

Chapter 9

Lamerica

Director:	Gianni Amelio
Actors:	Michele Placido; Enrico Loverso; Carmelo Di Mazzarelli
Country:	Italy
Year:	1994
Length	116 minutes

Lamerica is included in the selected corpus of films in order to enquire into the production and translation of migration movies also from a reversed perspective. This chapter will therefore illustrate how a scripted Italian lingua-franca variation is used in the source version to actualise the socio-cultural and linguistic dimensions also explored in the other films. At the same time, it will also contribute to the investigation of the adaptation strategies when English represents the target language for the international release. *Lamerica* is about two businessmen, Fiore and Gino, who are in Albania to create a shoe company, even though they aim to carry out a fraud. Since the country is impoverished by the fall of communism, they aim at making money out of the poor people, but when they meet Spiro, actually an Italian ex-soldier from the Second World War, Gino is forced to experience the local, dramatic socio-economic conditions.

Some features are shared with the other films analysed so far, such as the native speakers' higher status, the conflicting structures of some interactions, the selection of specific adaptation strategies for the English subtitles. In particular, despite the fact that the inclusion of a scripted ELF variation in the subtitles is not a common solution in audiovisual translation, it is nonetheless considered an appropriate choice to attain pragmalinguistic equivalence.

9.1 Linguistic Dimensions of the Movie

The alternation between Standard Italian and a scripted ILF variation is meant to represent the status asymmetries between the higher-status Italians and the lower-status Albanians, in a script that contains also instances of bureaucratic language with specific lexical and syntactic features, as well as a multimodal actualisation of the participants' illocutionary and perlocutionary levels. In other words, as in *It's a Free World...* (Chapter 7), the linguistic characteristics accompany the audiovisual construction, representing different levels of proximity or division between the speakers by means of their positions and the objects that appear in the scenes.

In the following interaction (46), Fiore wants to convince an Albanian woman to become the chairman of “Alba Calzature”, the shoe factory the Italian men are pretending to open in the foreign country (00:07:57 – 00:08:29):

- (46) FIORE: “Signora, a Lei piace la scarpa italiana? Il cuoio morbido, la confezione moderna, il piede che poggia in un velluto.”
WOMAN: [Speaking Albanian]
INTERPRETER: “L’ha visto in TV. Le scarpe italiane sono migliore al mondo.”
FIORE: “Noi dobbiamo dare ad ogni Albanese un paio di scarpe nuove. Nella fabbrica ci sarà soltanto manodopera locale. Utilizzeremo pellame albanese di primissima qualità: vaccariello, capretto, agnellino... Lei, signora, sarà Presidente della Società ‘Alba Calzature’.”

The interpreter embodies the non-native speaker’s status also due to his scripted ILF variation, which is characterised by non-conventional pronunciation and syntactic structure. Italian shoes are in fact defined “the best in the world”, with a deviating inclusion of the singular form of the adjective, “*migliore*”, instead of the plural version that agrees with the noun “shoes”. On the other hand, Fiore’s utterances are characterised by complex syntactic structure and formal lexis, which aim to promote the quality of the shoes that their factory will produce, justifying in this sense the use of adjectives such as “new” or “local” – respectively referring to the shoes or the manpower – or the specification of “the highest quality” of the skins.

Similar characteristics are identified in another dialogue, between Gino and an Albanian female doctor, when he wants to know more about Spiro, the ex-soldier they meet (00:34:51 – 00:35:18; 00:36:48 – 00:37:01):

- (47) GINO: “È grave?”
DOCTOR: [Speaking Albanian]
GINO: “No, non capisco: parla italiano!”
DOCTOR: “Ah, italiano. Come dice...? Asfissia, asfissia... Ma, non grave—ehm... ora bene. Bene. Voi parente?”
GINO: “No, che parente?! Io sono italiano!”
DOCTOR: “Lui parla italiano con me.”
GINO: “Che vuol dire? Qua tutti ‘parla’ italiano. [...] Le

scarpe dove sono?”

DOCTOR: “Non avevo scarpe. Non avevo.”

GINO: “E io come faccio a portarmelo via? Scalzo? Mi procuri un paio di scarpe, le pago. Pago.”

DOCTOR: “Mi dispiace ma... non posso aiutarla.”

