

Analysing multilingualism in drama and comedy: the Italian dubbing of *Lion* and *Demain tout commence*

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Abstract & Keywords

English:

In recent decades, cinema has increasingly included and depicted multilingual realities (Heiss 2014). Starting from a discussion of multilingualism and its main functions on screen, this paper focuses on two multilingual films of recent production and of different genres – the drama *Lion* (Gareth Davis 2016) and the comedy *Demain tout commence* (Hugo Gélin 2016) in order to analyse the transfer operations (Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer 2014) found in the Italian dubbed versions. The aim of the study is to investigate how multilingual discourse is dealt with in the translated versions and to consider the implications of different translation strategies in terms of character portrayal and film genre.

Keywords: multilingualism, linguistic diversity, multilingual films, audiovisual translation, dubbing

Introduction

The coexistence of different languages, language varieties and accents on screen is observable in a growing number of American as well as European films, which have been variously referred to as ‘polyglot’ (Dwyer 2005; Whal 2005 and 2008), ‘multilingual’ (Bartoll 2006), ‘plurilingual’ (Heiss 2004) and heterolingual (Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa 2014). Indeed, scholars in the field of Film Studies as well as Audiovisual Translation Studies have acknowledged a ‘multilingual turn’ (Meylaerts 2006: 2) or ‘multilingual commitment’ (O’Sullivan 2007: 84) in recent cinema: films have increasingly shown ‘the pressure of polyglossia, of national languages jostling up against each other’ (Kozloff 2000: 80), featuring characters who speak languages ‘in the way they would be used in reality’ (Wahl 2005) and representing ‘the richness and complexity of real-life multilingual realities’ (Bleichenbacher 2008: 21). In the past, linguistic realism was apparently not of primary importance: indeed, ‘the film industry, and particularly the Hollywood machinery, seems to have been traditionally reluctant to give voice to languages other than English’ (Díaz Cintas 2011: 216). However, the last few decades have seen growing concern with the representation of multiple languages in audiovisual productions (Parini 2017: 38).

This study focuses on the translation of two recent films, *Lion* (Gareth Davis 2016) and *Demain tout commence* (Hugo Gélin 2016), an Australian and a European production respectively, both characterised by the presence of multilingual dialogues, with the aim of illustrating the ‘transfer options’ (Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer 2014) adopted for the transmission of multilingual discourse to an Italian audience. Particular attention will be paid to the functions of multilingualism in the original films as well as in the translated versions. The two films provide the opportunity to analyse the phenomenon of multilingualism on screen in two different cinematic genres: drama (*Lion*) and comedy (*Demain tout commence*), where linguistic polyphony plays different roles and functions, especially in terms of character portrayal (Díaz Cintas 2011; De Bonis 2014a).

Multilingual films: definition and functions

The concept of multilingualism in film can be categorised in different ways and a number of definitions have been proposed by scholars in different fields. Following Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), in this paper a multilingual film is understood as a film where more than one language or language variety is spoken, in other words, a film which may contain not only interlingual variation but also intralingual variants, such as dialects, sociolects and different accents (see also Beseghi 2017; Delabastita 2002; 2009; Heiss 2004; Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa 2014). Although multilingual films may include a vast range of languages, one language besides the main one is sufficient for a film to be considered multilingual (Stewart 2016). As Heiss (2014: 3) puts it, ‘linguistic diversity’ may be used ‘to point out an entire spectrum of intra- and interlingual forms that [...] are perceived as diverse forms of language in reality and which are rendered in films (depending on their genre) as more or less stylized’. Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa (2014: 233) point out that multilingualism in films ‘does not have to be as obvious as the presence of English, Japanese, German and French in *Lost in Translation*’ and that there are ‘films which include intralingual variation (dialects, sociolects and idiolects) that stand out from one or more standard varieties’.

De Bonis (2015: 52) highlights the fact that multilingual films ‘refer to a rather diversified set of films whose common feature is that multilingualism itself plays a relevant role in the story and in the discourse’. Multilingualism can indeed be found in all film genres: comedies as well as dramas can be multilingual, especially when they tell stories of immigration or multiculturalism. De Bonis (ibid.) thus considers multilingual films a ‘meta-genre’, which may potentially include all cinematic genres. What is relevant for the AVT scholar and the translator are the functions of multilingualism in a given film (Díaz Cintas 2011).

In fact, as highlighted by a number of recent studies, multilingualism in film can perform a variety of functions:

realistic function (Bleichenbacher 2008; De Bonis 2014a; 2014b; 2015; Díaz Cintas 2011; Wahl 2005): when a film aims to provide a lifelike representation of linguistic diversity, showing characters that speak the language that they would speak in reality;

ideological function (Delabastita 2002): for example, when languages are used to foreground an intercultural encounter, clash or ‘conflict’ (De Bonis 2015), and are thus given a symbolical value;

comic function (Chiaro 2007): when a film uses languages to create humorous effects or ‘confusion’ (De Bonis 2015), for example, in situations of misunderstanding or miscommunication.

These functions are obviously broadly related to the cinematic genre in which multilingualism appears: in a comedy, multilingual exchanges may be used in humorous situations or for comic effects, while dramas may use linguistic diversity to represent social, cultural or ethnic conflicts. One specific function may be predominant in a film or have a role in the plot; however, more than one function may be found within the same film to fit the requirements of a specific scene or context.

