same or similar feelings to those experienced by the source text audience”. Attention, therefore, is on the effect that the humour has on the viewer rather than reporting faithfully the lexical features.

The translation of humour has been deeply analysed by Attardo (2002), who developed the six Knowledge Resource, with the aim of creating a hierarchy of steps to follow when translating humour. At the top of the hierarchy, we find Script Opposition, while the least is Language. Script Opposition is defined as the way in which key frames of reference appear in a joke (Robson . In such a case, every change could modify the

understanding of the wordplay; consequently, it should remain untouched. Script Opposition refers to themes such as the real and the unreal, the normal and abnormal, what is possible and what is not.

The first step to follow according to Attardo is substituting the original joke with a literal translation in the target language (Attardo 2002). If the outcome is meaningless, the next phase consists in focusing on the Narrative Strategy. In this case, any joke is considered as a part of the narrative organization (a dialogue, a riddle etc.) and translated as such (Attardo 2001). However, not every humoristic element is narrative; we can also find dramatic humour, for example. In such circumstances, the translator will substitute the Target of the humour, replacing the it with something more understandable. If the Situation of the joke does not exist in the target language, the next solution is replacing it with a comprehensible one. If any of these methods do not provide a satisfying translation, the entire logical mechanism will be changed. The crucial aspect, Script Opposition will be sacrificed in order to obtain a good humoristic element (Attardo & Raskin 1991). Naturally, the higher the position of the two correspondent jokes, the similar they will be considered.

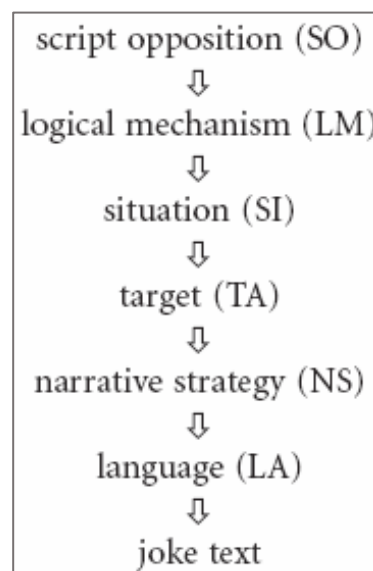


Figure 6. Attardo's Knowledge Resources Parameters (2002)

Moreover, it is crucial to pay attention to the source of humour: some jokes may come just from visual elements, some may origin from the interplay between visual and

spoken elements or be completely independent of the images. If the translator does not consider the source, the translation may in clash with the visual content, or with the logic of the audiovisual product (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007).

As mentioned above, difficulties in translating humour are mainly due to cultural references: the translator should be able to recognize the cultural elements, and to understand why they are considered a source of humour (Leppihalme 1996). To do so, the subtitler should be competent and bicultural, in order to recognize the comic factors (Leppihalme 1996). Nevertheless, several strategies to face cultural problems have been developed by scholars (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007, Davies 2003, Pedersen 2005, Katan 1999 and 2014), and they will be analysed in the next subchapters.

In conclusion, this section introduced some studies in the field of translating humour in subtitling. Several scholars, as Chiaro, Leppihalme and Attardo, tried to analyse the technical problems and tried to provide some solutions to achieve a suitable translation. As Antonini affirms in her study (2005), the quality of multimedia translation could be of advantage to additional studies, possibly involving different target audiences subjected to subtitling. All these scholars agree about the necessity of creativity in translation. In the case of subtitling in audiovisual translation, the constraints of this modality help to make this kind of translation problematic.

2.4 DUBBING HUMOUR

When translating humour, it is common for audiences and film critics to disapprove of the choices taken by translators (Chiaro 2010). When comparing the dubbed and the subtitled version of the same product and, more specifically, of the same sections, it is inevitable that one will notice some differences (Bucaria 2008). Considering dubbing, there are several complications that have to be considered when translating humour. In this case, audiovisual jokes are conveyed orally, and they frequently rely on the source culture. Spoken language is likely to present unfamiliar expressions for a the target audience, and it can represent a challenge for the translator. In the previous section about humour in audiovisual translation, different methods of translation have been described together with several translation proposals (for example Chiaro 2010, Spananaki 2007,

Delabastita 1997 etc.). Therefore, the focus of this section will be on the main challenges of translating for dubbing.

In the case of dubbing, where the main communicative modality is audio, a common source of humour is represented by dialects and accents (Arampatziz 2012). Language varieties are often a way to define characters and to create humoristic situations, and naturally, the task of the translator is that of trying to find a good solution (Arampatziz 2012). The scholar also talks about “prefabricated orality”, referring to non-standard varieties used to provide additional information, which may be useful to the comprehension. More specifically, the prefabricated orality consists in speeches which may seem spontaneous to the audience, but that are actually studied and adapted. As Baños-Piñero and Chaume (2009) affirm:

The challenge does not lie so much in trying to imitate spontaneous conversation, but in selecting specific features of this mode of discourse that are widely accepted and recognised as such by the audience (Baños-Piñero and Chaume 2009)

Therefore, the essential aim is not that of translating the dialogues in a logical and in the simplest way possible, but trying to recreate a natural conversation, in order to involve people as much as possible (Baños-Piñero & Chaume 2009). Translating language varieties often represents a thorny issue for the translator, and it is generally translated in a neutral way, due to dubbing constraints (Ranzato 2014). Vulgar language is part of this issue, too: it seems to be a quite unexplored area, probably because of the embarrassment that such a subject causes (Ranzato 2014). The translation of obscene language in films and television is generally under the control of translation commissioners who, according to the country and the modality, decide what extent the vulgarity should appear. Some countries tend to censor vulgar language and television appears to be less vulgar than films. A typical example of changing vulgarity in the dubbed version can be found in the film *Back to the Future* (1985), where translators probably judged the literal Italian translation of the word “butthead” too rude, and consequently it has been translated as “pidocchio”.

| | |
|---|--|
| Biff: “Who are you calling butthead, butthead?” | Biff: “Chi hai chiamato pidocchio, pidocchio?” |
|---|--|

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

The essential characteristic that dubbed humour should have is being comprehensible and realistic. In most cases, humour in films or television, especially comedies and sitcoms, has to reflect realistic situations, representing society and natural characteristics of human beings (Arampatzis 2012). As a consequence, the final product has to be faithful to real life, or otherwise the viewer will notice the unnatural language.

On the other hand, Zabalbeascoa (1996) maintains that the translator represents a restriction for dubbing comedy, since he/she may have some background differences, in culture, traditions or approaches to jokes. It may also happen that the translator applies some specific strategies that are more suitable to other types of translation (Zabalbeascoa 1996). Zabalbeascoa (1996: 248) suggests paying attention to the factors that could modify the final product and that could be misunderstood by the translator. Unless the translator is bicultural, it is almost impossible that a person has equal knowledge of every aspect of another culture. In particular, he recommends being careful about four aspects that he considers essential: specialization, recognition, teamwork and suitable tools.

Concerning specialization, if a genre is highly specialized and the translator does not know well the field of the genre, its lexicon and how to use it, there is the possibility that the translation is inadequate. If the translator is not completely aware of all the differences between the two cultures, the reception of humour and cultural specific elements, the result could be a poor translation. Moreover, the kind of humour changes also according to the multimedia product; for example, when translating comedy for television the priorities are doing well in popularity ratings and achieving fast popularity. In the case of comedy at the opera, the situation will be different as well, and for this reason, the translator should also be confident with the modality that he/she works with (Zabalbeascoa 1996).

A further factor is recognition, or the fact that the role of the translator was usually underestimated and underpaid (Gambier & Ramos Pinto 2018). When Zabalbeascoa presented these factors the role of the translator was often marginal, so the dubbing translator tended to use a standard strategy, rather than making the best translation choice. The main reason is that he/she did not want to risk, so the translator often ended up with translating literally what was said in the source text, even if it was not the best translating

solutions (Zabalbeascoa 1996). The current situation for translator has definitely improved, because the role of the translator is today more relevant and influential.

A third element is teamwork; naturally, if all the responsibility for the final product belongs to a single person, he/she will be less likely to propose an interesting solution. Zabalbeascoa (1996: 250) suggests joining native-speakers, translators and experts in script writing, in order to make everyone work at the same translation. With teamwork, the outcome would probably be a complete translation, integrated with all the element of the audiovisual product. Today the situation is not unreal: the world of audiovisual translation is increasing and some professional centres are emerging in big cities, such as Los Angeles and London (Diaz Cintas 2003). Group of translators have the possibility to access to all the information they need in order find realise a satisfactory translation.

The last factor suggested by Zabalbeascoa (1996: 250) about dubbing humour is the combination of suitable tools: he refers to reference books, specialized texts and databases. He suggested that every translator should be provided of every useful tools, not only to realise a good work but also to be faster. He/she should be also provided of a “specialized in-house stylebook”, which should include all the guidelines given by the client. Naturally, today translators are provided of several tools, as corpora, specialized websites, online dictionaries and all they need to in order to realise a satisfying solution.

In conclusion, in both dubbing and subtitling it is possible to face several challenges. In the case of dubbing, scholars such as Zabalbeascoa (1996), Baños-Piñero and Chaume (2009) have analysed some factors that should be taken into consideration when translating, but all agree in considering the figure of the translator as crucial. The quality of translation often depends on the single translator and how much he/she wants and is allowed to distance the source text (Zabalbeascoa 1996); for this reason, Zabalbeascoa suggests working in teams.

One can affirm that it is not always possible to bridge the linguistic gaps, especially when specific factors of the source culture are part of the humour. When it is necessary to find a corresponding element in the target culture because there are features of the source culture, which may be incomprehensible to the viewers, the decision is up to the translator (Zabalbeascoa 1996). In the example below taken from the film *Back to the Future*, the translators needed a corresponding element of the American drink Tab,

since it was unknown in Italy. The substitution has been made with the well-known drink Fanta, changing the wordplay.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|---|---|
| Lou: “Are you gonna order something, kid?” | Lou: “Che ne diresti di ordinare qualcosa ragazzo?” |
| Marty: “Yeah, gimme a Tab”. | Marty: “Ah...Sì, dammi una Fanta.” |
| Lou: “Tab? I can’t give you a tab unless you order something” | Lou: “Fanta che? Vuoi della fantascienza da bere?” |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

3. DEFINING AND TRANSLATING CULTURE

The third chapter of my dissertation concerns culture and its role in audiovisual translation. As mentioned above, dealing with humour translation, translating without modifying the original meaning is one of the main issues of translation. When culture comes into play, it becomes more complicated. As previously stated, culture plays an important role in humour in audiovisual translation (Leppihalme 1996), and for this reason, it is important to identify the sources of humour linked to culture (Zabalbeascoa 1996). Culture is well-known to be untranslatable (Chiaro 2006) and in particular, Pedersen (2005) talks about “Extralinguistic Culture-bound reference” (ECR) defining it as:

[...] reference that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience (Pedersen 2005: 2)

ECRs are also referred to as realia, and they can be defined as features that are particularly related to the culture, history and traditions of a country. For this reason, they represent a problem in translation. Before talking about how to translate culture in audiovisual material, first we need to define culture and see different ways in which scholars classify it. Katan (1999) affirms that the culture we talk about is not visible, but it is something that everyone has, an internal acquisition that comes by living and growing up in a culture and developing features like language, values and beliefs that are part of it.

As Robinson (1992) says, first language acquisition is a widely discussed subject, but first culture acquisition is a somewhat neglected topic although still important, especially when compared to second culture acquisition. In particular, she analyses the difficulty of dealing with a different culture. First, she claims that the perception that people have of another culture is always subjective (Robinson 1992). Every person who comes into touch with a new culture, belongs to a different cultural background, so when a new culture is assimilated, it will be inevitably influenced by their own cultural experiences. Another interesting feature is that a person normally tends to notice when

something (ideas, habits or clothing) is different; all different elements that emerge are called “salient cues” (Robinson 1992), and this is quite a normal tendency in humans.

However, this tendency to look for difference lays the foundation for stereotyping. Stereotypes emerge if a person bases the first impression of another culture on very little information; in this case, Robinson provides three possible solutions to remedy these issues. The first solution suggested is looking for similarities between the two cultures. Going through similarities can be a good point of departure, in order to face the differences that are causing problems. The second step (Robinson 1992) is empathising with the second culture, for example by reflecting on the stereotypes that people attribute to that culture. The last strategy is the use of ethnography; it is suggested to use ethnographic interview, which is an informal conversation in order to observe human reactions and thoughts, useful to arise feelings and reactions on the person interviewed.

3.1 The Iceberg Theory

One of the most famous images that have been realised concerning culture is the Iceberg Theory, which was developed by Edward T. Hall in the 1950s (Katan 1999) and then explored by Weaver in 1969 (Hanley 1999). There are many similar versions of this theory, used for many years to describe the nature of culture, which can be compared to an iceberg. Part of this iceberg is under the water, symbolising the way we are unaware that several elements influence our culture. Indeed, most of it is undetected and ignored, although every element contained in the iceberg has a role in communication (Hanley 1999). The visible part includes elements of folklore, for example food and typical clothing; in the hidden part it is possible to find the concept of faith and in leadership, the definition of love and friendship, or the conversational patterns in various social contexts. The theory developed by Hall is useful to understand the level of complication in translating cultural references.