The doctor’s scripted ILF variation generally displays omission of phrasal elements, like “*si*” in “*come [si] dice*”, or “*non grave—ehm... ora bene*”, where the verbs are not present. If uttered by a native speaker, in fact, the sentence would include the present simple tense of “to be”—“*non è grave*”—and the verb “*stare*” in “*ora sta bene*”. Furthermore, the doctor also resorts to simplified verb forms, which are mainly used in the present simple. Additionally, the latter feature helps to define the high-status participant’s attitude. Since the woman is not helping Gino with his search, the man produces a disparaging representation of his interlocutor by mocking her lingua-franca variation, in “*Qui tutti parla italiano*”. In this sentence, the verb “*parlare*”, ‘to speak’, is uttered in the singular form—“*parla*”—instead of the plural, “*parlano*”. The same simplification of verb tenses is also in the past dimension, when the doctor informs that Spiro was not wearing shoes when he arrived at the hospital. In fact, she says, “*non avevo scarpe*”, with again a simplified form, that of the first singular person, which replaces the appropriate third singular person—namely, “*non aveva scarpe*”.

So far, extracts (46) and (47) have illustrated the Italian men’s higher status. Actually, when Gino is imprisoned, the latter’s condition changes. In extract (48) below, he has a conversation with a police officer that, despite being a non-native Italian speaker, leads the development of the exchange. A similar subversion of roles is also in *It’s a Free World...*, but whereas in the latter case the Italian version reproduces such socio-cultural shift by giving a different language variation to Karol (see Section 7.3 above), in *Lamerica* the linguistic properties of the Albanian police officer are not modified. It follows that, as claimed after the analysis of the target version of Ken Loach’s movie, it is also possible to convey connotative semantic dimensions also by means of the integration between the verbal and audiovisual construction of the scenes (also cf. Section 9.2 below) (01:32:50 – 01:33:50):

(48) POLICE OFFICER: “Tuoi bagagli sono sequestrati.”

GINO: “Che volete da me?”

POLICE OFFICER: “Nome, cognome, e dove è nato.”

GINO: “Cudrali Luigi, Agrigento, 30 gennaio ’63.”

POLICE OFFICER: “Fai parte di questa società chiamata Alba Calzature?”

GINO: “Ci lavoro. Lavoro con loro.”

POLICE OFFICER: “Rispondo sì o no, ti prego.”

GINO: “Sì.”

The police officer’s high status may be inferred by the fact that he makes questions and Gino politely answers. At the same time, the syntactic dimension of the non-native participant’s utterances is still divergent from the standard norms. For example, the definite article “i” is omitted in “[I] *Tuoi bagagli sono stati sequestrati*”, whereas he alternates the less formal and more formal structures within the same dialogue. At first, his language is emotionally closer to Gino, since he uses “*Tuoi*”, ‘your’, in “*Tuoi bagagli*”; in the third turn, though, the social deixis is modified, when he says, “*dove è nato*”, with a more formal language. Actually, the register changes again in the other questions he poses.

The analysis of dialogue (48) confirms what was contended when analysing the Italian translation for the dubbing of *It’s a Free World...*: due to the multimodal construction of audiovisual texts, it is not necessary to change the linguistic features to indicate shifts in the participants’ status: the same perlocutionary effect and illocutionary force can be successfully conveyed by means of the extralinguistic characteristics, which contribute to the interpretation of the interactions in audiovisual scripts.

9.2 Conversation Analysis

In extract (46) and (47) Italians have a higher status, which is conveyed by the multimodal features of the scenes. As for dialogue (46), Fiore and the woman are separated by a desk, and this spatial organisation is significant because it will be repeated for the interaction between Gino and the police officer. At the same time, the different illocutionary forces in (46) and (47) determine different ways of communicating the asymmetric status, as reflected by the conversation frames.

In (46), Fiore’s rhythm is slow and his tone of voice aims to convince the woman to accept her role at “Alba Calzature”. On the other hand, when Gino speaks to the female doctor in (47), he has a completely different attitude, which includes the disparaging representation of non-native speakers by mocking their linguistic variation. In that scene, Gino only wants to find Spiro, and the fact that woman cannot be of any help is interpreted by the Italian man like an obstacle to reach his objective. In terms of conversation analysis, he does not resort to informing moves, as Fiore in (46), but he challenges the doctor, by ordering her to speak Italian, using imperatives. At the same time, he downgrades the woman’s assumptions, when she thinks that he is one of Spiro’s relatives. Later, when the woman says that the old man had no shoes, he poses a series of questions, using fake eliciting moves followed by an ordering move and a backing item, with the intent of confirming his higher status and imposing his will.

It is important to state that the different behaviours are not necessarily connected to the recipients' gender: both Fiore and Gino are speaking to women, so it can be surmised that the structures of the conversations are only connected to the men's intentionality and objectives, and to economic and personal reasons. Finally, when it is the Albanian police officer who plays high status, at first Gino tries to react, when he asks why he is being interrogated, but then he gets aware of his different position and answers to the officer's questions. He even repeats one of his utterances, "*Ci lavoro. Lavoro con loro*", in order to clarify how he is connected to "Alba Calzature".

