ARCHIVIO ISTITUZIONALE
DELLA RICERCA

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
Archivio istituzionale della ricerca

Representation of identity in dubbed Italian versions of multicultural sitcoms: An SFL perspective

This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

*Published Version:*
Manfredi, M. (2021). Representation of identity in dubbed Italian versions of multicultural sitcoms: An SFL perspective. London, New York : Routledge.

*Availability:*
This version is available at: https://hdl.handle.net/11585/759570 since: 2024-05-09

*Published:*

DOI: http://doi.org/

*Terms of use:*

Some rights reserved. The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

This item was downloaded from IRIS Università di Bologna (https://cris.unibo.it/).
When citing, please refer to the published version.

(Article begins on next page)

06 October 2026

**11**

# Representation of identity in dubbed Italian versions of multicultural sitcoms: An SFL perspective

*Marina Manfredi*

## Introduction

In contemporary multiethnic and multicultural societies, the media play a key role in constructing cultural diversity; audiovisual (AV) products seem to be one of the most powerful means of representing characters' identity, through different codes, among which the verbal one. To this purpose, both films and television series are increasingly 'multilingual' in the broadest sense: different standard languages and dialectal varieties are embedded in their dialogues. When it comes to cross-borders and re-contextualising language variation for viewers from different cultural contexts through a translation process, the issue becomes particularly challenging, since, as it is universally acknowledged, audiovisual translation (AVT) imposes textual restrictions.

After the mainstream Hollywood production traditionally based on monolingualism (Bleichenbacher 2008: 21), cinema has not been restricted to a single language, giving rise to contemporary trends of mixed-race representation (Beltrán & Fojas 2008).

In the United States, the first decade of the 21st century saw films such as *Spanglish* (Brooks, 2004), about the culture clash between Mexican immigrants and Americans, and *Gran Torino* (Eastwood, 2008), where characters spoke French, German, Italian and the Hmong language. Similarly, in the same decade, a comedy such as *Bend it Like Beckham* (Chadha, 2002) and a cross-cultural romance set in Glasgow such as *Ae Fond Kiss* (Loach, 2004) portrayed the lives of Pakistani immigrants in the United Kingdom who often employed code-switching from English to Punjabi. Apart from the world of cinema, television has shown increasing interest in offering a 'multilingual' vision of society. At the end of the 1980s, the animated television series *The Simpsons* featured an Indian character, Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, the owner of Kwik-E-Mart's store in Springfield, who spoke with a marked Indian accent. Likewise, a South Asian accent is also displayed by Rajesh Koothrappali (Raj), the nerd from the series *The Bing Bang Theory* (2007-2019). In more recent times, especially the on-demand streaming site Netflix aired multilingual series where characters switch between English and Spanish, among which the crime drama *Narcos* (2015-2017), about the Colombian cocaine trade, and *One Day at a Time* (2017-), a humorous sitcom whose protagonists are the Alvarez, a Cuban-American family living in Los Angeles. In the comedy-drama *Orange is the New Black* (2013-2019), characters use both Hispanic English and African American Vernacular English. Another success, first broadcast by The CW Channel then by Netflix, is the USA's sitcom *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019), an Anglicised telenovela that tells the story of the Villanueva family, of Venezuelan origin and migrated to Florida: three generations of women switch between two languages, while the protagonist's grandmother, her *abuela*, only speaks Spanish. Very recently, Netflix aired the immigrant family comedy *Kim's Convenience* (2016-), premiered on the CBC network, which follows the lives of a Korean-Canadian family who owns a convenience store in multicultural Toronto.

In the last two decades, multiethnic sitcoms addressed to a younger audience have come to the fore, such as Disney Channel's *Lizzie McGuire* (2001-2004), a teen-sitcom

whose characters are of mixed race and ABC's *Ugly Betty* (2006-2010), whose heroine, Betty Suárez, has a Latin American background. The language(s) that characters speak reflect(s) their multicultural identity.

More recently, a relatively new subgenre has appeared, i.e. multiethnic/multicultural sitcoms addressed to a 'tween-age' audience (see Manfredi 2018), given that the target market audience is represented by kids who are nearly, or have just become, teenagers. Illustrative examples are YTV's *How to Be Indie* (2009-2011) and Disney's *Jessie* (2011-2015), along with its spin-off *Bunk'd* (2015-).

