

Profiling Film Translators in Italy: A Preliminary Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to profile film translators in Italy in order to draw a connection between their working habits and routines and the development of linguistic regularities and shared translating behaviours that have been observed in dubbed Italian. The analysis has been carried out of quantitative data on productivity together with qualitative interviews with highly successful translator-adaptors. This allowed us to draw interesting conclusions about the policy of commissions, the attitude of this professional community and on the reasons for their linguistic choices.

KEYWORDS

Dubbing, film translator(s), language norms, adaptors' biographies

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1. Introduction

For the past fifty years large quantities of audiovisual texts have been translated in Italy, a traditionally dubbing country (Baccolini *et al.*, 1994; Bollettieri Bosinelli, 1994; Castellano, 2000a; Taylor, 2000; Caimi and Perego, 2002; Paolinelli and Di Fortunato, 2005)¹. However, outside inner, professional circles and apart from occasional interviews, little is known about who the translators are, how many they are and how the translation work is distributed among them. Such issues are crucial given the powerful sociolinguistic impact that dubbed texts have on viewers and, potentially, on their language.

The professional category we are interested in is that of the Italian *dialoghisti*, that is, those professionals who are responsible for the Italian

dialogues which will be recorded over the original ones for foreign film distribution in Italy. The fuzzy partition of the dubbing process, as illustrated by Benincà (1999), has repercussions on a terminological level. The label *film translator* is not accepted by the professional category at stake whose attitude does not overlap with that of scholars and researchers. A clash is clear between two contrasting viewpoints towards what we have referred to as *film translators* in the title of this paper. The denominations the professionals use, which range from *dialogue adaptor* (Galassi, 1996, 2000; Paolinelli, 2000b) to *author* (Galassi, 2000; Megale, 2004), show a refusal to be considered *translators* and an emphasis on the artistic, creative and most prestigious aspects of their professional activity. On the contrary, the denominations used by researchers, encompassing *translator/dialogue writer* (Whitman-Linsen, 1992; Ulrych, 2000; Chaume Varela, 2004), *dubbing translator* and *adaptor* (Chiaro, 2000), explicitly mention the translational process, one which is recognized as multifaceted and comprising many intralinguistic procedures (cf. Jakobson, 1959). For the purposes of this study, we have decided to refer to these professionals using the labels *film translators* or *translator-adaptors*, shortened for convenience to *adaptors*, the latter as a compromise respecting both the view of the process in the inner community and an overall view of what translation is, i.e. the process of conveying the global message of a text in another language. The debate is still open, which points to an unresolved issue, deserving further scrutiny.

In this paper we present a sociolinguistically-oriented investigation carried out in order to obtain a clearer picture of the agents involved in film translation for dubbing in Italy. Firstly, starting from a publication issued by the Italian professional association of audiovisual translators (*AIDAC – Associazione Italiana Dialoghisti Adattatori Cinetelevisivi*)², a statistical analysis has been performed on the films dubbed into Italian reported as having been translated by members of the association up to the year 2000. The analysis addressed the following research questions: 1) how many professional translators have worked in the field during the period investigated, and 2) how is their activity distributed in terms of number of translated films.

Following this first, quantitative survey, a series of semi-structured interviews were carried out with very productive – and therefore potentially influential – translators, enquiring about their professional training or personal working experience, their interaction with other professionals in the field, and the development of linguistic regularities and shared translating behaviours within this relatively small professional community. The results are discussed here also in relation to recurrent linguistic patterns observed in dubbed Italian (Malinverno, 1999; Brincat, 2000; Pavesi, 2004, 2005) in order to better understand the sources of such regularities and explore the relationship between individual translators' styles, the translators' community and the establishment of

