



# Audiovisual Translation: Theory and Practice

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## Introduction

Among Italian methods of cultural communication, adaptation is the most wide-spread but also the most neglected practice. For instance, it does not benefit from the high critical consideration granted to literary translation, even if, in the end, those who actively work for a movie or for a book to reach the public share the same faith: both adaptors and literary translators are an invisible presence, whose work is often underestimated.

Despite its relevant role in cinematographic distribution, in Italy audiovisual translation inevitably rhymes with the long-running polemic about its legitimacy: much has been said on the matter, with critics and scholars insisting on the illusion of immediacy and false cultural reproduction the audience would be exposed to. One of these critical voices is that of Bruno Osimo: according to him, the audience, tricked by the familiar language spoken in the movie, cannot grasp its implicit cultural specificity, which can only be understood in context (Osimo 2004: 133 sgg). A reply comes from Filippo Ottoni, President of Aidac – Italian Association of Audiovisual Script Translators and Adaptors – during an intervention at the Media Mundus Public Hearing in 2008:

Now, if I were to speak Italian right now, few of you – if any – would understand what I am saying without the aid of a simultaneous translation, and thus my precious “cultural diversity” would be completely lost. In other words, without a sure way of opening up to a wider understanding of the contents expressed by cultural diversities, what would be the sense of protecting cultural diversities?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The speech was already reported in English.



The work of both adaptors and literary translators is fully acknowledged and protected by copyright, and therefore considered equivalent to an original work:

The adaptor – under the law 633/41 article 4 – has the authorship of the produced text, which is preserved by copyright regulations in force, especially articles 18 and 20, law 633/41. (“Contratto Nazionale del Doppiaggio”: 4)<sup>2</sup>

Here follows Edmond Cary, on the complex and ambitious goals of screen adaptation: «Cinematographic translation truly deserves the title of total translation, and it can be considered the highest grade of translation» (Paolinelli 1993: 30).

Despite this polemic, only audiovisual translation guarantees total involvement and complete fruition of the movie without the public being torn between watching the scene on screen and reading the subtitles.

## **Adaptation and Translation**

From a theoretical point of view there is a difference, still to be fully defined, between translation and adaptation, which pivots around the level of text remodeling. In an adaptation, the mediator's choices become more intrusive, ranging from reshaping some parts, to cutting others. On the opposite, the tendency in translation is to follow the structure and the content of the prototext: «a faithful, literary rendering into another language» (Aaltonen 2000: 87). These procedures involving prototext and metatext require the mediation of a properly trained professional.

There can be various reasons behind an adaptation; in the literary field, adaptation is needed when there is the risk that the work will not be understood and, consequently appreciated, by the public (who, this must be said, is not the one the prototext was originally addressed to; it is the case of classic novels adapted for the youngest, where linguistic simplifications and plot reorganizations become essential to facilitate reception).

Good examples of adaptation come from theatre, one of the most powerful means of cultural expression, where, in the name of an enriching interchange, there could be the need to remodel a pièce, in

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, translations are made by the author.

order to make it fully effective in a new meta-context. Let us consider two examples: first, the Spanish adaptation of *My Fair Lady*, a musical taken from the 1964 movie (in turn inspired by *Pygmalion* by G.B Shaw), in which Eliza's eccentric way of talking had to be replaced by a new solution shaped on the Spanish language, in order to give the same impression of the original work (this is what Nida called «dynamic equivalence» (in Morini 2007: 66), that is, operating on the meta-text so as to generate the same sensations the proto-text arose in its addressees). The second example is Dario Fo's *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* in its English version, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, staged in London in 1979, which clearly shows the way different cultures perceive and transform a text which is deeply rooted in the proto-culture's social context along with its specific references. In this case, the social and cultural transfer determines a weakling of the political and ideological content, to the advantage of comic aspects. Translations of Fo's works overlook those same aspects which in Italy are its strengths, for, far from their original context, they do not have the same effectiveness: it can be said that English audience sees a whole different show, which shares with its Italian version only the title.

There is also the adaptation which involves two means and two different codes: a novel can often be turned into a movie or a pièce, a good story moves from the stage to the screen (or *vice versa*). Again, cinema and theatre propose a wide variety of examples: the success of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, from the first movie in 1940 to the BBC series in 1995 and the new movie in 2005; the adaptations of Broadway musicals – *Chicago* in 2002, *The Phantom of the Opera* in 2004, *Mamma Mia!* in 2008, *Rock of Ages* in 2012, and *Les Misérables* in the coming months. What matters, in these cases, is not to rethink the story, but the way it is told: from choices made to respect the specific code imposed by the new means (there might be the need to cut some acts of a musical in a cinematographic transposition), to innovative ways of presenting it, exploiting the potential of the media involved.