The majority of television series[i] mentioned so far have been dubbed for an Italian audience. This chapter aims to explore what happens when televisual products which reflect a multicultural vision of society travel cross-culturally and are addressed to a new target audience. More specifically, the aim is to investigate whether multicultural sitcoms for tweens show a special concern for representing identity or, conversely, geographical language varieties are not invariably reproduced in the target version, as is typical of AVT and dubbing in particular (Chiaro 2009: 158).

Translating language varieties has long been recognised as one of the greatest challenges translators and adapters have to deal with. Within translation studies (TS), the issue of so-called 'multilingualism' has been largely explored with respect to films (e.g., Heiss 2004, Dwyer 2005, Federici 2009, Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer 2014, Beseghi 2017, to name just a few). However, less attention has been paid to multilingual series and sitcoms (Ranzato 2006, Manfredi 2018, Beseghi 2019). The focus of this chapter will be on televisual products addressed to tweens, such as *How to Be Indie* (Canada, YTV, 2009-2011), *Jessie* (USA, Disney Channel, 2011-2015 and its spin-off *Bunk'd* (USA, Disney Channel 2015-), through the analysis of selected examples.

*How to Be Indie*, a Canadian sitcom created by V. Santamaria together with executive producers J. May and S. Bolch, and produced by Heroic Film Company, premiered on the network YTV and ran for two seasons. The series was also broadcast in the UK on Disney Channel and in Australia on ABC, with dubbed versions released around the world, from Latin America to Africa and also Europe. In Italy, it was broadcast in its dubbed version, *Essere Indie* (2010-2012), aired on DeAKids, a satellite channel for young people. The sitcom deals with the adventures of the main character, Indira Mehta, nicknamed Indie by her friends, and her family, migrants from India to Canada. The sitcom centres around the issue of cultural diversity, for Indie, her family and friends.

*Jessie*, a United States' sitcom created by P. Eells O'Connell, was an original Disney Channel's production, aired for four seasons. It was dubbed in Portuguese, for Brazil and Portugal, and Italy, with the same English title. *Jessie* focuses on the adventures of the title character, an 18-year-old woman who moves from a small town in Texas to New York City with her dream of becoming an actress and finds a job as a nanny for the Ross wealthy family. She takes care of their four children, i.e. Emma and her three siblings, Luke, Ravi and Zuri, adopted from the United States (Detroit, MI), India and Africa (Uganda) respectively. It was followed by its spin-off, *Bunk'd* (2015-) where three of the kids – Emma, Ravi and Zuri – go to Maine for a summer camp, which is the title of the Italian dubbed version, *Summer Camp* (2016-). The theme underlying the story is the promotion and acceptance of cultural diversity.

This chapter deals with dubbing, not only because Italy is historically a dubbing country in the world AVT's map[ii] but also because audiovisual products addressed to a younger audience tend to be dubbed all over the world, even in Scandinavian countries

which are used to subtitling. In addition, while in Anglophone contexts dubbing has traditionally been linked to the idea of a non-authentic experience, this specific translation mode has been recently reassessed (Ranzato & Zanotti 2019: 2-3).

The investigation will be limited to examples concerning the verbal code, without touching upon multimodal discourse analysis. Nevertheless, given the multisemiotic nature of AV products, aspects related to other codes will sometimes be considered.

The chapter aims to suggest that a linguistic framework for the analysis of 'multilingualism' in AVT is needed in TS to account for the wide spectrum of language variation in a systematic way. I argue that a discourse analysis approach such as that offered by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday 1994[iii]) may best serve this purpose, as the following section seeks to show.

**Theoretical framework**

The concepts of 'language' and 'language variety' have long been characterised by ambiguity, both for lay people and linguists. Most of the times, a variety has been seen in relation or opposition to 'standard', thus implying a hierarchical relationship. In TS, the notion of 'multilingualism' has been applied to both interlingual and intralingual varieties. The wide range of language variation featured in AV products has been interestingly faced by Corrius Gimbert and Zabalbeascoa (2011: 117) with the concept of 'third language (L3)' (Corrius Gimbert 2005), which includes standard languages, dialects, or other forms of language variation such as 'antilanguages' (Halliday 1978). I argue that even such a useful framework may be supplemented with an SFL (Halliday 1994) approach, which may help overcome some problematic issues raised when analysing the language of multiethnic/multicultural sitcoms.

As Munday and Zhang (2015: 329) point out, there has been a growing interest in the analysis of AVT from an SFL perspective (e.g., Bednarek 2010, Piazza, Bednarek & Rossi 2011, Taylor 2017), although most contributions concern subtitling (e.g., Taylor 2000, Mubenga 2010, Espindola 2012). At least to my knowledge, it has not yet been applied to dubbing and in particular to the translation of language varieties.

