
'Walk and Talk' in Italian

Dubbing Cool Politics

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Abstract & Keywords

English:

This study examines the reasons why the television series *The West Wing* did not have the huge success in Italy that it had had elsewhere. Over and above the supposition that the series lacked in appeal for simple marketing mistakes such as poor scheduling and the public's lack of engagement with matters of US politics, it is likely that issues concerning translation may have also had an adverse impact. One of the hardest hurdles facing the translator of the series concerned the management of dialogue that often consisted of witty repartee delivered at fast speed while actors were on the move 'walking and talking'. Following a brief and critical overview of the Italian dub of the episode *In Excelsis Deo*, a variety of lingua-cultural issues that the translation and dub had to deal with will be explored. An interview with the dubbing translator reveals how references to sex, violence and religion are flattened throughout the original script's to the Italian screen.

Keywords: dubbing, censorship, verbally-expressed humour, US television series

1. Introduction

Seasons 1–4 of *The West Wing* were first broadcast in Italy in July 2002 by *Rete 4*, one of the privately owned *Mediaset* channels. Later, in 2004, *Fox*, a channel available on the *Sky Italia* pay TV package, broadcast re-runs followed by the fifth season in 2007. In 2009 and 2010, *Premium* (*Mediaset*'s pay TV package) channel *Steel* aired Seasons 6 and 7. Between 2009 and 2010 *The West Wing* returned to *Rete 4* where Seasons 5 to 7 were broadcast once more. In 2012, *Sky Italia* and digital channel *Arturo* re-ran the entire series from scratch.

Despite its huge success in the US earned, amongst other things, for its cutting edge style portraying a 'politics is cool' ethos, the Italian version passed by the general public largely unnoticed. A potential reason for its debacle in Italy may well lie in the concerns of the series that are extremely technical and highly specific to US politics and thus possibly of interest only to those knowledgeable and taken with such matters. Like numerous contemporary serial dramas, each episode of *The West Wing* consists of a main plot stretching over an entire season or more that simultaneously encompasses smaller storylines which begin and end within a single episode as well as sub-plots which continue across several episodes. While the main story line is indeed concerned with complex matters of US politics, the subplots are often not directly connected with politics at all, in fact, typically they will touch upon a number of personal or social issues such as homosexuality or drug and alcohol abuse. Furthermore a number of romantic storylines, e.g., Josh and Donna; Danny and C.J.; Sam and Laurie and so on, that presumably make the series appealing to a wider public, nevertheless did not manage to attract Italian viewers to the series.

However, apart from its extreme cultural specificity regarding highly complex political operations that may not especially attract mainstream Italian audiences, scheduling was to some extent mishandled too. In fact, a possible reason for the series being overlooked could well be because it was broadcast at very inconvenient times. For example, Season 7 was screened between 5 and 6 a.m. followed by re-runs at 2 a.m. – hardly prime time viewing. Furthermore, episodes were frequently cancelled and time slots changed without warning, thus making recording difficult. Typically for Italy, apart from inappropriate viewing times, *The West Wing* (*TWW*) was screened in a way that was out of step on a monthly and yearly basis too. In fact, scheduling of episodes was such that Season 1 went out during the month of July, so that the Christmas episode *In Excelsis Deo - Buon natale Presidente*[1] ('Merry Christmas Mr. President') was likely to have been broadcast at the height of summer and thus quite out of tune with surrounding reality. This is not at all unusual on Italian TV where Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas episodes of series are often broadcast in high summer but such programming simply reflects an indication of carelessness and lack of regard for audiences.[2] Yet, Italian trailers publicized *TWW* as the highly acclaimed series which it was, making the reason for the total mismanagement that appears to have ensued rather bewildering. Additionally, even for night owls, the translation of the title may well have been misleading, especially for older viewers. The Italian version was broadcast as *West Wing - Tutti gli Uomini del Presidente* thus picking up on Alan J. Pakula's 1976 award-winning movie *All the President's Men* in which reporters Woodward and Bernstein, respectively played by Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman, unearth material that led to the Watergate scandal. Of course, *TWW* does not take place in the offices of *The Washington Post* but, as the title suggests, in the West Wing of the White House, something which may have been disappointing for someone expecting to watch a modern thriller. However, the Italian title follows a consolidated norm that involves a) keeping the original title without the article which is b) followed by an explanatory phrase as in *Desperate Housewives* that becomes *Desperate Housewives: I Segreti di Wisteria Lane* – 'the secrets of Wisteria Lane;' *ER - ER: Medici in Prima Linea* – 'Doctors on the Front Line' and so on

The Italian dubbing process normally consists of four basic steps; firstly the script is translated; secondly the translated dialogue is adapted so that it sounds like natural sounding Italian that matches the lip movements of the source language actors; thirdly dubbing actors record the new script, and finally it is mixed into the original soundtrack (for a fuller description of the process see Chiaro 2009, 144–6). The adaptation for the dub of Season One was carried out by a highly experienced AIDAC[3] associate Daniela Altomonte who accepted to be

interviewed and whose comments on the translation strategies and lingua-cultural choices adopted for this particular episode are reported wherever relevant throughout this chapter. Altomonte, a *dialoghista* or ‘dubbing translator’ whose task it is to make sure that the target dialogue sounds natural, worked, as is the norm in Italy, from a word-to-word translation of the original script produced by a translator. In the case of *TWW*, the scripts were translated by Alessandro Rossi, an expert not only in translation, but more significantly, someone who is highly conversant in geo-politics and the US constitution. Thus, this first season benefitted from the know-how and experience of two top-class professionals and it is indeed a pity that their talent and efforts went largely to waste.[4]

This chapter begins by reviewing the Italian version of *In Excelsis Deo (IED)* with regard to issues pertaining to the translation of lingua-specific features such as terms of address, greetings, fillers and so on, after which the area of the culture-specificity of the episode and its impact on the dubbed version is examined. Subsequently, features that overlap language and culture, namely idioms and verbally expressed humour will be also be examined. Finally, a brief discussion of censorship will precede the conclusion and closing remarks.