It is evident that the difference between adaptation and translation lies in the great attention paid to the adequacy/acceptability relationship in the target text, regardless of its nature:

A translator may subject him-herself to the original text and the norms it has realized, or to the norms active in the target culture or in that section of it which would host the end product. [...] Whereas adherence to source norms determines a translation's adequacy as compared to the source text, subscript to norms

originating in the target culture determines acceptability. (Toury 1995: 57)

As it can be seen from previous examples, not only does adequacy raise issues of reception (as in theatrical adaptations, where the dominant is efficacy, at the expense of the cultural specificities, whereas an acceptable translation, even if seldom chosen, is an excellent means of knowledge of the Other<sup>3</sup>), but, in intersemiotic adaptations, it also establishes itself as the dominant from the very first steps of creation: the content must obey to the needs and codes of the new artistic means.

## **Audiovisual Translation**

From an interlinguistic perspective, audiovisual translation entails an operation on linguistic features – lines and dialogues – of an audiovisual product, to facilitate its distribution in a wider market. There are several forms of audiovisual translation: in addition to subtitling and dialogue adaptation, the most known and easiest to classify, we can also include voice-over, which overlaps the original track – still audible in background – with dubbed lines or dialogues previously translated; narration, a formal reprise of the voice-over, which reworks contents without bonds of labials but still respecting the rhythm; the commentary, which, standing half way between translation and adaptation, allows great freedom in distributing information during the video; the audiovisual description, created for visually impaired, which has to take into consideration the audience heterogeneity and the precision of descriptions.

The following paragraphs will focus on subtitling and dialogue adaptation.

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<sup>3</sup> Adaptation is directly linked to the central-peripheral position of the culture. The more it is dominant, central, the less it will be open to new dimensions. Vice versa, peripheral cultures, in order to grow and expand, need to benefit from stimuli only a careful preservation of different cultural identities can provide, sometimes at the expense of communicative immediacy.

## **Subtitling**

Subtitles, whose definition in translation studies is still ongoing (Pavesi 2005: 37), are based on a target-oriented approach, for their function is to help the audience to fully understand the movie, at the expense of source-text specificities.

One of the reasons behind the hard translational definition of subtitle is the technical degree its writing requires, linked to conventions that may vary according to the distributor (the case of subtitles for visually impaired follows different rules, and will not be taken into consideration here): each subtitle must have no more than two lines whose length, including spaces and punctuation, is between thirty-five and forty characters; its visibility on screen, depending on the length of the scene, cannot exceed four seconds. Despite the aim being to guarantee the readability of the subtitle, the synthetic nature of these indications is clear: even if subtitles are a good aid to better enjoy the movie, the immediacy and the involvement of the result suffer if compared to an adapted and dubbed script, and this is most evident in those scenes of fast-paced or overlapped lines. What is certain is that reading a subtitle means losing good part of the action on screen (Paolinelli – Di Fortunato 2005).

Subtitling saves time and money: not only does it require less equipment and less professionals to be paid; if compared to the stages a text has to go through before reaching a dubbing studio, it also halves the working time.

The peculiarity of subtitles is to reproduce the oral language, preserving its typical colloquialisms or dialectal features, in a written form whose conventions must still be respected (for more details on the creation of a subtitle, cfr. Perego 2005). Subtitling is nonetheless a versatile and useful means of learning a second language: the learner has all languages involved under control at the same time, and can immediately check their functioning, and widening his/her lexical knowledge in a faster and more diversified way.