A first framework for the analysis of language variation was proposed by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964), who put forth a distinction between varieties according to the 'user' and the 'use' of language. Such a framework was furtherly devoloped, on the linguistics side, by Gregory (1967), Gregory and Carroll (1978) and Halliday and Hasan (1985) and, from a translation point of view, by Catford (1965), Gregory (1980) and Hatim and Mason (1990).

In his article about 'varieties differentiation', Gregory (1967), a major developer of SFL theory, suggested the labels 'dialectal' and 'dyatipic' varieties to categorize the "reasonably permanent" features of a language user (Gregory 1967: 184). Within the former, the scholar illustrated the sub-categories of 'idiolect, temporal, geographical, social, standard and non-standard dialect'. The situational category of a user's 'individuality' corresponds to the conetxtual feature of 'idiolect'. The situational categories of 'temporal, geographical and social provenances' correlate with the contextual categories of 'temporal, geographical and social dialects.' The difference bewteen 'standard' and 'non-standard' dialect is subtler. In Gregory's view, 'standard' is not associated with any regional or social origin but simply refers to the user's "range of intelligibility" within a community, along a cline or continuum (Gregory 1967: 183).

A decade later, Gregory and Carroll (1978: 12) observed that the general public tend to consider 'dialects' as 'poor country cousins' and that the non-specialists also

tend to confuse 'accent' and 'dialect'. The scholars explained that 'accent' refers to the "articulatory and acoustic features" of language, while 'dialect' is a superordinate term which comprises lexical, grammatical and phonological characteristics, including 'accent' (Gregory & Carroll 1978: 12). Therefore, a 'geographical' dialect has its recognizable 'regional accent'. Gregory and Carroll (1978: 17) remarked that, although sometimes 'social' and 'geographical' dialects intermingle, the latter usually reflects the physical space.

Describing how language varies 'according to the user' and 'according to the use', Halliday (1978: 35) put forward the distinction between 'dialect' and 'register', which was developed by Halliday and Hasan (1985: 41). User-related varieties, i.e. 'dialects', are linked to 'who the speaker or writer is', whereas use-related varieties, i.e. 'registers', are linked to 'what the speaker or writer is doing'. As Halliday and Hasan (1985: 43) pointed out, although 'dialect' and 'registers' are two different categories, there is a close relationship between them.

Catford (1965), applying such notions to translation, sub-divided the dimension of 'dialect' into 'proper or geographical', temporal and social. He argued that in dialect translation the criterion to be fulfilled is "'human' or 'social' geographical", rather than "purely locational" (Catford 1965: 86-87).

Gregory (1980: 463) stated that dialects can pose translation problems. Focusing on literary texts, the scholar argued that a writer may choose to use a geographical dialect along with the 'unmarked' literary language of a given context of culture. The translator may decide to look for equivalence through a TL literary dialect, and not necessarily at the same linguistic level: in other words, a marked phonological feature may be rendered through a marked lexico-grammatical choice.

Hatim and Mason (1990) also explored the issue of language variation in relation to translation and focused on the aspect of ideological choices and implications inherent in translating geographical dialects. They argued that the most common strategies to deal with geographical varieties might cause problems (Hatim & Mason 1990: 40-41). On the one hand, normalizing a geographical dialect might result in a loss in the TT; on the other hand, replacing that variety with a TL one might produce unintended effects.

In the present chapter, I shall use the term 'dialectal variety' and 'geographical dialect' in the Hallidayan sense and I shall consider 'a standard dialect' any variety that is understood by its speech community. Furthermore, I will take into account both 'real' and 'pseudo' geographical dialects, given that I will be dealing with fictional television products such as sitcoms, or 'kid-coms' (Manfredi 2018). In order to avoid ambiguity between the notions of 'standard' and 'non-standard' outside SFL, I shall use the labels 'unmarked' and 'marked'. Finally, I shall discuss examples according to three main translation strategies, i.e. localization, foreignization and neutralization (see Taylor 2006: 39).

## Analysis of dubbing into Italian

In this section, I shall present a selection of examples taken from the sitcoms *Jessie* and its spin-off *Bunk'd* (Disney Channel) and *How to Be Indie* (YTV), which, at different levels, manage to convey the multicultural identity of the characters.

### *Accents*

As stated in § 2, 'accent' is only one of the aspects which distinguish geographical dialects, although it is one of the most visible in a ST. However, when dealing with

AVT, it is a feature which is typically lost, for various practical constraints (Chiaro 2009: 158). In the sitcoms under investigation, accents typical of dialectal varieties are also neutralized.