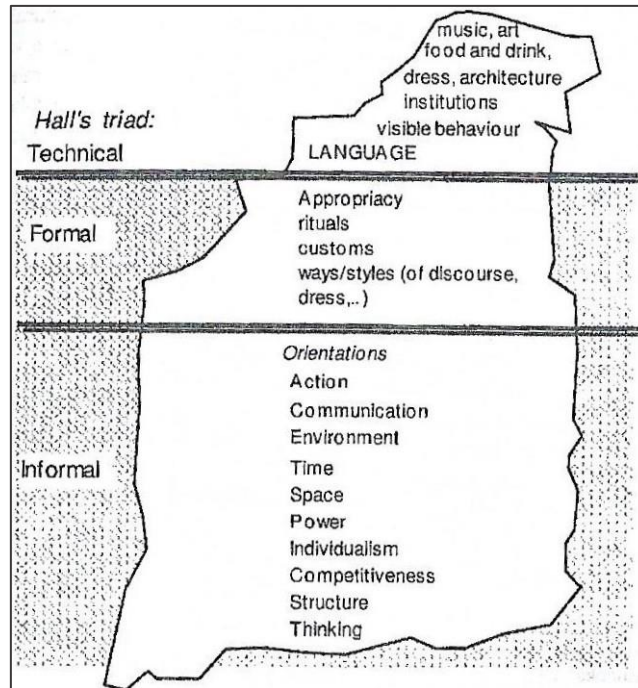


Figure 7. Hall's Icerberg Theory (Brake, Medina-Walker, Walker 1995)

As it is possible to notice in the image above, the iceberg is divided into three main classes: technical culture, formal and informal culture. For this reason, the figure is also known as “Hall’s Triad” (Katan 1999). The first class, technical culture, is defined as communication at the level of science. It defines everything that can be measured and that does not have a dual meaning, at this level we find visible behaviours, food and drink, institutions and music (Katan 1999). Communication at a technical level can be dealt with experts and since it has scientific bases, there is only one right answer. The second level defined by Hall is formal culture, and it includes rituals, customs and traditions. As Katan (1999) affirms, we are not completely aware of the routines of life until there is a change in them. Consequently, every element of this part is right below the line of the water. The third part of the iceberg consists in informal culture; it includes elements such as communication, perception of time and space, individualism, competitiveness and many others. Since these aspects are considered as informal, according to Hall there are no rules that concern the elements in this class. They are not learnt or taught, but acquired by living in a culture.

Throughout this analysis, it is possible to understand that culture is extremely complex, the several analyses that scholars such as Hall and Weaver carried out more than

twenty years ago have had repercussions in the study of culture and translation. Other scholars, Brake, Medina-Walker and Walker developed in 1995 an evolution of the Iceberg Theory (Katan 1999), and many other scholars such as Katan (1999 and 2014) are still continuing their studies in this field. Although more than sixty years have passed since Hall proposed his iceberg mode, his theory is still valid and taken into consideration today.

3.2 Katan's logical levels in culture

As already mentioned, culture involves a wide range of subjects in several fields, which are moreover constantly influenced by a series of factors (Katan 1999). Indeed, the set of cultures that characterise the human being is the result of the differences between and the factors of each environment. Needless to say, these differences affect every field, including that of audiovisual translation. Katan (1999) distinguishes some of the environments that influence the perception of cultures. Naturally, it is almost impossible to classify and determine all these elements; culture is not only difficult to define but it is also composed of so many aspects and levels that trying to limit it to a finite number of elements would be too reductive and certainly inaccurate.

The former group of elements defined by Katan is the Physical Environment, probably the scope that has changed the most in the years. The role of spatial behaviour has been deeply analysed in the cultural context (Aiello & Thompson 1980), especially by Hall (1966, 1990), but still this relationship is complex and constantly changing. Until more or less the 1980s, physical barriers such as rivers, oceans and mountain ranges also represented cultural barriers (Katan 1999). Moreover, the natural environment not only represents a natural divider but it also influences the people's cultural and social practices of the people. Naturally, it is almost impossible to understand the origin of a single cultural phenomenon because of a single geographical feature, since it comes from a long process of events (Aiello & Thompson 1980). However, we can affirm that thanks to globalisation and the demolition of physical barriers, this kind of division is today vanishing (Katan 1999). Thanks to the development of transportation, trade can be much faster, communication is instantaneous and with the birth of television and then of the Internet, all homes were linked.

Linked to the Physical Environment, Katan (1999) includes the Ideological Environment, which involves the role of religion and ethnic belief that divide the world.

This may represent a barrier too, together with Climate. The environment involves all the senses, and not just only sight and hearing; we perceive information of a culture also thanks to the weather (Katan 1999). Space also has a role in the definition of culture, the presence or the absence of it (Hall 1982 in Katan 1999). The meaning of private space may vary according to cultural groups, some are more open than others are, and give a different connotation to physical space needs. Mediterranean cultures are more willing to reduce this space, while Asian or Northern cultures prefer to increase it (Katan 1999).

Clothing and Food are usually defined as first signs to understand a person's culture. The different conception of formal and informal style is one of the many differences that a culture may present, together with fabrics and brands. In addition, cultural food habits define who a person is; culinary traditions are often the first contact that a person has of another culture (Goyan Kittler, Sucher & Nahikian-Nelms 2004), and it is one of the main elements that influences perception of a culture. A further element, which is still part of Physical Environment that affect a culture, is Temporal Setting. The conception of time varies from culture to culture; Moreover, especially in Western cultures, time is classified according to big changes, for example "the roaring twenties" (Katan 1999).

The second group of elements that affect a culture and its perception is Behaviour. Each culture has its own rules about behaviour; rules about what is right or wrong have always existed and they have changed over the years. In addition, etiquette has a decisive role in the constitution of a culture: several attitudes that may seem "normal" in some cultures, can become rude or inappropriate in others (Katan 1999). This is particularly important in audiovisual products, which are made to entertain, and it is always necessary to make sure that none of the elements, especially humour, proves offensive for the target culture.

A further factor, which has considerable importance in the audiovisual channels, is the Style and Channel of the Language (Katan 1999). There are different interpretations depending on the way a message is conveyed. Katan gives particular emphasis to factors that affect interpretation: the formality of the occasion and the nature of the audience; the importance and the function of the message; and the physical and social distance between

the speakers. Furthermore, beliefs and values may vary from people to people, and so they have to be taken into consideration too. In conclusion, the perception and the building of culture is affected by countless factors; in audiovisual translation it is essential to pay attention to how cultural elements are conveyed to the target audience, since they may appear too strange or even offensive. Naturally, in the case of domestication, several of these elements have to be adapted to the new culture, in order to be clear for the viewers.

3.3 Culture: an extra linguistic element?

After having explored the polysemiotic nature of culture, it is necessary to describe the methods that can be used to translate culture-specific concepts in practice (Ordudari 2007). As previously mentioned, cultural expressions that have to be translated are also called Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) (Pedersen 2005). In this case, we have to take into consideration the translation of cultural elements in the field of audiovisual translation. When dealing with culture for this area, it is necessary to remember that Pedersen considers cultural elements as *extralinguistic* elements (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007 and Pedersen 2005 and 2011), since language has a marginal part. In order to understand the difference between linguistic and extralinguistic nature of cultural elements, it is necessary to make a distinction between the two. Linguistic cultural references are closely linked to different aspects of language, such as idioms or metaphors; on the other hand, ECRs are related to the aspects that do not belong to the field of language, but that refer to the real world (Mustapić 2016). Pedersen (2005) considers these elements as entities and processes, which have an extralinguistic reference element, such as food, people or customs. The degree of separation between language and culture is still being discussed by scholars. Indeed, Chiaro (2009) underlines that culture-bound references are not exclusively visual, but have always a linguistic nature. According to Kramsch (1998), verbal and non-verbal aspects make up culture, and language expresses cultural reality. Culture, together with language impose a pressure on nature, which is defined as everything that was born instinctively. Culture and language form what today people call socialization and acculturation (Kramsch 1998).

In any case, culture-bond references present some difficulties in translation; concerning the classification of ECRs, several scholars have tried to conduct a complete categorization, without success (Mustapić 2007). Three of them will be taken into consideration, because of their difference, to show how the classification of ECRs may vary. The first one is Nedergaard-Larsen’s taxonomy, which classifies ECRs into four categories: history, geography, society and culture (Mustapić 2007). The history category involves events and people; the geography involves anything connected to places and environments, meteorology and biology, while the social-cultural aspect involves economy, customs and society organization.

On the other hand, Ranzato (2014: 222) proposes a classification of these cultural references, taking as a reference point the relationship between source audience and target audience. She considers a distinction between realistic and intertextual references. Realistic references concern real people (still living or not), objects and events that are part of our reality, such as food and celebrations. Intertextual references, as the name explains, are “explicit or indirect allusions to other texts, which create a bond between the translated texts and other literary, audiovisual or artistic text” (Ranzato 2014).

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Realistic references</i> | |
| SC references | Elements not exported outside the SC |
| Intercultural references | SC elements absorbed by the TC |
| Third culture references | References to cultures other than the SC contained in the ST |
| Target culture references | References to the target culture contained in the ST |
| <i>Intertextual references</i> | |
| Overt intertextual allusions | Explicit references to other works |
| Covert intertextual allusions | Implicit references to other works |
| Intertextual macroallusions | The whole text is a reference or contains various references to another text |
| All of the above can be either: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbal or nonverbal cultural references - Synchronous as asynchronous cultural references | |

Table 2. Classification of culture specific references (Ranzato 2014)

The table shows the classification of culture specific references; among the realistic references, it is possible to find elements that have not been exported outside the source culture, elements that have been exported and then absorbed by the target culture, and references to the target culture contained in the source culture (Ranzato 2014). In the intertextual “references examples”, there are implicit and explicit references to other works and intertextual macroallusions, which means that the whole text contains some references to another text. Both types of intertextual and realistic references can be verbal or nonverbal as well as synchronous and asynchronous. Ranzato (2014), therefore, proposes this classification to analyse the kind of cultural references used in a certain audiovisual product, in order to identify and translate them in a suitable way.

Similarly, Ramière (2006) maintains that in an audiovisual product, language and culture are deeply related, but the tendency to make the product (film, television series) as realistic as possible, makes the notions of foreignization and domestication crucial. Pedersen (2005) agrees with the importance of the role of the two notions explored by Venuti (1995) and adds that it is preferable to talk about “rendering” culture, rather than “translating”.

In the next section, some ECR translation strategies defined by Pedersen (2005) will be analysed. He proposed a model with some translation solutions, ordering them from the most foreignizing to the most domesticating. Pedersen (2011) divides ECRs into transcultural, monocultural and infracultural. The transcultural aspect of ECRs is provided by elements that do not represent a translation problem in the target culture, for example names of worldwide famous personalities. Monocultural ECRs contain recognizable elements in the Source Culture, which may not be understandable in the target one. Lastly, infracultural ECRs are linked to the Source Culture, but in a very specialized way. In this case, the ECR cannot be understood not only by the Target Culture, but also by some of the Source Culture viewers (Pedersen 2011).

3.4 Strategies for cultural references translation

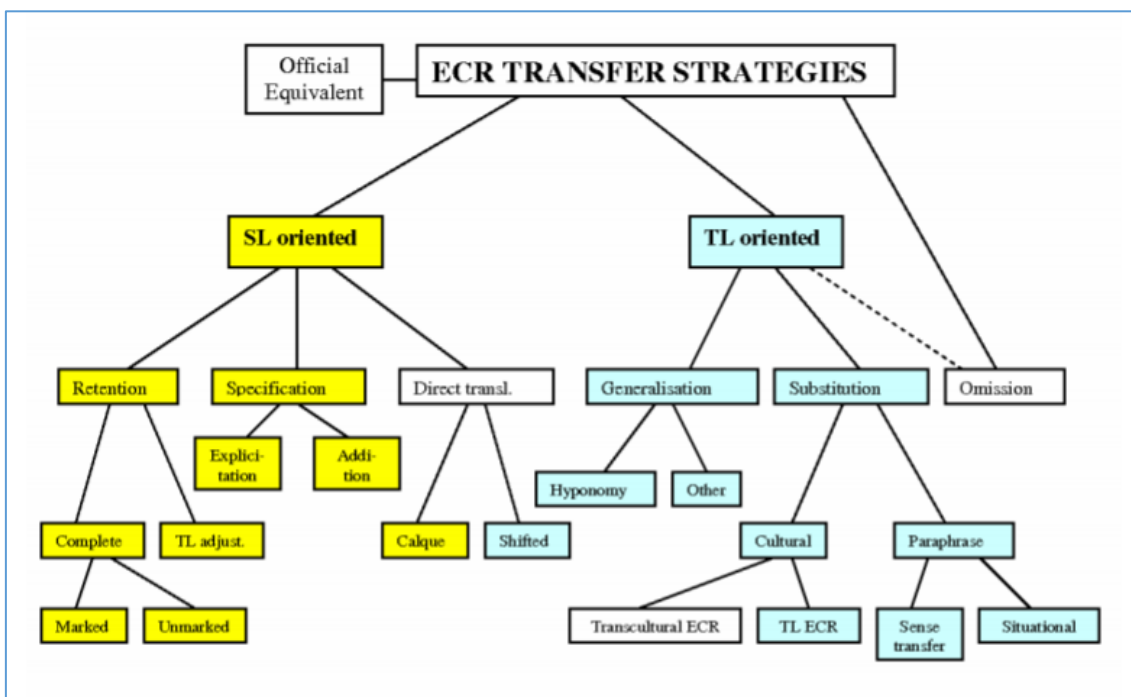


Figure 8. Pedersen ECR Transfer Strategies (2005: 4)

As already mentioned, translating extralinguistic cultural references is one of the most difficult task that a translator experiences, since they usually have not an equivalent and they represent some exclusive feature of a culture.