Translating multilingual films

Linguistic diversity on screen represents a challenge for AV translators, who are now faced with an increased volume of multilingual films (Baldo 2009; Beseghi 2017; Bleichenbacher 2008; De Bonis 2014a; 2014b; 2015; Díaz Cintas 2011; Dwyer 2005; Monti 2014; 2016; O’Sullivan 2011; Parini 2015; 2017; Wahl 2005; 2008). L3 theory (Corrius and Zabalbeascoa 2011; Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa 2014; Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer 2014) is currently one of the most useful approaches in the analysis of complex phenomena related to linguistic diversity in films and their translation. In this model, a distinction is made between L1 – the main source language, L2 – the main target language, and L3, which refers to any other language found in the source and target texts (Corrius and Zabalbeascoa 2011: 113). L3 is a concept defined as:

a deliberate use of expressive means (i.e., a language or language variety) that is distinguishable from most of the rest of the text, and this definition would include both foreign languages and dialects or other variations of a given language, including idiolects, sociolects and even special languages or varieties made up by the ST author. (Zabalbeascoa 2012b: 324)

AV translators often have to deal with texts that are not entirely monolingual or linguistically uniform, in that they contain some form of L3. Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa (2014) thus propose the term ‘intertextual translation’ rather than ‘interlingual translation’ to describe the translation of multilingual films where there is not one single SL to be translated into a single TL. The distinction between L1 and L3 is not always clear cut and, as Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014: 36) state, has to be made by the translator and/or by the scholar. L1 in a multilingual film is generally quantitatively more present and it is usually the language of the country where the film is produced and/or shot, although this is not always the case. For instance, *Call Me by Your Name* by the Italian director Luca Guadagnino (2017) is set in Italy but it is an American production, and the L1 is English, while Italian, which is also quantitatively less present in the film, is L3.

According to Corrius and Zabalbeascoa’s L3 theory (2011), the L3 segments of the ST can be rendered in various ways in the TT, yielding different results and effects in the translated version, such as standardisation, change of function or connotation and even L3 invisibility (ibid: 126). Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014: 38-39) identify three main transfer options:

neutralisation, in which L3 disappears by being omitted or substituted by L2,

adaptation, in which L3TT differs from L3ST,

transfer unchanged, L3TT and L3ST coincide, although L3 connotations and/or functions may change in the target culture. Transfer unchanged may occur as ‘verbatim transcription’, in which the same L3 is maintained, or ‘conveyed accent’, in which a non-native accent is maintained (ibid: 39).

When L2 and L3ST coincide, the translator may apply a substitution with a different L3 - a different language or the same language but with a distinctive accent - or zero translation, in which case L3 becomes invisible in the translated text. In their study of the different translations of *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino 2009) Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) point out that the Italian dubbed version maintains all L3s (German and French) through transfer unchanged, except for L3 Italian, which is substituted by the Sicilian dialect in the translated version through adaptation (see also Parini 2015). Conversely, in the Italian dubbed version of *Letters to Juliet* (Gary Winick 2010), which portrays the story of an American girl in Verona, the Italian language spoken by the protagonist (L3ST), as well as L1 (English), is neutralised and rendered with standard Italian, thus making L3 invisible (De Bonis 2014a).

The translation of multilingual films is often problematic and thus considered a challenge (Diadori 2003; Heiss 2004), especially in countries where dubbing is popular (Parini 2015: 29). Italy is traditionally a dubbing country (Parini 2009; Ranzato 2015) and films are usually dubbed for general release. As noted by Parini (2015: 27), ‘the practice of dubbing has become so deeply rooted in Italian culture that it is difficult to imagine a radical change in the context of audiovisual translation in the near future.’ Recent studies on multilingual films have nonetheless highlighted changing trends in the audiovisual practices of dubbing countries such as Italy, Germany and Spain (Beseghi 2017; Díaz Cintas 2011; Heiss 2004; 2014; Parini 2015; 2017). Such practices include the integrated use of dubbing and subtitling, which means that at least some exchanges in L3 are preserved – i.e., the original soundtrack is maintained – and subtitles in L2 are added to provide a translation of such exchanges. Some exchanges may be left unchanged without adding subtitles in L2, which seems to be a widespread strategy when no subtitles in L1 are provided in the original version, or when the lines in L3 are not indispensable for the comprehension of the scene (Bartoll 2006). This tendency shows ‘an attempt to reduce the levelling of language differentiation’ (Parini 2015: 31) in countries where the multiple languages of multilingual films have nearly always all been dubbed into L2.

The analysis

The analysis in this paper draws mainly on the concepts and taxonomies of L3 theory as defined by the studies of Corrius and Zabalbeascoa (2011), Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa (2014) and Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014). It focuses on two case studies of two recent films belonging to different cinematic genres – *Lion* (Gareth Davis 2016) and *Demain tout commence* (Hugo Gélin 2016), a biographical drama and a comedy respectively – in order to examine the transfer options used for L3 in the Italian dubbed version and, more specifically, to consider the implications and effects of these operations in the translated films. The qualitative analysis of the original and dubbed versions considers both interlingual and intralingual variants as well as the roles and functions which L1, L2 and L3 play in the fictional situation represented. Indeed, the choices made by the translators to deal with multilingualism - or ignore it - depend on the ‘functional value’ (Díaz Cintas 2011: 220) that linguistic plurality

has in the films. The analysis also investigates the relations between the characters' identities and the language(s) they speak, with the aim of tracing multilingualism in terms of its significance for character portrayal across different cinematic genres. Indeed, both films tell a multicultural story in which multilingualism plays an essential role and often has a diegetic function (Díaz Cintas 2011). As observed by de Higes-Andino (2014: 222), when translating multilingual scenes, the choice a translator has to make is whether to mark multilingualism or not, that is, to preserve or to obliterate the multilingual nature and connotations of the original film. If the translator chooses to mark multilingualism, then L3 will be present at least to some degree in the translated version.