9.3 Target Script Analysis

The analysis of the target script is meant to illustrate how the scripted ILF variation has been turned into a scripted ELF variation for the subtitles. In this section only the lexical and syntactic deviations will be explored (as it was made for the previous films), but the subtitles also display some specific features in terms of register and phonopragmatic features (cf. Iaia, Provenzano, and Sperti forthcoming).

The scripted ELF variation is marked by the omission of phrasal elements and simplified verbal forms, thus identifying some common features with the other variations used in the migration movies under analysis. By way of example, consider the English translation of extract (46):

(49)	Italian script	English script
	<p>FIORE: "Signora, a Lei piace la scarpa italiana? Il cuoio morbido, la confezione moderna, il piede che poggia in un velluto."</p> <p>WOMAN: "[Parla in albanese]"</p> <p>INTERPRETER: "L'ha visto in TV. Le scarpe italiane sono migliore al mondo."</p> <p>FIORE: "Noi dobbiamo dare ad ogni Albanese un paio di scarpe nuove. Nella fabbrica ci sarà soltanto manodopera locale. Utilizzeremo pellame albanese di primissima qualità:</p>	<p>"Do you like Italian shoes? Soft leather, modern manufacturing, feet wrapped in velvet."</p> <p>"[Speaking Albanian]"</p> <p>"She say Italian shoes best in world, she see on television."</p> <p>"We must give every Albanian a pair of shoes. We'll use local manpower in the factory and choice Albanian skins: lamb, kid, calf. And you will be the chairman of our</p>

vaccariello,	capretto,	company,	Alba
agnellino...	Lei,	Calzature.”	
signora,	sarà		
Presidente	della		
Società	‘Alba		
Calzature’.”			

From a technical perspective, the subtitles are shorter than the uttered lines, due to the temporal and spatial limits, but the target script preserves the distinction between the native and non-native speakers. In fact, the interpreter resorts to a deviating form of the verb “to say” in the present simple tense, without the “s” marking the third singular person in “She say Italian shoes best in world”. At the same time, a sentence is also characterised by a simplified syntactic structure, without the definite article “the” and the verb “to be”.

Similar structures are also identified in the rendering of the female doctor’s utterances in (50) below:

- (50)
- | | Italian script | English script |
|---------|---|--|
| GINO: | “È grave?” | “Is it serious?” |
| DOCTOR: | “[Parla in albanese]” | “[Speaking Albanian]” |
| GINO: | “No, non capisco: parla italiano!” | “I don’t understand, speak Italian.” |
| DOCTOR: | “Ah, italiano. Come dice...? Asfissia, asfissia... Ma, non grave—ehm... ora bene. Bene. Voi parente?” | “Ah, Italian. How do you say...? Asphyxia, but not serious, better now. You family?” |
| GINO: | “No, che parente?! Io sono italiano!” | “He had no shoes.” |
| DOCTOR: | “Lui parla italiano con me.” | He speaks Italian with me. |
| GINO: | “Che vuol dire? Qua tutti ‘parla’ italiano. [...] Le scarpe dove sono?” | “So? Everyone here speaks Italian. [...] Where are his shoes?” |
| DOCTOR: | “Non avevo scarpe. Non avevo.” | “He had no shoes.” |
| GINO: | “E io come faccio a portarmelo via? Scalzo? Mi procuri un paio di scarpe, le pago. Pago.” | “How am I supposed to take him away? Could you get me some shoes? I’ll pay.” |

DOCTOR: “Mi dispiace ma... non posso aiutarla.” “I’m sorry, I cannot help.”

In the ninth turn, the linguistic actualisation of the different participants’ status is represented by the fact that Gino’s question is posed with a correct and more formal syntactic construction—“How am I supposed to take him away?”. On the contrary, the doctor’s utterances “Are you family?” and “but not serious, better now” have more simplified structures and are characterised, as illustrated in the examples from the previous films, by the omission of articles and verbs. In the case under investigation, the subject and the verb are not present in “but [he is] not serious, [he is] better now”, or in “[Are] you family?”.

It is worth repeating that the creation of a scripted lingua-franca variation in target scripts is not common, and in fact if several extracts from *Lamerica* are compared, one may notice that the specific lexical and syntactic features have not a common frequency. This may be due to the lack of appropriate translators’ training—indeed, one of the reasons for the proposal of the definition of “scripted lingua-franca variation” in this book—and therefore it is vital to provide analysts, mediators and future translators with specific knowledge that would encompass the linguistic, extralinguistic and functional types of competence, in order to contribute to the appropriate interpretation and adaptation of the linguistic actualisation of the socio-cultural and semantic dimensions in film scripts.