The figure above shows a map of the different strategies to translate Extralinguistic Culture bound References (Pedersen 2005). The scholar has given an important contribution to the translation of ECRs, paying particular attention to the term reference in audiovisual translation. Every translation realised in polysemiotic text types is closely related to context, since these kinds of texts contain more context than other kinds of text, such as literal ones. Pedersen explains that the following strategies are particularly suitable for the subtitling modality, since, as we already mentioned, it is completely free from lip constraints which add difficulties for the final translation of the ECR. These approaches are conceived so as to transfer the culture references from the Source Language to the Target Language; however, not every strategy involves a translation (Pedersen 2005).

The first scholar who has distinguished between two main classes of strategies is Toury (1981); he distinguished the source language oriented ones and the target language oriented. Pedersen re-elaborated them specifying several strategies of translation. First, Separated from all the other strategies, it is possible to notice the Official Equivalent (Pedersen 2005): this class is separated because it is neither target language oriented nor source oriented (Lepre 2015). A typical Official Equivalent occurs when proper names are translated in a way that becomes official and definite, for example the translation of Topolino for Mickey Mouse (Lepre 2015). Although Pedersen separates the Official Equivalent from the other strategies, this approach is closely linked to cultural Substitution, a further strategy that will be seen shortly. An Official Equivalent can be created by someone who has a kind of authority in a certain field (Pedersen 2007), such as in diplomatic spheres. On the other hand, an Official Equivalent can also be created thanks to entrenchment: if an ECR is translated always in the same way in the Target Language, an Official Equivalent can be established (Pedersen 2007). A typical example of Official Equivalent born through entrenchment is Mickey Mouse, who became Topolino. Indeed, the Italian editor Mario Nerbini, started printing cartoons about Mickey Mouse four years after Walt Disney, in 1932. However, Nerbini was not satisfied with the original name, so he named the mouse Topo Lino, considering it catchier for an Italian public (Murphy 2017). When the editor got the rights from Disney, the name of Topolino was already popular and he could not change it, so he decide to maintain it (Murphy 2017).

3.4.1 Source Language oriented translation strategies

The source language oriented strategies involves choices which are closely connected to the original language, it includes the strategies of Retention, Specification and Direct Translation (Pedersen 2005). Retention means conservation; in such a case, the ECR is kept also in the target language, especially if it is something likely to be known by the target audience. Naturally, the ECR may be slightly modified and adapted to the new language.

| | |
|---|--|
| Marty: “Right, gimme a Pepsi Free” | Marty: “Ok, dammi una Pepsi Sens” |
| Barman: “You wanna a Pepsi, pall, you’re gonna pay for it.” | Barista: “Senza che? Se vuoi dire senza pagare hai sbagliato porta.” |

Chart 11. Taken from *Back to The Future* (1985) directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale.

In this scene of the movie *Back to the Future*, it is possible to notice a case of Retention with a change in the ECR. In this scene, the protagonist has just arrived in 1955 and he enters in a bar, completely lost. He orders a Pepsi Free, but since in 1955 it did not exist yet, the barman thinks that he is ordering a Pepsi without paying. Indeed, the barman understands that he want a Pepsi for free, and not free from sugar. In Italy, the American drink was already well-known, so it has been left in the Italian translation, with a small change. Since it was necessary to convey the meaning that the protagonist wanted the drink without paying, “Pepsi Free” became “Pepsi Sens”.

The second strategy proposed by Pedersen (2015) is Specification. It is less frequently used in audiovisual translation, since it consists in leaving the ECRs untouched in the target text, but explaining the meaning. Especially in literary texts, it is often possible to find some footnotes explaining an acronym or a particular term (Lepre 2015); it can happen also in audiovisual translation, but it is usually found in the subtitling modality between brackets. The Specification approach can be effectuated in two ways: the first one, Explication, means clarifying the meaning of the expression, for example by writing explicitly words that are part of an acronym if it may result not clear in the target text (Pedersen 2005 and Lepre 2015). The second Explication modality is Addition, which consists in adding some details to help the comprehension of the audience. This usually happens when some figures, such as politicians or athletes of the source language country, are nominated in a specific scene. In such a situation, it can happen that his or her role is added before the proper name, in order to clarify why the person is famous (Pedersen 2005).

The third source language oriented strategy is Direct Translation, which has two subgroups: calque and shifted direct translation. Calque is a special kind of borrowing, it happens when a language borrows an expression that is then literally translated (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995). The two scholars also affirm that it may happen that some calques become officially part of the target language and that the target audience became used to

it (Vinay & Dalbernet 2000). A typical example of calque from English into Italian is given by the translation of the sports names, such as “pallavolo” and “pallacanestro” from the English “volleyball” and “basketball” (Cappuzzo 2008). In addition to calque, Direct Translation also presents Shifted Direct Translation: in this case, Pedersen (2005) refers to the concepts that are common to the target audience and culture, and for this reason this class is situated in the middle between source and target oriented language translation (Salumahaleh & Mirzayi 2014).

3.4.2 Target Language oriented translation strategies

As it is possible to notice in the figure above, among the target oriented transfer strategies, it is possible to find three different classes: Generalisation, Substitution and Omission, which are divided in multiple subcategories (Pedersen 2005). Generalisation involves the notion of hyponymy; this semantic relation refers to a word or phrase whose semantic field is contained in its hypernym, which define the “class” of the given word. Specifically, Generalisation means substituting the ECR, which refers to something specific, with something more general (Pedersen 2005, Salumahaleh & Mirzayi 2014).. This technique has been analysed as Katan (1999) as well, with the name of “chunking up”. This strategy is used to transform specific expressions into more generic ones, in order to result more inclusive with different cultures (Katan 1999). It is possible to notice this technique in a scene of the film film *Back to the Future*. After meeting the young version of his dad, the protagonist Marty follows him around the town, until he notices him on the top of a tree with some binoculars, spying a girl in her room. Marty is astonished and respectively in the English and Italian version, he says:

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Marty: He’s a Peeping Tom. | Marty: Mio padre è un guardone. |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In the original version, Marty defines his father a Peeping Tom, referring to the character associated with Lady Godiva, which is a common way to describe a *voyeur*. In

the Italian translation, the audience would probably have had difficulties understanding the meaning of the expression, so the translator opted for a more generic “guardone”.

A further Target Language oriented strategy is Substitution, and it simply consists in the replacement of the expression with a different one (Pedersen 2005). This strategy involves two types, Cultural substitution and Paraphrase. The former is used when the ECR used in the source language is unknown or would not be completely comprehensible for the target audience. The strategy is also called “cultural substitution by transcultural ECR” (Pedersen 2007) and it involves the standardisation of the translation. The audience gets in touch with a more common and more familiar ECR. However, it may be argued that this strategy presents a credibility gap (Pedersen 2007), since the ECR in the source text and the one in the target text are completely different; for this reason, the translator is somehow lying to the audience. On the other hand, the translator is helping the audience, in order to make them enjoy the audiovisual product without comprehension problems.

In this instance, *Back to the Future* offers an example that has already been mentioned analysing the concept of domestication.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|---|---|
| Marty: Calvin, why do you keep calling me Calvin? | Marty: Levis, ma perchè continui a chiamarmi Levis? |
| Lorraine: Well, that’s your name, isn’t it? Calvin Klein. It’s written all over your underwear. Oh, I guess they call you Cal, huh? | Lorraine: Levis è il tuo nome, no? Levis Strauss. Ce l’hai scritto dappertutto, anche sulle mutandine. Oh, forse ti chiamano Lev. |

Chart 13. Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

As mentioned above, in this scene the brand Calvin Klein is substituted with Levis Strauss. Probably, the translator judged the brand still not well known in Italy, so they chose to substitute it with Levis, which was already well known in the 1980s. Naturally, when a substitution occurs, the audience is not aware since it is not evident (Pedersen 2005). On the other hand, when the ECR is substituted and the cultural sense is lost, we talk about paraphrase (Pedersen 2005).

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|---|---|
| Linda: Yeah, well, I still don't understand what Dad was doing in the middle of the street. Lorraine: "What was it, George, <u>birdwatching</u> ?" | Linda: Sì, lo so. Però ancora devo capire cosa ci faceva papà in mezzo alla strada. Lorraine: "Com'è successo George? <u>Guardavi gli uccellini, vero?</u> " |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In this scene, the specific English term "birdwatching" has been substituted with the more general "guardare gli uccellini". The reason why the translator decided to substitute the English term is probably due to the fact that this sport was still quite unknown in the 1980s. Today, the term "birdwatching" is well-known and probably would not have been translated in a modern film. Paraphrase can also be Situational; this kind of strategy is often used in puns when "every sense of the Source Target ECR is completely removed, and replaced by something that fits the situation, regardless of the sense" (Pedersen 2005).

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|--|---|
| Lou: Are you gonna order something, kid? Marty: "Yeah, gimme a Tab". Lou: Tab? I can't give you a tab unless you order something | Lou: Che ne diresti di ordinare qualcosa ragazzo? Marty: Ah...Sì, dammi una Fanta. Lou: Fanta che? Vuoi della fantascienza da bere? |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

This is an example of Situational Paraphrase, since the centre of this dialogue is a pun, it has been necessary to change it completely in the translation. When the protagonist Marty arrives in the past, he enters in a bar and orders a Tab, which was a well-known American drink in 1985, the year from which Marty arrives. In 1955, the Tab did not exist yet, and in the American slang the word "tab" means "bill", so the barman understands that he wants to pay before drinking something. In Italian, this wordplay would have been

impossible, not only the pun did not work, in Italian language, but also the drink was completely unknown to an Italian audience. The solution chosen by the translator gives proof of creativity: the drink Tab becomes Fanta, and the barman asks if he wants “science fiction to drink” (“della fantascienza”), solving the problem.

The last strategy suggested by Pedersen (2005) is Omission, which consists in completely removing the ECR, without adding anything. Omission is considered as a part of the Target Language Oriented Translation Strategies, but Pedersen separates it from the others, as it is possible to notice in the figure 9. This strategy inevitably causes a loss in the translation, but if the ECR is very closely linked to the culture and a change would be impossible, this may be the only solution.

In conclusion, because of the different nature of Extralinguistic Culture bound references, there are several strategies to translate them in the best way possible. The solutions suggested do not provide always a translation: sometimes the ECR is completely removed (as in the case of Omission), while sometimes it is translated with the complete elimination of the ECR. The solution adopted depends on multiple factors, but in any case, the choice of the translator heavily influences the outcome. Often, these choices are made unintentionally, and the frequency of the strategies depends on several factors, such as the translator’s choices, the type and quantity of culture references and on the nature of the two languages (Salumahaleh & Mirzayi 2014). Indeed, there is no official rule to follow and it is essential to find the best solution that does not make the audience notice that they are reading/hearing a translation. Naturally, the translation has to match the visual content and sound natural at the same time; sometimes it may happen that the visual content prevents the best translation. With reference to the previous examples taken from the film *Back to the Future*, some of the ECR translations that have been realised could not have been possible if the visual content had been different. The example of the Substitution strategy that has been provided above, for instance, has been provided only thanks to the images on the screen. When the protagonist Marty meets his young mother in 1955 after having travelled in time, she calls him Calvin after seeing his Calvin Klein underwear, since she does not know this brand yet. As already stated, in Italian the little known brand in 1950s has been translated with “Levis Strauss”; the main reason why it was possible to translate it in this way is that the underwear of the protagonist is not visible in the scene. Since the viewer is not able to see the brand, it was possible to

change it at their convenience, or otherwise the translator would have been obliged to leave the original brand in order not to create a contradiction.

In conclusion, the number of strategies to translate culture bound references is quite large; often the terms are linked to a source of humour, and especially for this reason it is essential to choose the best solution to arouse in the audience a similar reaction to that of the source language viewers.

Chapter 4: ANALYSIS OF A MOVIE: BACK TO THE FUTURE

Dr Emmett Brown: "You've got to come back with me!"

Marty McFly: "Where?"

Dr Emmett Brown: "Back to the future!"