While the analysis in this paper is principally focused on intertextual translation as defined by Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa (2014, see above), extra-diegetic and diegetic forms of translation within the original film (O'Sullivan 2007; 2011) are indisputably important elements to consider, since translation is usually an integral element of multilingual films. The most common form of extra-diegetic translation in multilingual films is 'part-subtitling', defined by O'Sullivan (2007: 81) as subtitles that are 'appended to part of the dialogue only, [...] planned from an early stage in the film's production, and [...] aimed at the film's primary language audience.' Interpreting, on the other hand, is a diegetic mode of translation, which occurs when a character in a film translates for (an)other character(s), thus providing the audience with a translation of L3 words or phrases. As claimed by Díaz Cintas (2011: 220), 'whether or not other languages are subtitled in the original and in the translated version will also depend on the expectations of the average viewer'.

Dubbing multilingualism in drama: the case of *Lion*

This section will investigate the presence of multilingualism in *Lion* as well as in its Italian dubbed version. *Lion* (Gareth Davis, 2016, Italian title: *Lion - La strada verso casa*) is a biographical drama adapted from Saroo Brierley's memoir *A Long Way Home* (2013). It tells the true story of a five-year-old Indian boy, Saroo, who gets lost in Kolkata, thousands of kilometres from home. He survives many misadventures before being adopted by a couple in Australia. 25 years later, he decides to look for his birth family in India. The action takes place in India and later shifts to the Australian island state of Tasmania, where Saroo starts his new life with his adoptive family. The film was well received internationally, winning many accolades and earning six Oscar nominations at the 89th Academy Awards.

Lion, without a doubt, can be considered a multilingual film. The first half, set in India, is mainly spoken in Hindi, with some exchanges in Bengali, while the second part, set mainly in Australia, is mostly spoken in English, which occasionally alternates with Hindi, for example when Saroo has memories of his Indian family or when he finally goes back to India to find his mother. The distinction between L1 and L3 in this film is not so easily definable: the very first language that the audience hear at the beginning of the film is Hindi, followed by some lines in Bengali when the location moves from Khandwa to Kolkata. Although the film is an Australian production and was first distributed in Anglophone countries (the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom), the very first word in English is actually uttered 45 minutes into the film. For quantitative reasons, one could argue that English and Hindi might be considered two distinct L1s. However, since the intended target audience is primarily Anglophone, it is more plausible to consider English the main language (L1) of the film, and Hindi and Bengali the secondary languages, or L3 (L3Hi, L3Be). Indeed, when L3Hi and L3Be are spoken, an extra-diegetic form of translation is generally provided and part-subtitles in L1 appear on the screen or, less frequently, a diegetic form of translation is provided (i.e., a character of the film acts as an interpreter). *Lion* presents a complex linguistic situation, including, in addition to interlingual variation, intralingual variants such as different varieties of English (e.g., Australian English, Indian English) and accented English (e.g., Indian accent), which together with L3, contribute to character portrayal and to reinforce socio-cultural issues represented in the film.

Lion revolves around the themes of family, roots, identity and home. In terms of functions, the presence of multilingualism unquestionably serves a realistic aim, specifically in relation to the geographical locations of the film; it would be unrealistic for the characters to speak English in an Indian village. Moreover, languages play a significant role on a symbolic level in the film. Saroo's life journey, from his hometown to Kolkata, and then to Australia and finally back to his hometown is symbolically accompanied by language diversity. When little Saroo is lost in Kolkata, he cannot understand a word because everyone speaks Bengali and he can only speak Hindi. His sense of loss and isolation in a huge, unfamiliar city is intensified by the challenge of speaking and understanding only Hindi in a place where Bengali is the common language. After his adoption, Saroo learns English, which becomes his first and only language, erasing all memories of Hindi. Later, his struggle with conflicting loyalties to his adoptive country and to his country of origin is again symbolised through language. When Saroo is at college, he meets a group of Indian students, who speak English with a noticeable Indian accent, which is pitted against Saroo's perfect English and Australian accent. This linguistic contrast and cultural clash, symbolising different lingua-cultural identities, is explained by Saroo Brierley himself in his biography (2016: 116):

They spoke English with me, but among themselves they spoke Hindi, the first I'd heard in years. My first language was almost completely forgotten – the Indians at high school had only spoken English too – and so initially I experienced a kind of reverse culture shock. In the company of the international students I was for the first time stripped of my Indianness – rather than being somewhat exotic, I was the Australian among the Indians.

After spending 25 years in Australia, Saroo goes back to his hometown to look for his lost family. Once again, he is in a place where everyone speaks Hindi, the language he learnt as a child and forgot when he started a new life in another country. The first woman he meets addresses him in Hindi, and Saroo instinctively replies in English. This incapacity to communicate emphasises the fact that Saroo feels lost all over again, a foreigner in his own country of origin. This sense of loss is again explained by Saroo in his memoir:

I look Indian, but my Western clothes are probably a little too new, my hair carefully styled – I'm obviously an outsider, a foreigner. To make matters worse, I can't speak her language. So when she speaks to me, I can only guess that she's asking me what I want here. (ibid: 2)

It seems a little thing, to not speak the language, but it carried an extra weight for a man making an emotional journey home after years of being lost. It was like being lost all over again, unable to understand what anyone said or to make people understand me. (ibid: 166)

As stated by Díaz Cintas (2011: 216), ‘language has the power to symbolise both understanding and misunderstanding’ and ‘to portray the different social, cultural and personal dimensions of the various characters’. It is clear that multilingualism in *Lion* suggests a sense of rupture, alienation and loss, as it follows the complicated journey of a conflicted character, divided between different ‘homes’. As observed by Cronin (2006: 45),

The condition of the migrant is the condition of the translated being. He or she moves from a source language and culture to a target language and culture so that translation takes place both in the physical sense of displacement and in the symbolic sense.