## **Adaptation and dubbing**

The main difference between adaptation and subtitling lies in the use of dialogues: the adapted script requires for lines to be read and acted by dubbers who substitute the actors' original performance<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The word performance is not used lightly: the challenge for a dubber is expressing all range of emotions and "re-act" the original, only not in an

First, a quick glance to the main indications included in the “Italian National Dubbing Contract”, which describes and regulates every aspect related to the dubbing process: let us examine what interests us the most, that is, rules concerning adaptation and the script. According to article 5, each page of the script will have to be numbered, and it will contain from eighteen to twenty lines. The line is the portion of script that consists of fifty typed characters (leaving out the name of the character) including spaces, punctuation and technical indications. This can be no coincidence, for the final script seems to be customized to answer the dubber’s needs: lines will be faster to read (and the chance of mistakes reduced) if they are contained in a limited space. The contract also indicates the maximum number of lines to be dubbed in a single turn, and this is really interesting, for having less lines to dub means elaborating the performance more accurately: consequently, a faster dubbing will come at the expense of quality; for example, article 7 states that in a “movie for the cinematographic circuit” there cannot be more than 140 dubbed lines per turn, a cartoon cannot exceed 190 lines, whereas a soap opera can reach 220 lines per turn, which is quite a significant difference. As to the adaptor, one of the terms requires maximum discretion about the contents of the audiovisual material; payments are clearly specified<sup>5</sup> and determined using the “rullo” (ten minutes of video) as reference unit.

Adaptation must submit to constraints of several kinds, which end up influencing the final result: while a literary translator can work on the text and modify its phrase order-specifying or adding elements

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open set with proper costume or make-up, but rather in the little space of a dark studio, with only a lectern and a screen to help identification; the actor has at least complete freedom in helping his performance using all kinds of expressions and movements: the dubber has to stick to the original performance, there can be no freedom in choosing how to say a line (which becomes really painful in case of poor acting). Moreover, since the vocal emission varies according to the movements of the actor’s body, the dubber has to imitate (in the small space mentioned above) every position, as insignificant as it may appear, to make sure that the voice comes out with the same intensity. This might sound quite easy, but aspiring dubbers know very well how difficult it is to reproduce a fight scene, or a nervous monologue, and be convincing. The dubber is a real actor who voluntarily chooses to communicate only with his/her voice, leaving aside any other communicative elements (body language above all) of a performance.

<sup>5</sup> As said before, subtitles are paid exactly 50% less than an adaptation, following the given guidelines for each kind of audiovisual product – range A, B, C, D. Cfr. “National Dubbing Contract”, table D.

if necessary- so that the text sounds adequate for the target language, the most challenging aspect for an adaptor to overcome is including the contents of the line in the timing imposed not only by the acting, but also by the possible synthetic features of the source language: every English>Italian translator has this difference clear in mind, especially when in front of long and dense lines which require a remarkable carving work on the text.

Consequently, the adaptor has to take into consideration linguistic and extra-linguistic constraints such as:

- Line duration: it is essential that the lines of the actor and those of the dubber are synchronized. This must be so not only when the actor is fully in the shot, but also when he is not: according to the angle shot, even if the movement of the mandible is hardly visible (for example in an over-the shoulder-shot) it cannot (should not) be overlooked.

- Labial movements: when possible, the labial movements have to coincide with the adapted words. Bilabials and fricatives, among the consonants, and every vowel, especially if emphasized by the acting, represent the main problem for the adaptor, who has to make the words fit in the right time of the line (for example, when a name is being pronounced: the whole line has to be modified to make so that the name falls in the same moment the actor on screen says it).

- Mimic and gestures: the adaptor must shape the line according to the acting.

- The background of the scene, that is, all that surrounds the action and serves as cultural reference: from market signs to classic take-away brands, the adaptor is bound to coherence, and will unlikely opt for choices that hide or minimize the abundant presence of realia in a movie.

That being said, there are still some observations to be done. It is easy to guess that the easiest lines for the adaptor are voice-offs or narrations in voice-over, that do not impose ties of labials (the same cannot be said for their duration: even if an interaction includes one character who is not visible in the shot, the turnover in conversation still has its rhythm and timing; in case of voice-over, the lines are linked to the change of shot, so the dubbed line cannot be longer than the shot itself); although it represents a huge limitation to the solutions the adaptor can choose from, the attention to labials cannot become a rigid dominant of the adaptation if it comes at the expense of full communicative efficacy (it is preferable to omit some labials and to underline the language and the emotion the lines convey). The adaptor has to pay attention also to those quick moments in which the actor does not speak but still moves his/her mouth: when watching the

movie in the original language that frame may pass unnoticed, but this does not happen in the dubbed version, where a blank frame not properly “filled” generates a feeling of inconsistency.