In the fourth and last part of my dissertation, I decided to take into consideration some excerpts from the film *Back to the Future*, in order to analyse some translation strategies that have been adopted when dubbing from English into Italian. Some of them have already been taken as examples in the previous analysis of cultural references translation, realised by Pedersen (2005). In the previous chapters, different aspects of audiovisual translation have been analysed, such as the characteristics of the main methods of translation in this field. Afterwards, the focus has moved on the translation of humour and of cultural references, which represent a challenge for translators, due to the multiple constraints of each modality. It has been seen how much difficulty there is in transferring wordplays and culture in order to obtain the same reaction from different audiences who have a different background. In this chapter, I will take into consideration a film that presents several types of translation strategies about both humour and culture. Several passages of the film will be taken into account together with their Italian dubbed translation. *Back to the Future* is a 1985 American film trilogy, directed by Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale, and probably the most famous time travel story in the cinematography. The trilogy quickly became one of the most successful franchises in the Universal Pictures' history, and it is still well known today, with some lines and scenes that became part of pop American culture.

The film is set in 1985 in Hill Valley, California, when the teenager Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) accidentally travels back in time with a time machine powered by plutonium created by his friend, the eccentric scientist Emmett "Doc" Brown (Christopher Lloyd). Marty finds himself in 1955, where he meets his father, George, and saves him from an oncoming car, driven by his future father-in-law. Marty finds himself in his young mother's home, where she becomes infatuated and tries to seduce him. Marty has no plutonium to come back, so he tracks down Doc's younger self for help. With no

plutonium, Doc explains that the only source that could generate the necessary power is a bolt of lightning. Marty shows him a flyer that he had in his pocket, that reports the future strike of a lightning on the town clock tower the following Sunday. They decide to exploit this opportunity, and Doc recommends Marty to not interact with anyone, or he could alter the future events. Marty recalls his mother saying that she fell in love with George when her father's car hit him and brought him to their house, so he realises that he prevented his parents from meeting for the first time by saving his father. He therefore tries to correct the events before being erased from existence, so while Doc works at the time machine, Marty teaches George how to win Lorraine's heart. Moreover, his attempt is constantly hindered by Biff Tannen, who bullies George and tries to seduce Lorraine. Marty manages to make his parents fall in love at the school ball and thanks to the storm, he goes back to 1985, where he is reunited with the future Doc, who departs for 2015. The next day, Marty notices some small positive changes in his family, due to his time travel that actually had some impact on the present. Suddenly, Doc appears and tells him they have to go back to 2015 to help their future children. In the last scene, the DeLorean disappears into the future.

4.1 Strategies for translating puns, wordplay and idiomatic expressions

The first category that will be taken into consideration is that of wordplays and puns. *Back to the Future* is a science-fiction film with many humoristic elements and jokes, some of which are closely related to double meanings, idiomatic expressions and inaccurate translation of proverbs. In the Italian dubbing translation, some domestication translation strategies have been adopted in order to make the puns meaningful for the target audience.

As previously mentioned, a pun may be characterized by untranslatability (Chiaro 2010); When facing a pun, there are several procedures to translate it, it is possible to leave it unchanged, to replace it with a different one in the target language or with an idiomatic expression, or to ignore and remove it completely (Chiaro 2010). Delabastita (1996) separates puns in three categories: homonymic, homophonic and paronymic puns. Homonymic puns are composed of words that have the same spelling but different meaning; in homophonic puns, words have the same pronunciation but different spelling,

while paronymic puns is based on words that are very similar, but have different pronunciation and spelling.

The paronymic pun is the first example of translation that I will analyse. In this scene, Marty’s father decides to ask Lorraine to go to the school ball with him. Marty suggests a romantic speech to tell her, so George quickly writes it down on a small notebook. However, as George starts talking with Lorraine, he panics and mispronounces a word.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|---|---|
| George: Lorraine, my density has popped me to you. | George: Lorraine, Lorraine, il delfino ci ha uniti |
| Lorraine: What? | Lorraine: Cosa? |
| George: Oh, what I meant to say was... | George: Quello che voglio dire è che...è |
| Lorraine: Hey, don't I know you from somewhere? | che... Lorraine: Un momento, ma non ti ho già visto da qualche parte? |
| George: Yes! Yes, I'm George, George McFly, and I'm your density. I mean, your destiny. | George: Sì! Sì, sono George, George McFly, sono il tuo delfino. Cioè, il tuo destino. |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In this scene, the play on words is based on the two paronymic words, “density” and “destiny”. The Italian translators had to keep the type of wordplay in order not to completely modify the scene, so “density” became “delfino”. In this case, translators used the strategy of Substitution (Pedersen 2005), which is the most used in the Italian dubbing of the film.

The bully Biff Tannen represents another source of humour of the film; a feature of his character is that he often mispronounces proverbs. Naturally, these expressions do not exist in Italian so these proverbs have not an official and faithful translation. Consequently, they have been translated trying to convey the general meaning of the proverb together with the humoristic aspect.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|---|---|
| Biff: “Since you’re new here I’m gonna cut you a break. Today. So <u>why don’t you make like a tree, and get out of here?</u> ” | Biff: “Dato che sei nuovo, ti lascio perdere...per questa volta. Però <u>ti consiglio di alzare i tacchi e andartene.</u> ” |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

This pun is based on the proverb “make like a tree and leave”. Indeed, the word “leave” is very similar to the plural of the word “leaf” without the final “s”, and the pronunciation is the same. In the original version of the film, the humour comes from the mispronunciation of the proverb; in Italian, the translators decided to leave an equivalent fixed expression (alzare i tacchi), but they completely removed the humour since it is pronounced correctly. Therefore, in this instance, the wordplay is completely removed from the target language. Therefore, in this scene it is possible to notice a case of Omission (Pedersen 2005). On the other hand, it is interesting to notice that in the sequel, *Back to the Future Part II* (1989), Biff pronounces the identical expression in the same incorrect way. However, in this case the Italian translators decided to change the translation that had been realised in the first film in order to leave the humoristic aspect, and not using the Omission strategy.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|--|--|
| Biff: “Oh that’s very nice, thank you very much. Now <u>why don’t you make like a tree, and get out of here?</u> ” | Biff: “”Beh sei molto gentile, grazie, molte grazie. Ora <u>perché non prendi armi e ritagli e smammi?</u> ” |
| Old Biff: “Its ‘leave’, you idiot! ‘Make like a tree and leave’, you sound like a damn fool when you say it wrong” | Biff anziano: “Armi e bagagli, brutto idiota, non armi e ritagli, che significa ‘armi e ritagli?’” |

Chart 18. Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In the table above, young Biff meets his older self, coming from the future; the English proverb is the same as that uttered by Biff in the first film, but in this case, old Biff corrects him telling the correct proverb. The Italian translator had to take into account the

correction of the incorrect version, so he/she opted for the expression “armi e bagagli”. The same character is the protagonist of another similar scene, where a fixed expression is pronounced incorrectly. In the following, Biff meets Lorraine on the street and rudely invites her at the school ball, obviously she refuses with an excuse.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|--|---|
| Lorraine: “I’m busy” | Lorraine: “Sì beh, sono occupata” |
| Biff: “Yeah, doing what?” | Biff: “A fare cosa?” |
| Lorraine: “Washing my hair” | Lorraine: “A lavarmi i capelli” |
| Biff: “ <u>That’s about as funny as a screen door on a battleship.</u> ” | Biff: “ <u>Oh, divertente, da sperticarsi dalle risate</u> ”. |
| Marty (in a low voice): “It’s ‘screen door on a submarine’, you dork” | Marty (in a low voice): “Sbellicarsi dalle risate, idiota.” |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

The correct expression pronounced by Biff in this scene is “a screen door on a submarine”, which means “useless” or “disappointing”. In Italian, there is no equivalent translation for it, but, as in the previous example, after the character mispronounces the expression, another character corrects it. Consequently, the Italian translators had to choose a similar expression that could be pronounced incorrectly in order to generate humour, so they opted for a wrong version of “sbellicarsi dalle risate”.

In another scene, Marty is trying to explain to the young version of his father how to win Lorraine’s heart, but in the conversation he calls him “dad” by mistake. He suddenly tries to rectify the gaffe:

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|--|--|
| George: Yeah, but I never picked a fight in my entire life. | George: Sì, ma io non ho mai fatto a pugni in vita mia. |
| Marty: You’re not gonna be picking a fight, Dad. <u>Dad dad daddy-o.</u> | Marty: Ma non devi fare a pugni, pa’ ... <u>papparapappa-pa.</u> |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In this scene, respectively in English and in Italian, it is possible to notice the strategy of Cultural Substitution (Pedersen 2005). The English expression pronounced by the protagonist, “daddy-o” is a slang expression used in the 1950s and 1960s, and it is the equivalent of “dude” or “man”. This expression would have been incomprehensible for an Italian audience, and translator had to look for a phrase that could be associated with the Italian word for “dad”. The chosen expression has not a real meaning as in the source text, but it is still effective.

A further interesting pronunciation of an idiomatic expression takes place in *Back to the Future Part III*, the last film of the trilogy, when Marty travels in time back to the Far West. In all three films, when he travels to the past or to the future, he meets his future or past relatives, who are always played by the same actors. For example, the actor who plays the antagonist Biff Tannen, Thomas F. Wilson, impersonates young Biff from 1955, older Biff from 1985, Biff’s son of 2015 in the second film, and Biff’s ancestor in third one. This characteristic represents one of the main sources of humour in *Back to the Future*, especially because there are some lines and habits that the characters repeat in all three films. In the third one, Biff’s ancestor Buford “Mad Dog” Tannen mispronounces proverbs and fixed expression, as do as his future relatives.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|--|---|
| Buford: “I’ll hunt you down and shoot you <u>like a duck</u> ” | Buford: “E se non ci sarai, ti inseguirò e ti ucciderò <u>come un pane!</u> ” |
| Henchman: “It’s dog, Buford. Shoot him down like a dog” | Scagnozzo: “Si dice ‘cane’, Buford. “Ti ucciderò come un cane.” |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future Part III* (1990), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

The English version is based on the expression “shoot someone like a dog”; in the incorrect version, the character confuses “dog” with “duck”, due to the similarity of the two words. In Italian, the equivalent would have been “ti ucciderò come un’oca”, which makes no sense in the scene. Consequently, translators had to choose a word that could be mistaken for “cane” and since there are no animal names there are very similar, they opted for “pane”.

A further example of a translation related to culture takes place in the third film, in 1885. This was probably a challenge for Italian translators, since they had to modify the conversation in this scene making it very different from the original. The scene takes place at a country fair, and it is about Frisbees, the popular plastic flying discs. The name of the item comes from the *Frisbie Pie Company*, which produced cakes inside pie tins. In the scene, at the buffet Marty notices an empty Frisbie pie tin, with the inscription of the company on it. He is very surprised to have found the origin of the famous item, so he shares his enthusiasm with his 1855 relatives.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|---|--|
| Marty: “Ehi, Frisbie! <u>Far out!</u> ” | Marty: “Ehi, Frisbie! <u>Tostissimo!</u> ” |
| Seamus McFly: “What was the meaning of that?” | Seamus: “Ma che cosa vuol dire?” |
| Maggie Mcfly: “It was right in front of him” | Maggie McFly: “Forse parlava del dolce” |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1990), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

When Marty notices the inscription on the tin, and he recognizes that the plate could be turned upside down and thrown, he shows it to his unaware future relatives: Marty knows what a Frisbee is but he probably had never thought about the origin of the item. The two seems to be a little confused and they do not understand the use of the expression “far out”, which is a way to describe something as fantastic and cool. In order to be faithful to the source text, the expression should have been translated in Italian with a reference to surprise. Therefore, they transferred the wordplay choosing the adjective “tostissimo”, to reproduce the use of the young people’s slang. In this case, the wordplay is still effective as in the original version, but the translators had to slightly change the following conversation between Marty’s ancestors. Here, it is possible to see the translation strategy of Retention (Pedersen 2005), since the expression has been translated with an equivalent in the target language. It is noteworthy that the original version was actually farfetched: the expression “far out” was quite popular in the 1960s and early 1970s, but in the 1980s/1990s it was already obsolete.

The last example of pun translation is one again in *Back to the Future Part III*, when the antagonist Buford Tannen is about to kill Dr. Emmett “Doc” Brown. Marty prevents the murder by disarming him and then nervously yells at him.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|--|--|
| Marty: Ehy, <u>lighten up, jerk!</u> | Marty: Ehi, <u>smettila di fare il Rambo!</u> |
| Buford (confused): Mightly strong words, runt! | Buford (confuso): Parole piuttosto forti, nanerottolo! |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1990), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In this scene, the humour is based on the modernity of language of Marty, who faces Buford as if he belonged to his time. In particular, the word “jerk” was used in 1985 to describe bullies and stupid people. Naturally, in the Far West this expression was unknown; therefore, Buford is confused by Marty’s words, which he acknowledged as “mightly strong words”. In the Italian version, translators decided to convey the modernity of the language using the term “Rambo”, which was in any case incomprehensible in 1855. In this case, the humour of the scene is effectively transferred in the target language.

To conclude, analysing these strategies of translation, it is possible to understand the difficulty that translator probably had to face when translating for dubbing, because of the necessity of being coherent with the images on the screen, with the continuity of the scene and with the humour that it has to convey. With reference to my research questions, it is possible to affirm that it is difficult to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps without modifying the original context. In some cases, little changes were sufficient to convey the humour perfectly, in others, the scene had to be completely recreated. In case of references closely linked to culture, the strategy of Substitution (Pedersen 2005) is the most used.