2. Dubbing lingua-specific features in In Excelsis Deo

Doppiagese or ‘dubbese’ is the term used to describe a variety of Italian that is adopted in the (Italian) dubbed dialogues of filmic products (see Antonini and Chiaro 2004 and Bucaria and Chiaro 2007: 95). While the term is not supposed to be in any way disparaging, it is worth highlighting that Italian dubbing does, however, adhere to conventions that often result in expressions that do not exist in naturally occurring Italian (see Pavesi 1994; Chiaro 2008; Antonini and Chiaro 2009). To quote a common example, fictional wedding vows translated from English filmic products in which the bride and groom are asked if they will take their partner to be their ‘lawful wedded husband/wife’[5] to which the traditional response is ‘I do;’ in Italian, for reasons of lip synchronization ‘I do’ becomes *lo voglio*—literally, ‘I want it.’ In a real-life Italian wedding ceremony the reply would be a straightforward *sì* — ‘yes’. However, although viewers are aware that much dubbese is essentially atypical and unlike naturally occurring Italian, research shows that they are willing to accept it as part and parcel of the general suspension of disbelief undertaken when partaking in filmic products (see Antonini and Chiaro 2009). Significantly, filmic products produced in Italy and in Italian tend to follow the norm that is present in dubbed dialogues with an inclination for script-writers to prefer the dubbese formula *lo voglio* to a more realistic *sì* in autochthonous filmic materials too.[6] This is not surprising considering the large number of products imported from the US that are translated from English with the result that Italians are exposed to a vast quantity of dubbese. It thus stands to reason that not only Italian filmic products, but also naturally occurring Italian is to some extent influenced by dubbese.

In *IED*, as in any other Italian dub, the most significant pragma-grammatical modifications occur in the area of terms of address and in the huge area of seemingly minor words and phrases that span from expressions of agreement and disagreement to greetings, ubiquitous fillers and beyond (see Pavesi 1996).

2.1. Terms of address

The fact that English does not have a specific personal pronoun with which to express politeness, courtesy and social distancing, nor a specific one to denote familiarity, creates the need for firm translational strategies in filmic products in languages such as Italian, French, German and so on which do have a pronominal system to denote social distance, vicinity, or politeness. In the absence of personal pronouns dedicated to politeness and distancing, audiovisual translation needs to take into account the way in which English uses a wide range of terms of endearment, titles, names and so on, so that viewers can capture the intended societal dynamics that exist between speakers (see Pavesi 1996). In this particular series, choosing between the more polite and distancing *Lei* form (third person singular) and the more familiar *tu* form (second person singular) is especially problematic because the characters are part of a team operating in a physically close working environment which includes the most powerful person in the world, the President of the US. Not only do people of various levels of rank work shoulder to shoulder with the President but in an enclosed space, emotional relationships of various intensities are fostered between people who, nonetheless, differ in their workplace roles and, consequently, social status. Additionally, English has a predilection for the copious use of first names in conversation (see Pavesi *ibidem*) thus rendering it seemingly a more informal language than Italian, a language in which it is not common to repeat the name of one’s interlocutor while conversing. This complexity needs to be negotiated in the pursuit of a convincing dub.

According to Altomonte it was initially decided that all characters would use the polite *Lei* form when addressing the President while he would use the more familiar *tu* form when addressing them. Furthermore, Altomonte adds, that with *IED* being one of the earliest episodes, it may have been aired containing inaccuracies in the area of terms of address. Basically, a strategy for handling terms of address is primarily proposed by the dubbing translator, after which it is the task of the dubbing supervisor to have the final say on what is actually aired.[7] This episode, in fact, contains several cases of inappropriate distancing between characters through use of the ‘wrong’ pronoun as well as instances of shifts made by speakers who sometimes move from *Lei* to *tu* in a seemingly haphazard manner although it is difficult to understand whether the choice is a deliberate translational strategy or, indeed an inaccuracy. Furthermore, the Italian dub is generally lacking in the texture of nuances created through the diverse modes of allocution present in the original.

In Italian, asymmetrical relationships (e.g. doctor/patient; bank manager/customer; teacher/student and so on) require either that both parties use the polite *Lei* form, although the elder or more socially empowered of the speakers (such as a teacher in the classroom or a doctor or nurse with an elderly or very young patient) may use the *tu* form. However, the President’s team of workers are mostly all on first name terms with each other despite the hierarchy existing between them and this reflects the familiarity and intimacy nurtured in many of the workplace relationships depicted.

Leo - Chief of Staff

The relationship between President Bartlet and his Chief of Staff Leo McGarry, is one of companionship as they share details about each other’s private lives and obviously have a rapport that goes beyond the workplace – in this episode, for example, Bartlet invites Leo to spend Christmas with him and his family. Interestingly, despite their close friendship, Leo addresses Bartlet as ‘Mr. President’ and ‘Sir’ while Bartlet addresses Leo by name. In a sense, the English reflects the asymmetrical power relationship that exists over and above the fact that the two are clearly close friends. Leo’s reverence towards Bartlet also highlights his professionalism and respect for his

friend who also happens to be the President of the US. The Italian dub opts for a different linguistic relationship between the two, with Leo using the informal *tu* form with the President and addressing him with his nickname 'Jed' where the English consistently adopts 'Mr. President' thus reflecting a relationship of equal standing, which, in a sense is not far from the true nature of their bond.

The same distance is also maintained in the Italian dub of the interaction between Leo and Press Secretary C.J. by having them interact with each other using the *Lei* form despite the fact that in the original they are on first name terms and are clearly friends – C.J. offers to cook for Leo at Christmas, implying that they are on very familiar terms. However Leo does not accept her offer replying jokingly 'What are you, my mother?' The Italian dub '*Lei non è mica mia madre* – You are not my mother' mixes two registers, namely the formality of *Lei* with the very colloquial *mica* – literally 'at all') and thus, besides not being funny, is quite inappropriate under the circumstances. Again, another inapt use of distancing *Lei* occurs in Leo's use of this form when addressing his deputy Josh Lyman and Sam Seaborne, Deputy Communications Officer. Although Josh and Sam are Leo's assistants, they are so close to Leo that they go out of their way in an attempt to prevent a scandal breaking out regarding Leo's past drinking problem and experiences in rehab. In a discussion regarding the somewhat unethical methods used by Josh and Sam in doing so, Leo's use of the *Lei* form is quite untimely.

The Italian dub also has to deal with the way Leo's other subordinates relate to him language-wise. Margaret, his assistant, is verbally very much his equal. In a scene in which she is bossing Leo into signing a pile of Christmas cards, at one point Leo snaps 'Who the hell is this guy and why do I care if he has a Merry Christmas?' to which Margaret responds 'Just sign the damn thing.' The retort is one of familiarity and lacking in the reserve that one would normally use when addressing a superior. The Italian dub reflects quite the opposite spirit: '*Lei pensi a firmare e basta* – Just sign it, end of' [*basta* literally means 'enough']. Notably, the Italian is also softened by removing the word 'damn' (see 5). Like Margaret, many others also use the *Lei* form when addressing Leo even though their relationship in English is one of familiarity. For example, when Leo sees reporter Danny Concannon holding a goldfish and remarks 'That's a nice goldfish?' Danny replies 'Isn't it?' which in the Italian dub becomes the polite form '*Trova?*' (literally 'Do you find?') thus accentuating distance.