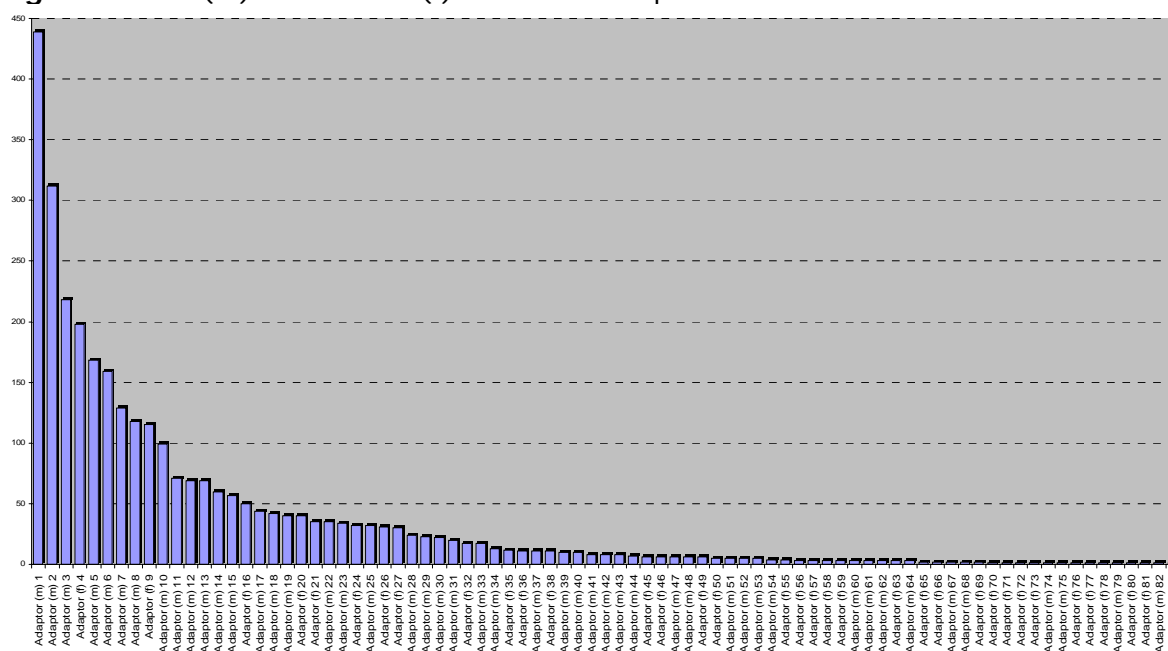
norms in audiovisual translation in Italy (Ulrych, 2000; Bollettieri Bosinelli, 2002).

2. A statistical survey

Our study was carried out starting from a specific publication issued in the year 2000 (Castellano, 2000b) by the Italian professional association of audiovisual translators. This book provides a list of 3067 films which have been dubbed and distributed in Italy up to the year 2000. The original title, the Italian title, and the name of the dialogue writer – a member of the association – are provided for each film listed, enabling us to identify who translated what and to draw statistical data.

The analysis we carried out gave unexpected results with work being unevenly distributed. A very limited number of adaptors out of an overall number of 83 is in fact responsible for the majority of films being translated (see Figure 1). In other words, film translations are concentrated in the hands of a few people who have been responsible for a great amount of dubbed language to which Italian audiences have been exposed to daily.

Figure 1 Male (m) and female (f) translator-adaptors' work distribution



Source: Castellano, 2000b

As more clearly visible in Table 1 below, approximately one third of the whole set of films has been translated by four people only. Overall, no more than 27 people out of the 83 listed have translated more than 30 films each, whereas the remaining 56 adaptors have translated fewer than 30 films, with 43 having translated fewer than 10.³

Table 1 Number of films translated and adapted by each male (m) and female (f) translator-adaptor up to the year 2000