In *How to Be Indie*, Indie's Mother, Father and Grandfather – first- and second-generation immigrants from India – have a strong Indian English accent. In the Italian dubbed version, they invariably speak unmarked Italian, without any specific accent. On the other hand, Indira (Indie) and her friend Abigail (Abi) from Philippines, third-generation immigrants, speak American and Canadian English, which is normalized in the TT, without conveying any geographical hint.

Similarly, in Disney's *Jessie*, while most characters speak American English in the ST and unmarked Italian in the TT, there is one character who is highly connoted for his dialectal variety: Ravi, the ten-year-old boy adopted from India, who has an Indian accent in the ST and uses contractions very rarely. In the Italian dubbed text, Ravi speaks unmarked Italian. Zuri, the six-year-old girl adopted from Uganda, sometimes speaks with a black English accent[iv], which is normalized in the Italian translation. Jessie, the eighteen-year-old nanny of the Ross children, also speaks with a Texan accent, which is not reproduced in the TT through a dialectal choice.

However, despite the use of neutralization at the phonological level, the characters' identity is also conveyed through lexico-grammatical choices and the visual code; therefore, the translation loss is not particularly problematic, as the following section aims to show.

### *Lexico-grammar*

*Cultural traditions*

Words that refer to specific socio-cultural, religious as well as culinary traditions of the source culture are often employed in the STs. In the TTs, non-translation mainly occurs, thus a strategy of foreignization, which maintains the multiple identity of the characters.

For instance, in *Jessie*, the name of a typical Indian garment is featured in both the ST and the Italian dubbed version, as in:

| Character | ST | TT | BT (Back Translation) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ravi | Hello, good family! Who is ready to get they learn on? | *Salve, bella famiglia! Chi è pronto a imparare qualcosa?* | Hello, good family! Who is ready to learn something? |
| Jessie | Oh, my… What you wearing? | *Oh mio… Ma come ti sei vestito?* | Oh my… But how have you dressed up? |
| Ravi | **It** is my **sherwani**, only worn on very special occasions. | ***Questo** è il mio **sherwani** e lo indosso soltanto in occasioni molto importanti.* | **This** is my **sherwani** and I just wear it on very special occasions. |

Table 11.1 From Disney *Jessie*, episode 1x11

In the example shown in Table 11.1, the name of *sherwani* – a man's knee-length coat buttoning up to the neck – which Ravi is proud to wear on his first school day to show his origins, is also combined with the visual code. Linguistically, the referential pronoun 'it', translated into the determiner *questo* ('this'), contributes to clarifying that

Ravi is talking about his bright yellow piece of Indian clothing. The following scene plays on the mispronunciation of the word, thus combining the phonological and lexico-grammatical levels.

It also occurs that non-English words are limited to the verbal code, as in the case of an expression with religious connotations related to a character's background heritage, which is found in *Jessie*:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Luke (as Lucas) | Hey! That's D.J. Half-Wit Master Flex to you! I'm available for birthdays, **bar mitzvahs**, and witch burnings. | *Ehi! Qui è DJ Strambo Master Flex che vi sta parlando! Disponibile per compleanni,* ***bar mitzvah****, roghi di streghe.* | Hey! It's Funny DJ Master Flex speaking! Available for birthdays, **bar mitzvahs**, witch burnings. |

Table 11.2 From Disney *Jessie*, episode 1x13

In the example in Table 11.2, Luke, the adopted son of Jewish origin from Detroit, mentions a typical religious ceremony, whose Hebrew name is also maintained in the Italian version.

*How to Be Indie* includes many references to typical Indian dishes, through their original Hindi names or in combination with English words. Those items are always kept in the TT, not only when in combination with the visual code, but also when limited to the verbal code. For example, on the occasion of the 'Wonderful World O' Food Day' that celebrates cultural diversity, the South Asia Booth will offer special dishes such as *pani puri,* '*biryani* cones', '*tandoori* chicken' and 'onion *pakoras*', which have been translated in the TT as *pani puri, coni biryani*, *pollo tandoori* and *pakora di cipolla*. A culinary culture specific item is also included in the title of the same episode, "How to Have your Samosa and Eat it Too" (episode 1x02), translated as *Come ottenere il tuo samosa e mangiartelo*" [How to obtain your *samosa* and eat it], where *samosa* is a triangular envelope of pastry, stuffed with spiced vegetables or meat and fried crisp, typical of Indian cuisine.