Josh and Donna

In the first series of *TWW* the relationship between Josh and Donna, his personal assistant is clearly hovering on the verge of romance, thus, despite its asymmetrical nature, dialogues between the couple reflect their equal standing at least in terms of emotional commitment. In fact, Josh and Donna partake in much flirtatious verbal sparring which contains no signals of asymmetry in the original, while the dub has Donna adopt the *Lei* form more typical of a P.A. talking to her boss. The three utterances in Table 1 have been extracted from a scene in which Donna gives Josh her Christmas present wish list – an action which clearly denotes familiarity as people do not generally hand out wish lists to strangers or to their superior at work. The original utterances are relaxed and highly colloquial 'Just feel free...'; 'Where you going?' and 'So you'll think about...'. The dub, on the other hand, contains a more formal use of language including the use of subjunctive imperatives pertaining to the *Lei* form, such as *Scelga* – 'pray choose' in place of 'just choose'; *se vuole* – 'should you want to' for 'feel free' and so on thus much more distancing than the source dialogue and consequently less appropriate under the circumstances.

Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Just pick something off the list, and, you know, feel free to pick two things.	<i>Scelga una cosa dalla lista. Ma se vuole può scegliere due.</i>	Pray, choose something from the list. You may choose two if you wish.
Where you going?	<i>Dove va?</i>	Where you going, pray?
So you'll think about the skis?	<i>Non dimentichi gli sci!</i>	Pray, do not forget the skis!

Table 1. Donna addressing Josh

When Josh gives Donna her Christmas present, a book on skiing, she is clearly moved by what he has written in a note inside and the couple give each other a tight hug. As can be seen in Table 2, the couple adopt a familiar style which, is only partly reflected in the Italian. For example, Josh uses the familiar *tu* form when addressing her and he calls her Dony an abbreviation of her name and an invented term of endearment.[8] In Italian *donna* is the word for 'woman' so it does sound odd when used as a first name in dubs as it may sound as though the speaker is calling his/her interlocutor 'Woman' a disparaging form of address. However the diminutive Dony does sound most peculiar. Furthermore, Donna does not mirror Josh's familiarity but continues to use the *Lei* form which is clearly odd and inappropriate under the circumstances.

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Josh	Donna, don't get emotional. Donna, don't get... You know, let's try and maintain some sort of...	<i>Non c'è bisogno che ti commuovi Dony, ti prego, non fare così... Dony... cerchiamo di mantenere un certo...</i>	You needn't get emotional Dony, I beg of you, don't get... Dony... let's try and maintain some...
Donna	You see!? You spend most of our time being, you know, you. And then you write something like this to me. Thank you.	<i>Ma tu guarda!... passa le giornate ad essere...insomma...se stesso...e poi mi scrivi una dedica così!...Grazie!</i>	Lei You see. You spend your days being... yourself...and then you write me a dedication like this. Thank you.

Table 2. Josh and Donna

Toby is Communications Director and hence a very important and powerful figure at the White House, however, as stated previously, professional roles often merge with emotional relationships, as well as a variety of other variables which are, of course, reflected in the dialogues. Dolores Landingham, the President's executive secretary is an elderly woman who is clearly respected by Toby both because of her professional standing as well as her age and gender. However, in one of the final scenes of *IED*, Mrs. Landingham, who is never addressed by her first name by any of the members of staff, manages to treat Toby like a child while maintaining politeness. She addresses him as 'Toby' while he addresses her as '*Mrs. Landingham*' (my italics). Furthermore, Mrs. Landingham tells Toby what he 'should not have done' scolding him like one would a naughty child, repeating his name while she does so (see Table 3) 'You shouldn't have done that Toby.' Toby meanwhile hangs his head in shame just like a small child caught by a parent doing something against the rules. The Italian dub has Mrs. Landingham use the polite *Lei* form and while she still dresses Toby down, she treats him as a peer, an adult rather than a child. It becomes an admonishment rather than a telling-off.

The very last line in the episode is uttered by Mrs. Landingham: 'Toby, I'd like to come along' which in Italian becomes a much more formal request '*Toby? Le dispiace se vengo anch'io?*— Toby, would you mind if I come too.' Mrs. Landingham is already dressed and has decided to go to the funeral; Toby has no choice in the matter as she is the more dominant of the two. The Italian dub suggests the reverse.

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Mrs. Landingham	Good morning Toby.	<i>Buongiorno Toby.</i>	Good morning Toby.
Toby	Good morning Mrs. Landingham.	<i>Buongiorno, signora Landingham.</i>	Good morning Mrs. Landingham.
Mrs. Landingham	The President would like to see you.	<i>Il Presidente le vuole parlare.</i>	The President would like to talk to you.
Toby	I know	<i>Lo so</i>	I know
Mrs. Landingham	Did you use his name to arrange a military funeral for a homeless veteran?	<i>Ha usato il suo nome per predisporre un funerale militare per un veterano senz'atetto?</i>	Did you use his name to arrange a military funeral for a homeless veteran?
Toby	Yes	<i>Sì</i>	Yes
Mrs. Landingham	You shouldn't have done that Toby.	<i>Non lo avrebbe dovuto fare.</i>	You shouldn't have done that.
Toby	I know	<i>Lo so</i>	I know
Mrs. Landingham	You absolutely should not have done that.	<i>Sarebbe stato molto meglio se non lo avesse fatto.</i>	It would have been preferable if you had not done that.
Toby	I know	<i>Lo so</i>	I know

Table 3. Toby and Mrs. Landingham

In the scene at the Korean War Memorial, where Toby has been summoned by the DC police, his neutral 'Excuse me' upon first approaching the police officer is translated with the polite form *Mi scusi* presumably in reverence of the official's social status. Whereas in the original, Toby is quite relaxed with the police officer, in the dub he is much more courteous and distanced. Toby's lax uses of 'yeah' – are translated with a polite *prego* (literally 'pray') and an insertion of the *Lei* form while a casual 'listen' with the 3rd person singular polite imperative *senta*.