Translator-adaptors	Films adapted		
Translator-adaptor (m) 1	439	Translator-adaptor (m) 42	8
Translator-adaptor (m) 2	312	Translator-adaptor (m) 43	8
Translator-adaptor (m) 3	218	Translator-adaptor (m) 44	7
Translator-adaptor (f) 4	198	Translator-adaptor (f) 45	6
Translator-adaptor (m) 5	168	Translator-adaptor (f) 46	6
Translator-adaptor (m) 6	159	Translator-adaptor (m) 47	6
Translator-adaptor (m) 7	129	Translator-adaptor (m) 48	6
Translator-adaptor (m) 8	118	Translator-adaptor (f) 49	6
Translator-adaptor (f) 9	115	Translator-adaptor (f) 50	5
Translator-adaptor (m) 10	99	Translator-adaptor (m) 51	5
Translator-adaptor (m) 11	71	Translator-adaptor (m) 52	5
Translator-adaptor (m) 12	69	Translator-adaptor (m) 53	5
Translator-adaptor (m) 13	69	Translator-adaptor (m) 54	4
Translator-adaptor (m) 14	60	Translator-adaptor (f) 55	4
Translator-adaptor (m) 15	57	Translator-adaptor (f) 56	3
Translator-adaptor (f) 16	50	Translator-adaptor (f) 57	3
Translator-adaptor (m) 17	44	Translator-adaptor (f) 58	3
Translator-adaptor (m) 18	42	Translator-adaptor (f) 59	3
Translator-adaptor (m) 19	40	Translator-adaptor (m) 60	3
Translator-adaptor (f) 20	40	Translator-adaptor (m) 61	3
Translator-adaptor (f) 21	35	Translator-adaptor (m) 62	3
Translator-adaptor (m) 22	35	Translator-adaptor (f) 63	3
Translator-adaptor (m) 23	34	Translator-adaptor (m) 64	3
Translator-adaptor (f) 24	32	Translator-adaptor (f) 65	2
Translator-adaptor (m) 25	32	Translator-adaptor (f) 66	2
Translator-adaptor (f) 26	31	Translator-adaptor (m) 67	2
Translator-adaptor (f) 27	30	Translator-adaptor (m) 68	2
Translator-adaptor (m) 28	24	Translator-adaptor (f) 69	2
Translator-adaptor (m) 29	23	Translator-adaptor (f) 70	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 30	22	Translator-adaptor (f) 71	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 31	20	Translator-adaptor (f) 72	1
Translator-adaptor (f) 32	17	Translator-adaptor (f) 73	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 33	17	Translator-adaptor (m) 74	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 34	13	Translator-adaptor (m) 75	1
Translator-adaptor (f) 35	12	Translator-adaptor (f) 76	1
Translator-adaptor (f) 36	11	Translator-adaptor (f) 77	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 37	11	Translator-adaptor (f) 78	1
Translator-adaptor (f) 38	11	Translator-adaptor (m) 79	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 39	10	Translator-adaptor (f) 80	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 40	10	Translator-adaptor (f) 81	1
Translator-adaptor (m) 41	8	Translator-adaptor (m) 82	1
		Translator-adaptor (m) 83	1

Source: Castellano, 2000b

Interestingly, cinema adaptors turned out to be just a minority prestigious group who can afford to choose what to work on and set their own (usually very high) wages. To put it in their own words, they cost a lot, and on the basis of a real 'economic sorting',⁴ they would never be asked to adapt mass-produced commercial audiovisual products. This partly explains the uneven clustering of work as shown in Figure 1. There are no absolutely certain data to rely on, but from the interviews conducted and from the literature examined (Castellano, 2000a, 2000b; Benincà, 1999) it

could be inferred that adaptors belong to a complex hierarchical structure. A small group at the upper end of the pyramid is made up of those who belong to the top of the professional community, the most prestigious and distinguished film adaptors. They are leading figures in the field, experts who also had the chance to acquire their skills from excellent adaptors. This group includes a number of fairly privileged adaptors working on a scant number of films and on high quality television products. Indeed, adapting films is considered the highest professional achievement for any adaptor. As far as television programmes are concerned, these privileged professionals have a reasonable chance to choose the audiovisual material they translate. Within this small group, an even smaller percentage of adaptors works exclusively on films, which is overall quite an uncommon situation. The largest group of adaptors is made up of those who have just a few chances to work on films and experience the strong competition in the market more than the others.

Table 1 also shows the very limited number of women working as film adaptors and belonging to this traditionally male-oriented professional environment, where assertiveness and entrepreneurship are top characteristics.⁵ However, the habit of discouraging women to engage in this activity has recently begun to be rooted out. Women, especially those coming from contiguous working fields, are now allowed to take up the job of dialogue adaptation and are now recognized as active professionals in the same way that men have always been.