*Greetings*

Interestingly, there are lexico-grammatical choices which represent both a geographical origin and a character's idiolect, and also intersect with Tenor, as in the following example:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ravi | Ravi K. Ross, pleased to meet you! **Cheerio**, fellow pupil! | *Ravi Ross, lieto di conoscerti!* ***Cheerio****, caro compagno di scuola!* | Ravi Ross, pleased to meet you! *Cheerio*, dear schoolmate! |

Table 11.3 From Disney *Jessie*, episode 1x11

In the instance offered in Table 11.3, Ravi uses a formal and polite way of greeting such as 'pleased to meet you' when he first meets a schoolmate and combines it with a farewell greeting such as 'cheerio', with a humorous effect. In the TT, the formality is conveyed and the English word is also retained, producing a foreignizing effect.

Although it is likely that the Italian young viewer does not understand the type of greeting, s/he will probably perceive and appreciate an idiolectal way of speaking.

*Proverbs and idioms*

Significantly, foreignization does not only concern isolated lexical items but also entire structures. An interesting example is found in *Jessie*:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ravi | Yes. Back in my village, we would say Bertram appears to be a few chickpeas short of a samosa. | *Al mio villaggio direbbero che è un piatto di legumi senza samosa.* | In my village [they] would say that it is a pulse dish without any *samosa.* |

Table 11.4 From Disney *Jessie*, episode 1x15

In the ST in Table 11.4, Ravi, the Indian boy, compares the butler, Bertram, to "a few chickpeas short of a samosa", referring to the same Indian dish mentioned above. However, not only is the Hindi word transferred into the TT, but also the whole clause. Whether real or invented, and presumably meaning 'strange' or 'crazy', the expression sounds culture specific and as a typical 'translation' from a different dialectal variety. The 'foreginizing' effect is also maintained in the Italian version, preserving the multicultural nature of characters.

In *How to Be Indie*, a similar strategy concerns a proverb, which appears as a calque from one of the Indian languages:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bhaba Ji | The bruisest banana is quite often the sweetest. | *La banana ammaccata spesso è la più dolce.* | The bruised banana is often the sweetest |

Table 11.5 From *How to Be Indie/ Essere Indie*, episode 1x01

The scene suggests that the instance in Table 11.5 is meant not to be comprehensible and the same effect has been maintained in the TT.

In *Jessie*, the rendering of a simile imbued with Indianess has been tackled with a similar foreignizing strategy:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ravi | Shield your eyes, siblings! She will make you sing **like a Malayan Night Heron.** | *Chiudete gli occhi [0]! O vi farà cantare **come un airone notturno malese**, fidatevi.* | Shield your eyes [0]! Or she will make you sing **like a Malayan night heron,** trust me. |

Table 11.6 From Disney *Jessie*, episode 1x15

In the example in Table 11.6, the TT is extremely close to the ST. The verb 'sing', used in a figurative way and meaning 'confess', has been rendered in Italian with its direct equivalent, also working idiomatically in the TL. A 'localizing' translation such as 'dotty' or an omission of the geographical reference have been avoided. The comparison with 'a Malayan night heron', a medium-sized heron forund in Asia, has been maintained, with a foreignizing effect.

***Metalanguage***

English is also used as a metalanguage to talk about the characters' identity, as in:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ravi | Clearly, you are not smart enough to recognize a phony Indian accent. | *Be', è ovvio che non sei abbastanza sveglio per riconoscere un vero* [0] *indiano da uno fasullo.* | Well, it is obvious that you are not smart enough to recognize a real Indian [0] from a phoney one. |

Table 11.7 From Disney *Jessie*, episode 1x11

In the example shown in Table 11.7, Ravi comments on his own accent. Given that such an accent is not practically reproduced in the TT, the character's identity is expressed with respect to his nationality ('a real Indian') through an omission, although the global effect is essentially conveyed.

In a final example taken from *Bunk'd*, the omission is even greater:

| Character | ST | TT | BT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Xander | You understood him? | *Hai capito che ha detto?* | Have you understood what he said? |
| Emma | Ravi panics a lot, so I picked up a little Hindi. | *Ravi va sempre nel panico, posso immaginarlo…* | Ravi always panics, I can imagine it… |

Table 11.8 From Disney *Bunk'd*, episode 1x01

In this specific case shown in Table 11.8, the reference to Hindi language is totally omitted in the TT and substituted with the comment 'I can imagine it', probably also linked to synchronization problems, which are typical of dubbing.