4.2 Domestication strategies

As previously mentioned, domestication is a translation strategy that occurs when a text is adapted to the culture of the target text (Robinson 1997b), in order to make in

transparent. Domesticating a text means removing all the elements that may sound strange at a foreign audience, and substituting them with familiar components. The film presents several translation strategies that are closely linked to culture and that had to be translated considering the lack of knowledge of the target audience. The first example has already been mentioned talking about situational paraphrase (Pedersen 2005), so it will be analysed quickly.

| <u>Source text (ST)</u> | <u>Italian dubbed version</u> |
|--|--|
| Lou: “Are you gonna order something, kid?” | Lou: “Che ne diresti di ordinare qualcosa ragazzo?” |
| Marty: “Yeah, gimme a Tab”. | Marty: “Ah...Sì, dammi una Fanta.” |
| Lou: “Tab? I can’t give you a tab unless you order something” | Lou: “Fanta che? Vuoi della fantascienza da bere?” |
| Marty: “Right, gimme a Pepsi free.” | Marty: “Dammi una Pepsi Sens” |
| Lou: “You wanna a Pepsi, pal, you’re gonna pay for it.” | Lou: “Senza che? Se vuoi dire senza pagare hai sbagliato porta.” |
| Marty: “Well, just gimme something without any sugar in it, okay?” | Marty: “Allora qualcosa che non abbia zucchero, ok?” |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

This is one of the clearest examples of domestication in the film: the unknown drink “Tab” becomes the popular “Fanta” while the Pepsi Free, which in the scene has to convey the meaning of obtaining the drink free, becomes “Pepsi Sens”. In this case, translators were able to find effective translating solutions, without making them seem too unnatural.

Another example of domestication is present in the first dialogue between Marty and the younger Doc from 1955. When the boy knocks at the door of Doc’s houses, he welcomes him with a strange invention that covers his head. Apparently, this device should read people’s mind so he does not let Marty talk since he wants to guess the reason of his visit.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbing translation |
|---|--|
| Doc: Let's see now, you've come from a great distance? | Doc: Vediamo...tu vieni da molto lontano. |
| Marty: Yeah, exactly! | Marty: Sì, ed esattamente... |
| Doc: Don't tell me. Uh, you want me to buy a subscription to the <u>Saturday Evening Post</u> ? | Doc: Non mi dire niente! Sh! Tu vuoi farmi fare un abbonamento ad <u>una rivista scientifica</u> . |
| Marty: No. | Marty: No. |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

In this scene, we can see an example of Generalisation; in the English version Doc talks about a specific magazine, the Saturday Evening Post. In Italian, translators wanted to make clear that he was referring to a journal, so they generalised the expression translating it as a scientific magazine.

A further example of domestication in the film is represented by a culture specific reference, which has been completely modified for the Italian audience. As above, in this scene, the protagonist Marty is trying to convince the younger Doc from 1955 that he comes from the future. Naturally, Doc does not believe him and asks him about the American political situation of 1985.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|---|---|
| Doc: "So, tell me, future boy, who's President of United States in 1985?" | Doc: "Allora dimmi, ragazzo del futuro, chi è il Presidente degli Stati Uniti nel 1985?" |
| Marty: "Ronald Reagan." | Marty: Ronald Reagan. |
| Doc: "Ronald Reagan? The actor? Then who's vice-president, Jerry Lewis? I suppose <u>Jane Wyman</u> is the First Lady!" | Doc: Ronald Reagan? L'attore? E il vicepresidente chi è? Jerry Lewis? Suppongo che <u>Marilyn Monroe</u> sia la First Lady! |
| Marty: "Whoa, wait, Doc!" | Marty: No, Doc, aspetta! |
| Doc: "And <u>Jack Benny</u> is Secretary of the <u>Treasury</u> !" | Doc: E <u>John Wayne</u> è il ministro della <u>Guerra</u> ! |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

These lines are particularly emblematic from a cultural point of view; Since Ronald Reagan was an actor before becoming the United States President, Doc thinks Marty is telling lies, so he makes fun of him joking about other celebrities. The Italian translation is faithful to the English script until Doc mentions the supposed first Lady. Jane Wyman was an actress and singer, and she was married to Ronald Reagan. However, they divorced before the election of Reagan as President, so she never became First Lady. While she was very famous in American culture, she was not in Italy, so translators probably expected her to not be recognized by an Italian audience. In order not to ruin the joke, they decided to change the name of Jane Wyman to Marilyn Monroe, more popular in Italy. Thanks to the translating technique of substitution (Pedersen 2005) the joke is not lost it does not need explanation. After the first substitution, another one takes place in this scene, when Doc ironically suggests that Jack Benny was probably the Secretary of the Treasury; but this reference would not have been understood in Italy, so they changed the Secretary of Treasury in Ministry of War, choosing John Wayne, popular for his Western films.

A further technique of domestication can be noticed in *Back to the Future Part III*, when Marty travels in time back to the Far West. During a country fair, a Colt gun salesman challenges him to hit some targets with the gun. After he successfully shoots at all of them, the man asks for explanations.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|--|--|
| Colt gun salesman: “Where’d learn to shoot like that?” | Venditore di Colt: “Dove hai imparato a sparare così?” |
| Marty: “The 7-11” | Marty: “A Disneyland” |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future Part III* (1990), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

Here there is a further example of domestication. 7-11 is a popular chain of convenience store, which does not exist in Italy. While today it is quite well known, in 1985 it was not; consequently, translators substituted the name of the shop with a very popular place that could be recognizable for an Italian audience: the Disneyland theme park. In this case it

is possible to talk about chunking (Katan 1999), since translators generalized the original expression, substituting it with a famous amusement park. Therefore, the strategy that has been used is Generalisation (Pedersen 2005). The interesting aspect of these lines is that the cultural reference has been translated in several ways according to the dubbing language. In the German version, Marty says “Space Invaders”; in the Spanish one he affirms “in the videogames” while in Arabic he says “the mall”.

When translating a film, errors can be made in the translation process. In *Back to the Future*, for example, it is possible to notice a case of lack of necessary domestication. Marty encourages his father to invite Lorraine to the school ball. However, he is too shy to do so, and Marty has to think up a plan to convince him. After he finds out that George is passionate about science fiction comics, he visits him during the night wearing a radiation suit, quite futuristic in 1955. Threatening him with a hair dryer used as a ray gun, he orders him to invite Lorraine to the school ball; In the dialogue, he uses the alias “Darth Vader”, the popular character of the Star Wars films, which began in 1977. In the Italian dubbed version of *Back to the Future*, Marty pronounces “Darth Vader” as well, but this is not the Italian name for this character. Actually, the *Star Wars* translators probably thought that the name was too strange for the Italian audience, so “Darth Vader” became “Darth Fener” in the Italian dubbed version of *Star Wars*. Therefore, there has been a non-recognition of a domestication strategy of another film. In this case, it is possible to notice the strategy of Retention, since the name has not been translated, but translators should have used the strategy of Substitution, in order to be coherent.

In conclusion, domestication strategies are widely used in this film; the solutions adopted were necessary for the understanding of the audience, moreover, there was a consistent work by translators, who perfectly integrated the visual content with dialogues, in order to make the film fully enjoyable.

4.3 Censorship and strategies of translation of bad language and racist terms

The translation of vulgar language is usually an unexplored area, essentially because it is quite a delicate topic and it represents a taboo subject (Ranzato 2014). Scholars have begun to give importance to the translation of swearwords twenty years ago (Soler Pardo 2015), in order to make the field of translation more complete. In the case of audiovisual

products, translation commissioners generally control the degree of vulgarity that a product has, and they take decisions according to rules of the country. Indeed, some countries tend to censor more than others do, and this depends not only on the target culture, but also on the medium. Television tends to censor more than cinema: the main reason for this higher level of censorship is due to the age of the audience. In Italy, the audience is divided into three different groups, VM18, when the product is only suitable for adults because of the presence of violence or strong language; VM14, when the product is not for children; and T (tutti), when the film is suitable for everyone (Ranzato 2014). Naturally, television networks have an interest in making the product appropriate for as many people as possible, in order to raise audience numbers. Moreover, the times of screening vary according to the kind of product that is aired on television: prime time usually presents products which are suitable for everyone, while shows and films in the late evening are usually reserved to an adult audience.

According to Toledano (2002), there are three different circumstances of vulgarity that are translated in different ways. The former occurs when the material that has to be translated is considered vulgar in both the source and the target text. The degree of preservation of the obscene expression will depend on the context and on the translators. A further situation is when by an expression is considered vulgar only in the target text, but not in the source text. In this case, it appears after the translation and it is due to translation choices (Toledano 2002). The last situation is represented by the presence of obscenity in the source text, but the absence of it the target text. During the transfer, the vulgarity is lost due to some form of censorship (Toledano 2002).

In the specific case of Italy, there are some issues, such as religion, which are particularly sensitive, as it will be seen in some steps in the translation of the film *Back to the Future*. In the film, several possible obscenities have been censored to make the product more appropriate for a wider audience. One of them is pronounced by Marty and the younger version of his father, George. In this scene, Marty is trying to teach to his bumbling dad how to behave like a tough man, and they pronounce two vulgar expressions, both censored in the Italian version.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|---|---|
| Marty: You open the door and you say...your line, George! | Marty: Ti avvicini, apri lo sportello e dici...la tua battuta, George! |
| George: Oh, “hey, you, get your <u>damn</u> hands off her”. Do you really think I oughta swear? | George: Oh, “ehy tu <u>porco</u> , levale le mani di dosso”. Devo dire anche porco? |
| Marty: Yes, definitely, <u>god-dammit</u> George, swear! | Marty: Certo, di porco, cerca di essere un duro! |

Taken from the film *Back to the Future* (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

The original version is more vulgar than the Italian dubbing; in this case the expression has been softened a bit. The Italian version presents a strategy of Substitution in the first case, and Omission in the second one. The word “damn” has been replaced with “porco”, which means pig in Italian, while the curse pronounced by Marty is simply omitted, probably because of its religious nature (Pavesi & Malinverno 1996).

It has already been mentioned that the typical appellative that the antagonist Biff often uses has been translated from “butthead” to “pidocchio”, but there are other examples of swearing that have been modified. In particular, vulgar expressions linked to religion are more likely to be censored, because they would prove much more vulgar than in the English language. Consequently, profanities are usually omitted to make the films less obscene (Pavesi & Malinverno 1996). A further example in *Back to the Future* comes from the repetition of the word “Jesus” by the protagonist Marty. However, in the Italian version he never says “Cristo” or “Gesù”, probably considered excessive: below it is possible to see some of the most interesting translation solutions for this expletive.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|---|---|
| “ <u>Jesus</u> , I’m beginning to sound like my old man” | “ <u>Oh</u> , sto cominciando a parlare come mio padre” |
| “Hot, <u>Jesus Christ</u> , Doc. <u>Jesus Christ</u> , you disintegrated Einstein!” | “Ah! <u>Mio Dio</u> ... <u>mio Dio</u> , Doc, hai disintegrato Einstein!” |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| “ <u>Jesus</u> , you smoke too?” | “Ma che fai, fumi anche?” |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

The strategy that has been used in these three cases is that of Substitution; imprecations are removed in favour of blander expressions. In the film, there is also the complete omission of an expletive; in a particular scene, when Doc shows Marty the DeLorean time machine for the first time, he says “Jesus” while the actor is turning his back to the camera. Since his lips are not visible, the Italian translators completely removed the word and he does not say anything. This is verifiable only by comparing the original and the Italian scripts, or paying attention while watching the film. It is clear that translators undertook a job of censorship by removing or substituting the word.

In the film, other numerous vulgar or obscene expressions have been softened with the strategy of Substitution. The most interesting translating solutions are shown below:

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed version |
|--|--|
| Doc: When this baby hits eighty-eight miles per hour, <u>your gonna see some serious shit.</u> | Doc: Quando questo aggeggio toccherà le 88 miglia orarie... <u>ne vedremo delle belle.</u> |

| | |
|--|--|
| Doc: No no no <u>this sucker’s electrical</u> , but I need a nuclear reaction to generate 1,21 Gigawatts of electricity. | Doc: <u>Questo aggeggio è elettrico</u> , ma ci vuole una reazione nucleare per generare 1,21 Gigowatt di elettricità. |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| Biff: You cost three-hundred buck damage to my car, you son-of-a-bitch. And <u>I’m gonna take it out of your ass.</u> | Biff: Ho pagato trecento dollari di riparazioni per la macchina, figlio di puttana, <u>e adesso me li ridai con gli interessi.</u> |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| Marty: Wait a minute Doc. What are you talking about? What happens in the | Marty: Preoccupare? Ma di che? Ma che diavolo stai dicendo? Cosa ci succede nel |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| future? <u>What do we become assholes or something?</u> | futuro? <u>Diventiamo tutti e due delle carogne, degli imbecilli?</u> |
|---|---|

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

These four examples show other translation procedures that have been adopted in order to eliminate profanities and make the film accessible to all. They present the strategy of Substitution, which is the most used in order to remove all the vulgarities. Looking at the original script it is interesting to see the considerable work that translators carried out to censor the film. There are several other examples that show the elimination of all the vulgarities in Back to the Future, the most interesting have already been analysed.