3. The interviews

For the second part of the present study we availed ourselves of the AIDAC's publications and documents, reports and published interviews and carried out semi-structured interviews with a selected number of highly successful professionals working as cinema adaptors. They are, in alphabetical order, Marco Bardella, Ruggero Busetti, Elettra Caporello, Eleonora Di Fortunato, Marco Mete, Filippo Ottoni, Mario Paolinelli, Alberto Piferi.⁶

We should like to focus our attention firstly on four particularly relevant aspects that emerged from our research work, i.e., training and language proficiency, the origin of adaptors today, and recruitment policy in the dubbing milieu. We will then move on to discuss the context in which adaptors live in terms of mutual relationships and working trends, since both bear an effect on the creation of language norms.

Training was the first aspect explored in the interviews. All respondents declared that systematic, officially recognized training is not needed (nor is it provided, even though it is advocated by some adaptors such as Spinazzola, 2000; Galassi, 2000) to become an adaptor. Practice and experience, skills and natural gifts are considered as the determining factors for success in the job (Benincà, 1999: 106). Such an important

professional role is expected to possess considerable levels of both artistic and technical competence. If the former is innate, the latter should be acquired through specific training (Spinazzola, 2000: 25). Nevertheless, up to 1996 no specific courses were provided in Italy, as people pointed out during the *Tradurre il Cinema* conference (Taylor, 2000).

The major assets commonly recognized as necessary to take on the job are excellent competence in Italian (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato, 2005), writing skills, and technical proficiency (Murri, 1996: 84), combined with a good general cultural knowledge. It should be stressed that adaptors do not necessarily have a university degree, as also pointed out by Benincà (1999: 120), who reports that only one fourth of the respondents to her questionnaire were graduates. Moreover, adaptors hardly ever hold a degree in translation, and their proficiency in the language(s) they translate and adapt from ranges from very low to very high and has, if at all, been acquired informally.⁷ In fact, adaptors do not consider themselves translators in the first place, and secondly the craft-made and practical nature of this profession makes it a job which is believed to be best acquired if the novice can work side by side with a senior, expert professional. To put it in other words, professional background in this working environment is acquired on the job (Taronna, 1996: 111, quoted in Benincà, 1999: 197; cf. also Whitman-Linsen 1992: 101).

The peculiarity of this profession is evident also in its history: the 'founding fathers' of today's adaptors were navy officers with a wide experience at all levels, who were open-minded and highly proficient in English – a competence acquired through the contact with native speakers – people who had travelled the world and had lived in several countries and in some cases had been war prisoners. Back in Italy after the Second World War, they were among the very few people capable of dealing with a foreign language and with foreign (American) producers (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato, 2005: 17-19). Furthermore, they were the right people in the right place: most proposals for becoming dialogue translators and adaptors came from relatives working in the cinema industry (Biarese, 2000: 103-104).⁸

This brings out an important issue, that is, the centrality of family or acquaintance relations for entering the dubbing world, which apparently still is a more decisive factor in this professional environment than in others. People usually join the dubbing field thanks to acquaintances, family relations, or else they naturally end up being adaptors because they have been working for a while in related areas. Living in Rome definitely helps, as the Italian dubbing industry for the cinema is based there (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato, 2005), a setting that also has an effect on the language of dubbed Italian, where local dialects are nonexistent. In the capital city it is easier to meet people who might encourage and allow the undertaking of this elitist job.

This state of affairs contributes to the creation of a small and closed social network hardly accessible to outsiders. A few very active family nuclei are in charge of much work within the whole professional community. The family-business nature of the circle of film adaptors, though, was apparent especially in the past, when a few family units dominated the market. The Izzo family is probably the most representative instance of this situation. Talking about Renato Izzo, a famous Italian dubbing actor, a journalist reports: “Almost everyone in the family is involved in the business: his wife Lilliana, his four daughters, his four grandchildren and his two grand grandchildren. «We are, he says with affectionate pride, like a big Thespis’ cart⁹, a high craft workshop, where everyone, even the youngest one, can do something»” (Carboni, 2004: 9, our translation). Nowadays, the closure of this working environment does not prevent a few outsiders – referred to by the interviewees as ‘pure adaptors’ – to join it, although initial selection is not always based on merit.