Interestingly, the film provides a more realistic representation in terms of language use than its literary source, which, apart from some instances of code-mixing, is mainly monolingual.

Again, according to Díaz Cintas (2011: 220), ‘if languages recur regularly they should be translated in such a way that the target viewer is aware of the language difference’. In the dubbed version of *Lion*, L2 (Italian) substitutes L1 (English), and the following transfer operations are applied:

transfer unchanged - verbatim transcription: L3Hi and L3Be are kept unchanged and part-subtitles in L2 are provided. Occasionally, part-subtitles in L2 are not provided (no translation);

transfer unchanged - conveyed accent: non-native English spoken by Indian characters is translated into Italian with a recognisable Indian accent, revoiced by an Italian dubbing actor who imitates an Indian accent;

neutralisation: L2 (standard Italian) substitutes L1 spoken with a foreign accent by Indian immigrants.

Clearly, multilingualism is mostly preserved in the Italian dubbed version of *Lion*, since all the lines in L3Hi and L3Be are maintained in the translated version through transfer unchanged, and part-subtitles in L2 are provided whenever they appear in the original version. Obviously, part-subtitles appear when it is essential that the audience understand the meaning of L3 exchanges. When no translation (extra-diegetic or diegetic) is provided, it is because it is not fundamental for the audience to understand the content of L3 lines, or because the filmmaker might not want the audience to understand, thus emphasising the alienating effect caused by the lack of understanding. In *Lion*, there are only two occasions when no translation is provided. The first is when Saroo arrives in Kolkata: he does not know where he is and everyone speaks a language he does not understand (Bengali). He calls for help but no one understands. All the voices he hears are meaningless noises: in this part of the film no subtitles in L1 or L2 appear on the screen, and the viewers can feel the same sense of alienation as the protagonist, until a worker at the train station invites Saroo to ‘speak Bengali’. From this moment on part-subtitles appear on the screen, and the viewers become aware that there has been a shift in language (i.e., from Hindi to Bengali).

The other occasion in which no translation is provided is when Saroo goes back to India after 25 years in Australia. When he speaks to the first woman he meets, she replies in Hindi. This multilingual exchange is not subtitled, so that the viewers can experience the same disorientation as the protagonist, until an Indian man who can actually speak English arrives and helps him to communicate.

In the dubbed version of *Lion*, transfer unchanged is used for L3Hi and L3Be, so interlingual variation, as well as the symbolic value of the original multilingualism, are preserved. Since the original soundtrack is left unchanged, the audience can hear the original voices of the actors. However, in the case of characters who use code-switching, a discrepancy arises in the dubbed version: ‘bilingual characters turn out to have different voices depending on the language they speak’ (De Bonis 2014: 259). An example of this is when an Indian character working at the orphanage, Mrs Sood, gives Saroo and two other orphans a last-minute English lesson before they are adopted by English-speaking families, and teaches them English words while they are sitting at a table set in western style (see example below). Mrs Sood’s continuous shift from L1 to L3Hi is maintained in the dubbed version, but while L3Hi is spoken by the original voice of the actress, the lines in L2 – which substitutes L1 – are spoken by the dubbing actress. Viewers may either notice and perhaps be annoyed by this incongruity, or they may accept it: after all, watching a dubbed film always requires a willing suspension of disbelief (Zabalbeascoa 2012a: 67). In any case, the audience has to accept another inconsistency in the dubbed version: the words taught to the Indian orphans are in Italian in the translated version, while it is clear that they will be adopted by Anglophone families (e.g., Australian). Again, the viewers will have to be aware that they are watching a dubbed film and that L2 is used to substitute L1 (Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer 2014).

ORIGINAL VERSION

MRS SOOD: [In Hindi with part-subtitles: What’s this called?]

ALL CHILDREN: Fork. Fork.

MRS SOOD: Fork. Yes, good. [In Hindi with part-subtitles: And this?]

ORPHAN GIRL: Nice.

MRS SOOD: Knife. Nice no. Knife. Ok?

ALL CHILDREN: Knife.

ITALIAN DUBBING

MRS SOOD: [In Hindi with part-subtitles: Come si chiama questa?]

ALL CHILDREN: Forchetta.

MRS SOOD: Forchetta. Sì, bravi. [In Hindi with part-subtitles: E questo?]

ORPHAN GIRL: Coltello.

MRS SOOD: Coltello.

BACK TRANSLATION

MRS SOOD: [In Hindi with part-subtitles: What’s this called?]

ALL CHILDREN: Fork.

MRS SOOD: Fork. Yes, well done. [In Hindi with part-subtitles: And this?]

ORPHAN GIRL: Knife [mispronounced in Italian].

MRS SOOD: Knife.

The Italian dubbed version of *Lion* clearly marks multilingualism. Considering the significant quantity of L3 in this film, the approach appears to indicate a step forward in the Italian dubbing scenario, since until recently it was noted that 'it is more common in Italian translations of multilingual films containing longer subtitled scenes to opt for monolingual dubbing' (Heiss 2014: 14). However, with regard to intralingual variation, both transfer unchanged (conveyed accent) and neutralisation are found. This means that L1 spoken with foreign accents is not always carried over to the translated text, hence some linguistic diversity is lost. While L1 spoken by Indian characters is translated into Italian with a noticeable Indian accent through conveyed accent, L2 (standard Italian) substitutes L1 spoken by Indian immigrants. In terms of functional value, this operation has the effect of erasing the different lingua-cultural identities depicted in the film. The cultural clash represented by the different language usage of Saroo and his Indian college mates is obliterated in the dubbed version, and the role of multilingualism in character portrayal downplayed. While Saroo believes that he is perfectly integrated into Australian society, both linguistically and culturally, the other Indian immigrant characters are more conscious of their origins, and they display this cultural affiliation, as well as their immigrant condition, linguistically. It is after meeting and talking to these characters that Saroo starts remembering his origins and begins a symbolic as well as physical journey to find his home and identity. While in the original version viewers cannot fail to notice the linguistic conflict, in the Italian version Saroo and the Indian immigrant characters come across as native speakers, and the symbolic value of linguistic differentiation is lost. As pointed out by Heiss (2014: 21), the rendering of intralingual variation in translation is still a thorny issue, as 'these differences cannot be completely transplanted into another language area'. However, in this case, the transfer option of conveyed accent could perhaps have been applied more consistently in the dubbed version in order to avoid standardisation of linguistic variety and flattening of the linguistic representation of characters.