**Discussion**

For its very nature of replacing a source language sound track with a target language one, dubbing typically involves adaptation, for at least two main reasons. Firstly, the technical constraints imposed by the channel, such as the syncronization between the actors' voices and their lips movement, often require semantic changes in the dubbed version. Secondly, the television industry tends to privilege globalised products for the marketplace. In the specific case of the small screen, as Steemers (2016: 54) points out, children's television is one of the most globalised AV products, and translation practices act accordingly. When it comes to language variation, the adoption of strategies of neutralization and omission is often the norm.

TV series which feature the use of dialectal varieties certainly pose major challenges for AVT translation and dubbing in particular. On the one hand, strategies of localization and neutralization will eliminate crucial aspects related to cultural identity. On the other hand, preservation of language variation might lead to incomprehension and non-natural effect in dialogues.

It is important to point out that objections have been raised in the media, for example to Ravi's accent in ST *Jessie*, condemned as 'fake', 'stereotypical' and

'exaggerated' (Lakshmi 2018). This attack reflects a wider critical attitude, voiced in media studies, towards Indian accents in US film and television, which are viewed as 'racial performance' (Davé 2013). As Bednarek (2018: 76) observes, this issue has also attracted criticism from linguists, who observe how 'telecinematic discourse' contributes to constructing and perpetuating cultural stereotypes. However, when daeling with multicultural/multiethnic sitcoms for younger viewers, one should consider the different functions that language variation in AV products may fulfil. If in multilingual films the function may be of 'realistic rendering', 'conflict' and 'confusion of lingua-cultural identities' (De Bonis 2014: 243), when it comes to television series it may well be an imitation of spontaneous language for the sake of realism, a resource for humorous purposes, or a tool for characterization. Starting with the assumption that the language of screen is fictional, and thus based on 'fictive dialogues' (Brumme & Espunya 2012: 7), it may be argued that naturalness is not necessarily such a relevant issue when coping with dubbing of multicultural sitcoms for a younger audience. From this perspective, the most common strategies of AVT may be re-interpreted. The usual poles of 'incoherent localisation' and 'banalising neutralisation' (Ranzato 2010: 109) might be seen from a different viewpoint. Normalization, which is typical of TV products for a younger audience, may result in homologation of cultures. Conversely, foreignization may represent a means to preserve cultural diversity rather than defective rendering of real speech. Significantly, what sounds as non-natural in the shape of a calque (as examples in tables 4, 5 and 6 demonstrated) may be considered an effective means of communication. Therefore, the much-debated issue of spoken dialogue vs. naturally occurring interaction (e.g., Pavesi 2008), which is valid for other AV products, may be overcome.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt with multiethnic/multicultural tween-sitcoms dubbed into Italian, although its claims might also hold true for other language combinations. It aimed to show the advantages of an SFL approach for the analysis of dialectal variation in AVT and its translation.

Firstly, from a strictly linguistic point of view, such an approach allows to solve the ambiguity between the issues of 'dialect' and 'accent', which do not necessarily overlap. Consequently, neutralization at the level of phonological aspects does not necessarily exclude the preservation of multicultiural identity, which may also be expressed through lexico-grammatical choices.

Secondly, from the perspective of discourse analysis and TS, such a model is comprehensive of the whole range of linguistic variation, i.e. geographical and social dialects, idiolect, standard and non-standard dialects. Although such categories sometimes happen to be related, by adopting a use-user oriented model of language variation each of them is clearly distinguished. By employing an SFL approach, other types of dialect may also be accounted for. For example, the recreation of a youth speech may be tackled as an example of idiolectal variation, while a character speech which conveys class origin may be analysed as a social dialect. The latter aspect is strictly related to the close link between dialectal variation and the use-related Tenor, the Hallidayan contextual variable that realises the interpersonal metafunction, determined by the relationship between and among characters.

Furthermore, the SFL notion of 'standard' and 'non-standard' dialect is particularly relevant when dealing with multicultural television products, given that it only

considers intelligibility as a parameter. Therefore, diversity and otherness are also advocated from a theoretical point of view. In other words, a character who uses a geographical variety to characterise his or her identity, is not necessarily viewed as 'non-standard', with respect to a supposedly 'superior' variety. Widening the horizons to include ideology and world view, an SFL approach seems to help overcome prejudices, especially when dealing with a text-type that is centred on championing cultural diversity.

**References:**


Bednarek, M. (2010). *The language of fictional television. Drama and identity*. London: Continuum.