On the other hand, the Italian translation also presents an exaggeration of one kind of vulgarity, precisely about racism. In the scene below, Marty has just arrived in the 1950s, when in a bar he meets Goldie Wilson, a coloured man who in 1985 will be the mayor of the town. In 1955, Goldie is cleaning the floor in Lou's bar, so during the conversation Marty instinctively tells him that he will become mayor of Hill Valley.

| Source text (ST) | Italian dubbed translation |
|---|---|
| Marty: That's right, he's gonna be mayor! | Marty: Ma certo, diventerà sindaco! |
| Goldie: Yeah, I'm...mayor. Now that's a good idea. I could run for mayor. | Goldie: Sì, farò il...sindaco. Questa è una buona idea” Potrei candidarmi come sindaco. |
| Lou: <u>A colored mayor</u> , that'll be the day. | Lou: <u>Un sindaco negro</u> . Ma che hai in testa? |

Taken from the film Back to the Future (1985), directed by Robert Zemeckis & Bob Gale

The term “colored”, used in the original version, has a direct equivalent in Italian, which is “di colore”. On the other hand, the term “negro” used in the Italian dubbing, is the equivalent of the English “negro”, which is much more offensive. Indeed, this term was commonly used until the 1960s and then it disappeared from newspapers and official documents with the Civil Rights Movement (Scacchi 2012). The sense of the sentence pronounced by Lou the bartender was that in the 1950s it would have been impossible that a coloured man could become mayor. Indeed, in those years, there was still the

presence of racial discrimination and it was the time of the Civil Rights Movement. In the original version, it is clear that the bartender does not mean to offend Goldie, but just to express his disbelief. However, the Italian translation is more offensive and it conveys the idea of Lou as a racist. Therefore, it seems that Italian translation presented a case where there is an exaggeration, compared to the original scene. This is probably due to the fact that in the 1980s, when the film was shot, there was already a certain level of awareness about racism that led to the use of a non-offensive word. As an American film, the screenwriters knew they were addressing a country that had been deeply marked by racism. In the real 1950s, it is more probable that in a similar situation, the bartender would have used a less politically correct term.

On the other hand, the situation in Italy was very different; in Italy this awareness was still almost absent in the public of television products and film (Buonuomo 2012). The Italian public was poorly informed and not so sensitive about these issues, so the translators had no problem in exaggerating the term (Buonuomo 2012).

In conclusion, concerning the several strategies used to translate humour and cultural references in the film *Back to the Future*, Substitution is the technique that has been utilized more often. Because the film is quite dated, some elements related to American culture were not known in Italy. Numerous elements that would have proved difficult for an Italian public have been replaced with some closer to Italian culture. Today, thanks to globalisation, the knowledge of cultures is easier to achieve; consequently, when translating cultural references the situation would probably be different, as it will be seen in the next section.

4.4 Evolution of audiovisual translation

After analysing several translation strategies of a 1985 film, it is possible to notice some differences comparing it with the audiovisual translation of today. At the beginning of the dissertation, the influence of globalisation in this field has been underlined; it has affected not only the frequency of use of audiovisual products but also the language of translation. In the last twenty years, there has been a significant increase in interest and variety of audiovisual products, such as international television channels, a large number of television series and successful films coming from all over the world (Diaz Cintas 2003).

Translation underwent an evolution too. Analysing a film that is more than thirty years old it is possible to notice that today some of those translations would be different, especially in the matter of domestication. Thanks to the investigation of several translation strategies concerning culture and humour, it is clear that globalisation has filled some cultural gaps. Some elements that in the film *Back to the Future* have been translated with a domestication strategy, today would not be domesticated but would probably be translated faithfully to the original script. Cultural references from the film, such as the substitution of the shop 7-11 with Disneyland, or the brand Calvin Klein with Levis Strauss do not need a strategy of domestication today, since they now represent well-known elements outside the American culture. Thanks to globalisation, the exchange of information today is much more effective and it is very likely that if the film were produced today, there would be some differences in translation. Geographical boundaries are fading and the professional world of audiovisual translation is evolving (Diaz Cintas 2005). In addition to this, a significant consequence is given by the developing of international distribution centres in big cities, such as London. On the other hand, the fact that these distribution companies tend to have the control on more aspects, translators of the target language have many more constrictions, such as scripts where the segmentation of the subtitles has already been decided by the production company (Diaz Cintas 2003). In summary, in the last twenty years globalisation has affected the methods and the nature of audiovisual translation. In particular, cultural aspects have been the most concerned by globalisation, which has blurred boundaries between cultures, in some cases making disappear all those differences that needed the strategy of domestication.

Concluding remarks

The main purpose of this dissertation was an analysis of some specific aspects of audiovisual translation. Audiovisual translation is hidden in everyday life, from TV to the latest TV series, from movies to websites, but has an important role, which is often not considered. This discipline has many facets, but it has only started to be considered relatively recently. The general feeling one may have about audiovisual translation is that it is often taken for granted or considered second class, when in reality it hides many interesting features.

The number of ways in which audiovisual translation can be expressed is truly wide: dubbing and subtitling are of course the best known and most widely used, but in recent times other modes are gaining importance, such as voice-over, respeaking, subtitling for hearing-impaired or the growing phenomenon of fansubbing. The latter in particular does not have any official recognition and it is also considered illegal, but represents a widespread phenomenon that is difficult to ignore. In fact, due to the exponential growth of audiovisual products, there is a skimming of the material that is actually translated and brought to our screens, and therefore non-professional translators (in fact, fans of a certain product) translate and subsequently distribute the material, which is not officially translated. Not being an official practice, very little is found in this regard, but it would be interesting to explore this phenomenon, which shows no sign of diminishing.

In my dissertation I focused my attention on the two main dubbing methods: within my analysis, the intention was to analyze the role of dubbing and subtitling. The aim was to understand whether the former, which represents a complete overlapping of the original dialogues, can actually condition the whole perception of a product, and if so, whether or not this could represent a loss for the viewer. Concerning subtitling, the question has always been open about its role as a constraint or a benefit for the viewer. Although the negative aspects are numerous, the majority of scholars agree to consider subtitles as a resource for the viewer. In particular, I decided to analyse two specific characteristics of subtitles, namely the levelling effect and the problem of reduction. The first case represents a sort of naturalization that occurs by smoothing out some linguistic and cultural aspects, to make understanding easier. This practice is called the levelling effect and it is linked to universals of translation, some linguistic features that are common to

all the translated texts. For some scholars, this type of naturalization does not represent a loss for the public, but rather it is a help. Concerning reduction in subtitles, it certainly represents a loss compared to the original content, but at the same time, it removes all those superfluous elements that would make the subtitles indigestible.

As for dubbing, this is probably the best-known way of audiovisual translation in Italy, but the process is not as simple as it may seem. It presents various problems and, above all, numerous constraints. Italy has a long tradition of dubbing, which has evolved and been modernized over the last fifty years. Of course, even this modality has advantages and disadvantages. In my dissertation I wished to focus my attention on two of the main problems that characterize it: the comparison between *filmese* and spontaneous language, and the issue of synchronization. In the first case, the analysis was carried out on the difference between everyday language, characterized by repetitions and banalities, and the so-called *filmese*, filmic dialogue. This type of language originates from a script; it is characterized by indirect and one-way communication to an audience, and condenses useful information with rare pauses, as opposed to everyday language. For these reasons, *filmese* can be positioned between written and spoken language. Another problem that characterizes the dubbing mode is synchronization, also called adaptation. It represents one of the main reasons why the translation sometimes undergoes great changes: particular attention has been given to the fact that the translation can be influenced by something as physical and articulatory as the body gestures. Translators must take into account not only the movements of the lips, but also the gestures of the actor. It is also interesting to notice the distribution of the two main audiovisual translation methods in Europe: the choice between subtitling and dubbing is not only due to historical but also economic origins, and it is possible to see a division into two distinct blocks.

In the second chapter, the focus was on one particular area of audiovisual translation: humour. Wordplay and humorous elements have always represented a challenge for the audiovisual translator, who has to take into account the so-called untranslatability of humour, but also the various constraints represented by the aforementioned main audiovisual translation methods. This section focused on the possibility of bridging the linguistic gaps in the translation of humour, and the degree of change that must take place with respect to the original script to obtain the same reaction from the source and the target audience.

Humour is also difficult to classify, and therefore, I took into consideration some of the most complete classifications, suggested by Spananaki (2007) and Chiaro (1992). As for translation, various scholars have proposed some methods of translating double meaning and wordplay, which are usually closely related to the culture of the source language. Although both the description and the translation of humour represent challenges, there are universal common denominators that represent humorous sources that are used more often than others as a common base, such as degradation. The translation of humour has some differences, depending on whether it occurs in dubbing or subtitling; It is necessary to emphasize different elements depending on the modality, in order to obtain a successful result. While translating humour into subtitles, for example, it is necessary to evaluate the restrictions of time and space, while in dubbing more emphasis is placed on the reproduction of natural language, so that the translated humour does not sound "strange" to the audience.

In conclusion, it can be said that it is not always possible to bridge the linguistic gaps, especially when it comes to specific factors related to culture. The variety of cultures and the many facets continually influence translation, and it is often impossible to find equivalents of the target culture. As for humour, which is closely linked to the cultural background, it can be said that a substantial change in translation is often necessary to actually gain the reaction desired by the audience. The choices made in dubbing are often criticized because of translation choices that are not entirely effective; often, this is due to constraints caused by the images on the screen or lip synchronization. It therefore seems that subtitling leaves more freedom in the matter, although it is not entirely free from constraints.

The third chapter of my thesis concerns culture and its role in audiovisual translation. The role of culture is directly related to humour, since it is heavily influenced by cultural references. First, the nature of culture was introduced in the chapter with one of the most celebrated methods, the Iceberg theory, introduced by Hall in the 1950s and still used today. This theory is very useful for understanding the level of complication in translating cultural references. Later, I considered one of the most famous scholars for studies on culture: Katan (1999). In fact, the scholar distinguished some levels that influence the perception of culture; these levels are countless and it is impossible to catalogue them all, since a culture is influenced by innumerable elements. These culture-

related expressions have been renamed by Pedersen (2005, 2011) ECRs (extralinguistic Culture-bound reference), since they are related to aspects that refers to the real world, and not specifically to the language field. Like humour, these references are also quite difficult to classify, and various scholars have proposed different classifications. Three of them have been presented, respectively proposed by Ranzato, Nedengaard-Larsen and Pedersen. Subsequently, the translation strategies for these culture references, initially proposed by Toury (1981) and then reworked by Pedersen (2005), were presented.

In the last section, I used these strategies for the analysis of a 1985 film, *Back to the Future*, which contains numerous examples of translation of humour. The strategies used by the translators are manifold, but without a doubt, the most widely used is that of Substitution: due to the multiple cultural references, the translators have made interesting translation choices, some extremely effective, others questionable. Since the film is from 1985, I took advantage of it for a reflection on the evolution of audiovisual translation, in particular on the strategy of domestication. Some elements that in the Italian dubbed version have been replaced with others closer to Italian culture, where today they would most likely be left as in the original script. The most striking example is the scene where the brand Calvin Klein is substituted with Levi Strauss, since it was clearly felt that the Italian audience would not know the former

Thanks to globalization, in fact, the exchange of information is effective and much more complete, and it is very likely that if the film had been produced today, different choices would have been made and fewer changes would have been carried out. We can affirm that today audiovisual products are more homogeneous because they need less changes comparing to thirty years ago. The Substitution strategy is the most widely used in the film, but today the number of substituted elements would probably be lower, thanks to the wider knowledge of the viewer.