Dubbing multilingualism in comedy: *Demain tout commence*

This section of the paper will investigate the use of multilingualism in the comedy *Demain tout commence* as well as in its Italian dubbed version. *Demain tout commence* (Hugo G  lin 2016, English title: *Two is a family*, Italian title: *Famiglia all'improvviso - Istruzioni non incluse*) is a French remake of the Mexican film *Instructions Not Included* (Eugenio Derbez 2013). The film is initially set in the south of France, where the protagonist, Samuel, lives a carefree life as a single man. Unexpectedly, an ex-girlfriend (Kristin) shows up with a baby girl she claims is his child. Kristin then leaves the child with Samuel, and disappears. Samuel goes to London to try and find Kristin, but he ends up raising his child (Gloria) by himself there, with the help of a French friend (Bernie). After eight years, Kristin shows up again, this time with her American boyfriend, and wants to take Gloria back, but Samuel fights to keep his daughter with him.

The film is clearly multilingual, with French and English continuously alternating throughout the movie. The English language is present to such an extent that it might seem reasonable to consider it an L1 together with French. However, as the film is originally aimed at a French audience, and the English words are fewer than the French dialogue lines, we can consider French the main language (L1) and English L3 (L3Eng). As in *Lion*, both diegetic translation (characters acting as interpreters) and extra-diegetic forms of translation (part-subtitles) from L3 into L1 are generally provided in the original film, since it is targeted at a French audience and the use of the two languages is often meaningful in terms of plot development. English is spoken in the film in different varieties: British, American and non-native (L3BrEn, L3AmEn, L3nnEn). Moreover, L1 French is also found in non-native varieties (L1nnFr).

In terms of functions, because the film is set in different countries (France and the United Kingdom), the languages first of all serve a realistic aim: the characters speak the language they are supposed to speak on the basis of their origins, their geographical location and their interlocutors. In *Demain tout commence*, multilingualism also has a diegetic function, in that the protagonist has to overcome a series of obstacles, including the language barrier. Furthermore, language gains a symbolic value when it is used to emphasise a specific situation in the plot: the protagonist suddenly finds himself having to take care of a baby girl, which is a totally new experience for him. His feelings of disorientation and fear are exacerbated by the fact that he is starting a new life in a country whose language he does not speak or understand very well, and where people do not understand him.

More importantly, multilingualism is used in this film to create comic effects resulting from misunderstandings between speakers of different languages or from mistakes in the foreign language (e.g., grammatical mistakes, poor pronunciation). When the French protagonist arrives in London, he finds it difficult to speak English and to understand other people, which often leads to confusion and comical situations. Many humorous scenes in the film are based on multilingual exchanges, and more specifically on misunderstandings deriving from multilingual conversations. Very often the comic effect is obtained through the contraposition between the protagonist's non-native English and other characters' native English. Furthermore, Samuel often uses a hybrid mixture of French and English, which constitutes a very peculiar kind of L3, a sort of multilingual idiolect, which obviously represents a challenge from the point of view of translation.

In the dubbed version of *Demain tout commence*, L2 (Italian) substitutes L1 (French) and the following transfer operations on L3Eng segments are applied:

transfer unchanged – verbatim transcription: L3Eng is kept unchanged and part-subtitles in L2 are either provided or not (no translation);

transfer unchanged – verbatim transcription with a different accent: some segments of L3Eng are revoiced by Italian actors who speak with a non-native accent;

neutralisation: L2 (standard Italian) substitutes L3Eng, thus erasing some multilingual exchanges (e.g., code-switching).

With regard to non-native L1 and L3, the following transfer operations are found:

transfer unchanged – verbatim transcription with a different accent: segments of L3nnEn and L1nnFr are revoiced by Italian actors who speak with a different non-native accent;

transfer unchanged – conveyed accent: segments of L3nnEn and L1nnFr are revoiced by Italian actors who speak with the same foreign accent, or fake it;

neutralisation: L2 (standard Italian) substitutes segments of L1nnFr, thus erasing the foreign accent.

As noted above, multilingualism in this film is primarily used as a vehicle for humour. It is interesting to note that in the original version of the film, no extra-diegetic translation is provided when the protagonist does not understand someone speaking English, as in the example reported below. In the dubbed version, L2 substitutes L1 and L3TT is the same as L3ST (English), and part-subtitles are not provided. In this way, in both versions, the viewers are given no assistance in interpreting the multilingual exchange. Moreover, the Italian translation uses the idiomatic expression 'non capire un tubo' (not understand a thing), thus creating a wordplay with 'tube' and reinforcing the humorous effect.

ORIGINAL VERSION

SAMUEL: Mister, do you know what to go to the tub?

MAN: Tub?

SAMUEL: Tub!

MAN: Ah, tube! Yeah. (speaking very fast) If you're looking for the tube you should take that corridor over there, go right through customs, you continue straight ahead, you'll see a sign just by the exit, you go down the stairs, hop on the line. It's quite simple, actually.