Until now, the analysis has involved the linguistic- translational aspect of adaptors’ work. Adapting a script, however, not only implies the mere reprocessing of a script, but also requires the mastery of some unexpected technical features: using precise and conventional signs, the adaptor also redefines each visual element in the scene. When the script gets to the dubbing studio, the dubber has to understand with just a glance what is going to happen in the scene he/she will be working on. To make that possible, the adaptor has to include:

- The Time Code (TC): it is mandatory to indicate it at the beginning of every scene, to make it easier to find<sup>6</sup>, but it must be also specified when a new character enters (and starts talking) later in the scene.

- Indications concerning all that helps define the scene. To this end, there are specific abbreviations: IC (*In Campo*) indicates the character as visible in the scene; its opposite is FC (*Fuori Campo*). Cinematographic cutting guarantees a great variety of shots, so the lines to be adapted are not always rigidly definable as completely IC or FC, which is why, in the script, the adaptor has to make clear how they progress: iIC (it begins in the frame) or fFC (ends out of the frame). It is usually also pointed out if a character turns his/her back at the camera (DSP – *Di SPalle*).

- Indications concerning the acting. The adaptor makes a distinction between a pause ( / ) and a caesura ( . . . ), a pause being a clear interruption, a caesura being more of an indistinct suspension; other marks are SM (*Sul Muto*), indicating that the actor does not emit an actual sound but there is a gap to fill (see previous paragraph); ANT, indicating that the beginning of the adapted line is anticipated (this often is the case of *FuoriCampo*); ACC (*Accavallamento*) indicating that two characters’ lines overlap. The adaptor has to specify if the actors sighs (F, which stands for *Fiati*), screams, laughs or if the voice

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<sup>6</sup> The movie is not dubbed following the natural succession of the scenes: each dubber works on his/her scenes during one or more turns (every turn lasts up to three hours), not necessarily respecting their order as it comes in the movie (cfr. Article 9 of the Contract and the possibility of “separated sound-tracks”: dubbers act their scenes on their own, even if there are more characters involved; later, the sound-tracks will be united into the ultimate one). This implies a certain effort in terms of identification and emotional rendering.



speaks with a radio or television effect (EFF). Finally, REAZ (*Reazione*) and VER (*Verso*) must be specified in fighting scenes.

- Synopsis: a sum of the plot and a list of characters and corresponding pronunciations. On the adaptors' enthusiastic reaction to this task see Calabrò (in Paolinelli – DiFortunato 1996: 92): «Ah, I would like to abolish the Synopsis. Apotheosis! ».

From these few hints, it is evident that the adaptor's work is not limited to the inter-linguistic aspects of the script; it includes an inter-semiotic expansion, for features of paralinguistic and visual communication are translated using a written and conventionally generated code.

All this said, the best adaptation is invisible, and combines rhythm, musicality and careful choice of words with the dubber's performance, which captures the audience making it easy for them to forget that the film was originally shot in a different language.

### **Case Study: *South Park***

Until now, we have been talking about technical contents – labial, synchronization, *InCampo* and *FuoriCampo*, but the adaptor also has to deal with cultural complications concerning realia, the proper reproduction of registers and terminology. *South Park* is the ideal means through which analyze these complications, thanks to its richness in American cultural references and its politically incorrect humour. A global vision of the whole seasons would be interesting but excessively dispersive, so here the only episode taken into consideration will be the first one of the fifteenth season, *HumancentIpad*.

### **Matters of adaptation**

In Italy, *South Park* is a well-known animated series, surrounded by several critics concerning the solutions found in the first adaptations to solve the thorny matter of linguistic content; the vulgar language is only the most evident – and least worrying – translational problem to face in *South Park*: let us see the others.

It is generally believed that a cartoon gives more freedom in preserving the sync, and this is usually true, with the exception of computer animation, which seeks to faithfully recreate human expressions, bringing the adaptor back to the dominants of a movie with actors in flesh and bones. *South Park* lacks this visual precision, however, since adaptation is not an exact science, the risk here is to be

tricked by the approximation of the drawings and to produce shorter lines, leaving empty frames when dubbing. Moreover, a technical observation must be done: *South Park* Italian dubbers use a caricatural voice, which requires a double declaratory effort. Consequently, contents complications cannot be solved by raising the speed of the line, for it would be hard for the dubber to keep up.

The main characters of this cartoon are children from third grade: without giving in to the temptation of over-simplifying the lexicon, the need is to create a plausible way of speaking, different from that of the adults. Much has been said about the audacity of the language, but the adaptor must be careful not to add even more.