As a final point, working relations are a significant issue, with isolation being a major component. Lack of professional contact with colleagues, which is mainly dictated by the working conditions, has been emphasised by all the interviewees (cf. also Benincà, 1999: 69). Adaptors work at home, where they have the necessary equipment, and where they work in solitude. In fact adaptors in Italy tend to work on an individual basis, as also happens in other countries like Spain (Martínez, 2004: 7), thus forming a network in which competition dominates over a limited degree of cooperation.¹⁰ Therefore, communication occurs only indirectly, through access to translated materials. As a matter of fact, according to some interviewees, watching films dubbed by colleagues is a genuine “refresher course” which allows them to benefit from access to others’ good solutions. It is therefore via finished products rather than during the process of adaptation, or through explicitly discussed issues that communication occurs. However, too close an imitation of others’ solutions is regarded as highly negative as each case of adaptation is viewed as unique and deserving special treatment. Good dialogue writers are reticent even about reutilising their own solutions and try to enhance linguistic and cultural creativity in order to avoid linguistic standardization (Scarponi, 1996: 53; Goris, 1993), and what Lambert (1990) knows as *un style zéro*, i.e., a levelled, standardized style.

4. Language

The second part of the interviews specifically concentrated on language choices and translation strategies used when translating from English into Italian for the purpose of adapting a script. Besides being questioned about the most difficult lexical, syntactic and pragmatic issues usually encountered in adapting from English into Italian, interviewees were presented with short specific quotations from dubbed films and were asked to discuss them in terms of correctness, frequency and purposes of use, and also possible triggers for that specific rendering. The data we

gathered can be viewed as a key factor in the interpretation of dubbed Italian and also have important consequences on the development of translation norms. Specifically, answers to our questions allowed us to draw up a set of macro- and micro-norms that adaptors tend to observe. The sections that follow give an initial overview of the results which will be further discussed in future publications.

4.1. Macro-norms

It has been noticed that the reference language for adaptors is native Italian, or one's own first language (Castro Roig, 2001: 268). Interviewees displayed a conscious effort to make dubbing invisible and avoid interference from the film's source language, while at the same time linguistically reproducing original characters' peculiarities (Calabrò, 1996; Paolinelli, 2000a). Some preoccupation with linguistic realism is shared both by film companies and adaptors. Sometimes films may be assigned to professionals in relation to their age and experience in a specific genre. For instance, Alberto Piferi is recognised as particularly brilliant for adapting comedy, Filippo Ottoni for costume films, Elettra Caporello is nowadays in charge of Woody Allen's films. Adaptors themselves are aware of the need for constant updating and renewal of their native competence and know that a film for young people will be better translated by a young adaptor, whereas a committed film will be more suitable for a mature and life-experienced adaptor. As far as language use is concerned, at times adaptors themselves interview young people they know in order to have access to youth's slang and structures.

The relationship of AIDAC with the Italian language academy (*Accademia della Crusca*) has been discussed by Ottoni and Di Fortunato, confirming an acute sense of responsibility towards the standards of language that viewers, especially young children, are exposed to – publications and professional conferences have been organized on the topic (Di Fortunato and Paolinelli, 1996). Unfortunately, no published guidelines or manuals are available, although they would be welcome, in particular to set notions of good practice.¹¹

Strong and general concern is attributed to *speakability* or *performability*. Apparently, the polarization between the notions of *performability* and *readability* is not only crucial in theatre translation (see Bassnett, 2000; Espasa, 2000) but it is also felt to be of great importance for dubbing. Adapted texts are going to be acted out – and not simply read aloud (Galassi, 1996: 13) – in the dubbing phase, and should therefore be fluent and smooth (Castro Roig, 2001; Gilabert *et al.*, 2001), easy to perform by dubbing actors, and time-saving during the dubbing phase. As a matter of fact, if dialogues do not need re-acting or further technical adjustments because they perfectly fit the synchronization requirements, a large number of unsuccessful takes is avoided and both the work of the dubbing directors and that of the dubbing actors is facilitated and speeded up. In

that respect, the effects of dramatization are *not* totally in the hands of the dubbing actors and the dubbing director (Chaume, 2004: 45). Dialogue writers play a key role in contributing to the shortening of the working time during the dubbing session, and can do a better job if they work by bearing orality in mind.

It is obvious that for the adaptors the proof of the pudding is in speaking the lines in the dubbing studio. Therefore, concerns about speakability and acted orality prevail over other language-oriented concerns.