SAMUEL (laughing): **J'ai rien compris.** Je suis désolé. **Tu parles trop vite.** [back translation: I don't understand. You speak too fast.]

MAN: Fuck off.

SAMUEL: Ça j'ai compris. C'était plus lent. [back translation: I got this. You spoke more slowly.]

ITALIAN DUBBING

SAMUEL: Mister, do you know what to go to the tub?

MAN: Tub?

SAMUEL: Tub!

MAN: Ah, tube! Yeah. (speaking very fast) If you're looking for the tube you should take that corridor over there, go right through customs, you continue straight ahead, you'll see a sign just by the exit, you go down the stairs, hop on the line. It's quite simple, actually.

SAMUEL (laughing): **Non ho capito un tubo.** Mi dispiace, **parli troppo in fretta.** [back translation: I don't understand a thing. I'm sorry, you speak too fast.]

MAN: Fuck off.

SAMUEL: Ah, questo l'ho capito, era più lento. [back translation: I got this. You spoke more slowly.]

The absence of subtitles in L1 and thus in L2 is sometimes justified by the use of diegetic interpreting. Gloria, who is a bilingual character speaking English and French, often translates for her father, functioning as a mediator between the two languages and cultures. The example below shows the use of both diegetic and extra-diegetic forms of translation, when Gloria translates from L3Eng to L1/L2 for her father, and the presence of part-subtitles in L1/L2 when Gloria is not translating.

ORIGINAL VERSION

DIRECTOR: Get some rest mate, it's gonna be a big day tomorrow.

SAMUEL: **Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit là? Il parle trop vite.** [back translation: What did he say? He speaks too fast.]

GLORIA: Il a dit qu'il fallait que tu te reposes ce soir. [back translation: He said you need to get some rest tonight.]

SAMUEL: Ah, yes!

DIRECTOR [with part-subtitles in L1]: I can't believe you still don't understand a word of English.

GLORIA [with part-subtitles in L1]: **I'm here to translate.**

ITALIAN DUBBING

DIRECTOR: Get some rest mate, it's gonna be a big day tomorrow.

SAMUEL: **Che ha detto? Va troppo veloce.** [back translation: What did he say? He speaks too fast.]

GLORIA: Dice che devi riposare stasera. [back translation: He says you need to get some rest tonight.]

SAMUEL: Ah, yes!

DIRECTOR [with part-subtitles in L2]: I can't believe you still don't understand a word of English.

GLORIA [with part-subtitles in L2]: **I'm here to translate.**

Demain tout commence is strongly characterised by the use of code-switching. Gloria is not the only bilingual character in the film: her mother Kristin and Samuel's friend Bernie are also proficient in two languages, and continuously shift from English to French according to the context and to their interlocutor. As mentioned above, the transfer options used in the dubbed version range from transfer unchanged (L3TT coincides with L3ST or L3ST segments are spoken by Italian dubbing actors) to neutralisation (L3ST is substituted by L2). As in *Lion*, when L3Eng is preserved and the original soundtrack is left unchanged, bilingual characters thus have two different voices in the dubbed film (i.e., the voice of the original actor/actress for L3 and the voice of the dubbing actor/actress for L2). In the example below, Bernie speaks with two different voices in L2 and L3.

ORIGINAL VERSION

BERNIE (talking on the phone) [with part-subtitles in L1]: No, I just want you to do your fucking job before I do mine, which is fire you! (he hangs up) Ça fait chier, merde! [back translation: Fuck! Shit!]

SAMUEL: **Vous parlez français?** [back translation: Do you speak French?]

BERNIE: Oui, ça m'arrive. [back translation: Yes, it happens.]

ITALIAN DUBBING

BERNIE (talking on the phone) [part-subtitles in L2]: No, I just want you to do your fucking job before I do mine, which is fire you! (he hangs up) Che palle, merda! [back translation: Fuck! Shit!]

SAMUEL: **Posso chiederle una cosa?** [back translation: Can I ask you something?]

BERNIE: Sì, diciamo di sì. [back translation: Yes, why not.]

When L3ST is substituted by L2, code-switching is not maintained in the dubbed version, and the connotations or functions associated with the language switch may be lost. The example below reports a multilingual dialogue between Samuel, Gloria and Kristin, where different operations are applied to L3 segments, bringing about different effects in the target text. In the original film, Gloria quotes a phrase from *Shrek*, and her American accent is unmistakable. In the Italian version, L3Eng is preserved but it is revoiced by an Italian dubbing actress with a non-native accent, and the character's American accent is lost. This operation leads to an inconsistency in the dubbed version, since Kristin makes a meta-linguistic comment about Gloria's American accent, which is actually absent.

ORIGINAL VERSION

SAMUEL: Eddie Murphy, ma chérie, il est dans Shrek. Tu te rappelles de l'âne? C'est lui. Enfin, c'est sa voix. [back translation: Eddie Murphy, my dear, he is in Shrek. Do you remember the donkey? It's him. Well, it's his voice.]

GLORIA: Ah oui! (in an American accent) [with part-subtitles in L1] You definitely need some tic tacs cause your breath stinks!

KRISTIN: Elle a un accent drolement américain pour une petite anglaise. [back translation: She has a funny American accent for a little British girl.]

ITALIAN DUBBING

SAMUEL: Eddie Murphy ha fatto Shrek, ti ricordi Ciuchino? Ecco, in originale era la sua voce. [back translation: Eddie Murphy was in Shrek. Do you remember Donkey? Well, it was his voice in the original.]

GLORIA: Ah sì! (in an Italian accent) [part-subtitles in L2] You definitely need some tic tacs cause your breath stinks!