Bednarek, M. (2018). *Language and television series. A linguistic approach to TV dialogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beltrán, M. C. and Fojas, C. eds. (2008). *Mixed race Hollywood*. New York: New York University Press.

Beseghi, M. (2017) *Multilingual films in translation. A sociolinguistic and intercultural study of diasporic films*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Beseghi, M. (2019). 'The representation and translation of identities in multilingual TV series: *Jane the Virgin*, a case in point'. In: Pérez L. de Heredia, M. and Higes Andino, I., eds., *Multilingüismo y representación de las identidades en textos audiovisuales/ Multilingualism and representation of identities in audiovisual texts*, *MonTI, Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación*, special issue, pp. 145-172. Available at: 10.6035/MonTI.2019.ne4.5 [Accessed 3 February 2020].

Bleichenbacher, L. (2008). *Multilingualism in the movies. Hollywood characters and their language choices*. Tübingen: Francke.

Brumme, J. and Espunya, A. (2012). Background and justification: Research into fictional orality and its translation. In: J. Brumme and A. Espunya, eds., *The translation of fictive dialogue*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, pp. 7-31.

Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chiaro, D. (2009) Issues in audiovisual translation. In: J. Munday, ed., *The Routledge companion to translation studies*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 141-165.

Corrius Gimbert, M. (2005). 'The third language: A recurrent textual restriction that translators come across in audiovisual translation'. *Cadernos de tradução* 2 (16), pp. 147-160.

Corrius Gimbert, M. and Zabalbeascoa, P. (2011). 'Language variation in source texts and their translations: The case of L3 in film translation'. *Target*, 23 (1), pp. 113-130.

Davé, S. S. (2013). *Indian accents. Brown voice and racial performance in American television and film*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

De Bonis, G. (2014). Dubbing multilingual films between neutralisation and preservation of lingua-cultural identities: A critical review of the current strategies in Italian dubbing. In: M. Pavesi, M. Formentelli and E. Ghia, eds., *The Languages of dubbing. Mainstream audiovisual translation in Italy*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 243-266.

Dwyer, T. (2005). 'Universally speaking: lost in translation and polyglot cinema'. In: D. Delabastita and R. Grutman, eds., *Fictionalising translation and multilingualism*. *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, *New Series*, 4, pp. 295-310.

Espindola, E. (2012). 'Systemic functional linguistics and audiovisual translation studies: A conceptual basis for the study of the language of subtitles'. *D.E.L.T.A.*, 28, pp. 495-513.

Federici, F. M. (ed.) (2009). *Translating regionalised voices in audiovisuals*. Roma: Aracne.

Gregory, M. J. (1967). 'Aspects of varieties differentiation'. *Journal of Linguistics*, 3 (2), pp. 177-198.

Gregory, M. J. (1980). 'Perspectives on translation from the Firthian tradition'. *Meta*, 25 (4), pp.