4.2. Micro-norms

During the interviews, adaptors were asked about a series of features of spoken Italian which may be subject to norms in translation for dubbing. Table 2 reports the grammatical structures that have been under discussion and some of the examples that have been handed over to the adaptors in order to elicit their remarks.

Table 2 Micro-norms investigated

<i>Type of structure</i>	<i>Examples presented to the interviewees</i>
pronominal subject in Italian, a pro-drop language	Lui è uscito (vs. È uscito) ' He has gone out' (vs. <i>Has gone out</i>) Loro insinuano (vs. Insinuano) ' They insinuate' (vs. <i>Insinuate</i>)
post-verbal subjects	Vengo io <i>Come I</i> 'I will come' Cucina il mio amico Max <i>Cooks the my friend Max</i> 'MY FRIEND MAX is cooking'
reinforced deictic pronouns	Prendo quel libro lì 'I'll get that book there ' Questo qua invece è molto buono ' This one here instead is very good'
pronominal use of the demonstratives <i>questo</i> and <i>quello</i> referred to people	Hai visto quello/a ? 'Have seen that one ?'
Non-standard double-pronoun structure (i.e. <i>a me mi</i>)	E a me non mi saluti? <i>And to me, not me greet?</i> 'Don't you greet me?' A me non mi fregghi! <i>And to me, not me cheat!</i> 'I'm no fool'
left dislocation	Certe parole le lasci a casa tua. (vs. Lascia certe parole a casa tua.) <i>Some words, them leave at home your.</i> Why don't you leave your trash talk back home.
right dislocation	La vuoi sentire la verità ? (vs. Vuoi sentire la verità?) <i>Do you want to hear it, the truth?</i> 'Do you want to hear the truth?'
colloquial cleft sentences	È che non ho più idee. ' It's that I've run out of ideas'. Non è che verrai qui all'improvviso? ' It is not that you'll just blow in?'

Adaptors' replies offered some confirmation of translational and linguistic patterns established in linguistically-oriented research on translated scripts (Pavesi, 1994; Malinverno, 1999; Brincat, 2000). After a few general remarks, we will briefly comment on some of the linguistic features investigated, that is, marked word orders and the non-standard double-pronoun structure *a me mi* as a feature of spoken Italian.

We should first of all underline that in general terms translators appear to have thought a lot about lexis. Lexical issues include word plays, humour, idiolectic or in-group formulae, slang, technical vocabulary, acronyms, and also dubbese, which is mainly identified with lexical choices.¹² Syntax and discourse, as opposed to lexis, do not appear to be at the forefront of adaptors' preoccupations, with some minor exceptions in the area of potential transfer, as in the one case mentioned by Elettra Caporello, who reported a preoccupation for avoiding adjectives before nouns. This hierarchy of concerns emerged as an interestingly unexpected avenue of research which has not been studied in depth and deserves further investigation.

Interviewees revealed extensive and careful use of marked word orders in the forms of right and left dislocations and cleft sentences. This trend shows a general awareness of the fact that both structures are typical of spontaneous spoken Italian and can also be exploited to successfully fulfil lip-synch, length and performing requirements.¹³ Interestingly, if both right and left dislocations appear to be unanimously accepted and used by all interviewees, cleft sentences are more controversial. This confirms the hypothesis that in film translations some specific linguistic features are selected for mimesis of the spoken language (Pavesi, 2004, 2005). Interestingly, though, dislocations have been defined by some adaptors as ungrammatical, necessary structures used to 'stain' the language (Marco Mete) and to reproduce modern colloquial Italian (Filippo Ottoni). More specifically, as for the clefts there is a degree of mismatch between actual behaviour and awareness of behaviour. In particular, one adaptor who has been reported to use them freely in one important adaptation (Pavesi, 2005) considers them hideous and low, which clearly shows that even the best adaptors may fall victim to superimposed prescriptive norms. More generally, what seems to emerge are evolving norms, with younger adaptors being more willing to exploit typical features of spoken language.

Furthermore, these syntactic features of spoken language are intentionally relied on to distinguish variations in mode and in the social level and, in particular, are used to mark low registers of spoken Italian. They may also be explicitly chosen because they offer good equivalents or good solutions to specific inter-linguistic problems (e.g. the colloquial Italian clefted construction starting with *è che* [it's that] conveniently translates into English as 'the fact is').