KRISTIN: **Ha un accento stranamente americano** per una piccola inglese. [back translation: She has a funny American accent for a little British girl.]

Soon afterwards, Gloria and her mother start a conversation in English, thus deliberately excluding Samuel. The function of creating an out-group (Monti 2014) in the conversation, however, is not maintained in the Italian dubbed version, since L2 substitutes L3 (neutralisation) and erases the multilingual nature of the exchange. The language shift which symbolically represents the changing relationship between Gloria and her mother is lost in the dubbed version.

From the perspective of translation, the most challenging scenes are those in which non-native varieties are used (L3nnEn and L1nnFr). One of the most significant examples is Samuel's idiolect, which is a mixture of English and French, characterised by a strong French accent. This non-native variety of English is rendered in the dubbed version with a mixture of English (L3) and Italian (L2), most of the time characterised by an Italian accent (verbatim transcription with different accent, see example below).

ORIGINAL VERSION

KRISTIN: Samuel doesn't speak English.
SAMUEL: Si, si, si, bien sure. Attends. Si si si. He speak, he speak. Sometimes, a little. Sometimes, no. It depend, en fait. It depend. It depend mais he speak, bien sure.

ITALIAN DUBBING

KRISTIN: Samuel doesn't speak English.
SAMUEL: Sì, sì sì, invece. Aspetta. Sì, sì, sì. He speak, he speak. Sometimes, a little. Sometimes, no. It depend, in realtà. It depend. It depend ma he speak, come no.

However, other transfer operations are found for the rendering of non-native varieties. As noted above, humorous scenes in the film are often based on non-native speakers' grammatical mistakes and bad pronunciation in L1 and L3. In the film, the two non-native speakers Samuel and Loel tease one another because of their mistakes and incorrect pronunciation in English and French respectively. While in the dubbed version L1nnFr is substituted by non-native Italian, maintaining the English accent (conveyed accent), L3nnEn spoken by Samuel is rendered inconsistently. Sometimes he speaks English with an Italian accent, and at other times he speaks English with a French accent. In the second case, the conveyed accent actually leads to incongruity in the dubbed version, since the viewers would not expect an Italian-speaking character to speak English with a French accent. The example below shows how the Italian dubbed version retains Samuel's French pronunciation of the phrase 'the South' (/zə 'zaʊs/)[I]. However, the same humorous effect is not obtained in the Italian version, which on the contrary sounds quite unnatural.

ORIGINAL VERSION

SAMUEL: *The Zous*.
LOEL: *The Zous*?
SAMUEL: Sì, *the Zous*, near the sea. You know.
LOEL: Oh, right, the South!
SAMUEL: C'est ce que je viens de dire, *the Zous*. [back translation: That is what I've just said, *the Zous*.]

ITALIAN DUBBING

SAMUEL: *The Zous*.
LOEL: *The Zous*?
SAMUEL: Sì, *the Zous*, near the sea. You know.
LOEL: Oh, right, the South!
SAMUEL: Ma è quello che ho detto, *the Zous*. [back translation: But that is what I said, *the Zous*.]

An example of neutralisation of L1nnFr is found when Samuel is casting some English women and looking for a substitute for Gloria's mother. He requires an actress who can speak French as well as English, but all the women are clearly British and speak French with a strong, noticeable English accent, and often switch from French to English. The use of multilingualism here is both realistic and comic, as well as enhancing Samuel's sense of frustration. Although it preserves the words in L3, the dubbed version neutralises L1nnFr, substituting it with L2 (standard Italian), thus reducing both the realist and the comic functions.

As discussed in detail above, the main functions of multilingualism in *Demain tout commence* are associated with realism and humour. Since the protagonist is a Frenchman who cannot speak English and refuses to learn it, his French origins are continuously emphasised in the film through meta-linguistic comments. These however disappear in the Italian version in order to maintain the illusion of credibility necessary in dubbing, as can be seen in the two examples below.

ORIGINAL VERSION

BERNIE [part-subtitles in L1]: I'm terribly sorry, sir. He's **from France**.

ITALIAN DUBBING

BERNIE [part-subtitles in L2]: I'm terribly sorry, sir. He's **not English**.

ORIGINAL VERSION

SAMUEL: Ah, donc **tout le monde parle français à Londres**, c'est ça le concept? [back translation: Oh, so everyone speaks French in London, don't they?]

ITALIAN DUBBING

SAMUEL: Ma a **Londra siamo tutti stranieri**, come mai? [back translation: So we're all foreigners in London. How come?]

Nevertheless, not all the references to France are removed in the dubbed version, thus asking the viewers to suspend their disbelief. In the example below, the comic effect is obtained through the phonetic similarity between the name Loel (Kristin's American boyfriend) and the French football team 'l'OM' (Olympique Marseille). Although Samuel's French origins are normally hidden, this French cultural reference is maintained in the dubbed version.

ORIGINAL VERSION

LOEL: And you're Samuel, right?
 SAMUEL: Right.
 LOEL: Loel.
 SAMUEL: **Loel, moi je préfère l'OM**. Désolé. back translation: Loel, okay, I prefer O.M., I'm sorry.]
 LOEL: What?
 SAMUEL: **Loel. l'OM**. Team. Football.
 LOEL: Ah, football!
 SAMUEL: Voilà, ça. [back translation: There you go, yes.]

ITALIAN DUBBING

LOEL: And you're Samuel, right?
 SAMUEL: Right.
 LOEL: Loel.
 SAMUEL: **Loel, ok, io preferisco l'OM**. Mi dispiace. [back translation: Loel, okay, I prefer O.M., I'm sorry.]
 LOEL: What?
 SAMUEL: No. **Loel. l'OM**. Team. Football.
 LOEL: Ah, football!
 SAMUEL: Ecco, sì. [back translation: There you go, yes.]