The success of *South Park* also depends on the up-to-date situations invented: the adaptor has to ask him/herself which can be preserved in the script and how to do so<sup>7</sup>. Since coherence between lines and actions must be one of the main dominants, it is often the boundary of the image that imposes the solution. In *South Park - HumancentIpad*, for example, Cartman yearns for an Ipad (thanks to the strong global diffusion of the brand and the product, there is no need to worry about its translation) and drags his mother to an electronics retailer, the BestBuy, also mentioned in some lines: in Italy it is an unknown brand, so, if the adaptor policy is to domesticate the text, there could be the temptation to substitute it with something more familiar, or even to omit it completely. However, a scene clearly shows Cartman and his mother inside such store, with the Best Buy brand clearly visible more than once, and at the end of the episode comes the BestBuy president himself. In the name of the coherence above mentioned, no domestication is possible.

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<sup>7</sup> Today there is a considerable attention towards cultural diversities and realia, direct consequence of globalization, but suffice it to look back to a not too distant past to discover surprising changes. The television-series *La Tata (The Nanny)*, arrived in Italy in 1995, has been heavily modified if compared to the American version: from the degrees of kinship – the main character's mother becoming her aunt for the Italian public – to the whole geographical and cultural context – the Jewish and American nanny is turned into a catholic Italian woman coming from Frosinone. It is easy to guess the massive work behind the adaptation, which is more like a total rewriting, given that the comic verve and Jewish reference have been removed and substituted with more familiar themes for the Italian television. Without discussing the kind of approach to cultural diversity, today such a revision is much more rare to find, for the audience's awareness has evolved, and adaptation along with it.

REPORTER            Tom, oggi è un gran giorno per tutti gli utenti Mac e Apple/ verrà presentato il primo HumancentiPad / Con un'astuta mossa pubblicitaria, la Apple si è accordata con BestBuy [...] per donare il primo HumancentiPad / a un povero ragazzo [...]<sup>8</sup>.

From the original script:

FIELD REPORTER    Tom, it's a big exciting day for Mac Apple users: the unveiling of the first HumancentiPad. As part of a clear PR stunt, Apple has joined up with Best Buy and Dr. Phil to donate the first CentiPad to a needy boy [...].

In this episode Cartman has his peculiar way to get what he wants – the big social pressure he is under imposes him to have an Ipad or he will become the laughing stock of the school – and manages to get to the show of a Doctor Phil, a psychologist whose show has been running in America for ten years. The cartoon makes fun of the sentimentalism that fills the show, known for the extreme cases it hosts. Being completely unknown in Italy, the audience cannot fully grab the sarcasm such doctor inspired, but still can easily guess what the message is: the derision of drama and sensationalism.

The problems often begin with the title: as we have seen, the title of the episode under examination is *HumancentiIpad*; the Apple product is quickly recognizable, but the pun is less immediate for Italians than for Americans. The reference is to *Human Centipede*, a 2009 horror movie, whose plot *South Park* drew on. Puns are at the same time a pleasure and a torture for the translator, for they challenge them to create with the language and study its potential: most of the time such challenge is lost, which is why winning is so much more satisfying. Going back to the title, which are the eligible alternatives to face this pun? In Italy the movie kept its original title, so there is no previous translation to take inspiration from. The adaptor might create a new pun, but the strong reference between title and plot would be lost<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The original layout of the script has been respected.

<sup>9</sup> The adaptor has to come up with three titles for the script, keeping in mind that he has no decisional power on the final choice. The adaptor who worked on this episode proposed as second choices “Una mela al giorno toglie Steve Jobs di torno – an Apple a day keeps Steve Jobs away”, and “La mela marcia – The rotten Apple”: these are solutions that seek to preserve the reference to the Apple company and to give the idea of danger, but they are much less approximate than the original pun.

Finally, in a scene where the cartoon version of Steve Jobs presents his insane project, the “*HumancentiPad*” writing stands out against the background, followed by the same illustration that appears in the original movie: the adaptor has to surrender to a partial loss (being the movie almost unknown in Italy, the audience may not immediately grasp the meaning of the pun, even if later the situation becomes clearer) and, above all, he is bound to maintain the English expression:

STEVE JOBS    Ormai hai accettato!!/ [...]Vi presento / lo  
                    HumancentiPad!