Adaptors show an awareness of the fact that these structures make language sound colloquial, expressive and colourful, they are not mediated from English and can purposefully be used to avoid dubbese. To stress this point during the interview, Filippo Ottoni refers to them as a *manna*, an unexpected gift which may come to the help of translator-adaptors. It must be said, however, that adaptors show some reservations about a widespread use of these features of spoken Italian. Marco Bardella, for example, pointed out that he wouldn't have any character use them indistinctly, but that he carefully chooses who should be assigned these spoken features.

In particular, among the many colloquial structures of spoken Italian, we investigated the type *a me mi*, a type of left dislocation where the clitic redundantly occurs in the same clause along with the stressed pronoun to which it refers. It is frequently encountered in casual speech, although not in formal, written Italian, as it is generally condemned as ungrammatical, (Maiden and Robustelli, 2000: 113). A *me mi* is said to be disliked and usually avoided by adaptors. When used, it is restricted to children and non-standard language, a fact acknowledged by most adaptors (Busetti, Mete, Ottoni, Paolinelli). In other words, it is believed to give the impression of colloquial, natural language in speakers who are not old enough to edit their speech, or else to evoke inaccurate ungrammatical language in uneducated speakers – e.g. working class or black criminals. *A me mi* seems in itself to be a micro-norm, a tool employed to be faithful to the social variation in the original version.

5. Concluding remarks

Far from having definitively settled the issue, this paper sheds some light on the figure of the adaptor in Italy and provides initial suggestions about some regularities in dubbed Italian. More precisely, the idea is upheld that a relation exists between the linguistic regularities of dubbed Italian and the peculiarity of the dubbing world. The sources of such regularities are firstly rooted in the scant number of adaptors and on their uneven distribution over the amount and the type of the translation work. Interestingly, such norms, although shared, are not intentionally created through joint work, as indirect communication via finished products is the dominant form of exchange. Interviews with highly successful adaptors allowed us to realize that synchronization is not the only constraint permitting creativity and language recreation (Chaume, 1998: 17-18), at the same time drawing our attention to two major factors that influence language choices: linguistic realism and speakability. Remarks made by the adaptors on some examples of dubbed Italian also highlighted a conscious use of specific formulae, especially of marked word order, with the purpose of recreating spontaneous language, and in general terms, recreating language according to the situation in which it was produced in the original texts.

In conclusion, contributing sociological information about the Italian professional community of film adaptors appears to be a fairly good compensation for the still dominant geo-political, linguistic and technical approaches to the study of dubbing.

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Notes

1. Italy's first attempts in the dubbing industry trace back to 1932 (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato, 2005: 12).
2. AIDAC, the acronym for *Associazione Italiana Dialoghisti Adattatori Cinetelevisivi*, is Italy's association of dubbing translators. Founded in 1976, it now counts around 180 members and is regulated by a Statute. AIDAC, and in particular some of its most active members, have played a crucial role in claiming and securing copyright on translated versions of foreign films to film translators. Beside promoting dubbing both in Italy and abroad, AIDAC's main function is that of protecting the economic and moral interests of its members, "the authors of the Italian versions" of foreign films, in terms of defending their rights and setting their duties, granting them a retirement fund, selecting them on the basis of a formal entrance examination, and finally respecting and recognizing their creativity. More detailed information on the association is provided both in Italian and in English on the AIDAC web page www.aidac.it and is now also available in Paolinelli and Di Fortunato (2005).
3. Such an asymmetrical distribution of work can be explained considering several factors. In the first place, for the most productive adaptors, this is a full-time job, whereas adaptors with low film productivity usually operate also in other related areas (they may work contemporarily as actors, dubbing or theatre actors, dubbing directors, scriptwriters, film directors, so on and so forth). Furthermore, the chart comprises AIDAC members belonging to different generations. Accordingly, we are shown a picture which includes both the past and the present reality. In the past, few adaptors shared a huge amount of work, which for the most part included films. Nowadays, the workload has enlarged and encompasses also a large number of commercial TV programmes. Therefore, a larger number of people 'fight' for the same amount of film-work, whose distribution mirrors the presence of an implicit scale of prestige among adaptors.
4. We would like to thank Marco Mete for the terminological suggestion.
5. This could seem to be in contrast with Benincà's findings, which show that the number of male and female adaptors is fairly balanced (Benincà, 1999: 119). However, the people she interviewed worked mainly for the TV, CDR-Rom, home-video, DVD, and videogame market as opposed to that of cinema.
6. Just a few words on the activity and experience of each adaptor, whose curricula include a large number of titles translated and adapted, will help to better understand them. Marco Bardella has a BA in Philosophy. He has a long teaching experience in translation diploma courses and is in charge of popular TV series, *ER* and *The X-files* just to mention a couple, beside translating for the cinema. Filippo Ottoni is the president of the association and a specialist in costume film adapting besides being himself a scriptwriter, playwright, film and dubbing director. Mario Paolinelli "since