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Toby	Yeah ...Listen, this isn't a crime scene, is it?	<i>Prego / Senta non si tratta di omicidio, vero?</i>	Pray, this isn't homicide, is it?
Officer	Huh ...thanks	<i>Hm...grazie</i>	Hm...thanks
Toby	Yeah , thanks	<i>Grazie a Lei</i>	Thank you to you

Table 4a and b. Toby and the police officer

Mrs Landingham

One of the most emotional and significant scenes in the episode is the one in which Mrs Landingham recounts the loss of her twin boys in Vietnam to the President's Personal Aide the twenty-something Charlie Young. In this scene, Mrs Landingham addresses Charlie using the *Lei* form, an odd choice considering Charlie's age, but also the circumstances. Once more we have a situation of high intimacy (as with Josh and Donna above) in which one of the speakers who is bearing her soul simultaneously maintains social distance to someone who could be her grandson, through the choice of form of address.

Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
You know , they were so young, Charlie, they were your age. It's hard when	<i>Charlie...avevano la sua età. Sa, è brutto quando queste cose accadono ...</i>	Charlie...they were your age. You know [polite form], it's horrible when these things happen...

that happens so far away,
you know

Table 5. Mrs Landingham and Charlie

2.2. Terms of agreement and disagreement

Much has been written regarding the Italian dub of the term ‘yes’ (see e.g., Pavesi 1994, 1996; Antonini and Chiaro 2009.) Owing to issues regarding lip sync, in which it would be wide of the mark to replace spread lipped, semi-closed mouthed *si* with a round lipped, wide mouthed ‘yes’ or ‘yeah,’ it has become customary to dub the term with *già*. The choice of *già* is so common that it also occurs when lip synch is not an issue, such as when dubbing from Spanish which has the same word for ‘yes’ as Italian. There are, however, several variations to the *già* solution. *IED* contains *esatto*, *certo*, *giusto*, *prego* – ‘exactly’, ‘certainly’, ‘right’, ‘please’ and even *si* itself despite Altomonte’s declared preference for the term *già*.^[9]

The casual ‘nope’ on the other hand is consistently translated with a more formal *no*.

2.3. Greetings

The informal greeting ‘Hey’ is regularly substituted with *ciao* although the Italian script does suggest *ehi* on one occasion which is ignored in the actual recording. *Ehi* is frequently used in Italian dubbese, presumably because of the good lip synch with ‘Hey,’ while not being totally absent in naturally occurring Italian, although used with a stronger function than a simple familiar greeting i.e., it may indicate surprise at seeing someone or else it can be used even to warn or reprimand someone, a sort of ‘Hey, watch out!’

2.4. Fillers

Generally speaking fillers are omitted in the dub of *IED*. Nine occurrences of ‘you know’ are absent in the dub thus rendering the Italian conversation less hesitant, lacking in repetition, redundancies and false starts – in other words less natural sounding. If we consider, for example, Mrs. Landingham’s description of how her twin sons were killed in Vietnam (Table 5) while the dub is equally (if not more) passionate than the original as the lack of uncertainty provided by ‘you know’ is substituted with extra pausing and more dramatic acting. However, the second occurrence of ‘you know’ in the reported exchange, is shifted to the head of the utterance in the dub and translated with a very literal, as well as polite and distancing ‘you know,’ i.e., *sa*. Rather than a filler which allows the speaker to mentally clarify what she is about to say next, the Italian *sa* gives the utterance a more explanatory function.

Despite the fact that the term ‘OK’ is common in naturally occurring Italian and would facilitate lip-synch, the term generally become *capisco* – ‘I understand’ – a clearly more formal choice than the original. The term ‘no way’ also becomes more formal with *scordatelo* – ‘forget it.’

3. Culture specific references

Culture specific references refer to entities that are typical of one particular culture and that culture alone, however, it is essential to bear in mind that these references can occur in different forms, in other words they may be completely or chiefly visual (for example the screen shot of the skyline of a city); completely verbal (for example references to units of measure or currency, to a well-known personality and so on) or else a combination of verbal and visual such as a reporter commenting on a game of American football as it happens on screen. Referring to written English, Leppihalme (1997) labeled these entities ‘culture bumps’ precisely because they often cause a jolt or a bump in the non-native speaker’s cognition in an otherwise smooth running text. Transferring the concept of culture bumps to translation, these features will cause the translator to compromise strongly with the reader – or, in our case, the viewer who may well have to come to terms with a mismatch between what s/he sees and what s/he hears(dub) and/or reads (sub). Thus Antonini and Chiaro choose the metaphor of electrical current and talk of ‘lingua-cultural drops in translational voltage’ to describe the discrepancy between what the audience sees on screen and the words they hear and/or see (according to whether they are enjoying dubbing or subtitling) and go on to classify culture specific references into ten specific categories namely: institutions (e.g. judiciary, police, political and military); educational; place names; units of measurement; monetary systems; national sports and pastimes; food and drink; holidays and festivities; books, films and TV programs; celebrities and personalities (2004: 39). As in any imported series, *TWW* and, of course, the episode at issue, is choc-a-block with not only, US culture specificity, but, to complicate matters, White House culture specificity too.

Thus, as might be expected, *IED* contains references to US place names, its monetary system, festivities (in this case the episode takes place in the two days before Christmas), food and drink, celebrities and personalities, but more importantly to issues pertaining to law enforcement and matters regarding the wars in Korea and Vietnam. In order to deal with these references the dubbing translator, Daniela Altomonte, largely opted for the strategy of replacing the reference with a hyperonym belonging to the same semantic field as the original reference – a strategy that Katan labels ‘chunking upwards’ (2004:147). The decision to choose this strategy is to help out the viewer who, according to Altomonte is ‘*ignorante e distratto*’ – ‘uninformed and unfocused’ and needs relevant information to be conveyed efficiently even if lacking in detail. A more specific translational choice represented by chunking either ‘downwards’ or ‘sideways,’ (i.e.; respectively translating with more specific references or same level equivalents in the target language), ‘*non arriva all’orecchio dello spettatore*’ – ‘will not reach the viewer’s ear.’ Furthermore, Altomonte also claims that it is the ‘duty’ of the dubbing translator to allow viewers to relax in their cinema seat or armchair at home therefore, if they start asking themselves questions, they will miss part of the film.^[10] In other words viewers require ‘*un aggancio immediato*’ – ‘[need to be] hooked right away.’

3.1. Visual culture-specificity

Hard as it is to extrapolate the purely visual from the verbal in a poly-semiotic text, Italian viewers are in fact presented with a number of visuals which will be perceived on the one hand as foreign, but at the same time extremely familiar owing to the fact that they are likely to have a wide experience of other filmic products representing similar sights. The Christmas atmosphere, conveyed by the predominance of the color red and the ubiquitous decorations present in the episode (trees, lights, wreaths, gift packages and so on) exemplify this. And

it is the very lushness of US Christmas with which viewers will be familiar from other screen products that to the European common imaginary, render the entire background particular to Yuletide in North America and North America alone.