455-466.
Gregory, M. J. and Carroll, S. (1978). *Language and situation: Language varieties and their social contexts*. London/Henley/Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Arnold.
Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.
Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to Functional Grammar*. 2nd edition. London: Arnold.
Halliday, M. A. K. and Hasan, R. (1985/1989). *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Australia: Deakin University Press/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Halliday, M. A. K. and Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to Functional Grammar*. 3rd edition. London: Arnold.
Halliday, M. A. K., revised by Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to Functional Grammar*. 4th edition. London/New York: Routledge.
Halliday, M. A. K., McIntosh, A. and Strevens, P. (1964). *The linguistic sciences and language teaching*. London: Longman.
Hatim, B. and Mason, I. (1990). *Discourse and the Translator*. London/New York: Longman.
Heiss, C. (2004). 'Dubbing multilingual films: A new challenge?'. *Meta*, 49 (1), pp. 208-220.
Lakshmi, K. (2018). 'Casual racism in media'. *The Voice*, 18 May. Available at: (https://presentationvoice.com/all-posts/ae/2018/05/18/casual-racism-in-media/ (Accessed 30 September 2019).
Manfredi, M. (2018). How to be Indian in Canada, *How to be Indie* in Italy: Dubbing a TV sitcom for teenagers. In J. Díaz-Cintas, and K. Nikolić, eds., *Fast-forwarding with audiovisual translation*, Bristol, UK and Blue Ridge Summit, PA, USA: Multilingual Matters, pp. 31-46.
Mubenga, K. S. (2010). 'Towards an integrated approach to cohesion and coherence in interlingual subtitling'. *Stellenbosch papers in linguistics PLUS*, 40, pp. 39-54.
Munday J. and Zhang, M. (2015). 'Introduction'. *Discourse analysis in translation studies, Target* special issue, 27 (3), pp. 325–334.
Pavesi, M. (2008). Spoken language in film dubbing: Target language norms, interference and translational routines. In: D. Chiaro, C. Heiss and C. Bucaria, eds., *Between text and image. Updating research in screen translation*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 79-99.
Piazza, R., Bednarek, M. and Rossi, F. (eds). (2011). *Telecinematic discourse. Approaches to the language of films and television series*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
Ranzato, I. (2006). Tradurre dialetti e socioletti nel cinema e nella televisione. In: N. Armstrong and F. M. Federici, eds., *Translating voices, translating regions*. Roma: Aracne, pp. 143-162.
Ranzato, I. (2010). Localising Cockney: Translating dialect into Italian. In: J. Díaz-Cintas, A. Matamala and J. Neves, eds., *New insights into audiovisual translation and media accessibility*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, pp. 109-122.
Ranzato, I. and Zanotti, S. (eds). (2019). *Reassessing dubbing. Historical approaches and current trends*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
Steemers, J. (2016). The context of localization: Children's television in Western Europe and the Arabic-speaking world. In: A. Esser, M. Á. Bernal-Merino and I. R. Smith, eds., *Media across borders: Localizing TV, film, and video games*. New York/London: Routledge, pp. 53-67.
Taylor, C. J. (2000). The subtitling of film: Reaching another community. In E. Ventola, ed., *Discourse and community*. Tübingen: Gunther Narr, pp. 309-327.
Taylor, C. J. (2006). The translation of regional variety in the films of Ken Loach. In: N. Armstrong and F. M. Federici, eds., *Translating voices, translating regions*. Roma: Aracne, pp. 37-52.

Taylor, C. J. (2017). Reading images (including moving ones). In: T. Bartlett and G. O'Grady, eds. *The Routledge handbook of systemic functional linguistics*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 575-590.

Zabalbeascoa, P. and Voellmer, E. (2014). Accounting for multilingual films in translation studies: Intratextual translation in dubbing. In: D. Abend-David, ed., *Media and translation. An interdisciplinary approach*. New York/London: Bloomsbury, pp. 25-51.

**Filmography**

*Ae Fond Kiss*. K. Loach. UK. 2004.
*Bend it Like Beckham*. G. Chadha. USA/UK/Germany. 2002.
*Gran Torino*. C. Eastwood. USA. 2008.
*Jane the Virgin.* USA, The CW/Netflix. 2014-2019.
*Kim's Convenience*. Canada, CBC/Netflix. 2016-.
*Lizzie McGuire*. USA, Disney Channel. 2001-2004.
*Narcos.* USA/Columbia, Netflix. 2015-2017.
*One Day at a Time*. USA, Netflix. 2017-.
*Orange is the New Black.* USA, Netflix. 2013-2019.
*Spanglish*. J. L. Brooks. USA. 2004.
*The Bing Bang Theory*. USA, CBS. 2007-2019.
*The Simpsons*. USA, FOX. 1989-.
*Ugly Betty.* USA, ABC. 2006-2010.

**Primary sources**

*Bunk'D*. P. Eeells O'Connell. USA, Disney Channel. 2015: First season. [*Summer Camp*. ITA, Disney Channel. 2016. Dubbing dialogue adapter: R. Manzi].

*How to Be Indie*. V. Santamaria, J. May and S. Bolch. Canada, YTV. 2009: First season. [*Essere Indie*. ITA, DeAKids. 2010. Dubbing director: F. Danti].

*Jessie*. P. Eeells O'Connell. USA: Disney Channel. 2011-2012: First season. [*Jessie*. ITA, Disney Channel. 2011-2012. Dubbing dialogue adapter: R. Manzi].

**Acknowledgement:**

Special thanks to Disney Enterprises Inc. for the permissions granted for the use of the textual excerpts in Examples 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and ITA, DeAKids and DHX Media in Example 5 of this chapter.

[i] At the time of writing, only *Kim's Convenience* has not been dubbed for the Italian television or web.
[ii] For an overview, see Ranzato and Zanotti (2019: 1).
[iii] Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold (revised 2nd edition 1994; revised 3rd edition, with C.M.I.M. Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday, M. A. K., rev. by Matthiessen, C. M. I. M., 4th edition 2014).
[iv] The so-called 'Black English', or African American Vernacular English, which is a variety spoken by many African Americans in the United States, displays some marked phonological features, although it also involves lexico-grammatical choices.