In conclusion, audiovisual translation presents innumerable difficulties; in particular, the translation of humour and cultural references requires particular attention and the use of strategies. In any case, this discipline is evolving alongside the multimedia; therefore, it would be ideal to continue to explore this area and its evolutions. The quality of multimedia translation could be of advantage to additional studies, possibly involving different target audiences. It would also be interesting to explore the evolution of translation strategies in several areas besides cultural references and humour, such as

dialects and accents, or bad language, which represent complicated aspects for a translator. He/she is a key figure in the area of audiovisual translation, and we can enjoy wonderful works thanks to people who translate for this field. This was recently demonstrated with the victory of the Academy Award as Best Picture 2020 of a Korean film, *Parasite*, which was brought to the attention of a world audience only thanks to its English subtitling. In this case, part of the credit goes to the translators, to the point that the South-Korean culture critic Kim Heon-sik affirmed:

[...] they don't translate literally or simply deliver the words, but they identify the message the director intends and 'design the language' so that the foreign viewers can arrive at the core of the message. It's a complicated job that requires both professional insight in filmmaking and linguistic proficiency (Kim Heon-sik 2020)

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Riassunto

Lo scopo di questo elaborato consiste nello studio della traduzione audiovisiva e delle molteplici sfaccettature che la caratterizzano, prendendo in particolare considerazione alcuni aspetti specifici con un approccio non solo teorico, ma anche pratico. Questa tipologia di traduzione ha cominciato ad essere considerata una disciplina a sé stante solo in tempi relativamente recenti. Prima di questa evoluzione infatti, era vista come uno dei tanti aspetti della traduttologia o scienza della traduzione, alla pari della traduzione testuale. Con l'evolversi e l'espandersi della traduzione audiovisiva, gli studiosi hanno realizzato che questa tipologia di traduzione si allontanava dalla classica traduzione testuale per molti aspetti, in primo luogo per il processo traduttivo essa non è legata solamente ad un testo, ma ad un prodotto multimediale che, come tale, comporta vari elementi da tenere in considerazione. Questo tipo di traduzione coinvolge una serie di aspetti che contribuiscono al prodotto finale, che sia esso un film, una serie televisiva, un videogame o una pagina web. Quando "godiamo" di uno di questi prodotti, le informazioni ci arrivano attraverso diversi canali: la parte acustica (dialoghi, canzoni) che è la parte che subisce la traduzione effettiva dalla lingua di partenza alla lingua di arrivo, e la parte visiva, vale a dire ciò che appare sullo schermo. La difficoltà maggiore sta proprio nel coniugare elementi visivi e acustici allo scopo di ottenere un risultato naturale, che faccia sì che lo spettatore non realizzi che sta effettivamente assistendo ad un prodotto tradotto. Per ottenere questo risultato è necessario l'utilizzo di strategie e diversi metodi di traduzione. È altresì vero che un prodotto audiovisivo può considerarsi di successo quando il ruolo del traduttore risulta invisibile agli occhi dello spettatore: come si può leggere all'interno dell'elaborato, di fronte ad un prodotto audiovisivo tradotto, lo spettatore è coinvolto in una sorta di realtà parallela, una bolla che può scoppiare non appena i dialoghi risultino forzati, raffazzonati o appaiano delle contraddizioni tra i fattori acustici e quelli visivi. La traduzione audiovisiva esiste proprio per far sì che spettatori che non condividono la stessa lingua del prodotto originale possano comunque godere di tale prodotto.

Ciò che ho voluto analizzare all'interno del mio elaborato è il grado di cambiamento che un prodotto audiovisivo di partenza può subire per essere sottoposto al pubblico di arrivo. Una serie di cambiamenti possono cambiare l'aspetto generale di un film, come si

vede più approfonditamente nel quarto e ultimo capitolo dell'elaborato. In dettaglio, ho voluto analizzare quanto lo stesso prodotto possa variare rispetto alle diverse modalità di traduzione audiovisiva, con risalto per le due modalità più utilizzate in questo ambito: il doppiaggio e il sottotitolaggio.

Il mio elaborato è composto da quattro capitoli: il primo capitolo presenta una panoramica generale della traduzione audiovisiva, con un'analisi dei metodi più utilizzati di questa disciplina. Il secondo capitolo si concentra su un'area precisa della traduzione audiovisiva, vale a dire l'umorismo; il terzo, direttamente collegato al precedente, presenta un'analisi per la traduzione dei riferimenti culturali, piuttosto complicati da trattare in questo campo. Infine, l'ultima parte rappresenta l'aspetto più pratico della tesi, con l'analisi di specifiche traduzioni realizzate nell'ambito di un film, *Ritorno al Futuro*, che presenta alcune interessanti strategie di traduzione.

Il primo capitolo presenta una visione generale della disciplina. Al contrario di quel che si può pensare, la traduzione audiovisiva non è caratterizzata solamente da doppiaggio e sottotitolaggio, ma anche da ulteriori modalità, come il voice-over, il respeakeraggio, o l'audiodescrizione, riservata a non udenti e non vedenti. Tutte queste modalità presentano caratteristiche e limiti precisi che è necessario tenere in considerazione durante la traduzione. Per comprendere meglio la disciplina della traduzione audiovisiva, una breve parte è stata dedicata ai concetti di *domestication* e *foreignization* (in italiano resi con domesticazione e straniamento). Il primo termine si riferisce alla neutralizzazione di un testo, vale a dire la modifica di questo con la sostituzione degli elementi della cultura di partenza con altri della cultura di arrivo. In questo modo il testo risulta più familiare per lo spettatore. Al contrario, lo straniamento mantiene tutti gli elementi culturali della cultura di partenza, senza adattare il testo ad un nuovo pubblico. Durante la traduzione di un testo è necessario valutare gli elementi che potrebbero risultare offensivi, o che il pubblico di arrivo potrebbe non comprendere, in modo da rendere il prodotto adatto.

In seguito, sono state analizzate le due modalità più diffuse e apprezzate in questa disciplina, con rispettivi vantaggi e svantaggi. La prima, il sottotitolaggio, riconosce tre tipologie di sottotitoli: i sottotitoli intralinguistici, vale a dire che non presentano una traduzione, ma riportano l'aspetto acustico sotto forma di scrittura o, più semplicemente, riportano suoni e dialoghi sotto forma scritta. La seconda tipologia è data dai sottotitoli interlinguistici, ovvero i sottotitoli che traducono in una seconda lingua i dialoghi del

prodotto originale, e in ultimo i sottotitoli bilingui, maggiormente utilizzati in luoghi in cui è presente il fenomeno del bilinguismo o in particolari eventi.

Il sottotitolaggio presenta numerosi vantaggi e svantaggi su cui ho deciso di soffermarmi, come anche su un quesito che caratterizza questa modalità: il problema della riduzione. I sottotitoli infatti sono caratterizzati da limiti di tempo e spazio, ciò comporta un'inevitabile perdita di contenuto, sebbene minima. Diversi studiosi presentano pareri discordanti su questa perdita, mentre per alcuni la riduzione rappresenta un grande difetto di questa modalità, per altri rappresenta un beneficio, poiché favorisce lo spettatore che può seguire più facilmente il prodotto a cui sta assistendo.

La seconda modalità di traduzione audiovisiva più utilizzata è quella del doppiaggio. Questa modalità comporta la sovrapposizione dell'audio originale con una nuova traccia. Come il sottotitolaggio, anche il doppiaggio comporta molti limiti e costrizioni: la sincronizzazione è probabilmente uno dei fattori che dona più credibilità ad un film e come tale va tenuto in considerazione. Tale aspetto rappresenta una sfida per il traduttore, che deve adattare la traduzione in modo da rispettare il ritmo, i gesti e il movimento labiale degli attori. In questo caso è necessario creare una vera e propria illusione volta a "ingannare" lo spettatore, che non deve notare contraddizioni tra il fattore visuale e quello acustico. Un ulteriore aspetto su cui ho focalizzato l'attenzione è il dualismo tra il cosiddetto *filmese*, e il linguaggio spontaneo: il primo termine indica la tipologia di linguaggio solitamente utilizzata nel prodotto filmico. Tale linguaggio è caratterizzato dalla comunicazione diretta e unidirezionale verso il pubblico, è volto a proseguire la trama e a fornire solo informazioni essenziali. Un prodotto filmico è infatti caratterizzato da limiti di tempo e la necessità di condensare più informazioni possibili in un tempo ristretto porta all'eliminazione degli elementi superflui. Il linguaggio spontaneo è difatti ricco di questi elementi, rappresentati da esitazioni, pause, ripetizioni e sovrapposizioni.

Il primo capitolo si conclude con un'analisi della scelta tra la modalità del sottotitolaggio o quella del doppiaggio. Essa è infatti data da fattori diversi: se l'Italia, come Spagna e Francia, è un Paese dove il doppiaggio è più diffuso, un secondo blocco composto da Regno Unito, Grecia e Paesi scandinavi ha una chiara preferenza per il sottotitolaggio. Questa divisione è dovuta a motivi storici, e risale agli anni 30, quando il

doppiaggio veniva usato non solo per esaltare i toni nazionalistici, ma anche per censurare contenuti scomodi. Questa tradizione si è protratta nel tempo, fino ad arrivare a oggi.

Il secondo capitolo del mio elaborato entra nello specifico con l'analisi di una determinata area della traduzione audiovisiva, vale a dire l'umorismo. Il ruolo dello humour in questa disciplina è piuttosto critico, tanto che è stato definito uno degli aspetti più complicati da riportare. Dopo un'introduzione sulla sua complicata natura, ho analizzato varie forme sotto cui si può manifestare, dalle semplici battute e espressioni idiomatiche ai giochi di parole. Questi ultimi in particolare, sono definiti intraducibili, tanto che il celebre saggista del XVIII secolo Joseph Addison afferma che la strategia per comprendere se si ha davanti un gioco di parole è tradurlo in una lingua diversa. Esso infatti è composto da parole che unite vanno a formare un ulteriore significato, spesso ricondotto all'umorismo. Quest'area della traduzione audiovisiva non è solamente difficile da trattare nell'atto traduttivo, ma anche nella classificazione. Non sono state individuate delle categorie nette, ma solo alcune piuttosto ampie, come il gioco di parole, l'allusione, e l'ironia. Nel primo caso sono state identificate quattro forme con cui un gioco di parole si può manifestare: l'omonimia (due parole hanno la stessa pronuncia ma significati diversi), l'omofonia (due parole sono pronunciate nella stessa maniera ma con ortografia e significato diversi), l'omografia (due parole hanno la stessa ortografia ma significati diversi) e la paronimia, quando ci sono minime differenze tra ortografia e pronuncia. Diaz Cintas e Remael (2007) si sono spinti più nello specifico, cercando di individuare alcune tipologie precise che vengono utilizzate nella traduzione audiovisiva: la prima è data dai così chiamati *international jokes* che si riferiscono ad elementi di un altro Paese. Questa tipologia si basa su aspetti molto conosciuti del dato paese, come figure politiche o celebri luoghi turistici, tanto che solitamente non causa problemi venendo resa con una traduzione letterale. Una seconda tipologia è data dai *national jokes* che si riferiscono ad una cultura o alle istituzioni dall'interno della cultura stessa: in questo caso sta al traduttore valutare se la cultura di arrivo ha le conoscenze adatte per recepire la battuta. Un'ulteriore tipologia è data dall'umorismo basato su costrutti linguistici, già citati sopra, seguita dall'umorismo visuale, vale a dire legato alla gestualità o espressioni facciali (un tipico esempio di umorismo visuale è il celebre personaggio di Mr. Bean, interpretato dall'attore Rowan Atkinson). Gli ultimi due tipi di umorismo individuati dai due studiosi sono gli *aural jokes*, che si basano su suoni e rumori e che

solitamente non necessitano di traduzione, e i *complex jokes*, che uniscono due o più delle tipologie precedenti.

Nonostante sia difficile classificare l'umorismo, alcuni studiosi hanno individuato dei denominatori comuni universali, e altri che si applicano a un pubblico più ristretto. Nel primo caso, un argomento piuttosto utilizzato è la degradazione, intesa come svalorizzazione con intento umoristico. Le vittime di questo tipo di umorismo sono numerose, come ad esempio il ruolo della moglie o della suocera, o si giocano sulle differenze tra gruppi, come il dualismo tra uomo e donna o anche tra Nord e Sud nel contesto dell'Italia. Per quanto riguarda l'umorismo di nicchia, esso prevede temi cosiddetti tabù, come la morte o la religione. Non c'è dubbio però che l'umorismo abbia un collegamento diretto con la componente culturale, tanto che le difficoltà nella traduzione sono principalmente dovute ai riferimenti culturali. Il traduttore dovrebbe essere in grado di riconoscere tali elementi, e capire non solo se rappresentano fonti di umorismo, ma anche il motivo. La figura del traduttore deve essere quindi competente, biculturale e con un buon livello di creatività che permetta di giostrarsi nelle situazioni più spinose.

Nel medesimo capitolo, dopo aver trattato il ruolo dell'umorismo e di alcune tecniche proposte dagli studiosi per la sua traduzione, ho voluto focalizzare l'attenzione su come viene trattato all'interno delle due modalità di traduzione audiovisiva più utilizzate. Sottotitolare lo humour implica restrizioni tecniche e linguistiche, che vanno a limitare ulteriormente il traduttore, il cui compito principale è in questo caso restare fedele a livello logico e valutare l'importanza dei passaggi umoristici. In alcuni casi, come ad esempio le sit-com, alcune battute hanno un'importanza marginale e può risultare necessario ignorare alcuni passaggi, specialmente quando la traduzione diventa problematica o troppo prolissa per il sottotitolo.

L'ultima parte del capitolo è dedicata alla resa dell'umorismo nel doppiaggio: la difficoltà più grande nel doppiare lo humour è data dalla necessità di ricreare dialoghi che risultino naturali allo spettatore, mantenendo allo stesso tempo una coerenza con l'umorismo di partenza, cercando di trovare soluzioni che possano suscitare medesime reazioni nel pubblico della lingua di arrivo.