3.2. Visual culture-specificity with verbal anchoring

The significance and the visual impact of the scenes set at the Korean War Memorial and at Section 43 of Arlington Cemetery are likely to remain quite foreign to Italian viewers, yet of course, in order to appreciate the episode in its entirety, comprehension is essential. Viewers need to understand that Toby may also be a veteran, possibly (judging from his age) from Vietnam, as well as the link with Mrs. Landingham who, we learn later on in the episode lost her twin sons in the same war.

The ironic choice of the choir in the Mural Room singing ‘The Little Drummer Boy’ to accompany the juxtaposition of the Christmas Eve celebrations and the military funeral is another essential feature for a complete understanding of the episode. As the funeral takes place with the military salute, the rifle shots and the intricate folding of the star spangled banner that had covered the casket, knowing viewers will capture the link between the carol about a little drummer boy visiting the infant Jesus in Bethlehem with the ‘rup pum pum pum’ chorus that evokes the drums of war. The scene at the cold winter cemetery is continually juxtaposed with the warmth of the Mural Room and the choir, the Christmas decorations, the red and the gold. This combination of visuals and sounds creates a bitter-sweet irony of contrasts regarding giving and taking; joy and grief; birth and death—themes that overlap and recall the storyline of the episode.

3.3. Verbally expressed culture-specificity

Several lexical items specifically pertaining to the semantic field of US warfare have been chunked upwards in the translation. For example, the very culture-specific Purple Heart medal awarded to soldiers wounded or killed in war is replaced with the more generic *medaglia al valore* – ‘medal for bravery’ and references to V.A. become a very general ‘*Associazione veterani*’ which, however, being visually anchored with the scene at the War Memorial coupled with references to Korea should clarify the allusion. The same strategy is adopted to replace the specific ‘IRS’ (Internal Revenue Service) with ‘*Ufficio Imposte* –tax office;’ and ‘The Goodwill’ with *beneficenza* – ‘charity.’ Similarly, the reference to ‘Georgetown’ becomes a generic ‘*università* –university’ while ‘carolers’ becomes a more non-specific *coro* – ‘choir,’ and ‘index cards’ that are typically used by US schoolchildren as prompts are transformed into standard *fogli* – ‘sheets.’

However, chunking sideways has been generally preferred more than chunking upwards with many references left in the original. All the personalities mentioned, i.e., Al Roker, Jose Feliciano, Sammy Sosa and Stephen J. Gould remain, although the dubbing translator did add explanatory footnotes for the actors and dubbing supervisor. The ‘coroner’ remains the same – presumably Italians have seen enough police genre products to know what a coroner does. Furthermore, a sarcastic reference to the Keystone Cops – ‘Like I’m not gonna have enough problems without the Keystone Cops’ becomes a much weaker (and unhumorous see 4.2.) *E sia l’ultima volta che vi mettete a giocare agli investigatori* – ‘and let this be the last time you play at detectives.’ Notice too the change of registers as we go from the colloquial ‘Like I’m not gonna...’ to the formal (i.e., subjunctive) ‘that this be...’

Using explicitation is another frequent ploy. We find that ‘Ten bucks’ becomes *molto economico* – ‘very cheap;’ ‘The DC Police’ *La polizia di Washington* – ‘the Washington police’ and references to the north-easterly wind ‘off the Chesapeake’ is translated with *Vento freddo e umido...da nord est* – ‘Cold, damp wind from the north-east.’

Furthermore, there are two interesting translational compromises regarding the domestication of two cultural usages. The first refers to the US/UK custom of sending flowers to the bereaved. In this episode the flowers sent by President Bartlet to the family of a young victim of violence are substituted with *un telegramma* – ‘a telegram.’ Secondly, a reference to the President attending ‘Christmas services’ is substituted with *la messa di natale* – Christmas mass. Interestingly, Jed Bartlett is indeed a devout Roman Catholic, but presumably his press officer, CJ, had deliberately kept her press release neutral.

4. Borderline features

Certain lingua-cultural features of the dialogues undoubtedly do not conform to the categories discussed in sections 2 and 3. Idioms, metaphors, allusions and humour, along with songs, poems, rhymes and gestures, require viewers to be familiar with a number of ‘knowledge resources’ (Attardo 1994) which clearly crosscut both language and culture. The two main types of borderline features found in *IED* are idioms and witticisms.

4.1 Idiomaticity

IED is brimming with idiomatic expressions, many of which are extremely up to date and tending towards slang. It is this very idiomaticity which gives the dialogues verve and contributes to the rapid ‘walking and talking’ for which the series is famous. This idiomaticity is mainly flattened in the dub which is delivered, as in most Italian products, slowly and pronounced with almost artificial clarity. One of the features which causes flattening (see 6) – that is the absence of linguistic particularities – is indeed the disappearance of idioms in favor of less poetic language.

From the teaser right to the end of the episode, audiences witness heavily idiomatic English. For example, the teaser begins with members of staff walking and discussing plans for the Christmas celebrations when Sam makes a reference to the new millennium as ‘[the]Pageant of peace, season of hope, coming of the new millennium.’ The ironic remark is translated with a straightforward ‘*Provi a chiedermi qualunque cosa sull’avvento del Nuovo Millennio* – ‘Try and ask me anything about the coming of the new millennium’ thereby omitting the clever idiomatic expressions of the original. And while there are plenty of similar omissions, there are also convincing substitutions. For example, one of the secondary storylines in this episode regards the issue of what could be the right punishment for committers of hate crimes. C.J. openly expresses her opinion that perpetrators should be punished more severely than others and she is reprimanded both by Leo and Sam and advised to neutralize her comments in public.

Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
C.J.	You told me to float a <i>Mi ha detto di sondare il</i>	You told me to test the

	test balloon.	<i>terreno.</i>	ground.
Leo	Float it. Don't shove it down anyone's throat. I don't know which way we're gonna come down on this.	<i>Certo, invece lei è partita per le Crociate! Non so come usciremo da questa storia.</i>	Yes, but you set off on a Crusade! I don't know how we'll get out of this story.

Table 6. Leo and C.J.