Another problem concerns the information technology lexicon, that is, whether to preserve precise references or to rewrite them:

LESLIE        Do you know if your friend has a Verizon or AT&T  
                    mobile number [...]?  
STAN          I think Verizon.

Here is the adapted version:

LESLIE        Sai per caso se il vostro amico ha un numero Verizon o  
                    AT&T [...]?  
STAN          Credo Verizon<sup>10</sup>.

The adaptor had to search for information about Verizon and At&T, the two main telecommunication enterprises in competition for the leadership of the American market. Here the adaptor, who could easily have opted to modify the lines and erase the names, was motivated by the will to preserve this information, well-known to experts but probably ignored by the rest of the audience, who therefore has the chance to learn something new. Since every translation can be improved, now the adaptor would probably switch the word order in the second line, which sounds like a calque, in «Verizon, credo».

The more the proto-script is oriented towards its culture, the more the adaptation will raise problems: *South Park* is sold and distributed worldwide, but it is firmly rooted in America, and, according to the cultural waves, some references may be understood straightaway, and some may not.

This gives the chance to underline a characteristic that audiovisual translation does not have: revising the translation after some time, as it

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<sup>10</sup> All the lines are taken from the Italian script by courtesy of O.D.S. Torino, which works on the Italian dubbing.

happens with literary translation. Modern adaptation ages less rapidly than the literary language, given the naturalness the dialogue has to have, but attention to such details is recent: dubbed movies in the 50s indiscriminately used an elegant Italian even if sometimes was out of context. There were also slips or calques: for example, in Hitchcock's *Gli uccelli* (*The birds*, 1963), where during a phone call Tippi Hedren says "Pronto, Charlie, è Melania!" (a clear calque from English, the natural Italian form being "Pronto Charlie, sono Melania") or in *La finestra sul cortile* (*Rear Window*, 1954), where James Stewart asks the funny Stella "Mi organizzerebbe un panino imbottito?" (a form that sounds unnatural to an Italian speaker). Yet, these movies are not revised, as it happens to literary translations<sup>11</sup>, for both economic reasons – working on new productions is so difficult that it makes it almost impossible to even think of revising older ones – and because of the strong identification of an actor/actress with his/her original Italian "voice".

## Conclusions

From the few examples above, it is evident that Osimo's statement concerning the loss of cultural diversity is not always valid: during all sixteen seasons of *South Park* the audience has been confronting with new stimuli which multiply exponentially if we consider the general outlook, the same thing being valid for all television shows or cinematographic productions distributed in Italy. For adaptation to be a real means of knowledge, it is important to propose new challenges and to avoid oversimplifications, which only result in cultural impoverishment.

Italian adaptation and dubbing is rightfully considered the best one, however the insiders' impression is that its quality is slowly degenerating, due to the frantic working rhythms, which prevent the adaptor from spending time more to find an adequate and original solution, and from revising the whole work (Paolinelli – DiFortunato 2005: 22), and due to the lack of qualified adaptors: for all these reasons detractors tend to put the blame for the general linguistic decadence on the "doppiaggese" (this derogatory definition includes all those fixed expressions and bad linguistic solutions which allow to speed up the adaptation without paying too much attention to the proper linguistic form in an adapted script), whose repertory would take root so deeply in the current use that even Italian screen players of would be infected

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<sup>11</sup> Cfr. Popović 2006.

by it. The solution to this problem is even harder to find because adaptation has to compete with file sharing and streaming, through which movies can be seen only a few days after their release: adaptation, with its current organization, cannot keep up.

Given the skills required, concerning not only linguistic abilities but also technical and cultural sensibility, it is clear the adaptor's profession cannot be improvised. Adaptation (and dubbing), even if not perfect, is the only professional alternative to an audience that does not master a second language and still wants to watch a foreign audiovisual product: suffice it to think of the self-produced subtitling phenomenon: subtitles are translated and released on the internet by amateurs, an established practice which does not guarantee neither quality nor precision of the translation, precisely because it is not a professional activity, making the final result fit only for a fast vision and a less demanding public; after having satisfied his/her curiosity about "what is going to happen next", the real devotee will still look for more professional solutions.

Adaptation and dubbing could also be the response to international distribution problems: many American directors have seen in adaptation/dubbing the main reason behind the success of their movies on the Italian market: without getting to the heart of the economic matter, adaptation could also be one of the possible answers to the scarce international diffusion of original Italian movies abroad.

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