Il terzo capitolo del mio elaborato si focalizza sul ruolo della cultura e il modo in cui essa viene tradotta nella disciplina della traduzione audiovisiva. Come già accennato,

tradurre ciò che fa riferimento ad una cultura specifica è piuttosto complicato. Di conseguenza, è necessario saper individuare le fonti di umorismo direttamente collegate alla cultura, in modo da saperle tradurre al meglio. Pedersen (2007) individua questi riferimenti come ECR (*Extralinguistic culture-bound reference*), definiti anche realia, che comprendono riferimenti a storia, tradizioni e cultura di un Paese. La cultura inoltre, è soggettiva, e la percezione che si ha di questa varia a seconda del background culturale di un singolo individuo e delle sue esperienze. Una delle più celebri immagini per rappresentare la natura della cultura è la teoria dell'Iceberg, sviluppata negli anni 50 da Edward T. Hall, e evoluta in varie versioni fino ad oggi. La teoria individua vari livelli di una cultura che, paragonata ad un iceberg, cela gran parte di essa, risultando invisibile: la parte "visibile" include elementi di folklore, come tradizioni culinarie e abbigliamento tipico, mentre la parte celata dell'iceberg nasconde concetti più specifici, come la definizione di fede, di leadership, modelli di conversazione in vari contesti sociali, e aspetti della comunicazione. Tale teoria è volta a dimostrare che nonostante una massiccia parte della cultura sia in realtà celata, l'intero "iceberg" ha un'importante influenza su vari aspetti della comunicazione, agendo sugli individui inconsapevoli. La cultura può quindi essere definita come polisemica, ma come può essere gestita nella traduzione audiovisiva? Pedersen (2005) distingue innanzitutto riferimenti culturali di natura linguistica ed extralinguistica: i primi sono legati a diversi aspetti del linguaggio, come le metafore, mentre i secondi sono legati ad aspetti che non appartengono all'area linguistica, ma hanno dei riferimenti al mondo reale, come usi e costumi, cibo o persone. Il grado di separazione tra cultura e linguaggio è tuttora discusso dagli studiosi, che attribuiscono diversi livelli di vicinanza tra i due. Un'altra area su cui gli studiosi si concentrano è la classificazione dei riferimenti culturali: all'interno del mio elaborato ne ho riportati tre (la tassonomia di Nedergard-Larsen, e i modelli proposti da Ranzato e da Pedersen), in realtà piuttosto diverse una dall'altra, al fine di dimostrare quanto possa essere complicato cercare di classificare tali riferimenti. Successivamente ho voluto dare particolare risalto al modello di Pedersen, che propone una serie di strategie per la traduzione dei riferimenti extraculturali, che ho in seguito utilizzato per la parte più pratica del mio elaborato. Tali riferimenti si presentano come espressioni nella cultura di partenza che potrebbero non essere del tutto compresi nella cultura di arrivo. In tal caso, c'è il bisogno di alcune precise tecniche traduttive, al fine di realizzare una traduzione

ottimale. Tali strategie si classificano in due grandi gruppi, uno composto dalle tecniche orientate alla lingua di partenza (*source-language oriented*) e uno dalle tecniche orientate alla lingua di arrivo (*target language oriented*). Il primo a proporre tale divisione fu Toury nel 1981, Pedersen in seguito le ha rielaborate aggiungendo specifiche tecniche di traduzione. Separata dai due gruppi principali, troviamo l'*Official Equivalent* (Equivalente Ufficiale), vale a dire un nome proprio la cui traduzione diventa ufficiale e definita, e che solitamente è creato da qualcuno che ha una sorta di autorità in un determinato campo, come ad esempio sfere diplomatiche.

Per quanto riguarda il primo gruppo di strategie, vale a dire quelle orientate alla lingua di partenza, esse sono così chiamate perché strettamente connesse alla lingua originale. Questa classe include le strategie di *Retention* (mantenimento), *Specification* (specificazione) e *Direct Translation* (traduzione diretta). La prima strategia menzionata, il mantenimento, consiste nella conservazione del riferimento culturale della lingua originale, essendo questo considerato comprensibile anche ad un pubblico di lingua e cultura differente. La strategia della specificazione invece si basa sulla spiegazione di un'espressione, aggiungendo dettagli o, appunto, specificando se si ha il timore che l'elemento possa non essere recepito completamente dalla cultura di arrivo. In ultimo, la traduzione diretta si divide in *Calque* (calco), un uso particolare del prestito che avviene quando un'espressione viene tradotta letteralmente, e la *Shifted Direct Translation*, meno intrusiva del calco, che comprende i termini che sono noti anche nella cultura di arrivo.

Tra quanto riguarda le strategie orientate alla lingua di arrivo, troviamo la *Generalisation* (generalizzazione), *Substitution* (sostituzione) e *Omission* (omissione). La prima strategia consiste nella sostituzione del riferimento culturale specifico, con un'espressione più generale. Tale tecnica è stata definita da Katan (1999) *chunking up*, e trasforma l'espressione con un risultato più generico. La sostituzione consiste semplicemente nel rimpiazzo di un'espressione con una diversa. La tecnica della sostituzione implica due diverse tipologie, la *Cultural substitution* (sostituzione culturale) e la *Situational Paraphrase* (parafrasi situazionale). Il primo caso viene applicato quando il riferimento culturale utilizzato nella lingua di partenza è sconosciuto in quella di arrivo, o potrebbe non risultare completamente comprensibile; in tal caso, viene inserito un altro riferimento culturale più vicino alla cultura di arrivo. Come si vedrà anche nell'ultimo capitolo con l'analisi di un'opera cinematografica, questa tecnica è molto utilizzata, ma

risulta anche quella che più necessita di creatività traduttiva. La seconda tipologia di sostituzione comporta la parafrasi situazionale, che sostituisce il riferimento culturale del lavoro originale con uno più vicino al testo di arrivo, ma avendo cura di mantenere il senso. In questo caso, una volta tradotto, sarà ancora possibile riconoscere il significato originale nel testo tradotto. L'ultima strategia proposta da Pedersen (2005) è *l'Omission* (omissione), che consiste nella completa rimozione del riferimento culturale. Tale tecnica viene in realtà solo marginalmente considerata parte delle strategie orientate alla lingua di arrivo, e comporta un'inevitabile perdita nella traduzione finale, ma può risultare necessaria in caso il cambiamento sia impossibile. Tutte le strategie elencate finora vanno valutate attentamente prima di essere applicate, al fine di realizzare una traduzione ottimale. La scelta finale dipende da fattori multipli e soprattutto dai traduttori stessi: spesso le scelte delle strategie traduttive sono compiute non intenzionalmente, e dipendono anche dal tipo e dalla quantità di riferimenti culturali. È certo però che non ci sia una regola ufficiale da seguire e ogni caso è a sé stante. Naturalmente, non bisogna dimenticare che in aggiunta ad una buona traduzione del cosiddetto ECR, è necessario tenere in considerazione la sincronizzazione con il contenuto visuale, che molto spesso va a influenzare la traduzione stessa. Non può infatti verificarsi una contraddizione tra ciò che viene pronunciato nel doppiaggio e ciò che effettivamente accade sullo schermo. Un esempio che è stato riportato nel mio elaborato è tratto dal film analizzato nel quarto capitolo, *Ritorno al Futuro*. In una delle scene più celebri, quando il protagonista Marty viaggia nel tempo dal 1985 al 1955, incontra sua madre adolescente, Lorraine. Questa, dopo averlo soccorso a causa di un incidente, crede che il suo nome sia Calvin Klein, avendo visto il nome del brand, ancora sconosciuto negli anni '50, sulla sua biancheria intima. Nel doppiaggio italiano, i traduttori hanno tenuto conto del fatto che il pubblico italiano non conoscesse ancora bene il marchio Calvin Klein e che probabilmente non avrebbe compreso del tutto la battuta. Nella traduzione italiana, Lorraine chiama Marty "Levi Strauss", celebre brand di abbigliamento molto più conosciuto. Questa traduzione effettuata grazie alla strategia della sostituzione è stata possibile solamente perché il fattore visivo del prodotto non ha vincolato la traduzione. Nonostante nella scena si affermi che il protagonista abbia il nome del brand Calvin Klein stampato sulla biancheria intima, questo non è visibile. Non essendoci vincoli, i traduttori italiani sono stati liberi di tradurlo con "Levi Strauss" senza cadere in una contraddizione. Il numero di strategie

per tradurre riferimenti extraculturali è effettivamente ampio, perciò nel mio elaborato ho deciso di attribuire particolare rilevanza alle strategie sviluppate da Pedersen, considerate complete da molti studiosi. L'umorismo e i riferimenti extraculturali sono indissolubilmente legati tra loro e tradurli senza un criterio può compromettere qualsiasi prodotto audiovisivo.

Il quarto e ultimo capitolo del mio elaborato presenta la parte più pratica, vale a dire l'analisi approfondita dei metodi e strategie di traduzione utilizzate in un preciso prodotto, vale a dire *Ritorno al Futuro*, film del 1985 diretto da Robert Zemeckis e Bob Gale. La scelta è ricaduta su questo preciso film per la presenza di numerosi riferimenti extraculturali che, uniti all'umorismo, presentano un buon esempio di strategie utilizzate per il doppiaggio italiano del film. Ho deciso di classificare i diversi passaggi secondo vari criteri: la prima categoria che ho analizzato sono i giochi di parole e le espressioni idiomatiche. Il film è infatti ricco di elementi umoristici basati su giochi di linguaggio, parole paronimiche, che nel doppiaggio italiano hanno richiesto particolare attenzione. In questa categoria, la strategia più utilizzata è quella della Cultural Substitution, con alcuni casi di omissione (Omission) e mantenimento della battuta originale (Retention). Un'ulteriore area su cui ho voluto focalizzare l'attenzione è quella delle strategie di domesticazione. Come affermato in precedenza, per domesticazione si intende neutralizzazione del testo di partenza, per renderlo più accessibile alla cultura di arrivo, che potrebbe non comprendere alcuni elementi del prodotto originale. La domesticazione ovviamente non è sempre necessaria, ma risulta particolarmente utile quando i riferimenti culturali sono molto specifici. Il film che ho analizzato si presta perfettamente per una riflessione proprio a riguardo di questa strategia traduttiva, in particolare al cambiamento della necessità di utilizzare la domesticazione. Essendo *Ritorno al Futuro* un film girato più di trent'anni fa, si possono notare alcune scelte di domesticazione che oggi sarebbero del tutto superflue. È già stata citata ad esempio la traduzione del celebre brand "Calvin Klein" con l'allora più conosciuto in Italia "Levi Strauss", del tutto superflua al giorno d'oggi, essendo il primo un brand molto celebre anche in Italia.

Nell'ultima parte del mio elaborato, è presente una sezione riguardo alla traduzione e all'eventuale censura del linguaggio volgare all'interno del film. Il linguaggio volgare da sempre rappresenta un argomento piuttosto delicato in materia di traduzione, anche se gli studiosi hanno cominciato ad attribuire importanza anche a questo campo circa venti

anni fa, al fine di rendere la disciplina della traduzione più completa. Nel caso analizzato, ho riscontrato la rimozione e la censura della maggior parte delle volgarità presenti nel film, probabilmente al fine di renderlo adatto ad un pubblico più ampio. Nella stessa sezione ho inserito anche l'esempio dell'unica esagerazione che si è registrata dallo script originale al doppiaggio italiano, riguardante il razzismo. Mentre nella versione originale in una specifica scena non si percepisce un tono di razzismo, la versione italiana è più offensiva. Ciò è probabilmente dovuto al fatto che quando il film fu girato, negli anni '80, in America c'era già un certo livello di consapevolezza, anche grazie al Movimento dei Diritti Civili, mentre in Italia questa consapevolezza era quasi del tutto assente.

L'ultima parte del mio elaborato presenta una riflessione personale sul grado di evoluzione che la traduzione audiovisiva ha avuto in trent'anni, paragonando alcune delle scelte traduttive del film *Ritorno al Futuro* a come potrebbero essere se il film dovesse essere doppiato oggi. Il livello di domesticazione sarebbe inferiore, dal momento che grazie alla globalizzazione e alla continua interconnessione a livello mondiale, anche culture molto distanti geograficamente possono entrare in contatto tra loro a livello profondo. Le barriere tra le culture sono senza dubbio più sfumate, grazie alla facilità di trasmissione di idee e l'insensificazione di relazioni sociali.

In conclusione, nel mio elaborato non c'era la pretesa di realizzare un lavoro completo ed esaustivo: la traduzione audiovisiva comporta numerosi aspetti, già analizzati o che sono ancora da analizzare, coprire tutti questi aspetti approfonditamente comporterebbe un lavoro immenso. Lo studio dell'utilizzo delle strategie applicate a un determinato prodotto audiovisivo rivela diversi passaggi piuttosto ostici da dover reinterpretare e, di conseguenza, varie difficoltà per la figura del traduttore.

Il fatto che la disciplina della traduzione audiovisiva sia relativamente recente, comporta che venga spesso data per scontata o considerata "di seconda classe", quando in realtà nasconde aspetti complicati e soprattutto abbia un'importante rilevanza nella vita di tutti i giorni. Io stessa ho trovato difficoltà nel reperire materiale relativamente recente su quest'area. Questo campo della scienza della traduzione è in continua evoluzione come anche tutti i prodotti multimediali con cui entriamo in contatto ogni giorno, sarebbe quindi importante esplorare eventuali cambiamenti nella disciplina.

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