C.J.'s 'float the test balloon' metaphor is picked up with Leo's retort 'Float it...' which is lost in the translation in which the idiom is substituted with a perfectly adequate Italian idiom *sondare il terreno*, literally 'to test the ground.' Interestingly, in this exchange, the forceful idiom used by Leo 'shoving [it] down people's throats' is softened with the Italian 'Crusades' metaphor (see the discussion on censorship in 5). Again, earlier in the episode, when Sam had also told C.J. to be more impartial about the subject, especially in public, he uses a motoring metaphor 'putting your foot on the gas' when telling her to go easy:

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Sam	I'm not sure I'd put my foot on the gas so hard with hate crimes legislation.	<i>Ci sei andata giù pesante sulla riforma della legislazione.</i>	You went down heavily on the reform of the legislation.
C.J.	First of all, I barely grazed the gas. Second of all, why not?	<i>Primo, non ci sono andata giù pesante, secondo, perché non avrei dovuto?</i>	Firstly, I did not go down heavily, secondly, why shouldn't I have?

Table 7. Sam and C.J.

Now, what is interesting about English idioms is that the speakers tend to allude to, play and tamper with them rather than utter them in their entirety. So, when C.J. is advised not to put her foot on the gas so hard, she cleverly replies that she 'barely grazed' it. She is also able to pick up the metaphor further on in the interaction with 'Ah. I'll keep my foot off the gas.' The dub uses the metaphor *andare giù pesante* – literally 'to fall down heavily' – with which Italian C.J. is unable to play, but simply repeat in its totality and this diminishes the effect of the verbal repartee.

Again, in the closing lines of the episode, when Toby is being reprimanded by the President for having used his name to arrange an honor guard funeral and tries to justify himself by saying that Hufnagle had been 'a Lance Corporal, United States Marine Corps, Second of the Seventh. The guy got better treatment at Panmunjong', Bartlet replies: 'Toby, if we start pulling strings like this, you don't think every homeless Veteran would come out of the woodworks?' Both the 'pulling strings' and the 'woodworks' metaphors are omitted in the dub – '*Se cominciamo ad occuparci di queste cose tutti i veterani senza tetto reclameranno qualcosa* – if we start looking after all these things all the homeless veterans will want something.' This is not to criticize the solution, but simply to say that the interaction is lacking its intended dynamism.

4.2. Humour

TWW is typical of contemporary US serials which, while belonging to one particular TV genre, will tend to incorporate features pertaining to other genres creating a product which can be labeled 'mixed-genre.' For example, with a medical drama series such as *House M.D.* (FOX, 2004 – 2012, US) which clearly deals with medical professionals, hospitals and surgeries – things which are by nature linked to sickness and disease, it naturally follows that such a series will predictably play upon emotions such as tension and anxiety – and it does. However, in places *House M.D.* is also both visually and verbally funny. This mixture of genres occurs in many other dramatic series such as, for example, *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007, US) a series containing much violence and *The Big C*, a series about a woman who has terminal cancer (Sony, 2010-13, US). Both series not only include instances of verbal humour, but many comic interludes too. Vice versa, lighter series such as *Ally MacBeal* (FOX, 1997-2002, US) and *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998-2004, US), contain their share of drama by dealing, for example, with issues such as cancer and death within a predominantly comedic framework. No longer strictly confined to drama or romance, series now habitually tend to expose viewers to a rollercoaster of divergent emotions constantly contrasting drama with a substantial amount of both visual and verbal humour. And *TWW* is no different with much light relief provided by the characters' verbal repartee.

However, the verbally expressed humour in *IED* is never of the punning, *double entendre* variety but rather of numerous instances of irony and above all, of abundant good lines. A good line is a clever witticism or a sharp and clever remark which is not necessarily dependent either on linguistic or cultural ambiguity. Cinematic and TV dialogues are full of such lines. Good lines are possibly unlikely to arise in naturally occurring conversation, but on screen, leading actors and 'good guys' definitely get to utter them. A good line can be exemplified in the famous 'You talkin' to me? Well, I'm the only one here' uttered by Travis Bickle/ Robert De Niro; (Martin Scorsese *Taxi Driver*; 1976; US) as he looks at himself in the mirror. Travis Bickle talking to his image in a mirror is certainly odd, but purely in terms of language it would be hard to spot any verbal ambiguity in the utterance itself. While being incongruous with reality, it would be difficult to justify these good lines in terms of linguistic ambiguity and therefore unlike puns they present no particular translational challenges.

4.2. Irony

Unlike the verbal acrobatics necessary to create puns, irony, in linguistic terms is quite straightforward to construct and should therefore create few translational problems (see Chiaro 2010). This is not to imply that irony itself, as a trope, is in any way simplistic. If it were then readers and recipients of irony in general would not be deceived into taking it at face value. In fact, the ambiguity of irony lies in its indistinctness and the way in which it subverts truth values and conversational maxims. However, it appears that despite its *linguistic*

simplicity translating irony is not always as straightforward as it would seem. For example, Toby decides to arrange a state funeral for Hufnagle, the homeless veteran, and while he is on the phone trying to get through to the right office he is interrupted by White House Media Consultant, Mandy. Toby is about to lose his patience with the operator when Mandy says ‘This might seem trivial under the circumstances’ and then tells him that the Santa hats for the Christmas celebrations clash with the Dickensian costumes. Toby replies ‘It might seem trivial?’ This ironic remark is totally lost in the dub as it is translated with the curt and dismissive ‘*Ti aspetti che faccia qualcosa?*— You expect me to do something?’

At other times, however, the irony is successfully retained. For example when Bartlet decides to go Christmas shopping in a place called ‘Rare Books’ when asked if he knew what they sold there, Josh replies ‘Fishing tackle?’ and the President retorts ‘Funny boy.’ The irony is retained in the translation, especially in the President’s ironic *Che simpatico!* Again when Josh and Sam try and convince Laurie to give them names of her Republican clients, shocked by the request she looks at Josh and says ‘So you’re the brains of the outfit.’ An ironic idiom which in Italian becomes ‘*allora la mente del gruppo sei tu* — the mind of the group’ which is as equally ironic although less idiomatic.

4.3 Good lines

However, it is the good lines which make most of the humour in the episode. Josh and Donna’s banter consists of fast-talking, witty teasing and there are copious examples in the episode. For example, Table 8a reports an interaction in which Josh typically torments Donna by telling her straight out that he has not bought her a Christmas present, to which she replies ironically that she knows that he has been ‘agonizing’ over the matter. Josh picks up Donna’s irony and agrees adding that he is also agonizing over how to find 10 dollars to pay for it. However, the line ‘That and how I scrape together the ten bucks’ is not ironic, but simply a clever response to Donna’s irony. The dub is less neat than the original as, although Donna’s irony remains, Josh’s retort is much weaker as ‘*tra l’altro* –among other things’, lacks in the cohesion created by Josh’s ‘That and how...’. Table 8b reports another witty exchange between the would-be lovers. This time Josh’s good line, referring to Donna’s expression is ‘Like I just killed your hamster?’ – the hamster is for some reason replaced with a cat in the dub.. Another good line, this time uttered by Donna, occurs after she receives the book and while they are hugging (see 2.1.1ii) she defuses the embarrassing situation with ‘Skis would have killed you?’ The Italian dub ‘*Gli sci erano fuori discussione?* – Skis were out of the question?’ is more formal but possibly just as incongruous.