From the analysis of the original and the translated versions, it can be concluded that the dubbing of *Demain tout commence* generally marks multilingualism. However, the range of operations applied to L3 segments are varied. The rendering of non-native varieties is especially problematic, and the transfer operations found in the dubbed film range from neutralisation to transfer unchanged, which may lead to a decreased level of humour. Another challenging area is the management of bilingual speakers in translation: although the language alternation or shift is mainly preserved, some incongruities arise, such as the presence of two different voices for the same character. This may be detrimental to the illusion of credibility that is part of filmmaking (Zabalbeascoa 2012a), or perhaps it is the price to pay to preserve multilingualism in a dubbed film. On the other hand, if L3 is revoiced by the dubbing actors, the original accent is inevitably modified and some inconsistencies may arise as well, for instance when meta-linguistic comments do not match the character's actual speech.

Conclusions

This paper set out to examine multilingualism and its functions focusing on two case studies: *Lion* (Gareth Davis 2016) and *Demain tout commence* (Hugo Gélin 2016). These two recent films, an Australian and a European production, were selected because they provide the opportunity to analyse the functions of multilingualism in two different cinematic genres - drama and comedy.

Multilingualism in the two films is associated mainly to realism, symbolic/socio-cultural meanings and humour. Regardless of their genre, both films include multilingualism for realistic purposes: the characters speak the language or language variety they would speak in reality. In the biographical drama *Lion*, multilingualism also takes on symbolic meanings related to character portrayal and to cultural identity. In particular, the life journey of the protagonist, including the experiences of getting lost as a child, adoption and finding his roots again, is represented symbolically by the alternation of language(s) that he speaks, forgets and finally remembers. In the comedy *Demain tout commence*, multilingualism largely functions as a vehicle for humour, to create situations of misunderstanding and comic effects arising from non-native uses of L1 and L3. In particular, the multilingual idiolect spoken by the protagonist is a mixture of L1 and L3, with a distinctive accent, which indicates his resistance to the 'other' language and culture and which is in sharp contrast with the bilingual skills of the other characters.

The analysis of the dubbed versions, which draws on L3 theory (Corrius and Zabalbeascoa 2011) and on the analytical model defined by Voellmer and Zabalbeascoa (2014) and Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014), has highlighted that the transfer operations applied in the translation of the two films generally preserve multilingualism, especially with regard to interlingual variation. In both translated versions, the overall strategy is to mark multilingualism, principally by maintaining the original soundtrack when L3 is spoken, with or without subtitles in L2. This tendency is particularly evident in the Italian version of *Lion*, where the first 45 minutes are entirely in L3 - Hindi and Bengali - accompanied by Italian subtitles on the screen. These qualitative findings are in line with the increasing propensity to preserve linguistic diversity in Italian dubbed films that has been observed in recent studies on multilingualism (Bonsignori and Bruti 2014; De Bonis 2014a; 2014b; 2015; Monti 2014; 2016; Parini 2015). Moreover, both films show the use of a combination of translation modalities (i.e., dubbing and subtitling), which has been indicated by Heiss (2004; 2014) as the most viable solution for dubbing countries. Indeed, Heiss (2014: 22) emphasises 'the importance of a flexible, pragmatic, and theoretical translation

approach' to be applied to the increasingly complex scenario of audiovisual products. It is by employing flexible approaches that the multilingual reality of a film can be preserved, at least partially, even in dubbing (ibidem).

However, as far as the translation of intralingual variation is concerned, the dubbed versions of the films analysed do not apply a consistent set of operations. Ultimately, they do not display the same degree of linguistic realism, since intralingual variants and foreign accents are often neutralised or modified. By erasing part of the linguistic diversity, also part of the socio-cultural connotations or symbolic meanings of the original film are lost and the humorous effects can be lessened. Finally, it is interesting to note how the same transfer option can give rise to different effects depending on the film genre, where obviously multilingualism serves different functions. The qualitative analysis also highlighted some incongruities that characterise the translated films, such as the use of different voices spoken by the same character or meta-linguistic comments which do not match the characters' actual speech.

Heiss (2014: 20) claims that 'cinema viewers and film reviewers are strongly critical of dubbing that masks the multilingual elements of films that contain various languages', so it is probably safe to say that if multilingualism is preserved in a dubbed film, Italian viewers may be ready to willingly suspend their disbelief after all and fully appreciate the linguistic diversity preserved in translation, despite the discrepancies that may arise. As pointed out by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014: 27), 'the theoretical proposal for L3 still requires a large body of case studies and examples that can confirm and further refine the model.' This study has applied the L3 model to two recent multilingual films, hoping that it will open up possible paths for future research that could explore the phenomenon of multilingualism and its translation across different genres (drama, comedy and others) on a larger scale in order to identify patterns, as well as investigating target audiences' perception of multilingualism in dubbing.

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Filmography

- Ae Fond Kiss* (Ken Loach, 2004, UK)
- Call Me by Your Name* (Luca Guadagnino, 2017, Italy; France; Brazil; USA)
- Demain tout commence* (Hugo Gélin, 2016, France, UK)
- Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009, USA; Germany)
- Instructions Not Included* (Eugenio Derbez, 2013, Mexico)
- Letters to Juliet* (Gary Winick, 2010, USA)
- Lion* (Garth Davis, 2016, Australia, USA, UK)
- My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Joel Zwick, 2002, Canada, USA)

Notes

- [1] The French language does not include the dental fricatives θ or δ , so French speakers often replace them with /s/ and /z/.

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