1979 treats exclusively and continuously the task of translation and adaptation of dialogues for foreign films, TV subjects and ads dubbing” (www.aidac.it/ass_s22e.html). He is vice-president of AIDAC and has written different articles and books on the dubbing politics and market in Europe. He has played an important role in obtaining copyright recognition for the category. Eleonora Di Fortunato is a translator, a journalist, and a communication and copyright expert. Both Paolinelli and Di Fortunato are politically committed within the association and are the authors of the recent *Tradurre per il doppiaggio* (2005). Ruggero Busetti and Marco Mete are younger in age but professionally very dynamic. The former started working on cinema products at a very young age after working for some time in an entirely different field. The latter started as a dubbing actor, a job that he carried out for ten years before moving to film translation. Mete is also film and dubbing director with a strong interest in theatre. Senior and now retired Alberto Piferi is one of the *founding fathers* of the association and one of the first adaptors in Italy. Elettra Caporello is the only woman with an amazingly high productivity in the field of cinema translation; she is the official adaptor of Woody Allen's films in Italy.

7. Indeed, some of the interviewees maintained that a few of the most notable adaptors did not know the language they translated from at all, stressing the remoteness of their job from that of a (professional) translator. Paolinelli and Di Fortunato (2005: 20) point out that nowadays some offhand improvised ones often do not know the film source language either, thus giving birth to dubbese, a plain and redundant language.
8. The most distinguished Italian adaptors of the first generation include Roberto De Leonardis, Ferdinando Contestabile and Leonardo Magagnini.
9. A travelling Italian theatrical company started in 1930 to bring opera to the masses and formerly supported by the Fascist regime.
10. The only form of collaboration accepted by the adaptors is the counsel on the part of experts, which is at times needed in order to overcome problems related to sectorial language. The same behaviour is mentioned also in Benincà (1999: 70, 104) where, interestingly enough, the reluctance of adaptors to ask colleagues when a language obstacle arises is also mentioned, although not emphasised. The negative effect of the lack of communication on language, which accordingly may result in a plain, levelled language, is a belief not only our respondents share (Benincà, 1999: 69, 92; Martinez, 2004: 7). However, it should be highlighted that nowadays, as far as audiovisual translation is concerned, the attempt to overcome the traditional trend according to which “the professional world of translators tends to form its own groups rather than interacting with academic circles” (Hermans and Lambert, 1998: 114) has been observed. Collaboration between film translators and university researchers is now on-going and providing benefits to both parties.
11. AIDAC is working in this direction, although they are aware that experienced senior adaptors would be reluctant to accept direction from above. Just to mention a few instances of what good practice is, during the interview Filippo Ottoni pointed out that films should be watched before beginning the adaptation work and there should be a careful study of characters in order to avoid uniform, undifferentiated language – what Raffaelli (1996) has called *Un italiano per tutte le stagioni* [Italian for all seasons].
12. Dubbese is consciously avoided although at times necessarily picked as a consequence of unfair working conditions, which do not allow adaptors to find better solutions.
13. In fact, if, for instance, the Italian sentence *Vuoi sentire la verità?* [Do you want to hear the truth?] is too short for a particular exchange, ***La vuoi sentire la verità?*** [Do you want to hear it, the truth?], with an additional fronted clitic, could perfectly fit in the time available. It could thus allow the adaptor or the dubbing actor to avoid linguistic formulas, such as the Anglicism ‘ok?’, which would contribute to create dubbese

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