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Josh	As you can see I have not yet bought your Christmas present.	<i>Come vedi non ti ho ancora comprato il regalo.</i>	As you can see I have not yet bought your Christmas present.
Donna	Yes, and I know you're agonizing over how to best express your appreciation and affection for me at this time of the year.	<i>Mi rendo conto che (per lei) non sarà facile trovare qualcosa che possa esprimere l'affetto e la riconoscenza che prova per me.</i>	I understand that for you it can't be easy to find something that can express the affection and appreciation you feel for me.
Josh	That and how I scrape together the ten bucks.	<i>E che tra l'altro dev'essere anche molto economico.</i>	And which, among other things, has to be very cheap.

Table 8a. Josh and Donna’s banter a)

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
Josh	Could you stop looking at me with the face?	<i>La vuoi smettere di guardarmi con quella faccia?</i>	Could you stop looking at me with that face.
Donna	It’s my face.	<i>Ho solo questa..</i>	I only have this one.
Josh	Like I just killed your hamster?	<i>Sembra che ti ho ucciso il gatto.</i>	It’s as though I’ve killed your cat.

Table 8b. Josh and Donna’s banter b)

5. Censorship

Regarding issues of censorship on Italian TV, research shows that products tend to undergo substantial editing in translation of features such as taboo words, references to sexual practices, death and religion (see Bucaria 2007, Chiaro 2007). According to Altomonte ‘*La censura in tivù viene imposta* –Censorship is enforced on TV [scriptwriters/dubbing translators]’ adding that the Mediaset group is more lenient than state owned RAI regarding language that might be considered distasteful. Altomonte goes on to exemplify that the term *puttana* – Italian for ‘whore’– is forbidden on RAI channels yet her own adaptation of *IED*, commissioned by Mediaset, includes this very term in her original copy in place of the term ‘hooker’ uttered by Josh to high class sex worker, Laurie. However, the term that is actually adopted in the dub is not the less refined *puttana* but the higher register, and more neutral term, *prostituta*. In the same scene, the reference to ‘kinky sex’ is also neutralized in Italian with *certi giochetti*, a euphemism literally meaning ‘certain little games’. Another example of censorship occurring to the adapted script, (i.e., unknown to the dubbing translator and thus changed without consultation), is the case of the exclamation ‘Oh, Jeez’ which appears as *Oh Gesù* in the copy, but is neutralized to *Oh no!* on screen.

One of the themes in this episode regards the debate on hate crime legislation. The concept of ‘hate crime’ itself is softened in Italian to become *crimini di intolleranza* – ‘intolerance crimes’ – needless to say the concept of hatred is more adverse than that of intolerance. An important sub-story of the episode regards the death of a ‘gay high school senior,’ Lowell Lydell, who was ‘...beaten up, then they stripped him naked, tied him to a tree and threw rocks and bottles at his head’ (see Table 9). The Italian version is much weaker than the original as the violence described is lacking in the force provided, first, by the additional ‘naked’ present in the original that is eliminated in the dub. Second, the syntactic structure of the target utterance defuses the dynamism of the ‘stoning’ which is aimed at the victim’s head and not, as the target text suggests, randomly towards any part of his body. Again ‘rocks’ are bigger and heavier than ‘stones’ yet the dub *sassate* suggests that *sassi* – ‘stones’ were used and not *pietre* – ‘rocks’. Altomonte claims that the reduction was necessary owing to ‘lack of space’ and that the four actions are ‘very lengthy’ to express in Italian and justifies her choice ‘the lesser of two evils’ (*il male minore*)– the greater evil being a longer more complete, possibly out of sync, albeit more powerful description, against a synthetic one with good timing even though rather less forceful.[11] Again, at a press conference C.J. expresses her controversial opinion regarding hate crime legislation referring to Lydell’s having ‘got his brains beaten out.’ This phrase is moderated in the dub by the neutral ‘*subisse l’aggressione* –underwent aggression.’ This moderation is not only created by the choice of a semantically ‘weaker’ (and, of course, unspecific) noun *aggressione*, but also through a less forceful syntactic structure consisting of the curt verbal phrase, *subisse l’aggressione*. The final result is that the Italian version lacks in graphic impact. Thus, combined with the term ‘hate crime’ used by the reporter substituted with the euphemism *questo tipo di crimine* -- ‘this kind of crime’ followed by a simple ‘aggression’ in the response, we have a censored dialogue.

	Original Dialogue	Italian Dub	Back Translation
C.J.	[Lowell Lydell was] ‘... stripped him naked, tied rocks and bottles at his head.’	‘... <i>Prima è stato picchiato, poi spogliato, legato ad un albero; l’hanno preso a sassate e gli hanno rotto delle bottiglie in testa.</i>	‘First he was beaten ... then stripped, tied to a tree; they threw stones at him and broke bottles over his head
Bobbi reporter)	(a Do you think that this will revisit the debate on hate crime legislation?	<i>Verrà rivista la legislazione su questo tipo di crimine?</i>	Will the legislation on this type of crime be revisited?
C.J.	Yes, I do. Though I suppose the best time to do that would have been the day before Lowell Lydell got his brains beaten out and not the day after. Who’s next?	<i>Immagino di sì. Anche se forse si sarebbe dovuto fare prima che Lowell Lydell subisse l’aggressione, non dopo. Altre domande?</i>	I imagine so. Even if it should have been done before Lowell Lydell underwent aggression, not after. Any more questions?

Table 9. C.J.

However, while Altomonte cannot be deemed responsible for the bowdlerization of the term *puttana* and the exclamation *Oh Gesù* discussed above, it would appear that in this case, we are looking at a case of self-censorship, albeit ‘necessary’ according to the dubbing translator. Other small ‘cuts’ can be seen in the disappearance of words, minor taboo items such as ‘hell’, ‘damn’ and so on (see 2.1.1 i)

There is however, one example of compensation in the episode when Danny and C.J. finally manage to arrange a dinner date. C.J. declares ‘You understand we’re having dinner, right?’ in which it is perfectly clear from her intonation and demeanor that she is excluding a sexual encounter. The dub, on the other hand, explicates the underlying meaning of her utterance with *Non finiremo a letto*. – ‘we won’t end up in bed.’ Compensation yes, yet it weakens the cat and mouse courtship inherent to the couple’s ambiguous repartee.

6. Dubbing walk and talk

The highly favored ‘walk and talk’ technique (see Perego in this issue) in which film or TV characters converse while walking from one place to another clearly complicates the job of those involved in the process of its dub. One of the features of walk and talk is that dialogue often tends to be less than clear simply because the actors are walking and thus the audio recording that has to deal with a different breathing pattern from that of the more static ‘talking heads.’ Translating walk and talk for the screen is extremely challenging. Subtitles will need to find a compromise between the speed of delivery and viewers’ required reading times which will inevitably lead to vast reduction and audiences having to guess that they are missing much of the verbal action. Dubbing, on the other hand, should ideally have actors deliver dialogues on the go so as to retain the tempo of people on the move, but of course, given the cramped space of the average dubbing booth, this is surely out of the question. But the main problem with the Italian dub of *IED* is the same problem of most Italian dubs, namely that the language is too clear, too formal, too artificial. These three features coupled with the same voices across numerous products is what gives strength to critics of (Italian) dubbing.

In fact, one of the criticisms of this particular episode is indeed one linked with voice quality. For example, Jessica Hodges, the pretty little girl that the President picks on to ask a question is dubbed in a very high-pitched stereotypical child’s voice whereas in English, third grade Jessica has quite a mature way of speaking. She is, of course, a young child with a young child’s voice, but the dub gives her an overly childlike, unnatural way of speaking. Similarly, instances of laughter are overacted and in general, dialogues tend to be slightly off key, in the sense of being more histrionic than necessary. And this is the true difficulty with the Italian dubbing of US products. The laid-back acting style of north American actors is often substituted with performances on the brink of being over-the top. Furthermore, with dubbing actors re-cycling themselves across a variety of different genres,

audiences soon become familiar with their voices so that, if one was to turn one's back on the TV screen, it would be hard to distinguish between a product aimed at teens and one aimed at adults – not only, but it is certainly possible to discern a dubbed product from a home-made one. It is in this sense that dubbing has a flattening effect. However, despite these drawbacks, the dub of *IED* is a very good one, as we have seen, with perfectly adequate solutions for thorny problems such as idioms and humour.

7. Conclusion

For reasons ranging from poor scheduling to the public's lack of engagement with matters of US politics *The West Wing* did not have the huge success in Italy that it had had elsewhere. This chapter provides a brief and critical overview of the Italian dub of the episode *In Excelsis Deo*, examining a variety of lingua-cultural issues that the translation and dub had to deal with. It also discusses censorship and the overall effect of managing dialogue consisting of witty repartee delivered at fast speed.

Despite the fact that dubbing, by default has a flattening effect on the original dialogue as social, regional and idiosyncratic linguistic variation disappears in favor of a more standard form of language, overall, the dub of *In Excelsis Deo* is successful. It succeeds in involving the viewer in the narration. And even if matters regarding US legislation on hate crime and the ins-and-outs of Lillenfield's scheming may not be perfectly clear to Italian audiences, who is to say that they are any more comprehensible to English-speaking audiences? After all, how many native speaker viewers of *House M.D.* really understand the medical jargon? And is Tony Soprano's wheeling and dealing patently clear to all? White House politics is probably no different – the most important thing is for audiences to engage in the plot which, when all is said and done, recycles the same narratives as always but in a fresh and exciting form and framework. And if the politics is less than transparent, it may be worth reflecting on Egoyan and Balfour's well known quote: 'Every film is a foreign film' and so is every serial.

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Notes

[1] The original adaptation initially suggested the title *Buon natale, Presidente!* — literally 'Merry Christmas (Mr.) President' — followed by a secondary title *Veterano Toby* — 'Veteran Toby' — but the final choice went to *Buon Natale Presidente* (see the DVD on sale in Italy: *West Wing : Tutti gli uomini del presidente – Prima stagione*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment). Naturally, the allusion to the chorus of the carol *Angels from the realms of glory* is not retained in the translated title so that all references to the death of Hufnagle and the Landingham twins will thus be missed.

[2] Several blogs and forums express disappointment regarding the mishandling of the series in Italy; see especially: <http://www.serialtv.it/community/index.php?showtopic=36965&st=60> and <http://dvd.forumcommunity.net/?t=3346917> — both sites accessed 20 October 2011.

[3] Associazione Italiana Dialoghista Adattatori Cinetelevisivi: <http://www.aidac.it>

[4] I would like to thank Francesca Altomonte for allowing me to have access to the original transcription and to the 'work-in-progress' notes of her adaptation of *In Excelsis Deo* and also for generously contributing with her invaluable thoughts and opinions and, most of all, for her time.

[5] The traditional vows are : '(Bride's Name), do you take (Groom's Name) for your lawful wedded husband, to live in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love, hono(u)r, comfort, and cherish him from this day forward, forsaking all others, keeping only unto him for as long as you both shall live?'

[6] For a tongue-in-cheek clip that illustrates the conventions of Italian dubbese see http://www.aidac.it/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=58&Itemid=89&lang=en

Accessed 25 October 2011.

[7] The dubbing supervisor or *direttore di doppiaggio* for the first series of *The West Wing* is Silvia Pepitoni.

[8] It is quite common for Italians to invent affectionate forms of address simply by adding an /i/ (transcribed with a 'y') at the end of a name e.g. Reby, Mery, Ketty, Patty, Roby, Giusy , and so on

[9] It has been noted that while not reflecting naturally occurring Italian, *già* is commonly adopted in Italian filmic fictional products too, thus indicating the influence and overflow of dubbese in Italy.

[10] *Ho il dovere di dialoghista di fare rilassare lo spettatore in poltrona al cinema o a casa ... se la persona si pone la domanda si perderebbe una parte del film* – It is my duty as a dubbing translator to allow the viewer to relax in their armchair at home or at the cinema ...if people ask questions they will miss a part of the film.' (my translation).

[11] *...non c'era lo spazio ... che fosse ritmicamente corretto ... quattro azioni lunghissime in italiano. Scelgo il male minore ... lo spettatore immagina la scena , è vero che è ancora più brutta ma è il male minore.* – 'there wasn't enough room ... the rhythm was right ... four very long actions in Italian. I chose the lesser of two evils ... the viewer imagines the scene, it's true that the scene was even uglier, but this [translation] is the lesser of the two evils' (my translation).

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"'Walk and Talk' in Italian Dubbing Cool Politics", *inTRAlinea* Special Issue: A Text of Many Colours – translating *The West Wing*.

Stable URL: <http://www.intralea.org/specials/article/2196>